War and Propaganda during the "Rough Wooing"

Increasingly it has come to be recognized that the spread of the printing press throughout Europe at the end of the fifteenth century had a significant effect upon the dissemination of ideas beyond that of making Luther's ideas widely available or the putting of a bible in every English church. The existence of easy printing enabled governments to communicate with their subjects with a speed and in a depth not hitherto possible. The case of the English reformation is well known, but we should not forget that increasingly throughout the sixteenth century, governments used the press to cajole, instruct and exhort their subjects over a wide range of issues from prayers for a sick king to declarations of war to the price of wine and to matters of dress and consumption. This paper examines one example of how the printing press was used in the sixteenth century in an attempt to affect not only the subjects of one kingdom, England, but also the subjects of another, Scotland, with whom England was at war. In the case of England, the government hoped to popularize a war which was being fought to subject Scotland to English rule; in the case of Scotland, the government hoped to encourage Scots not only to accept the idea of union with England, but also to work actively for that end. It was what we would call a propaganda campaign and in many respects it was a most modern affair. Let us tackle the topic by describing first the war, then the propaganda which the English printed in support of that war and then by briefly asking three questions: What effect did the English hope this
propaganda would have? What effect did the propaganda actually have during the war? What were the long term effects, if any, of the campaign?

On 14 December 1542 James V of Scotland died leaving as heir to his throne a one-week old Mary Queen of Scots. No sooner did word reach London, than Henry VIII seized upon this amazing conjunction of events (a conjunction augmented by the fortuitous capture at Solway Moss of a number of prominent Scottish nobles known to be hostile to James and suspected of holding reformed views) to propose that Mary be married to Henry's son, Edward, Prince of Wales, the future Edward VI. The purpose of the marriage was clear from the start: to unite the two kingdoms dynastically through the child of Mary's and Edward's marriage inheriting both. The reasons Henry sought such a union are complex and need not bother us here; the point is that the King wanted and spent considerable sums to effect this 'golden and godly union'.

What is also of import is that the Scots, after a year discussing the matter, if that is an apt phrase, determined that they did not want the union. Again, their reasons for rejecting the marriage need not detain us; simply bear in mind that after December 1543 no Scottish government was seriously prepared to accept the marriage. Henry thus determined to wage war against the Scots until such time as they altered their view. But, because he was more interested in a campaign in France and because the Scots were resolute, his diffuse, blustering, distracted attempt to force the Scots to accept the marriage failed during the period 1544 to 1546. Once the old king was dead, however, the protector Somerset, who in 1547-49 headed the regency of Edward VI, turned to Henry's policy with a ruthlessness, single-mindedness and determination that almost brought the marriage off. That he too failed was due to Scottish resistance, his own mistakes and just plain bad luck. But in trying, he forced the Scots to bring in French aid, aid which was only given because the Scots agreed to Mary being betrothed to the son of Henry II of France.

This is the war — or, more accurately, the wars — known as the 'rough wooing'; the name comes from the memorable quip of the Earl of Hunly who was captured at the great English victory over the Scots at Pinkie on 10 September 1547: asked what he thought of
the marriage now that God had clearly shown his preference in the matter, he disingenuously replied, 'I... hau'd well with the marriage, but I like not this wooing'.

During the 'rough wooing', 1543-46 and 1547-1550, the English used a variety of tactics to force the Scottish government of James Hamilton, 2nd Earl of Arran, the second person of the realm, to agree to the marriage. Four major invasions of Scotland took place with an army royal: May 1544, September 1545, September 1547, and August 1548. During the winter and spring of 1547-48, through the construction of modern artillery fortifications, especially at Haddington and holding castles in the borders (and elsewhere: at Dundee and in the southwest, but these were minor theatres of war in which they did not fare well) the English established a 'pale' — 'the King's dominions in Scotland' — which they ruled directly. Countless raids and border harassment took place during which most of those Scots who lived on the borders fled, or suffered loss of their cattle, sheep and crops, or gave in and supported the English. Any Scot at variance with the regime of Arran — be it the earl of Lennox, or the aged pretended Lord of the Isles, Donald Dubh — was given English money, support, a bride in the case of Lennox (she bore a future husband for Mary) and an English burial for the Lord of the Isles. The English also encouraged (and here they were breaking with the past: monarchs ever since Edward I had employed the four tactics so far listed) the spread of the Reformation. They perhaps did not do so with either the zeal or the premeditation that historians have since thought they did, but nonetheless many Scots first heard protestant sermons in Dumfries and in Dundee from English-paid lecturers and many Scots got their hands on the bible in English at this time. The English enjoyed another innovative tactic, the encouragement of non-noble Scots to aid them in effecting the union, the creation through fear, feud, greed and religion of a body of supporters not dissimilar to the French 'collaborateurs' during the second world war. This aspect need not detain us either, but it should be borne in mind when we discuss the printed propaganda.

