Bound up with Meaning: The Politics and Memory of Ribbon Wearing in Restoration England and Scotland

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Abstract During the Exclusion Crisis (1678–83), political opinion polarized around the issue of who, or indeed what, should succeed Charles II. In addition to the labels "Whigs" and "Tories," the rapid polarization of politics after 1681 resulted in the adoption of blue and red ribbons distinguishing the two movements. This article focuses on the Whigs' blue ribbon, arguing that the device created the sense of an "imagined consensus" within the group's varied support base. The Whigs' enemies used memories of Britain's troubled past in order to claim that ribbon wearing replicated the behavior of the Covenanter and Parliamentarian movements of the 1630s to 1650s. The history of ribbon wearing in England and Scotland since the 1630s suggests the Whigs were conscious of the blue ribbon's significance. This consciousness reflected an identification with the Covenanter and Parliamentarian movements that survived the Restoration. Evident in contemporary writings and speech, it has been overlooked by scholars of Restoration memory and remembering.

From the sashes of the "Orange Order" in Northern Ireland to the ribbons of Ukraine's "orange revolution," color is a familiar medium for the expression of political belief. Colors possess particular political resonance in the United Kingdom, where the names of the principal parties are exchangeable with the blues, greens, purples, reds, and yellows of their placards and rosettes. So entrenched are the meanings of these colors that a party's efforts to alter its position on the political spectrum might involve a self-conscious "recoloring", such as the modern Conservatives' recent selection of a paler, and thus "softer," shade of their traditional blue. Meanwhile, the timeless association of red with socialism has rendered the color a veritable insult with which to attack the left of the Labour Party. To add to the confusion, labels of "red Tory" and "blue Labour" represent positions within those parties that are deemed more or less progressive than the norm. Elsewhere in the British Isles, the 2003 debate in the Scottish Parliament about the precise hue of the St. Andrew's saltire demonstrates the importance of color for national identities.[1]

[1] "Scottish Parliament Education, Culture and Sport Committee Official Report, Meeting No 5 2003," 18 February 2003, accessed 18 June 2016, http://archive.scottish.parliament.uk/business/committees/historic/education/or-03/ed03-0502.htm.

27

This peculiar synesthesia of politics is nothing new. In 1682, William Gough was putting the finishing touches to his *Londinum Triumphans*, a history "*for many Ages past*" that was intended to demonstrate the ancient influence of his native London on national affairs. To this end, Gough included an account of the 1377 London riots against John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. Gough denounced the actions of the rioters who, in opposition to Gaunt's support for the religious reformer John Wycliffe, elected to hang his coat of arms upside down "in sign of Treason" along the city's streets. For Gough, the actions of Gaunt's opponents were comparable with a more recent episode in which unknown assailants had "cut the Picture of his Royal Highness the Duke of *York* … at *Guild-hal*." This was not the only parallel that Gough identified between Gaunt's treatment in 1377 and the recent intensification of opposition to James, Duke of York, the heir to the throne. He went on to describe how Gaunt's supporters, who had worn his "Sign or Colours, were fain to hide them, so great a fear and dread had seiz'd upon their Spirits." Pausing for thought, Gough admitted that "whether these Colours were Parsons Black, True Blew, Flourishing Green, Orange Tawny, or Blood Red, the Historian hath not so far gratified us."[2]

The casual observer would be forgiven for passing over Gough's thoughts on which colors John of Gaunt's supporters wore in 1377. For those who read *Londinum Triumphans* when it was first published in 1682, however, the author's words would have carried a great deal of significance. For the colors to which Gough referred—"True Blew, Flourishing Green, Orange Tawny[,]" and "Blood Red"—had emerged as signifiers of political opinion in the months leading up to the publication of *Londinum Triumphans*. In particular, these were the colors of the ribbons that, since 1681, had been worn in the hats of those for whom the Roman Catholicism of James, Duke of York had become a source of division. The "Whigs," whose principal aim was to exclude York from the succession because of his religion, wore blue ribbons, while their enemies, the "Tories," adopted red ones. The Whigs were also associated with green ribbons, a device that had been the badge of the radical King's Head Club in the late 1670s. Elsewhere, men and women in Taunton, a Somerset town renowned for its radical inclinations, had been seen to adorn their hats with orange ribbons at the annual commemoration of a Civil War siege. Gough's offhand comments in his *Londinum Triumphans* thus reflect the colorful nature of the debates about the future of the Three Kingdoms that characterized the 1680s.

This article provides the first exploration of colored ribbons as a means of political identification at the end of Charles II's reign, focusing in particular on the motivations behind the Whigs' adoption of the blue ribbon during the Exclusion Crisis of 1681 to 1683. To that end, it takes inspiration from historians who have combined material, visual, and political cultural approaches to this turbulent era.[3] Where these

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[2] [William Gough], *Londinum Triumphans, Or an Historical Account of the Grand Influence the Actions of the City of London Have had upon the Affairs of the Nation for many Ages past* (London, 1682), 211–12.

[3] Mark Knights, "Possessing the Visual: The Materiality of Visual Print Culture in Later Stuart Britain," in *Material Readings of Early Modern Culture: Texts and Social Practices, 1580–1730*, ed. Mark Daybell and Peter Hinds (Basingstoke, 2010), 85–122. See also Clare Haynes, *Pictures and Popery: Art and Religion in England, 1660–1760* (Aldershot, 2006); eadem, "The Politics of Religious Imagery in the Late Seventeenth Century," in *Fear, Exclusion and Revolution: Roger Morrice and Britain in the 1680s*, ed. Jason McElligott (Aldershot, 2006), 49–66; Helen Pierce, "The Devil's Bloodhound: Roger L'Estrange Caricatured,"

studies have tended to focus on print and graphic culture, the subject here is clothing, the uses of which as political signifiers have been a more common feature of works on English and French radicalism in a later era.[4] Drawing on these studies, "appearances" in general, and dress in particular, are depicted as having been "inseparable from the specific contexts within which they are displayed and scrutinised," and sites for "the negotiation of variant meanings, in which past and present are simultaneously elided and in collision."[5] Following an introduction to ribbon wearing in Restoration England, the "variant meanings" that were ascribed to the Whigs' blue ribbon between 1681 and 1683 are treated in turn. Ribbons bound together the emergent Whig movement, providing a basis for "imagined consensus" among a group of individuals with disparate aims. They also evoked (often hostile) comparisons with the uses of similar devices in other geographical and historical settings, especially during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms in the 1630s, 1640s, and 1650s. Rather than the product of the wild imaginations of their enemies, the Whigs' apparent appropriation of the signifiers of earlier political movements is shown here to have been intentional. The use of the blue ribbon thus reflects a broader positive countermemory of resistance against the Stuarts in both England and Scotland during the 1630s to 1650s that has remained largely absent from the burgeoning interest in the legacies of the civil wars and revolution.[6] The devices can also shed fresh light on debate over the Exclusion Crisis as the "first age of the party."[7] Rather than being emblematic of a new partisan era, the ribbons of the Whigs and Tories constitute a link between the colorful political mobilization of the 1680s and that which occurred in the military context of the 1640s and

in *Printed Images in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. Michael Hunter (Farnham, 2010), 237–54; and Adam Morton, "Intensive Ephemera: *The Catholick Gamesters* and the Visual Culture of News in Restoration London," in *News in Early Modern Europe: Currents and Connections*, ed. Simon F. Davies and Puck Fletcher (Leiden, 2014), 115–40.

[4] Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley, 1984), 52–86; James Epstein, "Understanding the Cap of Liberty: Symbolic Practice and Social Conflict in Early Nineteenth-Century England," *Past and Present* 122, no. 1 (February 1989): 75–118; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances: Representations of Dress in Revolutionary France* (Oxford, 2002); Katrina Navickas, "'That Sash Will Hang You': Political Clothing and Adornment in England, 1780–1840," *Journal of British Studies* 49, no. 3 (July 2010): 540–65; and Murray G. H. Pittock, *Material Culture and Sedition, 1688–1760: Treacherous Objects, Secret Places* (Basingstoke, 2013).

[5] Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, 8–9.

[6] John Patrick Montaño, *Courting the Moderates: Ideology, Propaganda, and the Emergence of the Party, 1660–1678* (Newark, DE, 2002); Mark Stoyle, "Memories of the Maimed: The Testimony of Charles I's Former Soldiers, 1660–1730," *History* 88, no. 290 (April 2003): 204–26; idem, "Remembering the English Civil Wars," in *The Memory of Catastrophe*, ed. Peter Gray and Kendrick Oliver (Manchester, 2004), 19–30; Matthew Neufeld, *The Civil Wars after 1660: Public Remembering in Late Stuart England* (Woodbridge, 2013); Fiona McCall, *Baal's Priests: The Loyalist Clergy and the English Revolution* (Farnham, 2013). See also Matthew Neufeld, ed., "Uses of the Past in Early Modern England," special issue, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 76, no. 4 (Winter 2013). For one of the few recent discussions of positive reflects on the Parliamentarian movement, see Mark Goldie, *Roger Morrice and the Puritan Whigs* (Woodbridge, 2016), 161.

[7] For still the best introductions to this debate, see Mark Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis, 1678–81* (Cambridge, 1994), 3–38; and Tim Harris, "What's New about the Restoration?' *Albion* 29, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 187–222, at 204–14.

