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## FEAR AND HATRED AS A FEEDER FOR CROWDS IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

This article discusses the phenomenon of urban crowds in London in the years 1640–1643. The author argues that these gatherings were not entirely spontaneous responses to current events, but were inspired by contemporary prints, which spread fear of popish enemies as well as hatred for those who could endanger the English state and Parliament.

**Słowa kluczowe:** angielska wojna domowa, strach, zgromadzenia.

**Key words:** English civil war, fear, urban crowds.

Historians often encounter the phenomenon of crowds, gatherings and mobs appearing at various stages of historic developments and having a major impact on the outcome of contemporary events. Just taking a brief survey of the historical record clearly shows that crowds of spectators and participants influenced nearly every revolution. These gatherings and crowds are often the result of spontaneous reactions of otherwise peaceful citizens, inspired by tragic, dramatic and sometimes glorious events and processes. This paper will first examine two seemingly spontaneous gatherings in early modern European history. Next I will discuss gatherings, which, I shall argue, were not as spontaneous as they seemed and were not merely a simple reaction to particular events. The crowds that gathered outside Parliament in London in 1640–1641 were induced to such a reaction by numerous prints that spread fear and hatred amongst the Londoners. Thus, not

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<sup>1</sup> The first version of this text was presented at a conference devoted to urban crowds in history held in Tours, France, in 2008. A revised version was submitted for publication in French, but has not yet been printed. The version presented here was updated and changed significantly. I would like to thank the reviewers for their comments.

just by the witnessed events, but the intentions of the authors, publishers and their mentors were to maintain the heated, revolutionary-like atmosphere and use it to manipulate the common people of Albion's capital. However, we should begin by examining two cases of truly spontaneous urban gatherings.

On 27 May 1610, a young Polish noble, Jakub Sobieski, found himself amidst a crowd on a street in Paris while on his Grand Tour of Europe. He recalled the development of the situation as follows:

...There was an angry scream among the huge crowd, cursing him... even the oxen had problems to walk amongst the – unseen ever earlier – multitude of people... and thus he was brought to a large market square, which they call *a la Grève*, where all greatest criminals in Paris were executed. The whole square was so filled with people... that they stood in the windows and on the roofs... I was there with the Princes Radziwiłł, and we hired one window and paid for it well. As soon as an opening where he was to be executed was secured, and the huge crowd moved to the sides, he was torn to pieces with horses and thus died. At once several hundred young cavaliers jumped off their horses, reached for their swords and chopped him into pieces *cum summa rabio*<sup>2</sup>. There were many of them that put pieces of his body in handkerchiefs and took them home. One bookbinder, an elderly man, probably over 50 years old who was the landlord of one of my fellow Poles – a certain Piotr Branicki – was extremely enraged against him. This landlord, who looked of sound mind, with a huge beard, brought several pieces of the flesh of the executed with him, and out of enormous fury, out of venom, cooked scrambled eggs with them and ate it, which we witnessed with our own eyes. He even had the nerve to invite us to join this banquet, to help him eat the meal, but instead we spat in his face and left him. As I understand, this man was so filled with ruthless venom at this time, that it made him react as some dog.<sup>3</sup>

It was with the execution of Ravailiac, who had assassinated King Henry IV of France. Sobieski's diary testifies that the crowd was so full of hatred and anger against the condemned that, in the end, it led them to actions that cannot be justified and classified as a normal human behaviour – even by the standards of those days.

Seventy-three years later, Jakub Sobieski's son wrote his wife from Vienna. His letter, one of a collection of the most beautiful letters written in the Polish language in the early modern period, reads:

... And thus the princes ran to me, as did the Bavarian elector, Waldeck, who hugged me around the neck and kissed my face, whilst generals kissed my hands and legs; not to mention ordinary soldiers! Officers and regiments of cavalry and infantry screamed: "*Ach, unzer brawe Kenik!*"... And today in the morning... all of them kissed and hugged me, calling me their *salvador*. Afterwards I visited two churches. All the common folk kissed my hands, legs, my dress; others just touched me shouting: "Oh, let us kiss this brave hand!" They all wanted to shout "*Vivat!*" but it seems that

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<sup>2</sup> With great fury.

