

Summary of a letter from a Jesuit to the Father Rector in Brussels (19 March 1628)

John Maynard

Transcript

British Library, Harley MS 4931, ff. 143r–144v

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A Copy of a Letter [tha]t was found among those Iesuits [tha]t were taken at Clarkenwell in London, & addressed to the Rector of Bruxells, March, 1628.

Father Rector,

Let not the damp of astonishm[en]t seiz upon yo[u]r most dear, & zealous soul, in appr[e]hending the sudden, & unexpected calling of this Parli[amen]t; we haue not opposed, but rather farthered it; for [tha]t we hope as much in this Parl[iamen]t, as ever we feared one in Q. Eliz. days; You must know the Councell is engaged to assist the King by way of pr[e]rogatiue, in case the Parli-am[en]t shold fail. You shall see this Parliam[en]t resembl the Pelican, w[hi]ch takes pleasure with her beak to digg out her owne bowalls.

The elections of the Kn[igh]ts, & Burgesses haue been in such confusion, & by such apparent faction, as [tha]t w[hi]ch we w[e]r[e] wont to procure heretofore with much art, & industry (w[he]n the Spanish match was in treaty) now it breaks out naturally, as a botch or boyl, & spitts out, & shows it own rancour, & venome.

You may remember how [tha]t famous, & im[m]ortall Statesman the Conde of Gundamor fed K. James his fansy, & rocked him asleep w[i]th [th]e soft, & sweet sound of peace, to keep up [th]e Spanish Treaty; likewise we w[e]r[e] bound to some emi-nent Statesemen of o[u]r own Country to gaine time, in p[ro]curing [th]o[e] advantage-ous cessations of Armeses in the Palatinate; & in admiring the worth & honor of the Spanish Nac[i]on, & vilifying the Hollanders; Remonstrating to K. James that, [tha]t [th]e States w[e]r[e] most ungrat^efull to his pr[e]decessor Q. Eliz. & to his most sacred Ma[jes]ty; [tha]t [th]e States w[e]r[e] more obnoxious [the]n [th]e Turk; & p[er]petually iniured his Ma[jes]tyes Sub[jec]ts in the East Indies; as likewise they had usurped from his Ma[jes]ty the Regality of the Narrow-seas in fishing upon the English Coasts:

Had e Spanish match taken effecte (w[hi]ch was broken by the heate, & violence of o[u]r furious enemy the Duke of Bucks, certainly K. James had deserted [th]e Hol-landers. These great Statesmen had but one principall meane to further their great & good designes, w[hi]ch was, To make K. James belieue [tha]t none but the Puritan facc[i]on (w[hi]ch plotted nothing but Anarchy, & his confusion) w[e]r[e] averse to this most happy union. We steer the same cours, & make great use of this Anarchicall election, & haue pr[e]judicated, & anticipated [th]e greate one, That none but the Kings enemies & his, are chosen of this Parliam[en]t; & y[a]t this Parliam[en]t vowes to begin where they left, & will never giue over, till they haue extirpated him & his posterity. On the other side the same parties incessantly foment (who are to be admired for their indefatigabl in-dustry) Revenge, & Iealousies in most of the Parliam[en]t men; And especially they work upon the Pride & Vain-glory of such as haue been imprisoned, posses

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sing y[e]m, y[a]t they are [th]e only Martyrs, & worthies of their Country

London is as much distempered as ever Florence was; for [th]e Companies are at odds; & [th]e Com[m]on Counsell haue opposed the Magistrates ag[ains]t [th]e usuall customs in the election[es] of their Kn[igh]ts; w[hi]ch hath bred a g[rea]t heart-burning in y[a]t City is so y[a]t twice a day we can divulg w[ha]t we list in Pauls, & upon the Exchange. And we haue already rendred o[u]r irreconcilabl enemy the D. of Bucks, as odious as a toad; for the peopl are apt to belieue any thing ag[ains]t him. We hope to be revenged on y[a]t ball of wild-fire the D. & to quench his fury; you shall see y[a]t same sword y[a]t wounded us, being drawn upon [th]e wound with an oile y[a]t we haue, shall make us whole; and yus it shalbe don.

The Parliam[en]t, as a g[rea]t ship, hath dashed twice ag[ains]t [th]e same rock; & we haue so wrought upon the severall complexions of Parliam[en]t men, In Charming [th]e most temperat & wisest, y[a]t [th]e best way to overthrow [th]e D. is By humbl pe-tic[i]on to his Ma[jes]ty; W[i]th [th]e Violent, we haue taken a quite contrary cours, by working upon their passions, & inebriating their fancyes, w[i]th p[ro]babilities & pr[e]sidents y[a]t w[e]r[e] never heard of, That favourites w[e]r[e] never Parliam[en]t-proof; they may wrestle for a time, but at last the parl[iament] hath ov[er]thrown y[e]m. We encourage y[e]m, w[i]th all the witt we haue to fall upon the D. & p[er]suade yem now is [th]e time or never, the K. being in such necessity; insomuch, y[a]t we assure o[u]rselus y[a]t God hath forsaken & infatuated y[e]m, y[a]t they not only strike, & dash upon y[a]t rock again, but sink, & wrack in [th]e bottomles sea of destruction.