1650s.[8] By considering the Whigs' ribbon in these ways, it is possible to heed recent calls to examine both England as a constituent of the Three Kingdoms and the era after 1660 as inextricable from that which preceded it.[9]

RIBBONS, POLITICAL MOBILIZATION, AND "IMAGINED CONSENSUS"

The turbulent period from 1678 to 1685 has attracted considerable historiographical attention in the past three decades.[10] That this era was so febrile stemmed from deep-seated fears for the future of the Three Kingdoms. On the one hand, the prospect of a "popish" successor in the form of Charles's brother and heir, James, Duke of York, was anathema to Protestants who recalled with horror the counter-reformation of Mary I in the 1550s, the 1641 Irish Rebellion, the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, and the more recent destruction of the Great Fire of London in 1666, a catastrophe that was also imputed to Roman Catholics. On the other hand, those whose interests were to defend the Church of England in its episcopal form and the royal line of succession were anxious that fears of "popery" and a "popish" successor were being used, as they had been in the 1640s, to eviscerate the sociopolitical order. These tensions mounted in 1673 when the Duke of York's resignation from the position of lord high admiral signified his failure to fulfil the obligations of the Test Act and, by extension, his refusal to abandon Roman Catholicism.

In the autumn of 1678, fears of counterreformation surged as a result of the revelation of a fabricated "Popish Plot" to assassinate Charles II and murder English Protestants, and the death of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, the Middlesex magistrate to whom the plot had been revealed.[11] In the frenzied months that followed Godfrey's mysterious death, the prosecution of the alleged plotters became the priority of MPs then sitting at Westminster. Moreover, the revelation that the Duke of York's former secretary, Edward Coleman, was involved in the plot intensified the development of strategies for securing the succession of a Protestant monarch, one of which involved the exclusion of York from the throne. Opposition to York's succession led to two bills for his exclusion, but these fell afoul of Charles II's prorogation of Parliament in May 1679 and a vote in the House of Lords eighteen months later. Charles's use of his prerogative powers to impede the first attempt to exclude his brother, as well as claims that he had influenced the result of the second, resulted in loud assertions of Parliament's sovereign status. In January 1681, and amid unprecedented opposition, Charles prorogued and then dissolved Parliament before sending

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[8] For political mobilization in the context of the Civil Wars, see Michael Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire: A New History of the English Civil Wars* (London, 2008).

[9] Tim Harris, "The Legacy of the English Civil War: Rethinking the Revolution," *European Legacy* 5, no. 4 (2000): 501–14.

[10] For a useful summary of the explosion of work on the Restoration since the 1980s, see Harris, "What's New about the Restoration?," 187–222.

[11] John Kenyon, *The Popish Plot* (London, 1972) remains a seminal work on this subject. For more recent contributions, see Peter Hinds, *"The Horrid Popish Plot": Roger L'Estrange and the Circulation of Political Discourse in Late Seventeenth-Century London* (Oxford, 2009); and Claire Walker, "'Remember Justice Godfrey': The Popish Plot and the Construction of Panic in Seventeenth-Century Media," in *Moral Panics, the Media and the Law in Early Modern England*, ed. David Lemmings and Claire Walker (Basingstoke, 2009), 117–38.

out writs for a new one at Oxford, a traditional retreat for Stuart monarchs under fire. When, much to his chagrin, MPs introduced a third bill of exclusion, Charles dissolved Parliament, triggering a period that has been described as his "personal rule."[12] In the hostile aftermath of the Oxford Parliament, public opinion crystalized rapidly around the issues of exclusion, the relationship between crown and Parliament, and liberty of conscience for Protestant Dissenters. This polarization of public opinion resulted in the self-identification of individuals as members of two distinct political communities: the "Whigs," who favored the exclusion of the Duke of York, the independence of Parliament from the crown, and the toleration of Dissenters; and the "Tories," who opposed all three.

In parallel with these well-known labels of "Whig" and "Tory" emerged another means of political self-identification: the adoption of colored ribbons. In the wake of the Oxford Parliament, blue ribbons proliferated as signifiers of support for the Whigs. So prominent had these ribbons become in the summer of 1681, in fact, that one political commentator was provoked to write that he had witnessed "many" of his fellow Londoners wearing "blew ribbons in their hats."[13] Over the succeeding months, the blue ribbons of the Whigs spread throughout England. In July 1681, for instance, dozens of men were seen in the Wiltshire town of Warminster at the time of the local Sessions Court with "peices of new blew Ribbon about six inches in length" in their hats, with concerns raised that "in twoe or three dayes tyme there might be one hundred or two hundred persons in the towne distinguised by the like marke."[14] Three months later and two hundred miles away in Wallingwells, Nottinghamshire, the dissenting minister Oliver Heywood recorded in his diary that local men had started to wear a "violet" ribbon.[15] When Charles II's illegitimate son, James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, toured the northwest of England in 1682, those who favored his claim to the throne over that of his uncle, the Duke of York, wore similar blue ribbons. On this occasion, secretaries of state were informed that "a quantity of blue ribbon was distributed" among those who waited on Monmouth at the estate of George Booth, Baron Delamere, in Dunham (Cheshire) in September 1682.[16]

Most of these testimonies of blue ribbon wearing include references to the adoption of red ribbons by the Whig's opponents, the Tories. The men of Warminster, for instance, explained that the blue ribbons had been adopted "in opposition to those that wore Redd ribbons" or against "those that wore redd ribens at Salisbury."[17] Likewise, the *True Protestant Mercury* explained that the Londoners who wore blue ribbons did so to distinguish themselves from those who wore red.[18] Oliver

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[12] Grant Tapsell, *The Personal Rule of Charles II, 1681–85* (Woodbridge, 2007).

[13] Narcissus Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs* (Oxford, 1857), 110–11.

[14] B. Howard Cunnington, ed., *Records of the County of Wilts, Being Extracts from the Quarter Sessions Great Rolls of the Seventeenth Century* (Devizes, 1932), 262–63.

[15] J. Horsfall Turner, ed., *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B. A., 1630–1702: His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books; Illustrating the General and Family History of Yorkshire and Lancashire*, 4 vols. (Brighouse, 1881), 2:285.

[16] F. H. Blackburne Daniell, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles II, 1682* (London, 1932), 407.

[17] Cunnington, *Records of the County of Wilts*, 263, 265.

[18] *The True Protestant Mercury Or; Occurrences Foreign and Domestick*, 16–20 July 1681.

Heywood also spoke of "a red Ribband" in Nottinghamshire.[19] Elsewhere, there are references to the use of red ribbons in Derbyshire, Durham, Bristol and Worcester.[20] In the latter two examples, the words "Rex et heredes" or "the king and his heirs" were embroidered into the ribbons.[21] In the mind of the Whig pamphleteer John Phillips, the red ribbon had become sufficiently emblematic of his political enemies that he was able to define a Tory as "a Monster with an *English Face*, a *French Heart*, and an *Irish Conscience*" whose "mark" was "a *Red Ribbon* in his Cap, to shew, That he belongs to the *Scarlet Whore*, by her Bloody Livery; or else, you may take it for a *Wedding Favour*, That whenever *Popery* and *Tyranny* shall make a *Match*, he would fain be a *Bride man*."[22] In contrast, in his *Speculum Crape-Gownorum*, Phillips described Protestant Dissenters as those who would not "wear Scarlet Twists in their Hats."[23]

Whereas a number of such commentators spoke of the emergence of blue ribbons in opposition to red ones, it would appear that the former was the original and that it had emerged in March 1681 at the time of the Oxford Parliament. Writing on the eve of that parliament, the author of one Whig newssheet explained that

> some of our Ingenious *London* Weavers … contrived a very fine fancy, that is a Blew Sattin Ribbon, having these words plainly and legibly wrought upon it, *No Popery, No Slavery*, which being tyed up in knots, were worn in the Hats of the Horsemen, who accompanied our Members.[24]

The newssheet's author was referring to the London activists who accompanied Whig MPs to Oxford in the week before Parliament sat. Among them was Stephen Colledge, whose later treason trial alleged that he had been the principal distributor of the blue ribbon and that it had formed part of an attempt to kidnap Charles II at Oxford in March 1681. According to one witness, the ribbons were about a yard in length and were embroidered with the slogan "No Popery, No Slavery" "eight times" or "twice wrought in every Quarter of a Yard."[25] Intriguingly enough, Colledge's famous ballad "A Ra-ree Show"—the treasonable nature of which formed the central pillar of his later prosecution—included an image of several Whigs pulling Charles II into the mire, and wearing the ribbons in their hats.[26] Fastening the ribbon to a hatband—or perhaps even as a hatband—appears to have been the principal method of bearing the device, and this is confirmed in another ballad

[19] Turner, *Oliver Heywood*, 2:285.

[20] See Tapsell, *Personal Rule*, 118–19.

[21] *Observator in Dialogue*, 7 September 1681; Tapsell, *Personal Rule*, 119.

[22] John Phillips, *A Pleasant Conference upon the Observator and Heraclitus: Together With a brief Relation of the Present Posture of the French Affairs* (London, 1682), 7–8.

[23] John Phillips, *Speculum Crape-Gownorum: Or, A Looking-Glass for the Young Academicks, new Foyl'd* (London, 1682), 30–31.

[24] *Smith's, Protestant Intelligence: Domestick & Foreign*, 17–21 March 1681.

[25] *The Arraignment, Tryal and Condemnation of Stephen Colledge for High-Treason, in Conspiring the Death of the King, the Levying of War, and the Subversion of the Government* (London, 1681), 32. For more detail about the ribbon, see Roger North, *Examen* (London, 1740), 102.