<sup>3</sup> J. Sobieski, *Peregrynacja po Europie i droga do Baden*, Wrocław 1991, p. 91.

they were afraid of their officers and the elders. Yet one part of the crowd could not keep silent and they shouted “*Vivat!*” yet with some fear, and – what I could see – was badly received.<sup>4</sup>

Jan Sobieski, who wrote these words, was the king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In 1683, he was asked by Emperor Leopold I to provide military assistance against the Turks laying siege to Vienna. The allied armies under the command of Sobieski scored a brilliant victory against Kara Mustafa and his Ottoman army, and Vienna was saved from the siege. The gathered soldiers and citizenry of Vienna spontaneously thanked their saviour – obviously contrary to the liking of Emperor Leopold I Habsburg and his court. Before Sobieski’s arrival, civilians had little hope that Vienna would be saved from the Turks; and the soldiers were full of appreciation, admiration and love for the great Polish general who led the assault on the enemy. All in all, the reaction was sincere and expressed the emotions of the crowd gathered among the ruins of the liberated city.

While these two cases are distant in time and place, and occurred under completely different circumstances, they were brought together for the sake of this paper due to the descriptions by the narrators of these two accounts of the crowds that gathered without being told what to do, when and how. Outside factors they had no control over had brought change into their lives, attracted them and evoked strong reactions. In the first case, it was hatred, fury and despair; but, in the other, it was relief, thankfulness, rejoicing and hope. In both situations, we witness urban gatherings – spontaneous gatherings that vividly react to events that have taken place. Is this always the case when we speak of and analyse urban gatherings? Do urban crowds always gather in response to special events taking place in a city?

The crowds that gathered for the execution appear to be a normal element of such dramatic episodes in the medieval and early modern period. Regardless of what we today think of the burning of witches, beheadings of criminals or an *auto da fé* for a heretic, curious and ‘bloodthirsty’ watchers were there. These events were an attraction that no one wanted to miss, not even those who might well be the next victim. Crowds reacted in a similar way from Lisbon to Vilnius, from Palermo to Helsinki, and, more than often, they were being given a special spectacle to watch, and the event was used as a ‘safety valve’ for the releasing and calming of other emotions.

In the case of the situation experienced by Jan Sobieski in 1683, the creation of the crowd or urban gathering was based on positive and indeed constructive emotions. Two months of hopelessly defending the city and visions of destruction, death, starvation and Turkish captivity and possibly slavery on their galleys ended with the arrival of the Polish troops from Kraków. The joy of the miserable, hungry, wounded, tired defenders of the city demonstrated by

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<sup>4</sup> J. Sobieski, *Listy do Marysienki*, Warsaw 1962, p. 522.

this spontaneous crowd is perfectly explicable in human terms. We would be surprised if a crowd would not meet, cheer and thank their saviours.

Were all gatherings and urban crowds in those days alike? Were people always brought together by a spectacle, either cruel and bloody or full of joy and hope? Did they always stare, stupefied, with their mouths open and then scream and let the 'spirit' of the mob push them to emotions and, subsequently, actions that were not always positive and direct towards hope of a better future?

The aim of this paper is not to deal with the gatherings mentioned above.<sup>5</sup> It will also not refer to the spontaneous, happy, joyful gatherings celebrating a royal entry into town, someone's marriage, a bishop's ingress into a cathedral or the triumphant celebrations following a military victory. I would like to analyse gatherings that formed in response to long-lasting propaganda, even if the events predicted by this propaganda did not happen. In a way, I want to look at how a crowd can be manipulated into forming and acting using a handful of skilfully employed tools and arguments. These carefully phrased arguments promoted profound feelings of fear and hatred among receivers, provoking reactions that resulted in the formation of street gatherings anxious to prevent events that have not yet happened – and might not happen at all.

In the 1640s, London was the scene of many urban gatherings, including one that helped save deputies of the Long Parliament from the wrath of King Charles I.<sup>6</sup> In other cases, Londoners gathered to supposedly save Parliament, exert pressure on this legislative body, or destroy the monuments of the past such as the Cheapside Cross, which was pulled down in 1643.<sup>7</sup> I would like to argue that these gatherings were not just the result of a particular moment, and that they were not born from spontaneous reactions and counter-reactions. I firmly believe, and I will try to prove, that these particular gatherings in this particular place and at that particular time grew out of precisely aimed, well-prepared and executed propaganda, and that Londoners came out of their houses and took to the streets out of fear and hatred. Of course, not all gatherings were alike and today it is extremely difficult to determine and weigh the most important factor that led people to protest.

Let us move back to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Her ascension to the English throne put forth a question about England's religion: will the country remain Catholic, or will it pursue reformation? Peter I. Kaufman insists that, at the beginning of her reign, Elizabeth ruled over a country that was predominantly

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<sup>5</sup> However, there will be a direct reference to the execution of Ravaillac, the echoes of which reached England in subsequent years.

<sup>6</sup> M. Bennett, *The Civil Wars in Britain & Ireland*, Oxford 1996, p. 106–107.

<sup>7</sup> I have come across one case where it is the king, not the Parliament, who tries to achieve the liberation of Strafford using a small gathering/mob of loyal subjects to exert pressure on the opposition and free his minister. The attempt failed completely when the 'royal' mob was stopped by the London 'mob', *ibidem*, p. 86.