If one takes propaganda to be a public utterance intended to be read or heard by an audience with a view to affecting that audience's attitude and behaviour, then during this period, more than ten difference pieces of propaganda on the subject of union with Scotland were printed and circulated by the English governments of
WAR AND PROPAGANDA

Henry VIII and Somerset. Admittedly not all of these were directed at the Scots and not all were, strictly speaking propaganda. But a large number, especially during Somerset's direction of the war, were for Scottish consumption and clearly aimed at inducing Scots to collaborate with the English. Let us turn to what arguments were made in them.

The first major tract actually predates the 'rough wooing' by a critical month, and it clearly could not have been intended to convince Scots, but it is important both because it was the first of these printed pieces of propaganda and because it contained what was a major English attitude towards Scotland. This was *A Declaration, conteynyng the iuxt causes and considerations, of this present warre with the Scottis, wherein alsoo appereth the trewe & right title, that the kinges most royall maiesty bath to the soueraynitie of Scottlande*. Printed in November 1542, the Declaration spent considerable time outlining that Scotland did belong to Henry VIII just as it had belonged to Edward I and it outlined the homages done by vassal Scottish kings to English overlord kings since the beginning of the history of the island and especially since William I, material all too familiar to those who have been through the justifications of Edward I for his conquest of Scotland in 1296. This, of course, was not the sort of stuff which would impress a Scottish readership, especially since the treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton (1328) was not mentioned. But it was a line that Henry had used before in 1513. In 1544 when asked for taxes, the Commons stated they were convinced by documentation which the king laid before them — 'divers and soondrye old aucnent and authentic rooks patent, writs and records openly... exhibited and maturely read and debated' — and declared that they were convinced of Henry's 'good juste tylte and interest to the Crown and Realme of Scotland'. That very much was the line that Henry took with the English audience.

Towards the Scots, however, he allowed a slightly different explanation of his actions to be argued in the proclamations which predated his two major invasions. The purpose of the war, in addition to punishing the Scots for their falsehood, was to bring about a marriage, 'soo as be that conjunction both realmes might be yunitied perpetually to lyve in pese and quiannis for evar'. In 1547, when Edward Seymour, duke of Somerset and protector of Edward VI, took over the management of the war, this was the line which he
took up, even though he never totally renounced the contention that Scotland belonged to England by right and even though, ultimately, when the war went against him, he was to argue that the Scots were rebels against their sovereign lord.

In late summer 1547, the government printed the work of a Scot, James Henderson, entitled: An Exhortacion to the Scottes to conforme themselues to the honorable, Expedient, & godly Union betweene the two Realmes of Englande and Scotland.\(^\text{10}\) Henderson did not dispute the English argument of sovereignty and even advised his readers to go to the Declaration to see that case 'exactlie set furthe'. He was fascinated, as were all sixteenth-century writers, by past inheritance and he made some important revisions to the English lists of homages received and given. But the main brunt of his tract was that union would be good for Scotland. The two kingdoms had once been united: 'We were Britayne at the beginning, come of one kind, and liuinge vnder one Monarchie'. Now however we are two: are not we 'taught to repute a body as to be monstrous that hath two heads and no less is the realm that hath two kinges'. Thus war between us is an 'unnaturall devision', a 'Ciuil warre', monstrous because we are 'of one natyve tonge and bredd in one ile compassed with the see'. Who sought to perpetuate this division: the papists, 'issuyng from the prince of darkenes, brought vp in darkness & maynteined by darkenes' and those 'whom we cal our auncient frendes, where thei are in deed our auncient enemies... the Frogges'. Henderson maintained that not only did he wish to see the blotting out of those 'hatefull termes of Scottes and Englishemen' for 'Briton', but he also hoped that as

these two Realmes should grow into one, so should thei also agre in the concorde & vnite of one religion, & the same the pure, syncere & incorrupt religion of Christ.