[26] [Stephen Colledge], *A Ra-ree Show* (London, 1681). See also B. J. Rahn, "*A Ra-ree Show*—A Rare Cartoon: Revolutionary Propaganda in the Treason Trial of Stephen College," in *Studies in Change and Revolution: Aspects of English Intellectual History, 1640–1800*, ed. Paul J. Korshin (Menston, 1972), 77–98.

from 1681, "The Loyal London Prentice," which included an image of Tories who wore ribbons in their hats.[27]

While we cannot be certain that Colledge commissioned the London weavers to make the Whigs' blue ribbon, his name did become synonymous with it. In 1681, Sir Roger L'Estrange's *Observator* newssheet spoke of "the *Blew-Ribbon-men* that went *Colleging* out a while ago to *Hobby-Horse-Fair*."[28] Eight months later, another newssheet made light of Colledge's trial and subsequent execution with the remark that the Whigs' blue ribbon had not been seen much of late.[29] Indeed, during his long trial in August 1681, a number of witnesses came forward with accounts of having been provided with the blue ribbon by Colledge, or having seen him distribute it.[30] It was even alleged that Colledge had provided an anonymous "Parliament man" with a length of ribbon.[31] Of most significance to the prosecution, however, was one witness's claim that Colledge had asked him to circulate the blue ribbon "among those that [he] knew to be Dissenters in the Country."[32] If Colledge's intention had been a wider distribution of the ribbon, then the appearance of other versions of the device in a concentric wave from Oxford through neighboring Wiltshire, into the East Midlands a few months later, and then as far as Cheshire, could point to his success. Indeed, the "No Popery, No Slavery" ribbon that emerged at the Oxford Parliament continued to appear in England until at least 1683.[33] This was despite the fact that, priced at 2*s* per yard, the ribbons were not cheap.[34] Indeed one ribbon would have cost much of a day's pay for the kinds of craftsmen with which Colledge, a joiner, would have worked.[35] Nonetheless, references to ribbons without the embroidered slogan, and indeed those that were not blue but "violet" (as in the case of the Nottinghamshire ribbons), suggests that cheaper imitations might well have been produced.[36] Moreover, that Colledge asked his associates to distribute the ribbon for free, and thus absorb the cost, could explain the claim of one of those who received "a little peice of [the] blew Ribon" in Warminster that he did so "without paying any thing for it."[37]

The Whigs' adoption of the blue ribbon was not, of course, the first time that ribbons were worn as a means of political identification after the Restoration. Some of the Whigs, including Colledge it would seem,[38] were, or had been, members of the infamous club that met at the King's Head tavern on the corner

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[27] *The Loyal London Prentice: Being his Constant Resolution, to hazard his Life and Fortune for his King* (London, 1681).

[28] *Observator in Dialogue*, 29 October 1681.

[29] *Loyal Protestant, and True Domestick Intelligence*, 27 June 1682.

[30] *Tryal*, 19, 27, 29, 30, 32.

[31] Ibid., 32.

[32] Ibid., 19.

[33] *A True Narrative Of the whole Proceedings at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bayly, Begun on Thursday the 12th. of this Instant July, 1683* (London, 1683), 4.

[34] *Tryal*, 32.

[35] See figure 3, "Modal Wage Rates of London Building Craftsmen and Labourers, 1574–1720," in Jeremy Boulton, "Wage Labour in Seventeenth-Century London, *Economic History Review* 49, no. 2 (May 1996): 268–90, at 278.

[36] See also North, *Examen*, 101.

[37] Cunnington, *Records of the County of Wilts*, 264.

[38] Mark Knights, "London's 'Monster' Petition of 1680," *Historical Journal* 36, no. 1 (March 1993): 39–67, at 53–54.

of Chancery Lane and Fleet Street, and was named for the distinguishing green ribbons that the members wore.[39] The first references to this use of the green ribbon appeared in October 1676, when it was reported that the device was worn in the hats of those who called for a new parliament,[40] and there were references to the same practice in February 1677.[41] The Green Ribbon Club continued to be associated with efforts to safeguard English parliaments after the revelation of the Popish Plot in the autumn of 1678.[42] How popular wearing these green ribbons had become is hinted at in *A Seasonable Address to both Houses*, a pamphlet published to coincide with the Oxford Parliament of March 1681.[43] The author of the pamphlet spoke of "daily" seeing "others run into Clubs and Cabals, distinguishing them[s]elves by Green Ribbans."[44] Despite its fame, the Whigs appear to have traded in the green ribbon for the blue version from March 1681 onwards, and the reputed role of the King's Head Club in the production of both devices could well reflect a conscious "rebranding" exercise.[45] That the Tories continued to evoke the device in lampoons of the Whigs suggests that a putative effort to phase out the green ribbon did not efface the significance of the green ribbon.[46]

If the green ribbon of the King's Head Club was worn as a signifier of efforts to safeguard English parliaments, the meaning of its blue successor is somewhat harder to pin down. On the one hand, it appears that blue ribbons became emblematic of support for the Duke of Monmouth's rival claim to the succession—a notion that has permeated historical consciousness of the Exclusion Crisis.[47] The Wiltshire men who adopted their blue ribbon over the summer of 1681, for instance, claimed to have done so because they were "the Duke of Monmouths colours."[48] Narcissus Luttrell also felt that blue ribbons were worn "for the duke of Monmouth."[49] This meaning of the blue ribbon endured as late as 1682 when "a quantity of blue ribbon was distributed" among those who waited on Monmouth at the estate of Lord Delamere in Dunham (Cheshire) in September 1682. So close did this association between the Duke and the device become, in fact, that some pro-Monmouth postal workers in Stockport were described as subscribing to "the blue ribbon principle."[50]

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[39] For a treatment of the Green Ribbon Club, see David Allen, "Political Clubs in Restoration London," *Historical Journal* 19, no. 3 (September 1976): 561–80, at 568–69.

[40] Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis*, 187. See also *Poor Robins Intelligence* (London), 10–17 October 1676.

[41] Cited in J. Ereck Jarvis, "Green Ribband Width: The Broken Metaphors of New Social Forms, c. 1680 and c. 2013," in *Social Networks in the Long Eighteenth Century: Clubs, Literary Salons, Textual Coteries*, ed. Ileana Baird (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2014), 31–53, at 41.

[42] See *A Tale of the Tubbs or Romes Master Peice Defeated* (1679); *The Litany of The D[uke of Buckingham] of B[uckingham]* (c. 1679–1680); and "The Essex Ballad" (London, 1680).

[43] Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis*, 311.

[44] [George Savile], *A Seasonable Address To both Houses of Parliament Concerning the Succession; The Fears of Popery, And Arbitrary Government* (London, 1681), 17.

[45] Roger North, *Notes of Me: The Autobiography of Roger North*, ed. Peter Millard (Toronto, 2000), 213.

[46] "Prologue Spoken to *Anna Bullen*, written by a Person of Quality," in John Banks, *Vertue Betray'd: Or, Anna Bullen. A Tragedy* (London, 1682), n. p.

[47] Tim Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II: Propaganda and Politics from the Restoration until the Exclusion Crisis* (Cambridge, 1987), 198.

[48] Cunnington, *Records of the County of Wilts*, 265.

[49] Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, 110–11.

[50] Daniell, *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, 1682*, 407.

While the blue ribbon appears to have become synonymous with support for the accession of the Duke of Monmouth by 1682, this does not appear to have been the reason for the adoption of the color in March 1681. Monmouth's "colors" (those that were associated with his regiment) were in fact yellow and not the blue with which some contemporaries associated him.[51] In order to uncover the true origins of the blue ribbon, it is important to acknowledge that Monmouth's accession to the throne was but one solution to the "problem" of a Catholic successor. Others sought instead to fast-track the accession of James's eldest daughter, Mary, who would then reign with her husband, the Dutch stadtholder and Calvinist, William of Orange (a plan that bore fruit, of course, in 1689).[52] Meanwhile, there was a vocal, but much less popular, movement that called for the resurrection of a republican commonwealth.[53] To be sure, some of the Whigs' supporters were hostile to Monmouth, both as a Stuart and one, at that, who had led the brutal suppression of the 1679 Covenanter rebellion in Scotland. Such views were aired in the spring of 1681, when a group of Essex radicals, or so it was claimed, concurred that "none of that race [i.e., the Stuarts] shall suckseed" and that "power shall not liv in [Monmouth] but in the peopell."[54] If the Whigs' opinions about the succession varied, it is also important to acknowledge that, for some of their number, the independence of Parliament from the crown and the toleration of Protestant Dissenters were issues of equal, if not greater, importance than the religion of the heir to the throne. The Whigs were, in other words, a movement devoid of a single vision.

In light of the diversity of the Whigs' support base, a different explanation can be offered for the uptake of the blue ribbon from March 1681 onwards. In his work on the King's Head Club, J. Ereck Jarvis has suggested that their green ribbon device was intended to establish "significance through a proliferation of sameness" and prioritize "agreement rather than interaction" within "the diverse" King's Head Club.[55] The first iteration of the Whigs' blue ribbon suggests a similar interpretation. The ribbon was arguably adopted for the specific purpose of concealing unhelpful conflicts over who, or indeed what, should replace the Duke of York, or whether this was even the most important issue at stake. From the ideological chaos of the Exclusion Crisis, then, the blue ribbon created an "imagined consensus" over who the Whigs were. Like the "imagined communities" to which historians and social scientists have referred, this "imagined consensus" eliminated boundaries that were confessional and political, as well as geographical.[56] In this sense, the Whigs' blue ribbon stands as a forerunner of the colored rosettes, badges, bracelets, and ribbons with which mass support for movements (political or otherwise) continues to be mobilized. This lends credence to an old adage, since renewed in more nuanced forms,

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[51] Anna Keay, *The Last Royal Rebel: The Life and Death of James, Duke of Monmouth* (London, 2016), 115.

[52] For a discussion of these groups, see Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis*, 56.

[53] See Richard L. Greaves, *Secrets of the Kingdom: British Radicals from the Popish Plot to the Revolution of 1688–1689* (Stanford, 1992).

[54] The National Archives (hereafter TNA), SP 29/431/76.

[55] Jarvis, "Green Ribband Width," 31–53, at 44.