Catholic.<sup>8</sup> According to Patrick Collinson, the situation could not be determined either way, although the English church at the end of Elizabeth's reign was probably more anti-Catholic than Protestant.<sup>9</sup> In other words, the English were afraid of the perspective return of the Church of Rome with all its consequences for the country and each of its inhabitants. At the same time, the development of the Protestant religion did not happen fast enough, and, according to some Englishmen, was not radical enough. This state of affairs developed and shifted in favour of Protestantism during the Queen's reign, and was greatly influenced by the famous propaganda works by John Foxe.<sup>10</sup> Thus, anti-Catholic, anti-Papist feelings were systematically developed and enforced among Elizabeth's subjects. Continuous work in this direction must have left a significant impact on people's minds, beliefs and emotions.

The queen's death in 1603 and the succession of her Scottish 'cousin' promised the perspective for some change in the attitude of the state and the church towards Catholics – at least, such hopes existed. These anticipated prospects or hopes for change faded with the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, where all blame was put on Catholics. All of the stereotypes about Catholics, all of the repeated pronouncements warning about their cruelty, plots and treacheries, appeared true with the discovery of the plot.

The first 40 years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century witnessed constant anti-popish, anti-Catholic and anti-Jesuit propaganda.<sup>11</sup> This activity became more vivid and visible as Charles I and his bishop, William Laud, displayed increasingly obvious signs of sympathising with Arminianism and, indirectly, Catholicism. In analysing the causes of the English Civil War, Conrad Russell names religious discord as one of the main causes of the conflict.<sup>12</sup> Unexpectedly the Catholic sympathies of Charles clashed with long-lasting anti-Catholic propaganda and strengthened negative feelings towards the king. Moreover, the English were afraid of the possibility of royal treason.

As the conflict broke out with the beginning of the Bishops' Wars, Charles had to summon the Short and then the Long Parliament. This moment is important, because the chaos following the dismissal of the Short Parliament, which did not even begin working, the military conflict and finally the calling of the Long Parliament greatly weakened royal power and king's position. The arrests of Strafford and Laud, the failure of state administration, decreased control of civic

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<sup>8</sup> P.I. Kaufman, *Thinking of the Laity in Late Tudor England*, Notre Dame 2004, p. 63.

<sup>9</sup> P. Collinson, *Anti-Papist, anti-Puritan*, in *Not Angels, but Anglicans*, ed. H. Chadwick, Norwich 2000, p. 144.

<sup>10</sup> J. Foxe, *Actes and Monuments...*, London 1563; see also: J.N. King, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*, Cambridge, New York 2006.

<sup>11</sup> A. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, passim; R. Clifton, *Fear of Popery*, [in:] *The Origins of the English Civil War*, ed. Conrad Russell, London 1973; J.-L. Quantin, *Les jésuites et l'érudition anglicane*, "XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle", No 237, 2007, p. 691–711.

<sup>12</sup> C. Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* Oxford, New York 1990.

life, among other upheavals led to chaos and anarchy – at least in London. The situation was ripe for crowds to step in and exert pressure on the various sides of the conflict.

This period was also marked by the rapid growth of printing activity without any state, royal or church control.<sup>13</sup> A substantial part of this printing activity was directed against the monarch and his camp, and utilised by the Parliament to build up its strength. The anti-Catholic propaganda, which demanded the abolishing of the episcopate in England, is extremely important. The events of the moment, strengthened by the war and rebellion in Ireland, met with deeply rooted sentiments that had been held by people and flourished over the decades. The long lasting anti-Catholic propaganda, fear of a possible papist assault on England, the vision of bloodthirsty Jesuits seeking to overthrow the English order had at this point been cemented and, when ignited by the on-going crisis, resulted in an amazingly strong reaction by the common people.

Robert Clifton writes: “Among London newspapers and pamphlets published after 1642 no explanation of the Civil War was more common than the assumption that Catholics and Catholicism were in some way to be found at the heart of it.”<sup>14</sup> Shortly thereafter, he continues: “The Venetian ambassador dryly calculated that by the end of 1643 alone, 60,000 men had been added to Charles’s army... the number of English papists in London grew with a speed no less phenomenal.”

One issue are newspapers, which disseminated continuous information about the movement of the enemy, regardless of who the enemy actually was: Charles, the Jesuits, the Irish or others. The other issue was the long-lasting activities and preparations by England’s enemies to subdue the kingdom, erase the true religion and put the country under the tyranny of the pope. This approach was cultivated by the authors of various pamphlets for well over half a century. It slowly found its way into people’s houses and their worldviews. It would most likely be difficult if we were to try and find a Londoner in 1640 who had not had contact with such propaganda.

