Healing and Settling in Cromwellian England
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Introduction
• Cromwell sought to oversee the healing and settling of England. Sept 1654 in a speech to MPs
• What did he mean? Was it binding war torn England? He described the civil war in terms of family strife.
• Cromwell seems to be asking for reconciliation, but was this his intent? How far did cromwell believe that healing and settling was in fact possible?
• He wants healing but also wants a religious revolution to continue... This division is also seen in his ambivalent attitudes to parliament - sometimes using it, other times dissolving it.
• Cromwell as a character seems to be highly torn in many cases. He seems to be torn in his own position - does he want to rule the country or not?
• How can we understand Cromwell's character? How could we approach it? What did healing and settling mean for Cromwell? How can print culture help us to this end?
• Print culture is key to understanding political culture, rather than just policies or personalities.

Press Culture Before Cromwell
• Print culture in the C17th was novel but increasingly prevalent. Contemporaries were fascinated with and frightened by the culture. This can be clearly seen in the explosion of print in 1641 and in repressive censorship laws.
• Both Hobbes and le Strange saw the growth in print culture as a dangerous thing. They felt that print had destabilised the country in 1641 - it was a causal factor for them of the civil war.
• If Cromwell believed in healing and settlement it should be evident in his attitudes towards the print culture of the day. So what would this look like? Tolerance towards royalists? Attempts to foster political unity? Discouraging acrimonious debates which might divide?
• In December 1653 Cromwell inherited a culture in which cheap print was growing after the abolition of the star chamber and removal of censorship in 1641. And indeed mass literacy. There had been an outpouring of political pamphlets. Newspapers could now be published and show British news - there was an explosion of newspapers.
• The new print culture, as Hill suggests, gave a voice to a wide range of peoples. It shows the debates in religion etc. also illuminates the political reaction to the new press, suppression and taming etc.
• New acts came into force post 1641 to control the press: licensing, controls etc. There were also attempts to exploit the press. A window into political life and culture.
• During the republic 1649-53 there was an attempt to control the radical press which grew after 1649 - especially levellers, diggers etc. A clear suppression is evident by 1650. Critics were effectively silenced through ordinances, especially groups such as the Levellers.
• Professional journalists were employed to write polemic for the regime - most famously Milton. By 1653 a large number of newspapers are official government documents.

Cromwellian Press Policy
• Under Cromwell there is a similar mix of suppression, control and propaganda.
• The protectorate increased the power of government to control the press. From 1654 to 1655 unofficial press was allowed. Post 1655, unofficial press was suppressed.
• Newspapers required official sanction in order to publish - the government ran a monopoly on the press.
• With a few small exceptions, the only papers between 1654-9 were government run.
• The government also used spies and informants to monitor the press. Seditious literature was rooted out. This was done with a particular zeal showing the growth of centralised government power under Cromwell.
• Under Cromwell there is also a growth in the production of government propaganda. The content was important.
• Official newspapers were officially monitored and revised by the secretary of state. Government generally disseminated the key propaganda to the editors of the main papers.

What did Cromwell Hope to Achieve?
• Some royalist authors were not suppressed. The publication of imaginative literature and religious debate seems to have not been suppressed.
• The publications allowed were neither seditious nor especially problematic.
• Real dissent might be seen in the works which directly criticised Cromwell etc. even these were allowed to be published. Cromwell noted that if his government could not withstand "paper shot" then it should be disbanded. He suggested that argument was the best solution.
• However, there is evidence that contemporaries believed that they would be at risk of they published seditious materials. Many commented that there was a dearth of real criticism of the government and that the English were too afraid to speak.
• The radicals were the real risk however, rather than the royalists. The radicals therefore become the target of suppression. Many leading radical writers were arrested.
• "England's Remembrances" 1656 - when leaflet was distributed in run up to elections the state investigated the publication of the work. Those involved were identified through a trail of investigation, starting with those who leafleted.
• "Killing no Murder" advocated the assassination of Cromwell - in 1657 it became a matter of attention. The government arrested John Sturgeon who had been distributing whilst he was in the street. Sturgeon had already been under surveillance due to his exile and previous attempts to assassinate Cromwell. Further enquiries led back to printers Edward Wroughton. Eventually the inquiry led to the author, Edward Sexby.
• The regime did not silence all dissent - there was a toleration of some criticism - could be a limit of power or evidence of tolerance.
• Those who advocated violent resistance were targeted, however these were more radicals than royalists.
• Cromwell used the press to promote an image of the protectorate in which It is suggested that a hereditary Protectorate would be best. There is a clear attitude that Cromwell should take on the quasi-monarchical powers offered to him. It shows the thinking of those in his court.
• The press also released a broad range of articles in which Cromwell distanced himself from radicals. One common way was to publish public apologies of radicals.
How Far was Cromwell Interested in Healing and Settling?

- Limited evidence that Cromwell wanted a general healing of the country. Happy to include obedient royalists but not violent royalists or radicals.
- Using the press findings, it is possible to re-examine Cromwell's healing and settling speech from 1654.
- Cromwell seems to be addressing those parliamentarians who were not entirely in support of him, rather than the whole country. The problem Cromwell is identifying is the radicalism within his own parliamentarian camp.
- Cromwell felt the need to return to order and prevent the constant overturning and perpetual revolution he saw as the danger present.
- Cromwell's healing and settling meant a single leader and the sovereignty of parliament. It also meant a liberty of conscience - not unfettered freedom but a freedom tempered by the liberty of conscience of the extreme magistrate.
- Cromwell as little to say of royalists and little to say of healing and settling with them. He still refers to them as the enemy.
- The 1654 speech is more about asking for unity amongst the parliamentarians rather than allowing them to fragment and lose his principles of good government.
- It might therefore allow us to resolve the idea that Cromwell was torn in his approach. There was no division between healing and settling on one hand and religious reform on the other. They were both aiming in the same direction.
- Cromwell's view of healing and settling is the Exercise of authority in the pursuit of order.
- Cromwell's healing and settling can most clearly be seen through his press policies.