[56] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1991). For a recent consideration of the implications of this concept for "public politics" in the 1640s and 1650s, see Jason Peacey, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2013), 21.

that the Whigs, and their opponents, adopted forms of mobilization that anticipated those of modern politics.[57]

RIBBONS AND REMEMBERED REBELLIONS

Whereas the Tories' red ribbon appears to have offered a comparable means of political mobilization to that of the Whigs from 1681 onwards, some of their supporters were loath to admit it. Indeed, a number of the Whigs' opponents regarded the adoption of a ribbon as emblematic of their true intentions to throw the Three Kingdoms into chaos. When Stephen Colledge was tried in August 1681, for instance, the prosecution concluded that his "No Popery, No Slavery" ribbons had been "marks whereby [he and his co-conspirators] were to be known, and they were to be one and all, as they call it, that, when such a blow was struck, they should be ready to fall in."[58] Sir Roger L'Estrange, the Tories' chief propagandist, concurred, arguing punningly that the ribbons and the "No Popery, No Slavery" motif were "an Ostentation of their Force and Resolution to Oppose any Power whatsoever … under the colour of [a] Bare Pretence."[59] This interpretation of the blue ribbon as a signifier of rebellious intent endured and it informed suspicions that the Duke of Monmouth's supporters wore similar ribbons in Wiltshire for "some designe to make a publique disturbance" or "as a Marke of distinction in order to disturbe the publique peace."[60]

For Colledge's prosecutors, one of the reasons for this association of the blue ribbon with rebellion was "the several Exploits that have of late in *Scotland* been carried on, by a few discontented Persons."[61] The "exploits" referred to here were the riotous events of Christmas 1680 when students, wearing blue ribbons, paraded an effigy of the pope through the streets of Edinburgh to the lodgings of Alexander Burnet, the archbishop of St. Andrews, where it was ignited and later exploded.[62] Participation in the pope burning was not exclusive to Edinburgh's student population, and it was reported afterwards that, as the pope burned, "*every old Wife thought her self happy that could get a stroke at it*."[63] Widespread coverage was also given to the role that the city's apprentices played in the riot.[64] Because of this, and the Duke of York's presence in Edinburgh at the time, the response of the authorities to the riot was robust. In contrast to the London pope-burnings over the previous decade, which the students had imitated, the riot resulted in military intervention.[65] The entrance of six-hundred government troops served to

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[57] See Tim Harris, "Party Turns? Or, Whigs and Tories Get off Scott Free," *Albion* 25, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 581–90; and Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis*, 348–68.

[58] *Tryal*, 93.

[59] Roger L'Estrange, *Notes upon Stephen College* (London, 1681), 39.

[60] Cunnington, *Records of the County of Wilts*, 262.

[61] *Tryal*, 17.

[62] *Mercurius Veridicus Communicating the best and truest Intelligence From all parts of England* (London, 7 January 1681).

[63] *The History of the Late Proceedings of the Students of the Colledge at Edenborough* (London, 1681), 2.

[64] N. M., *A Modest Apology for the Students of Edenburgh Burning a Pope December 25, 1680* (London, 1681), 4.

[65] *The Scots Episcopal Innocence: Or, The Juggling of that Party with the late King, his present Majesty, the Church of England, and the Church of Scotland, demonstrated* (London, 1694), 53–57.

inflame tensions, however, and Edinburgh's tradesmen were provoked to "*lay out the Blew Blanket Flag*,' an act of civil defiance, which, in the ominous words of one commentator, seldom occurred "*without Blood-shed*."[66]

For the authorities, the riotous turn that the Edinburgh students' entertainment had taken was not accidental. In order to illustrate this point, the students' critics highlighted their decision to adopt a *blue ribbon* with the slogan "No Pope," "No Priest," and "No Bishop,"[67] which, it was held, comprised "a new way of Tumultuating … in pursuance of … Seditious and Tumultuous Designs."[68] The students were quick to defend themselves from such accusations, and while they conceded that "we never wore such distinguishing Ribbons at this time of the year; nor ever Ribbons with Motto's before," they put it to their critics that "if other Gentlemen besides our selves (or the Apprentices afterwards) did think fit to wear Ribbons of that colour, what was that to us, who could not hinder them?'[69] That similar blue ribbons were seen in Glasgow could well corroborate the students' claims that such devices were traditional student dress in Scotland. On the other hand, it might suggest that the students, or some of the others who participated in the riot, distributed the devices outside the Scottish capital.[70]

The students' ribbons did not merely catch on in Scotland, of course: the devices were also the immediate inspiration for the "No Popery, No Slavery" ribbon that Stephen Colledge distributed in March 1681 and that became the Whigs' emblem thereafter. Quite how the Whigs became acquainted with the students' ribbon is difficult to ascertain. Nonetheless, it was noted that several Englishmen had been involved in the riot in Edinburgh, and these individuals could well have delivered the ribbons, or details about them, to associates in London.[71] It is even likelier, however, that widespread coverage of the students' actions in the London press inspired the Whigs' decision to imitate the device. The first known reference to the riots in England appeared in the sole issue of the London newssheet *Mercurius Veridicus* on 7 January 1681, in which the editor offered a detailed narrative of events.[72] Soon afterwards, the Whig press made a concerted effort to defend the students from accusations of rebellion, perhaps as a vicarious defense of their own pope burnings in London (of which Stephen Colledge had been an architect).[73] The Whig publisher Richard Janeway, for instance, published three letters from a witness of the events in Edinburgh "to prevent false reports," as well as *A Modest Apology for the Students of Edenburgh Burning a Pope December 25, 1680*, and these included references

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[66] *The Late Proceedings of the Students* (London, 1681), 2.

[67] John Lauder, *Historical Observes of Memorable Occurrents in Church and State: From October 1680 to April 1686* (Edinburgh, 1857), 19.

[68] *A Proclamation Concerning the Students in the Colledge of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1681).

[69] *A Modest Apology*, 15.

[70] James Coutts, *A History of the University of Glasgow from its Foundation in 1451 to 1909* (Glasgow, 1909), 159; *A Modest Apology*, 15.

[71] *The Late Proceedings of the Students*, 4. See also Tim Harris, "The British Dimension, Religion, and the Shaping of Political Identities during the Reign of Charles II," in *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c. 1650–c.1850*, ed. Tony Claydon and Ian McBride (Cambridge, 1998), 131–56, at 139.

[72] *Mercurius Veridicus* (London), 7 January 1681.

[73] For an account of the London pope-burnings, see Sheila Williams, "The Pope-Burning Processions of 1679, 1680 and 1681," *Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 21, no. 1/2 (January–June 1958): 104–18.

to the students' blue ribbons.[74] Elsewhere, the Whigs' *True Protestant Mercury* described how "many of that City wore a *Blew Ribbon*, and in their Hats a *Guilded Laurel* with this Inscription: *No Pope, no Papist*, &c."[75] The fallout from the events in Edinburgh on Christmas Day 1680 continued to be reported in the Whig press well into the spring of 1681.[76]

References to the riotous events in Scotland made it into a rather more famous product of the Exclusion Crisis: Stephen Colledge's March 1681 engraving entitled *A Prospect of a Popish Successor*. The famous print includes as its centerpiece a monstrous papist figure who is setting light to a building labeled the "Provost's House," an allusion to a fire that consumed the house of the convenor of Edinburgh's council on 11 January 1681. The English and Scottish authorities were both quick to conclude that the fire had been lit in retaliation against the Provost's harsh punishment of the pope-burning students.[77] There were several references to the fire in English news publications in early 1681, and these almost certainly encouraged Colledge to include the episode in his print. Indeed, Colledge's print follows the Whig's alternative interpretation of the arson as a "false flag" with which the students were to be further incriminated.[78] That Colledge was well aware of the events in Scotland would reinforce the contention that he was involved in the production of the ribbon, and perhaps even its design.[79] Moreover, the interest that he and other Whigs showed in events that were unfolding some four hundred miles away, combined with the influence that their own pope burning ceremonies had had on the actions of the Edinburgh students, attests to the acute "awareness" in England, Ireland, and Scotland "of what was going on in Charles II's other kingdoms" after 1660.[80]

The entanglement of the Whigs and their blue ribbon with the riotous actions of Edinburgh's students before and after Christmas 1680 offered something of an open goal for the Whigs' opponents. Indeed, it had been memories of the events in Edinburgh that led to the opinion that Stephen Colledge's true intention in distributing his ribbon at Oxford was to start a rebellion. There is evidence to suggest, however, that the Whigs' adoption of the students' blue ribbon carried other, much more powerful connotations, and that these made it even easier for the Tories to castigate them. Despite the students' appeals to collegiate tradition, some observers recognized that the ribbon was redolent, and perhaps even a reproduction, of that which the Scottish Covenanter movement had worn since the Bishops' Wars of 1639–40.[81] Indeed, the students were themselves accused of having "enter[ed] into *Bonds* and *Covenants*" with each other in December 1680, for which the ribbons had acted as "the

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[74] *The Late Proceedings of the Students*; and *Scotland against Popery, Or Christs Day against Antichrist; Or An account of the manner of the burning of the Popes Effigies upon Christmas Day Last 1680. in the City of Edinburgh, Sent in two Letters from two several Friends to a Citizen of London* (London, 1681).

[75] *The True Protestant Mercury Or, Occurrences Forein and Domestick* (London, 11–15 January 1681).

[76] See *Protestant (Domestick) Intelligence: Or News Both from City & Country* (London, 18 March 1681).

[77] *The Late Proceedings of the Students*, 4–5.

[78] *Smith's, Protestant Intelligence: Domestick & Foreign* (London, 4–8 February 1681).

[79] [Stephen Colledge], *A Prospect of a Popish Successor* (1680). For an informative discussion of this work and its authorship, see Pierce, "The Devil's Bloodhound," 237–54.

[80] Harris, "The British Dimension," 131–56, at 156.

[81] Edward M. Furgol, *A Regimental History of the Covenanting Armies, 1639–1651* (Edinburgh, 1990), 11.