Let us refer to a contemporary text:

Such is the most bloody and most blasphemous impudency of these Romish Incendiaries, that when they put on a develish and desperate resolution to murder any Emperor or King... by some Rava-liac, whom they make choice of for the execution... these infernall firebrands kneele all down... and put before the intended traytor a knife folded up in a scarfe, shut up in a little Box, covered with an Agnus Dei; written about with black letters of perfumes... cast or sprinkle some drops of holy

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<sup>13</sup> J. Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers. Propaganda During the English Civil Wars and Interregnum*, Aldershot, Burlington 2004; J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*, Cambridge, New York 2003; D. Cressy, *England on Edge. Crisis and Revolution 1640–1642*, Oxford, New York 2006; C. Gheeraert-Graffeuille, *Satire et diffusion des idées dans la littérature pamphlétaire à l’aube de la guerre civile anglaise, 1640–1642*, “XVII Siècle”, No. 195, 1997, p. 281–296.

<sup>14</sup> R. Clifton, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

water upon it, which done, they hang at the haste of the said knife five or six graines of Corral, which are blessed b y them, who blasphemously give him to understand and make him beleeve, that so many blowes as shall be given by him with the said knife...<sup>15</sup>

This is an example of a typical, yet incredible, contemporary text. The quoted passage, and indeed the entire brochure, is filled with hatred, fear and venom against the enemy.

The list of the Jesuits' or Papists' sins against England and its monarchs is long, starting with the reign of King Henry and leading to the Catholic and Jesuit priests present at the Queen's court.<sup>16</sup> Archbishop William Laud and his devotion to Arminianism, understood in England and Scotland as an attempt to reintroduce Catholicism, is also not without importance.<sup>17</sup>

But simple hate and fear was not enough, nor was the remembering of the past deeds. Along with these grievances about past Catholic activities directed against England in 1641, we can also find numerous publications disseminating concrete, sensational information about the planned – in the here and now – plots against Parliament, London, and rightful and pious Englishmen in general. Thus, the theoretical fear of popery, cultivated over some hundred years, that resulted in a real, albeit virtual hatred of Rome found its confirmation in real life.

The atmosphere had to be heated at all times, and fear was definitely a useful tool in bringing people into the streets. Let us refer to a fearful scene from Norwich:

Then did they drag the man himselfe, from the side of his tender wife, and children, and threw him upon the table, where before his wives face with a hatchet, in a most Lamentable manner, cut off his head, and then with the same hatchet did they mangle his quarters, which being done, they ranne upon his wife, and children, and naked as they were threw them out of doores. Thus doe these bloody minded Rebels, dayly act their villany, by persecuting and murdering the poore Protestants.<sup>18</sup>

The Catholics in Ireland were perhaps even more cruel and bloodthirsty:

When they perceived, how he had derided their proffer, they did run upon him, and bound him with rowles of match fast to a board, so fast, that his eyes bursted out of his head, then did they cut of

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<sup>15</sup> *Seven Arguments plainly proving that Papists are Trayterous Subjects to all true Christian Princes*, 1641.

<sup>16</sup> G.B.C, *Plots, Conspiracies and Attempts of Domestic and Forraigne Enemies of the Romish Religion Against the Princes and Kingdomes of England, Scotland and Ireland*, London 1641.

<sup>17</sup> R. Ashton, *The English Civil War: Conservatism and Revolution*, London 1978, p. 110; *A Discoverie of the Notorious Proceedings of William Laud*, London 1641; *The Prophecie of the Life, Reigne and Death of William Laud*, London 1644; *Lambeth Faire, Wherein you have all the Bishops Trinkers set for Sale*, 1641.

<sup>18</sup> *Bloody Newes from Norwich, or A True Relation of a bloody attempt of the Papists in Norwich, to consume the whole City by fire*, London 1641.

his eares, then his nose, then feered off both his cheekes; after that they cut off his armes, after that his legs, and yet (a wonderfull thing to heare) was not this good Knight dead: will, eye and vitall spirits remaine; then did they cut out his tongue, and afterward to put him of his paine, they ran a hot iron into his bowels, and so he dyed.

His Lady they killed not; but because she was a faire woman, did intend to keep her, that they might abuse her delicate body when they pleased.<sup>19</sup>

These quoted, common texts, leave no room for doubts. It was not the king, the court, or indeed the deputies, who were in danger, but all English subjects who are not Catholics.