We haue now many strings to o[u]r bow, & haue strongly fortified o[u]r factions, & haue made 2 bulworks more; for w[he]n K. James lived, you know he was very violent ag[ains]t Arminianism, & interupted by his pestilent wit & deep learning o[u]r strong designs in Holland, & was a g[rea]t fr[ien]d to y[a]t Arch-rebæll, & old Heretique the Pr. of Orange; now we haue planted y[a]t soveraing drug Arminianism, w[hi]ch we hope will purge the Protestants of their Heresy; & it flourisheth, & will beare fruit in du season.

The Materialls w[hi]ch build up o[u]r 2d Bullwork, are The Proiecto[ur]s, & Beggars of all ranks & qualities w[ha]tsoever; both these factions operate to destroy this Parliam[en]t, & introduce a new species & form of govern[en]t, w[hi]ch is Oligarchy. These factions serue as divers meanes & instrum[en]ts to o[u]r end, w[hi]ch is, The Univ[er]sall Ca-tholique Monarchy. O[u]r foundac[i]on must be Mutac[i]on, this mutac[i]on will cause reluctac[i]on, w[hi]ch will seem as so many violent diseases; as [th]e Stone & Gout, & the to the speedy destrucc[i]on, or p[er]petuall & insufferabl languish of the body, w[hi]ch is wors y[e]n death itself, well to p[ro]ceed by Counsell, & Mature Deliberac[i]on, w[he]n & how to work upon the Dukes ielousy, & revenge; & in this, we gieu [th]e hono[ur] to those y[a]t meritt it, y[a]t is, the Church-catholiques.

There is another matter of consequence, w[hi]ch we take much into o[u]r conside-rac[i]ons & tender care, w[hi]ch is, to stau[e] off [th]e Puritans y[a]t they hang not on the Dukes eares; they are an impudent, & subtle people & it is to be feared least they shold negotiate a reconciliac[i]on between [th]e Duke & the Paliam[en]t. Certenly the duke wold gladly haue reconciled him[s]elf to the Parliam[en]t at Oxford, & Westminster, but now we assure ourselues

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we haue so handled the matter, y[a]t the D. & the Parl. are irreconcile-able; for the better pr[e]uenc[i]on of the Puritans, the Arminians haue all-ready blocked up the Dukes eares, & we haue those of o[u]r religion, who stand continually at the Dukes chamber to see who goes in & out; we cannot be too circumspect & carefull in this regard. I cannot choose but laugh to see how some of o[u]r coat haue accoutred themselus, you wold scarce know y[e]m if you saw y[e]m; & it is admirabl how in speech & ge-sture they can act the Puritans; The Cambridg schollers to their wofull experience shall see that we can act the Puritan a little better they they haue don the Iesuite; they abused our sacred Patron Ignatius in iest, but we will make yem smart for it in earnest. I hope you will excuse my merry digression, for I confess I am at this instant transported w[i]th ioy, to see how happily all instruments, & meanes, as well g[rea]t, as less, cooperate to our purpose. But to return to the main fabrick of o[u]r foundac[i]on, Arminianism. The Arminians, & Projecto[u]rs (as appears by their devises) affect Mutac[i]on, this we second & inforce by probabl arg[umen]ts; In the 1st place we take into con-siderac[i]on The Kings hono[u]r & pr[e]sent necessity; & we show how the K. may free himsel[elf] of the his pr[e]sent Wardshipp, as K. Lewis 11th of france, did; & for his splendo[u]r & lustre he may raise vast summs of mony & not be beholding to his Subj[ec]ts, w[hi]ch is By way of Imposic[i]ons, & Excise; we instance The Low-countries, & show What a vast sum of mony they raise to pay their armies by sea & land, merely by excise. Then o[u]r Church-catholique p[ro]ceeds to show the meane how to settle this excise, w[hi]ch must be By a mercenary Army of Horse, & foot; for the Hors, we haue made it sure y[a]t they shalbe forreners, & Germans, who will eat the Kings Revenue, & spoile the Country wheresoever they come, though they shold be well paid; w[ha]t havock will they make y[e]n, w[he]n they haue not pay, or be not duly paid? surely they will do much more mischief y[e]n we hope the Catholiques Army will doe. We are provident y[a]t this Mercenary Army of 2000 Hors, & 20000 foot shalbe taken into pay before the excise shalbe settled. In forcing the excise, the Country is most likely to rise; if the Mercenary Army subiugate the Country, y[e]n [th]e Soldiers, & Proiecto[u]rs shalbe paid out of the Confiscations; if the Country be too hard for the Soldiers, y[e]n they must consequently mutiny, w[hi]ch is equally advantageous to us.