Trumpet, as well as Colour of [their] Rebellion."[82] Elsewhere, the students' use of ribbons was exploited as evidence of their desires to "studiously imitate" the "proceedings" of those who "in the last age … br[ought] on all their dreadful Rebellion … from such beginnings."[83] Much later, one Scottish antiquarian was led to a more explicit interpretation of the students' actions as a "revival" of what he called "the blue ribbon of the covenant."[84] The blue ribbon that the Glaswegian students adopted at the same time was likewise interpreted as "the blue ribbon of the Covenant."[85] Such claims do not appear to have been anachronistic. One observer of the riotous events in Edinburgh, Sir John Lauder, Lord Fountainhall, was thus provoked to remark that "this minds me of the old quarrel of Cavaleer and Round head."[86] That, as Fountainhall observed, an opposing red ribbon also appeared in Edinburgh at the time of the riots, thus echoing the adoption of a similar device by the armies of Charles I during the Bishops' Wars, reinforces the idea that the street politics that played out after the pope burning of December 1680 was threaded through with memories of earlier conflict.[87]

In England, memories of the invasion of the Scottish Covenanters in 1640 and their later support for the Parliamentarian movement meant that the color blue retained similar mnemonic significance after 1660. It was for this reason that, in 1658 (and again when it was republished in 1678), the reader of *The Coat of Armes of Sir John Presbyter* was expected to understand the connotations of the "three Jewes Heads proper, with as many Blue Caps on them" that were depicted therein.[88] Likewise, one author's derisive association of English Dissenters with their "*Blue* Brethren of the *Tweed*" in 1673 would have been obvious to the reader.[89] In 1674, the famous "Geneva Ballad" made this historic link between the Dissenters and the Scottish covenanters even more transparent. To be sung "To the Tune of [16]48', the ballad alluded to the Scottish origins of English bloodshed, or the "Foul Errors" of "The *Brownists* and the *Ranters* Crew" having been "Oaded in a Northern Blue."[90] From 1660 onwards, blue became associated with Presbyterianism and Protestant Dissent in general. The association is evident in Samuel Butler's famous mock epic *Hudibras*, which appears to have popularized the phrase "*Presbyterian* true blew."[91] References to "true blue" and "Coventrey-blue" (referring to the city that was famous for its blue dyes, ribbon-wearing industry, and dissent) continued throughout the 1660s and 1670s.[92]

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[82] *A Modest Apology*, 4.

[83] *Proclamation Concerning the Students in … Edinburgh*.

[84] Malcolm Laing, *The History of Scotland, From the Union of the Crowns on the Accession of James VI. to the Throne of England, to the Union of the Kingdoms in the Reign of Queen Anne*, 4 vols. (London, 1819), 4:117.

[85] James Coutts, *A History of the University of Glasgow from its Foundation in 1451 to 1909* (Glasgow, 1909), 159.

[86] Lauder, *Historical Observes*, 19.

[87] John Hill Burton, *The History of Scotland from Agricola's Invasion to the Extinction of the last Jacobite Insurrection*, 8 vols. (Edinburgh, 1873), 6:248n.

[88] *The Coat of Armes of Sir John Presbyter* (1658), 1.

[89] [Richard Leigh], *The Transproser Rehears'd: Or The Fifth Act of Mr. Bayes's Play* (Oxford, 1673), 18.

[90] *The Geneva Ballad* (London, 1674).

[91] [Samuel Butler], *Hudibras. The First Part* (London, 1663), 8.

[92] See, for instance, *The Phanatick Anatomized* (London, 1672).

When the Whigs wore the blue ribbon in March 1681, then, these associations between the adoption of a blue ribbon and the Covenanter movement were well established on both sides of the border. It was for this reason that, in 1681, the Whig leader, the Earl of Shaftesbury, was depicted as recognizable from his ribbon of "th'old Northern Blew."[93] This reference accompanied a slew of comparisons between the Whigs and the Covenanters from 1681 onwards. The pamphlet *The Two Associations*, for instance, went as far as printing the Whigs' "Association" for the defense of Protestantism next to the 1643 Solemn League and Covenant.[94] More often, it seems, the blue ribbon's Covenanter connotations made possible broader associations between the Whigs and Presbyterianism. Indeed, following their adoption of the blue ribbon in March 1681, references to the Whigs as the "Protestant true blue" exploded.[95] That it was the Whigs' adoption of the blue ribbon in particular that triggered the reemergence of an association of "true blue" with Protestant Dissent is evident in the words of Sir Roger L'Estrange, who lamented in September 1681 how Presbyterianism was "worn like *Colleges Ribbon*, (of *No Popery, No Slavery*) in the Caps of all the *Phanatiques* of what sort soever."[96] For L'Estrange and other Tories, the Whigs' adoption of a symbol of Presbyterianism served aptly to expose their stubborn antagonism to the Church of England that, for reasons of political expedience (or so it was perceived), had remained concealed.

The ease with which the Whigs' blue ribbon could be used to pin claims of Covenanter and Presbyterian sympathies onto the Whigs has other implications for our knowledge of one of the most famous features of the Exclusion Crisis. It is entirely plausible that the huge uptake of the slur "Whig" to describe those who supported the exclusion of the Duke of York was a direct result of their imitation of the Edinburgh students' blue ribbon. The term had connoted Scottish Covenanters since the 1640s and endured in relation to Scottish Presbyterianism after 1660.[97] The Scottish students, for instance, had felt the need to distance themselves from the "*the Whig-Ministers or Citizens*" of Edinburgh who were suspected of pulling the strings of the Christmas riots.[98] In fact, it is not impossible that the origins of the opposing slur of "Tory" derived from press coverage of the same events. While the term tends to be associated with Irish outlaws, one newssheet emphasized the role of the Duke of York's guards—or "*Tories*" as it referred to them—in the suppression of the students in Edinburgh at Christmas 1680.[99]

For those who could recall the Covenanters' blue ribbon, the Whigs' decision to wear a similar device would have been a source of considerable alarm. For most observers in England, however, the Whigs' blue ribbons would have evoked memories of rebellion that had occurred rather closer to home. In 1682, one anti-Whig pamphlet warned that "the distinguishing Streamers of *Blew* and *Green* Ribband at

[93] *Sejanus: Or the Popular Favourite, Now in his Solitude, and Sufferings* (London, 1681), 3.

[94] See *The Two Associations* (London, 1681).

[95] For instance, the authors of *The Loyal Feast, Design'd to be kept in Haberdashers-Hall, on Friday the 21st. of April 1682* (London, 1682) listed themselves as "*His Majesties most Loyal True Blue Protestant Subjects*."

[96] *Observator in Dialogue*, 21 September 1681. See also ibid., 1 September 1684.

[97] Robert Willman, "The Origins of 'Whig' and 'Tory' in English Political Language," *Historical Journal* 17, no. 2 (June 1974): 247–64, at 252.

[98] *A Modest Apology*, 13.

[99] *True Protestant Mercury: Or; Occurrences Forein and Domestick*, 1–5 February 1681.

present take mightily, though the bloody colours of a Parliament Army," of which the ribbons were representative, "would not be presently so pleasant a spectacle."[100] As this remark suggests, for those who had lived through the English Revolution, the significance of ribbons as "field signs,' or means of distinguishing between friend and foe in the height of battle, would have been obvious. When Oliver Heywood witnessed the use of red and violet ribbons in Nottinghamshire he likewise commented that "this is the distinction they make instead of Cavalier and Roundhead," concluding that "thus men begin to commence war."[101] Roger North's 1740 work *Examen* includes a number of similar insinuations about the militant nature of the Whigs' ribbon. In one section of the work, he refers to those who wore the ribbons as a "general Rendezvous," a "Retinue," and "at least a Troop of Horse, well arm'd," while, in another, the ribbons were listed along with the "Armour, Weapons, [and] long Trains of Attendants" that the Whigs had taken to Oxford.[102] This martial significance of the ribbon appears to have informed accusations of treasonous intent against Stephen Colledge himself. When he was tried in August 1681, therefore, the joiner was described as having distributed his blue ribbon "as if open War were already Declared."[103] Colledge's adoption of the ribbon was also associated with his alleged boast that "he should be in a little time a Collonel."[104]

While ribbons began to be used as "field signs" during the Thirty Years' War, their significance as means of distinguishing friend from foe on the battlefield was fixed—in the minds of British men and women at least—amid the domestic conflicts of the 1630s, 1640s, and 1650s.[105] When war befell England in 1642, ribbons became the field signs of the warring factions. On the one hand, Royalists wore red—a color that as we have seen, had been worn by Charles I's armies during the Bishops' Wars—whereas Parliament adopted distinguishing "tawny orange" sashes, scarves, and ribbons to reflect the heraldic colors of their commander, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex.[106] It was even claimed in 1644 that the inhabitants of Hertfordshire wore the orange scarves and ribbons in order to rob local people under the pretense of membership of Colonel Dalbier's Parliamentarian regiment.[107]

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[100] *The Parallel: Or, The New Specious Association an Old Rebellious Covenant* (London, 1682), 7–8.
[101] *Oliver Heywood: His Diaries*, 2:285.
[102] North, *Examen*, 102, 107, 302.
[103] *The Tryal*, 16.
[104] Ibid., 17.
[105] For the first references to ribbon wearing in England in a military context, see *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic: James I, 1623–25*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London, 1859), 125, 160, 277.
[106] For one of the earliest references to these colors, see Aaron Graham, "Finance, Localism, and Military Representation in the Army of the Earl of Essex (June–December 1642)," *Historical Journal* 52, no. 4 (December 2009): 879–98, at 894. For other references, see Henry Bold, *Poems Lyrique, Macaronique, Heroique, &c.* (London, 1664), 160; Samuel R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War, 1642–1649*, 4 vols. (London, 1901), 1:199; C. H. Firth, *Cromwell's Army: A History of the English Soldier during the Civil Wars, the Commonwealth and the Protectorate, Being the Ford Lectures delivered in the University of Oxford in 1900–1* (London, 1902), 101; Alan R. Young, ed., *The English Emblem Tradition: 3 Emblematic Flag Devices of the English Civil Wars, 1642–1660* (Toronto, 1995), xxiv; Philip J. Haythornthwaite, *The English Civil War, 1642–1651, An Illustrated Military History* (London, 2000), 117; Barbara Donagan, *War in England, 1642–1649* (Oxford, 2010), 117–18.
[107] *Mercurius Britanicus*, 26 February–6 March 1644.