Pamphlets, brochures and sheet publications brought news and information about prevented (sometimes miraculously) attempts to blow up the Parliament (we can find allusions to 1605 here),<sup>20</sup> attacks against specific deputies, judges,<sup>21</sup> and even entire towns.<sup>22</sup> The enemy is at the doorstep and has taken the form of papists, Catholics, Jesuits, recusants, the Irish and the French. Most of these factions are interchangeable with one another.<sup>23</sup> These texts may seem funny, even naïve, to us today, but in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century these scares and thus fear were much more real and so seen as truly dangerous. Let us refer to a few examples to illustrate the problem.

In 1641, a plot was presented in the Parliament. An Irish woman, Anne Hussey, was caught red handed and her plot was supposedly discovered and prevented.<sup>24</sup> Soon after, we learn about “a bloody Massacre plotted by the Papists, intended first against the City of London and consequently against the whole land.”<sup>25</sup> In December 1641, a plot by some Frenchmen seeking to “cover London with blood” was uncovered.<sup>26</sup>

Revelations about subsequent plots continued. As I stated above, they were directed against Parliament, the city of London, other English cities or Ireland.

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<sup>19</sup> *The Bloody persecution of the Protestants in Ireland*, London 1641.

<sup>20</sup> *The Iesuites Plot Discovered, Intended against the Parliament and the City of London very lately*, 1641.

<sup>21</sup> *The Rat-trap, or the Iesuites taken in their owne Net &c.*, 1641.

<sup>22</sup> *A Bloody Plot, Practised by some Papists in Darbyshire*, London 1641; *A Royall Message from the Kings most Excellent Maiestie to the Honourable Houses of Parliament, with the Answer of the House of Commons*, London 1641; *A True and certaine Relation of sundery great Machinations and Plots of divers Iesuits, Priests and other Papists*, London.

<sup>23</sup> In 1641, a certain W.C published in London *The Bspotted Iesuite*, which was later reprinted as written by William Crashaw, *Loyola's Disloyalty or the Jesuits Open Rebellion*, London 1643; the same text appeared in 1644 under the title *The Anatomie of the French and Spanish Faction*, London 1644; the last mentioned work was in large parts a direct copy of the *Bspotted Jesuit*, but the Jesuits were exchanged for the Frenchmen.

<sup>24</sup> *A Discoverie to the prayse of God and joy of all true hearted Protestants, of a late intended plot by the Papists to subdue the Parliament*, London 1641; I have not found confirmation of this plot in historical literature.

<sup>25</sup> London 1641.

<sup>26</sup> *The Attachment examination and confession of a French-man*, London 1641.



Some of them are a surprising projection of the 1605 gunpowder plot, which in 1641 was modified to blow up a whole block of houses in the capital and kill all members of Parliament.<sup>27</sup> It was prevented when one of the deputies was warned not to show up at the Parliamentary session. According the author of one of these prints, a letter warning one Londoner not to show up at the House of Commons was read in the Parliament on 10 January 1641. Thus, the plot was avoided. This scenario is repeated in other cases as well.<sup>28</sup>

Information about “bloody,” “terrible,” “wonderful” and “dangerous” plots, conspiracies and attempts against England continued to be published for the next three years. In 1644, they were replaced by literature devoted to heresies and the crisis in the English church.

Pamphlets describing various plots, conspiracies and planned attacks were quite numerous. It is hard to tell today how many were written and published, and it is impossible to guess their impact based on circulation. A survey of these prints leaves a strong impression on the contemporary reader. Their amount, language, and contents did indeed create an atmosphere of danger. The fear factor, backed by virulent hatred, must have been extremely strong, particularly in London, where most of these prints were published and circulated. The prints show certain ingenuity. First of all, even though they were printed in London, they cover large territories in England and Ireland: Darbyshire, Ireland, Scotland, Dublin, Worcester, Cheshire, Lancashire, Dorset and Hull to name a few. The specifications of the described assaults are also fascinating, as they range from primitive personal attacks on a particular English patriot to planting bombs to blow up a specific house, the House of Commons, or a whole town. Authors describe hidden Catholic lords who have amassed arms, munitions,<sup>29</sup> and many horses in a special cave dug under a castle.<sup>30</sup> Equally fantastic is a tunnel prepared under a regular road, which was to be filled with gunpowder and blown up when English troops would be passing over it. It was only by a miracle, when someone stuck his walking cane too deep into the ground, that the plot was discovered.<sup>31</sup>

The diversity of potential weapons to be used by the enemies of England is also fascinating. We even come across an attempt that could today be classified as

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<sup>27</sup> *Matters of note made known to all true Protestants*, London 1641; exactly the same plot is described a year later in *The Papists Designe against the Parliament and Citie of London discovered*, 1642.

<sup>28</sup> *A Declaration or Discovery of a most horrible Plot against the city of London*, 1642.