Our sup[er]latiue desires are, To work the Protestants, as well as [th]e Papists to welcom in a Conquero[u]r; & this is by this meane; We hope instantly to dissolue Trading, & hinder Building of Ships, & devise probabl designes, & putting the State upon Expedic[i]ons, as that of Cales, for w[hi]ch we must take away the marchants Ships; or Putt y[e]m in hope to take the West-Indian fleet, w[hi]ch is, to seek a needle in a bottle of hay; His Catholick Maj[es]ty shall not want o[u]r best intelligence; besides, he hath Puttaches, & Carvalls abroad to discover, so you cannot be surprized in any Harbo[u]r. When trading is ruined, & shipping decayed, w[ha]t will becom of Excises? nay w[ha]t will become of Noblemens, & Gentle

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mens Revenues? the yeomen, & {farmors} (in w[ho]m consists the glory of this Kingdom) will turn Rogues, & will resemble abiecte fellowes Peasants, w[hi]ch are little better y[e]n slaves. Trade, & Shipping are so much decayed all-ready, y[a]t London is as it w[e]r[e] besieged already for want of fewell, for sea-coales are at 3li a Chalder.

When thinges are brought to p[er]fection (w[hi]ch we hope wilbe by y[a]t time his sacred Maj[es]ty hath settled his affaires in Germany) all the people in generall will {hunger} for a Conquero[u]r, missinge their severall ranks & qualities. Then we are sure y[a]t the Lands that

w[e]r[e] rent & torn from the Church by y[a]t ravenous monster K. H. 8. shalbe reassumed & restored by o[u]r mighty Protecto[u]r his Catholique Ma[jes]ty. to the recalling of those w[hi]ch are exiled, & delivering of 1000's of soules w[hi]ch suffer p[er]secuc[i]on for the testimony of a good conscience.

Ioyn yo[u]r prayers w[i]th o[u]rs, in importuning the blessed Virgin, & all the Host of Angells, & Holy Martyrs for to intercede for us, & no question but God will make hast to help us.

Thus hoping to see Conde de Tilly, & Marquis Spinola here about Iuly come twelue-month, I rest. In the meane time we pray for the happy success of his Catholique Ma[jes]ty in Germany, & the Low-countrys.

Other manuscript witnesses

- British Library, Additional MS 28011, ff. 21v–23r
- British Library, Additional MS 35331, ff. 14r–v
- British Library, Additional MS 4108, ff. 95x–98r
- British Library, Additional MS 44848, ff. 153v–155r
- British Library, Harley MS 1323, ff. 37r–42r
- British Library, Harley MS 3786, ff. 28r–30v
- British Library, Harley MS 4289, ff. 239v–241r
- British Library, Harley MS 4761, ff. 92r–97r
- British Library, Harley MS 6799, ff. 359v–361v
- British Library, Lansdowne MS 494, ff. 40r–43v
- British Library, Lansdowne MS 495, ff. 1r–6r
- British Library, Additional MS 30926, ff. 10r–14r
- British Library, Additional MS 33469, ff. 33r–34v
- British Library, Hargrave MS 225, ff. 56r–65r
- British Library, Harley MS 286, ff. 298r–302r
- British Library, Stowe MS 152, ff. 23x–24x
- Beinecke Library, Osborn b8, ff. 51x–61x
- Beinecke Library, Osborn fb165, ff. 27–33
- Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 826, ff. 209r–210v
- Bodleian Library, MS Barlow 54, ff. 12r–13r
- Bodleian Library, MS Clarendon 4, ff. 113r–114v
- Bodleian Library, MS Eng. hist. c. 272, ff. 115r–122x
- Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C 807, ff. 116–127
- Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson D 356, ff. 18–24
- Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 72, ff. 252r–253v
- Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 82, f. 210r214r
- Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.1.29, reversing the volume, 84v–85v
- Cambridge University Library, MS Mm.5.1, ff. 124r–26v
- Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.b.277, ff. 110r–113v
- Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, VIII.B.148
- Houghton Library, fMS Eng 1080, pp37–40
- Huntington Library, HM 36836, ff. 90–102
- Inner Temple Library, Petyt MS 538/18, ff. 404v–406v
- London Society of Antiquaries, MS 26, ff. 48r–50v
- Northamptonshire Record Office, FH2381, ff. 4v–5r
- Parliamentary Archives, HL/PO/RO/1/37, pp.21–28

Manuscript Pamphleteering in Early Stuart England

- The National Archives, SP 16/99, /22 [ff.192r–193v]
- The National Archives, SP 16/99, /23 [ff.195r–198r]

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<https://mpese.ac.uk/t/MaynardLetterJesuit1628v2.html>