These distinguishing colors were not confined to the battlefield. In late 1642, it was reported that the inhabitants of Bristol and Coventry wore colored ribbons in order to demonstrate their sympathies with the two armies.[108] Likewise, in October 1642, it was recorded that "because the Earl of *Essex* gave a deep yellow for his colours, every Citizens Dame, to the Draggle-tail of her Kitchin, had got up that *colour* of the *cause*."[109] In the same month, the Venetian ambassador described how, "following the example of his Majesty's soldiers', Londoners wore "a rose coloured band on their hats, as a sign that they are his faithful servants."[110] The *Weekly Intelligence* reported likewise that "there are divers that weare upon their hats a tauny colour'd Ribbon, w[hi]ch is the colour his Majesties Souldiers weare." Confusingly, "tauny" referred in this instance to *red* rather than orange, since, as the newssheet went on the report, one "Moll Cut-purse" had worn "Tauney and Orange colored Ribins saying she would were [*sic*] both, for she was for King and Parliament."[111] In December 1642, the Common Council of London took the step of banning ribbons, "whereby divisions[,] dissentions[,] or disturbance … may happen to arise or grow within this Cittye."[112] In response to the adoption of orange and red ribbons, those calling for peace in London started to wear white ribbons in their hats in August 1643, a move that received angry reactions from the supporters of Parliament who saw white as a symbol of royalism.[113] The clubmen who rose to preserve their communities from the ravages of war in 1643 were also described as wearing white ribbons.[114]

These cases represent the extent to which the Civil Wars transformed ribbons from a field sign of use on the battlefield to a means of mobilizing political support for the Parliamentarian and Royalist armies in urban areas. Indeed, towards the end of the First Civil War, regimental ribbons became euphemistic of divisions between Parliamentarians over the *jus post bellum*. From April 1645 onwards, for instance, the Earl of Essex's tawny orange ribbon took on the specific meaning of opposition to the new Parliamentarian commander Thomas, Lord Fairfax, whose supporters wore the blue ribbon of his regiment. It was for this reason that, in 1647, Colonel General Sydenham Poyntz was reported to have traded in his "true blue" ribbon

[108] H. E. Nott, ed., *The Deposition Books of Bristol*, vol. 1, *1643–1647* (Bristol, 1935), 12; Ann Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire, 1620–1660* (Cambridge, 1987), 147.

[109] William Sanderson, *A Compleat History of the Life and Raigne of King Charles from His Cradle to his Grave* (London, 1658), 568.

[110] Allen B. Hinds, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, 1642–1643*, 38 vols. (London, 1925), 26:181.

[111] *Weekly Intelligence from Severall parts of this Kingdome, and other places, from the 10 of Octob. To the 18* (London, 1642), 10.

[112] Journal of Common Council 40, MS. COL/CC/01/01/041, fol. 44r, London Metropolitan Archives. With grateful thanks to Jordan Downs for this reference.

[113] Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War*, i, 186. See also Jasper A. R. Abbott, "Robert Abbott, City Money Scrivener, and his Account Book, 1646–1652," *The Guildhall Miscellany* 7 ([London], August 1956): 31–39, at 33; *Military Memoir of Colonel John Birch, Sometime Governor of Hereford in the Civil War between Charles I, and the Parliament*, ed. John Webb (London, 1873), 142, 142n; and John Rushworth, *Historical Collections, The Fourth and Last Part*, 2 vols. (London, 1701), 2:1097; Thomas Birch, ed., *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, December 1654–August 1655*, 7 vols. (London, 1742), 3:35.

[114] [W. Cobbett], *The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803*, 36 vols. (London, 1808), 3:381.

for a "bundle of orange ribbon in his hat."[115] It was also at this moment that the famous association of the Levellers and the *green* ribbons of Thomas Rainsborough's regiment (and indeed his coat of arms) emerged.[116] In September 1648, for instance, the ten thousand women who carried a petition of grievances to the House of Commons were described as having "seagreen ribbons pinned to their breasts."[117] Later, it was recorded that everyone who attended the funeral of the Leveller Captain Lockyer "wore ribbons of the Leveller colour, seagreen, and also of black," and the Leveller mutineers of May 1649 are also held to have had "seagreen ribbons in their hats."[118] The significance of these colors led to John Lilburne's remark that he would have stood a better chance presenting the "large" Leveller petition of 1647 to Parliament if he had worn Fairfax's blue ribbon.[119] The 1649 pamphlet *Sea-Green & Blue, See which Speaks True* reflects the extent to which these colors had become emblematic of Parliamentarian factionalism.[120]

These political uses of ribbons in the 1640s suggest a material dimension to the penetrative political mobilization with which historians have identified the Civil War era.[121] It is striking, however, that, notwithstanding the incorporation of such devices into army and county militia uniforms, there are few references to ribbons in a civilian context in the 1660s and early 1670s.[122] It is conceivable that this sudden disappearance corresponded with the new regime's efforts to reduce the level of political participation to which the 1640s had been conducive,[123] as well as their efforts to create an atmosphere in which the "names and termes of distinction" of the violent recent past were forgotten.[124] This disappearance of ribbons from 1660 onwards meant that their reappearance in a *political* context from March 1681 onwards stirred memories of the Civil Wars. It was for this reason that the blue ribbon enabled the Tories not only to accuse the Whigs of rebellious intent, but also to tar them with the brush of neo-Parliamentarian sympathies. In 1682, for instance, one hostile pamphlet was in a position to refer to the "Old *Forty one* [i.e., 1641] Fanatick Blew" of the Whigs.[125] Elsewhere, the identification of the Whigs with "true blue" allowed one Tory to revel in the metaphor of how, like a fast dye, their opponents would not "flinch an ace" from their "Principles"

[115] C. H. Firth, ed., *The Clarke Papers*, 5 vols. (London, 1891), 1:121n.

[116] Ian Gentles, "Political Funerals during the English Revolution," *London and the Civil War*, ed. S. Porter (Basingstoke, 1996), 205–24, at 217.

[117] Henry Noel Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution* (Stanford, 1961), 317.

[118] Ibid., 507, 515.

[119] See George Masterson, *A Declaration Of some Proceedings of Lt. Col. John Lilburn, And his Associates* (London, [1647]), 14. See also John Lilburne, *An Impeachment of High Treason against Oliver Cromwell, and his Son in Law Henry Ireton Esquires, late Members of the late forcibly dissolved House of Commons* (London, 1649), 41.

[120] *Sea-Green & Blue, See which Speaks True* (1649). The subtitle for this pamphlet is "*Or Reason contending with Treason. In Discussing the late unhappy difference in the Army, which now men dream is well composed*."

[121] Braddick, *God's Fury*.

[122] See Cecil C. P. Lawson, *A History of the Uniforms of the British Army*, 3 vols. (London, 1940), 1:20; Christopher L. Scott, *The Maligned Militia: The West Country Militia of the Monmouth Rebellion, 1685* (London, 2016), 171.

[123] For a discussion of this, see Andy Wood, *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 2002), 172–74.

[124] An Act of Free and Generall Pardon Indempnity and Oblivion, 1660, 12 Car. 2, c. 11, sec. xxiv.

[125] [Thomas D'Urfey], *Butler's Ghost: Or, Hudibras* (London, 1682), 51.

of the "*Good Old Cause*."[126] The Whigs' earlier use of a device similar to the Levellers' green ribbon led to comparable attacks from the Tories. In 1682, for instance, ribbons were burned with a host of other Parliamentarian regalia (including the Solemn League and Covenant), while in 1683, "*Green Ribbond* Club" members were described as having "drapt out of *Oliver's* [i.e., Oliver Cromwell's] *Tap*."[127]

RIBBONS AND THE REVOLUTION RELIVED?

The Whigs' blue ribbon evoked memories of the devices Covenanters and Parliamentarians had worn in the 1640s. This enabled the Tories to claim that their enemies were the conscious inheritors of a tradition that sought to overthrow the Stuarts and the Church of England. Since Jonathan Scott's seminal work on the Restoration, historians have acknowledged the power of such appeals to the painful past.[128] Tim Harris, for instance, considers it to be one of the principal means through which the Tories were able to eviscerate the Whigs between 1681 and 1685 and thus dispel their "threat" to church and state.[129] Meanwhile, Matthew Neufeld has likewise proposed that "public memory" of the Civil Wars after 1660 served as "historical justification for the proscription of the puritan impulse from an exclusively Anglican polity".[130] When historians have considered alternative memories of the English Revolution, these are often located after the revolution of 1688–89 when, to paraphrase Blair Worden, the radical Whigs were able to remarket the republican cause of the 1640s and 1650s.[131]

In line with these influential studies, those who have explored the use of colors have been tentative about inferring radical political opinion from their adoption. Tim Harris, for instance, has been hesitant to interpret the decision of rioters to adopt makeshift green banners from their aprons in 1668 and 1675 as evidence of Leveller sympathies despite his view that oppositional politics after 1660 was "the same type of socio-political phenomenon" as the Levellers of the 1640s.[132] This is because, as Harris puts it, "London crowds frequently divided up into regiments and marched behind different coloured banners or flags—the model here being the London trained bands, not the Levellers."[133] While Harris is right to urge caution about the rioters' green banners, the case of ribbon use from the 1670s onwards is

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[126] *The Head of the Nile: Or the Turnings and Windings of the Factious Since Sixty, in a Dialogue between Whigg and Barnaby* (London, 1681), 35.

[127] Harris, *London Crowds*, 170; [*An Exc*]*ellent New Song: Or,* [*The*] *Loyal Tory's Delight* (London, 1683).

[128] Jonathan Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis, 1677–1683* (Cambridge, 1991), 27–49.