<sup>29</sup> *A Bloody Plot Practised by some Papists in Darbyshire*, London 1641, mentions about 34 barrels of gunpowder and iron bullets.

<sup>30</sup> *A Great Discovery of a Damnable Plot at Rugland Castle in Monmoth-shirein Wales*, London 1641, brings in information about horses hidden underground along with other supplies. This information, obviously sensational, was reprinted in other brochures.

<sup>31</sup> *A Discoverie of the Hellish Plot against Divers particular of the Nobility of the Kingdome of England. Also the Papists Gunpowder-plot brought to light*, London 1641.

biological warfare, when “the fithiest puddle of Hellish Corruption [...] unclean Conspiracie” was aimed at John Pym, one of the early leaders of Parliament. On 24 October 1641, a messenger brought him a letter with “a filthy clout, with the contagious plaster of a Plague store upon it.”<sup>32</sup>

One may not be an advocate of the Marxist principle on “quantity turning into quality”, but the repeated sensational descriptions and accusations fell on fertile ground and must have born fruit. Despite the fact that many of those prints must have been lost, we still have access to a large number of them. The time of their publication is relatively short, and, as I demonstrated above, they contain information from many places, which differ significantly. One brochure republished several hundred times would not cause the same anxiety as one published in fewer numbers, but that brought new and heretofore unknown information.

A Parliamentary call for help when news about a potential plot reached the deputies resulted in huge crowds gathering outside the House of Commons on the Monday after Strafford’s execution.<sup>33</sup> That crowd was driven by fear and hatred: fear of a supposed popish plot and hatred against those who were trying to bring crisis to England.

“Such gatherings continued to provoke protests in the Lords where it was argued that there was ‘nothing more contrary to the nature of a parliament’.” However, such gatherings of crowds continued, even after direct threats to the Parliament vanished.

The arrest and execution of Strafford, as well as the sending of bishops (particularly the Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud) to the Tower cleansed London of any potential direct threats to the Parliament as well as the legal English church. In spite of this, crowds, differing in size and energy, kept on gathering outside the Parliament.

In the work about London in the early 1640s quoted above, the author brings information about numerous gatherings of crowds outside the Parliament at the end of 1640, in 1641, continuing until the real fighting of the civil war broke out. “From May 1640 to May 1641, most of the salient features of a popular intervention into national politics, that periodically helped shape events during the rest of the decade, became visible and familiar. The year witnessed the rise of mass politics as Londoners rioted and demonstrated, organised mammoth petitions, and lobbied both king and parliament,” writes the historian of civil war-era London.<sup>34</sup> The first demonstration mentioned by him is the one against William Laud on 11 May 1640.

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<sup>32</sup> *A Damnable Treason, By a Contagious Plaster of a Plague-Sore*, London 1641.

<sup>33</sup> K. Lindley, *Popular Politics and Religion in Civil War London*, London 1997, p. 90–91.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4. Compare also: G. Garavaglia, *Società e religione in Inghilterra*, Milano 1983, pp. 321–350.

The opening of the Long Parliament resulted in a wave of demonstrations, protests and petitions. The crowds were further inspired in their actions, when in November a Westminster justice of the peace, Heywood, was stabbed outside the Parliament as he was compiling a list of recusants to present to the Parliament.<sup>35</sup> All of the worst fears of a popish attack that had been so carefully and masterfully presented to the public over the past 100 years, appeared to materialise. As a result, a crowd turned up at the queen's chapel to stone worshippers as they left the chapel after the service.<sup>36</sup> Already at this time, we can see actions by a crowd that are driven by hate against Catholics as opposed to a real, visible threat: a group of Londoners attacking and throwing stones at peaceful group of people leaving the royal chapel. Similar gatherings happened over and over again. Attempts to control or disperse these gatherings with arguments or with force did not work. Protesters arrived to supposedly protect the Parliament, to rid of Bishops and to reform the church even though no one asked them to do it and no call for help was proclaimed. These actions grew out of deeper convictions and beliefs.

The protests stopped at the very end of December 1640, only to resume on 4 January 1641 and prevented the monarch from arresting five members of Parliament. At the end of the month, crowds gathered before the House of Lords to hear the charges proclaimed against Strafford.<sup>37</sup>

On 12 May 1641, Strafford was executed, William Laud was in Tower and those who were considered the enemies of England were either dead, in the Tower or hiding with Charles' army outside London. The situation was under the control of the Parliament and popular protests should have calmed down – but they did not.