[129] See, for instance, Tim Harris, *Restoration: Charles II and His Kingdoms* (London, 2005), 238–50.

[130] Matthew Neufeld, *The Civil Wars after 1660: Public Remembering in Late Stuart England* (Woodbridge, 2013), 2.

[131] Blair Worden, *Roundhead Reputations: The English Civil Wars and the Passions of Posterity* (London, 2001), 11. See also Goldie, *Roger Morrice*, 161.

[132] For Harris's views on the green banners, see his *London Crowds*, 198; and idem, "The Leveller Legacy: From the Restoration to the Exclusion Crisis," in *The Putney Debates of 1647: The Army, the Levellers and the English State*, ed. Michael Mendle (Cambridge, 2001), 219–40, at 219–20, 223–27. For the quote, see ibid., 223. See also William Lamont's criticism of Harris's interpretation of the banners in his "Angels or Green Aprons? 'Popular Toryism' in late 17th Century England," *History Workshop*, no. 27 (Spring 1989): 188–93.

[133] Ibid., 226.

much less clear cut. Unlike banners, the use of ribbons in the context of urban politics carried connotations that were a cause of direct comparison with the events of the 1640s and 1650s. The idea that the adopters of the Whigs' blue ribbon might be oblivious of this mnemonic significance of the ribbons is thus doubtful. It is probable, in fact, that all of the meanings with which the blue ribbons were imbued by the Tories were acknowledged by at least some of the Whigs as well.

Indeed, in contrast to the case of Harris's rioters, there is evidence to suggest that the adopters of the blue ribbon were well aware of the connotations that otherwise provided ammunition to the Tories. Stephen Colledge, for instance, the man who had been responsible for distributing the ribbons at the Oxford Parliament, acknowledged the association between the color blue and the Covenant on a number of occasions. In the winter months of 1680–81 and at the time of the Edinburgh riots, for instance, Colledge produced a mock correspondence between Sir Roger L'Estrange and his publisher Henry Brome. Both letters made light of L'Estrange's recent escape from hostile London to Edinburgh, referring to the "Blew-cap[s]" and "Blue Bonnet[s]" whom the Tory was often disposed to attack, but to whom he now fled for safety. In the mock letter from Scotland, Colledge also had L'Estrange confessing to Brome that "I am … learning to speak thorough the Nose, and am getting by Heart the *Scotch-Covenant*."[134] In the second letter, from Brome to "his (and his Wives) never Failing Friend Roger Le Strange" who was then in the United Provinces, Colledge made light of how L'Estrange was "forc't to screen himself under *Jockeys Blue Bonnet* of the *Presbyterian Cut* under the very Nose of his great Master for Shelter."[135] That the Whigs' appear to have appropriated the "true blue Protestant" slur as a badge of honor from 1681 onwards might even suggest that the ribbon became a signifier of a broader positive identification with Presbyterianism. One poem from 1682, for instance, which was addressed "to the Tantivities" (another name for the Tories), finished "*We're the honest and true loyal Blew.*"[136] Indeed, such identification with Presbyterianism might have motivated the Whigs' adoption of the blue ribbon of the Edinburgh students in the first place.

That the Whigs adopted the blue ribbon out of Covenanter sympathies would chime with recent studies that have shown how the Whigs' 1680 Bill of Association, which would bind its subscribers to an armed defense of English Protestantism in the event of a Roman Catholic invasion or rebellion, drew its inspiration from the Solemn League and Covenant.[137] Indeed, when one considers the sub-committee and lawyers who were responsible for drafting and finalizing the bill in November 1680, one finds the names of several men who had participated on the Parliamentarian side in the Civil Wars or supported the Commonwealth: namely, Sir Arthur Annesley (Earl of Anglesey), Anthony Ashley Cooper (Early of Shaftesbury), Sir

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[134] [Stephen Colledge], *A Letter out of Scotland from Mr. R. L. S. To His Friend, H. B. in London* (1681), 3.

[135] [Stephen Colledge], *A True Copy of a Letter (intercepted) going for Holland, Directed Thus For his (and his Wives) never Failing Friend Roger Le Strange* (London, 1681), 1.

[136] *New News from Bedlam: Or More Work for Towzer, and his Brother Ravenscroft* (London, 1682), 47. For other positive references to "True Blue Protestants," see *The Coat of Arms of N[athaniel T[hompson] J[ohn] F[arwell] & R[oger] L['Estrange] An Answer to Thomson's Ballad call'd The Loyal Feast* (Dublin, [1682]).

[137] Edward Vallance, *Revolutionary England and the National Covenant: State Oaths, Protestantism and the Political Nation, 1553–1682* (Woodbridge, 2005), 196.

John Maynard, John Robartes (Earl of Radnor), and Hugh Wyndham.[138] Moreover, despite the Tories' claims that the Whigs chose the label "Association" in order to divert would-be supporters from their true designs to forge a covenant, Edward Vallance has pointed out that "virtually all the oaths and covenants imposed by the Long Parliament between May 1641 and 1643 were also described as Associations."[139] The distinctions between the Whigs' Association and the Covenant of 1643 are thus more blurred than some Whigs might have liked to admit.

In addition to the Association movement of the 1680s, the Whigs' identification with the Solemn League and Covenant found other outlets. In 1681, the Whig publisher Richard Janeway produced a tract in which the 1643 Covenant was described as "good" since it swore "to preserve his Majesty, and to oppose Idolatry," while those who refused to abjure it were justified as "opposing sins, and preserving his Majesty."[140] Indeed, Colledge—who has been identified with Presbyterianism—himself appears to have believed that the Covenant constituted an unbreakable contract.[141] In his parodic letter from Henry Brome to Sir Roger L'Estrange, Colledge posted a list of queries, one of which involved an explicit criticism of Charles II for renouncing the Solemn League and Covenant to which he had adhered in 1650 in order to win the support of Scottish Presbyterians. Colledge was thus led to ask "whether *Scotch Oaths*" were like "*Breda promises*[,] liberty of Conscience, *Mock marriages, War with* France, *saving* Flanders[,]" and thus made "in *Jest*."[142] Colledge's views were shared in Scotland, where two women were condemned in early 1681 for saying Charles II "*had broken His Coronation Oath*," while, elsewhere, a Presbyterian prisoner agreed at about the same time that "*Charles* II. ought not to be own'd as King, because he had broken the Covenant on which he took the Crown."[143]

The adoption of the blue ribbon could point, then, to an identification of the Whigs with the Covenanter movements of which it was symbolic. Whether, as some Tories claimed, the Whigs were also drawing upon Parliamentarian sympathies is more difficult to ascertain. It does seem significant, however, that, as in the case of 1640s Parliamentarianism, the opposition movements of the 1670s and 1680s allotted to wear green and blue ribbons rather than red or white ones, colors that had signified adherence to Charles I. Moreover, that the Tories appear to have imitated Charles I's supporters in their choices of red ribbons suggests that conscious self-identification with the factions of the 1640s was not unknown. In the 1681 ballad "The Loyal London Prentice," the narrator explains that "I'm a True Born Cavaleir [*sic*], And here my Colours have Display'd" and goes on to elucidate that "I wear this Ribbond in my Hatt,/For all the Whiggs to wonder a" Considering the name of the ballad "The Royal Rose" and the commonness of the red ribbon as a marker of

[138] See Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Eleventh Report, Appendix, Part II. The Manuscripts of the House of Lords 1678–88* (London, 1887), 211.

[139] Edward Vallance, "Loyal or Rebellious? Protestant Associations in England 1584–1696," *Seventeenth Century* 17, no. 1 (2002): 1–23, at 10.

[140] *A Caution to all true English Protestants, Concerning the Late Popish Plot, by way of Conference, between an Old Queen-Elizabeth-Protestant, and his Countrey-Neighbour* (London, 1681), 7.

[141] Gary S. De Krey, "College [Colledge], Stephen (c.1635–1681)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, 61 vols. (Oxford, 2004), 12:616.

[142] [Colledge], *A True Copy*, 2.

[143] *Smith's, Protestant Intelligence: Domestick & Foreign*, 1 February 1681; [Ridpath], *The Scots Episcopal Innocence*, 55.

Toryism, we can assume that it was a "Ribbond" of that color that the narrator of "The Loyal London Prentice" wore to show that he was "a True Born Cavaleir." If the adoption of the red ribbon reflected identification with Civil War Royalists, it is conceivable that some Whigs saw in the blue ribbon a means of identification with the Royalists' Parliamentarian counterparts. That a number of those who witnessed the emergence of blue ribbons in 1681 assumed that they had been adopted in opposition to existing red ribbons only serves to reinforce this supposition.

When one considers some of the other colored ribbons that opposition groups wore in the 1670s and 1680s, the idea that the blue ribbon was adopted out of sympathies with Civil War Parliamentarians appears much less farfetched. Historians have tended to assume, for instance, that the green ribbon of the King's Head Club was a nod to the Leveller movement of the late 1640s.[144] In the context of the support of both movements for the dissolution of Parliament (in 1647 and 1676), and the presence of notable Civil War radicals and their descendants among the King's Head Club's membership, this does not seem to be an unreasonable assumption.[145] Moreover, that the "Clubbers" appear to have made a conscious effort to replace the green ribbon with a blue one in March 1681 could reflect a level of chromatic discernment that echoed, and perhaps even imitated, that of the 1640s. It is conceivable, in fact, that the Whigs' adoption of a blue ribbon in 1681 reflects a broader effort to create some distance between the Whigs and those who wore the green ribbons in the 1670s, much like the Levellers had done in relation to Fairfax and his supporters over three decades earlier—albeit in reverse.

While the appropriation of the Levellers' green ribbons is one famous example of identification with Civil War Parliamentarianism, there is evidence to suggest similar actions elsewhere, but with a different Parliamentarian color. On 11 May 1683, it was reported that the inhabitants of Taunton wore orange ribbons to commemorate the anniversary of the end of the long Royalist siege of Taunton in 1645.[146] Taunton had well-known Parliamentarian sympathies and the 11 May was widely condemned as means of transmitting memories of the "Good Old Cause" to future generations.[147] It is thus likely that the decision of the townsfolk to adopt tawny orange ribbons— the old mark of the Parliamentarian armies that had relieved Taunton—was one emblem of this continued identification with the town's deliverance in 1645.

Like blue and green, the orange tawny ribbons of the Earl of Essex's regiment in particular, and the Parliamentarian armies in general, retained their significance after the Restoration. In 1662, for instance, the author of *An Hymenaean Essay* warned Charles II's new bride Catherine of Braganza that Presbyterians continued to "spread / From pulpit, *Essex* [i.e., the Earl of Essex] risen from the dead" and that

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[144] See Brailsford, *The Levellers*, 318n; and Allen, "Political Clubs in Restoration London," 569.

[145] For a list of known Green Ribbon Club members, see Roger Morrice, *Roger Morrice and the Puritan Whigs: The Entring Book of Roger Morrice 1677–1691*, ed. Mark Goldie (Woodbridge, 2007), appendix 50, 535–41.

[146] TNA, SP 29/424/62. For a detailed description of the commemoration, see James Savage, *The History of Taunton, in the County of Somerset* (Taunton, 1822), 422–23. For a more recent take on the commemoration, see Ian Atherton, "Remembering (and Forgetting) Fairfax's Battlefields," in *England's Fortress: New Perspectives on Thomas, 3rd Lord Fairfax*, ed. Andrew Hopper and Philip Major (Farnham, 2014), 95–119.

[147] See TNA, SP 29/290/179.

"though thou to *Essex* wert *unlucky* ever; / And most *unlike*, thou *tender,* and he *brawny*; / Yet they will make thy *Mantle orange-tawny*."[148] Intriguingly, it seems, one ballad from 1681 recalled the manner in which Stephen Colledge himself rode into Oxford in March 1681 wearing "Colours of *Orange* and *Blew*."[149] It is possible that this reference to orange either enabled the balladeer to keep to meter or referred to the color of the embroidered "No Popery, No Slavery" slogan. Otherwise, it could suggest that the Whigs' famous blue ribbon had originally been complemented by an orange one. If so, it would be a considerable coincidence indeed for Colledge to have selected at random the principal colors of Civil War Parliamentarianism (barring the already ditched green ribbon of the King's Head Club) without an acknowledgment of the mnemonic significance of those colors. To be sure, it was not unheard of for former Parliamentarians to wear former colors in this manner. One tantalizing government report from 1684, for instance, records how former Parliamentarian soldiers wore scarves and hatbands—a reference, one assumes, to their regimental colors—at the funeral of a New Model Army colleague.[150] Moreover, in what appears to have been another powerful evocation of the uniform of his Parliamentarian forebears, it was alleged that the MP to whom Colledge had provided some his blue ribbon in March 1681 did "take [it] and tye it upon his Sword."[151]

Identification with Civil War Parliamentarianism was not unknown after 1660. The writings of Stephen Colledge, for instance, were replete with implicit claims that Charles I had suffered for his refusal to safeguard English liberties and that his son was walking a similar path. Indeed, it was one such comparison in his famous ballad "A Ra-ree Show," which was used to prove his treasonable intentions at his trial in August 1681.[152] Colledge's views match those found in countless cases in which men and women justified, expressed profound nostalgia for, or identified with the English Revolution after 1660.[153] The soldiers who wore the Parliamentarian hatbands and scarves at John Masson's funeral in 1684, for instance, were reputed to have said that they "hop[ed] the difference at Court may widen and make way for them to get into the saddle once more."[154] It is conceivable, in fact, that the adoption of colors of the Parliamentarian movement on a wide scale in 1681 speaks of a more general identification with the Parliamentarian movement of the 1640s than has been hitherto acknowledged. Murray Pittock, in his ground-breaking study of Jacobitism and material culture has argued that the Jacobites' "accumulated fund of significant symbols" provided what he describes as "communicating memory without making it public."[155] Considering the extent to which speaking about the revolution put one in hazard of one's life after 1660—a fact of which Stephen Colledge became all too aware when he was tried and executed in August 1681—we can conclude that the blue ribbon, along with the green and orange versions, were likewise "significant

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[148] *An Hymenaean Essay, Or an Epithalamy upon the Royal Match of his most Excellent Majesty Charles the Second with the most Illustrious Katharine, Infanta of Portugal, 1662* (1662), 6.

[149] *The Ignoramus Ballad. To the Tune of, Let Oliver now be Forgotten* (1681).

[150] TNA, SP 29/438/93.

[151] *Tryal*, 32.

[152] L'Estrange, *Notes*, 45.

[153] Edward Legon, "Remembering Revolution: Seditious Memories in England and Wales, 1660–1685" (PhD diss., University College London, 2015).

[154] TNA, SP 29/438/93.

[155] Pittock, *Material Culture and Sedition*, 59.

symbols" that made it possible for the Whigs to communicate their seditious memories of the Civil Wars.

What the Whigs' blue ribbon illustrates, then, is that the Restoration witnessed the formulation of strategies to overcome the constraints that former Royalists placed on expressing memories. Since it was outside the purview of the Sedition Act of 1661, the blue ribbon vocalized what was otherwise silenced. Put differently, the blue ribbon was a manifestation of views that, if not concealed entirely, we have recourse to only when they herniated the "public transcript" of popular royalism. Historians have long acknowledged that the atmosphere of Restoration Britain was thick with reminders of a divided past and that these informed fears of "popery" and "arbitrary government" that endured in the stomachs of British men and women for the remainder of the turbulent century. There can be little doubt, then, that memories of revolution colored the Restoration imagination. While it is often assumed that the color of this imagination was "Blood Red,' we should not overlook the fact that, in the words of William Gough with which this article began, it could also be "True Blew, Flourishing Green", and "Orange Tawny."

CONCLUSION

The evidence here demonstrates the extent to which ribbons of various hues were bound up with meaning amid the turbulent 1680s. For the Whigs, the blue ribbon enabled the conjuring of a sense of "imagined consensus" among those whose political and religious opinions were otherwise diverse. It was almost certainly this binding power that encouraged Stephen Colledge and other leading Whigs to imitate the Scottish rioters of Christmas 1680 and to adopt the blue ribbon in March 1681. For the Tories, the bonds that the blue ribbon created between the Whigs and the Scottish students made possible efficacious claims about the danger that both posed to church and state. These claims were based on the self-evident link (for the Tories at least) between the Whigs' blue ribbon and similar devices with which Presbyterians, the Scottish Covenanter movement, and, taken to its logical conclusion, English Parliamentarians, were associated. Whereas historians have tended to assume that the thread that connected the 1640s and 1680s were of the Tories' making, the evidence that has been considered here might lead us to a different conclusion. In the light of the inescapable connotations of ribbon wearing after 1660, the Whigs' adoption of a blue ribbon could disclose a continued identification with the revolution of the 1630s, 1640s, and 1650s.

These conclusions raise additional questions about politics during the reign of Charles II. To begin with, the evidence implies that a more expansive relationship existed between politics, memory, and appearance in early modern England than has been hitherto charted. One direction that future studies might take, then, is to consider how far individuals adopted certain appearances as an expression of political identities, especially in the aftermath of the revolution when what one wore, and how one wore it, possessed clear confessional implications.[156] Furthermore, the extent to which emerging political movements used clothing and other materials in order to

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[156] Penelope J. Corfield, "Dress for Deference and Dissent: Hats and the Decline of Hat Honour," *Costume* 23 (1989): 64–79, at 10–11.

foster what has been described here as "imagined consensus" might be investigated in greater depth. The speed with which the Whigs' blue ribbon spread around England from March 1681 onwards caused considerable alarm in some quarters and this implies that appearance was able to engender collective identities to an extent that merits further research.

In addition to the relationship between politics and material culture in early modern Britain, these conclusions might also lead us to reassess how far men and women were averse to conflict after the trauma of the Civil Wars. The evidence considered here throws light on what we might describe as a militant atmosphere that infused the Exclusion Crisis. It could be argued, in fact, that the period witnessed the galvanization of a movement (the Whigs) whose adoption of swords, armor, and field signs, not to mention defensive "Associations," disclosed an acceptance that, in order to prepare English and Scottish Protestants for an "inevitable" invasion or rebellion of Roman Catholics, a "military posture" was required. That the final years of Charles II's reign did not descend, like those of his father, into bloodshed does not mean that the Whigs and Tories were pacifists, reeling still from experiences of a conflict that pitched father against son, but perhaps that the critical point at which this military posture might have been put into action was never reached.

Finally, this article also demonstrated how the Civil Wars—rather than being an episode from which contemporaries recoiled in horror—offered an inspirational resource when it came to the political cultural strategies of later generations. This conclusion opens up room for a consideration of how far memories of mobilization in the 1640s and 1650s conferred a distinct character upon post-Restoration politics and the development of political movements. Indeed, it is with memories, and the extent to which the mnemonic landscape of Charles II's reign was more varied than historians have inferred, that the most profitable historical engagement might occur. English men and women, and rather more in parts of Scotland, continued to look back to the 1640s and 1650s in order to inform opinions about the present and hope for the future. Whereas such views were silenced (in print, at least) as the public sphere contracted from 1661 onwards, this was symptomatic of suppression and not, as some historians have inferred, disavowal of the "old cause". When these memories did spill out in the open, it is possible to detect the visible part of a broad spectrum of views about the Civil Wars. These views differed not only in terms of whether the "old cause" was in fact "good", but also in terms of when and whose the "good old cause" was. Moreover, these views were not the preserve of radicals, but also emanated from more "moderate" mouths and pens. In these ways, the legacy of the civil wars and revolution of the 1630s, 1640s, and 1650s has a great deal still to tell us about those who lived in its long shadow.