Less than a week after Strafford's execution, a crowd numbering between two and three thousand people gathered outside Parliament.<sup>38</sup> We can trace the reaction of the two Houses to these events. Following the demonstration of 17 May, the Lords passed an enquiry to the Lower House asking for discussion of the matter and stating that it was:

Ordered, That this House have a Conference with the House of Commons To-morrow Morning, concerning the Concourse and Tumults of People resorting hither, out of London and other Places.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> K. Lindley, *op. cit.*, p. 13; G. Garavaglia, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

<sup>36</sup> K. Lindley, *op. cit.*, p.75, it is worth recalling that Charles I's wife, Queen Henrietta Maria, was French and Catholic.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 19; see also note 5.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 92.

<sup>39</sup> From: *House of Lords Journal Volume 4: 17 May 1641, Journal of the House of Lords: volume 4: 1629–42* (1802), 251-252. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=35599>, date accessed: 7 February 2010.

The following day, the Lords' request was presented in the House of Commons and the following reply was prepared: "For the Tumult, the House of Commons will be ready to join with your Lordships, whensoever it shall please your Lordships, in sending to the Lord Mayor, and Magistrates of the Town and Parts adjoining, that from henceforth they take Order, with the best Diligence they can, for the Suppressing the like unlawful Assemblies."<sup>40</sup>

As the House of Commons decided to discuss the matter with the House of Lords, the Lords passed another proclamation in form of an order.

**Order to prevent the Tumult of People here.**

Ordered, That, if the People do assemble here in any tumultuous Manner, this House will take Order to suppress them, or adjourn the House until it be done.<sup>41</sup>

Simultaneously, people gathered outside the Parliament in what is seen today as the second anti-popish scare in May.<sup>42</sup> The spectacle continued in spite of the Lords' endeavours to stop the tumults and demonstrations. Londoners gathered repeatedly, with some of the largest gatherings taking place in June, August, November and December.<sup>43</sup> All of these crowds gathered under the banner of antipopishness, antipapism and criticism of the bishops. All of them were characterised by fear and hatred as a driving force, and rumours of possible Catholic/Jesuit/French intervention were in common use.

We do not have precise descriptions of all the gatherings, but historians are able to provide examples referring to some of them. Contrarily to popular belief and frequent assertions by historians,<sup>44</sup> the crowds that gathered were not composed of those on the margins of society.

The demonstrators were labelled as "a rabble of mean, unknown, dissolute persons", "base persons" and "idle and lewd" in contemporary sources. However, the arrest of a group of those who formed the crowd in May 1640 revealed a different image. Keith Linley provides the list of the arrested, among whom we find a Southwalk glover who was "a literate young man from a respectable family," a glazier, perfumer, shoemaker, cordwainer, pinmaker and another half-dozen respectable citizens.<sup>45</sup> The demonstrators had in their midst middle-class craftsmen, who must have been able to read and write, and thus were able to

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<sup>40</sup> From: "House of Commons Journal Volume 2: 18 May 1641," *Journal of the House of Commons: volume 2: 1640–1643* (1802), pp. 148–149. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=9726>, date accessed: 7 February 2010.

<sup>41</sup> From: *House of Lords Journal Volume 4: 18 May 1641, Journal of the House of Lords: volume 4: 1629–42* (1802), pp. 252–253. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=35600> Date accessed: 7 February 2010.

<sup>42</sup> K. Lindley, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 93, 96, 98, 99, 100, 108, 109, 111.

<sup>44</sup> M. Bennett, *op. cit.*, refers to such crowd as "a mob", see p. 86.

<sup>45</sup> K. Lindley, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–27.

define the aim of their protests. These were directed against Catholics, papists, Jesuits, Recusants, the Irish and other members of the similar groups. Indirectly, they were aimed at Charles and his army, as his soldiers were often found with prayers addressed to Mary and images of the Virgin hidden under their armour.

It is practically beyond doubt that these crowds gathered on someone's initiative and inspiration. Again, we cannot tell whose, but we can guess that the initiative probably originated in Parliament itself.<sup>46</sup>

An attempt to stir up trouble would have been unanswered if it would not speak to peoples' worries, fears and anxieties. The crowds were prepared for these events over many years due to fear being inflicted on their hearts and minds, and by having hatred stimulated and enflamed by years of propaganda. The contemporary pamphlets printed freely in London at that time were as sparks igniting barrels of gunpowder. Crowds gathered in response to fear and were driven by hatred.

Visions of what was to come were expressed in some of the most ridiculous stories published in the contemporary brochures. One particular story that comes to mind was that of a whale that was attacked by "all creatures of the sea" after it had swallowed a Catholic priest. The whale, according to the author, did this because, like all the righteous creatures in the sea, despised the pope and Rome.<sup>47</sup> There were also similar stories of Catholic priests being caught on the English shore with weapons such as holy water, candle wax, tears of Mary Magdalene and a tooth of St. Peter to use against the English.<sup>48</sup>

There is no doubt that the printing and distribution of these pamphlets was directed and aimed at keeping up the atmosphere of protest. Skilful manipulations utilised the doubts and worries of Londoners, mostly the poorest, to perfection. "Undoubtedly the potential for great violence and bloodshed was present in some of the demonstrations and confrontations. Yet when demonstrators armed themselves it was usually with a defensive rather than an aggressive intent, to defend themselves against papists or to protect parliament against a possible coup."<sup>49</sup>

Let me conclude by providing one more example of the activities of London crowds on the eve of the civil war. In 1643, a group of Londoners, obviously in an act of specific, clearly defined action, destroyed the magnificent thirteenth

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 31.

<sup>47</sup> *A True and wonderfull Relation of a Whale*, London 1645, describes a whale in the channel between England and continental Europe, which was attacked by all sea creatures. Sailors were helpless and could only watch. When the poor 'beast' escaped to the nearby beach and died, local peasants and fishermen cut it open, to find a Catholic priest inside. On the one hand another story showing how dreadful are the methods used by Rome, on the other a skilful way to show, that all living organisms on this earth are against the pope. An extremely meaningful story.

<sup>48</sup> *Exceeding goud Newes from the Isle of Wight*, London 1641, brings stories of three ships stopped in English ports, which brought to England the listed 'weapons'.

<sup>49</sup> K. Lindley, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

century cross that stood at Cheapside. The cross was destroyed because it was Catholic and popish; because it was decorated and gleaming with gold; and because it displayed figures of the pope, cardinals, Mary and saints. The destruction of the cross resulted in the publication of several pamphlets that illustrate various approaches to this religious object. Most of them have a satiric character, although one can never be sure about this after the centuries, which have passed. The Cross was accused of high treason against the English people, as its purpose was to propagate loyalty to His Majesty against the Parliament, bring people to the Romish religion, and bring about the ruin and slavery of the whole kingdom.<sup>50</sup> It was also accused of collaborating with the Jesuits and heresy.<sup>51</sup> In his “Testimony”, the Cross admits having committed these crimes and agrees that he was justly punished.<sup>52</sup>

Once again, we have the same mechanism displayed here. The Cheapside Cross was a mediaeval monumental cross, richly decorated, and stood in the heart of London. Its ‘crime’ was the fact that it was a cross, and that it was decorated with figures of saints, the pope and bishops. The crowd that pulled it down in 1643 most likely consisted of the same group of people who had been protesting at Parliament and in the City. There was no direct threat to their lives or property – after all, the monument could not act against them – and yet, it was accused of high treason and pulled down.

Fear and hatred – and the crowd.

*Jakub Basista*

## STRACH I NIENAWIŚĆ JAKO POŻYWKA DLA TŁUMÓW W ANGLII W CZESNONOWOŻYTNEJ

### Streszczenie

Artykuł podejmuje fenomen zachowania tłumu w Londynie w pierwszym okresie angielskiej wojny domowej, czyli w latach 1640–1643. Grupy ludzi wielokrotnie gromadziły się albo pod parlamentem, albo w innych częściach miasta, aby protestować i demonstrować. Protesty skierowane były przeciw królowi, jego ministrom, a następnie w obronie parlamentu. To właśnie „motłoch” uniemożliwił Karolowi I aresztowanie kilku posłów. W swoim artykule autor twierdzi, że ów motłoch, londyński tłum, sterowany był przez ówczesną propagandę. Była ona skierowana przeciw papieżowi, Kościołowi katolickiemu, jezuitom, a w końcu i królowi. Obrazowe opisy krwawych ekscesów stronników papieża, łącznie z opisami tortur i obcinania członków, musiały

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<sup>50</sup> *The dolefull Lamentation of Cheap-side Cross*, London 1641; *The Downefall of Dagon, or the taking downe of Cheap-side Crosse*, London; *The Crosse Case in Cheapside*, 1642 to name the most important.

<sup>51</sup> R. Orenton, *Articles of High Treason Exhibited against Cheap-side Crosse*, London 1642.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, the last will was entered by Orenton into his publication; *The Remarkable Funeral of Cheapside-Cross in London*, London 1642.

oddziaływać na wyobraźnię ówczesnych ludzi. Kiedy publikowane w dużych nakładach broszurki zaczęły donosić, że planowany jest zamach na parlament i jego wysadzenie, londyńczycy tłumnie zgromadzili się wokół budynku, aby go bronić. Doszło nawet do konieczności podjęcia stosownych uchwał przez posłów, usuwających przeszkadzających obrońców. Nie ma wątpliwości, że mamy do czynienia z jedną z wczesnych, a zarazem skutecznych manipulacji tłumem w celów stworzenia odpowiedniego nastroju grozy, strachu, a nawet paniki.