Henderson's long and thoughtful tract was quickly followed by the English invasion which resulted in the victory of Pinkie and the creation of the English pale. A proclamation dated 4 September was widely circulated beforehand in Scotland and it, too, took a very moderate line, making little of claims to superiority.\(^\text{11}\)

We mynd nocht by this conjunctioun of mariage to do ony moir
prejudice to this realme of Scotland than to the realme of England, but with the advice of the noble men and gude men of baith realmes to unite theme togidder in any name by the name of Britounis and in such a freindlie kind of leving and such a libertie and preservatioun of justice to ilk persone equalie as they sall weill find both the glorie of God and his worde advance, this bishop of Romes usurpted jurisdiction abolisheit, the honour of baith weill satisfied and contented.

Then in February 1548, there was an even fuller and more widely circulated piece of propaganda: *An Epistle or exhortacion, to unite & peace, sent from the Lorde Protector, & others the kynges moste honorable counsaill of England: To the Nobilitie, Gentlemen, and Commons, and al others the inhabitantes of the Realme of Scotlande.* The *Epistle* is a remarkable and complex document in which are contained three broad arguments for union. In the first case, the Scots had agreed by treaty to the marriage: thus insofar as 'any man maie rightfully make battaill, for his espouse', so 'by Gods Lawe' the English 'hath the better parte' in this war. Moreover, heavenly intent was manifest in the conjunction of events whereby Edward and Mary stood able to be married to each other: 'If GOD hymself should speake, what could he speake more then he speaketh in these?'.

Secondly, the Scots had no alternative to union. Either they gave in to the English or they would have to call in the French and end up surrendering their laws, liberties, names — and their wives' and daughters' chastities — to them. On the one hand, the *Epistle* trenchantly reminded its readers: 'Be we not in the bowels now of the realme? Haue we not a greate parte there of either in subieccion, or in amitie and loue?' On the other hand, enlisting French aid — just what was happening in February 1548 — would bring confusion. 'That succour is your detriment, the victory so had, is your servitude'. Conquest, the *Epistle* dolefully warned the Scots, 'commeth vpon you whether you will or no'.

Despite such sombre injunctions, the *Epistle* had a third, more attractive element, the argument that union was in the best interests of Scotland. What had been the result of the past two and a half centuries of constant warfare between the two kingdoms? Scotland five times conquered by England, numerous kings of Scots captured
and held prisoner or killed. Moreover, the English would not change any laws nor subvert the realm; they sought 'equalitie': not conquest but a marriage: they wished not to be lords but rather to be friends. They fight this war to 'ioyne in mariage from high to low, bothe the realmes, to make of one Isle one realme, in love, amitie, concorde, peace, and Charitie'. To prove the point, the Epistle offered that any Scot who aided the English could henceforth trade in England 'without any trouble and vexacion...as liberally and as frely...then Englishmen'. Union is so sensible: 'Of all the nacions in the worlde, that nacioun onely Scotland, beside England, speaketh the same language'. Let us join 'like as twoo brethren of one Islande of greate Britayn'.

The Epistle was the high water mark of the English propaganda campaign. Although more tracts were to be published, none attempted to induce the Scots to fight for the 'golden and godlie marriage'. With French troops pouring into Scotland by the summer of 1548, Scots were deserting the English in droves, and Mary was sent to France by August. Although the war would continue for eighteen more months, it was beginning to be lost, a fact Somerset's government recognised by deliberately choosing not to print any more tracts aimed at the Scots.

What had the English hoped to accomplish by these tracts? Clearly they hoped that in conjunction with their occupation of the south-east of the country, with their encouragement to the reformed religion and with the lavish rewards paid to those who chose to collaborate, the tracts would encourage still more Scots to join with them and thereby weaken Arran's government to the point that it gave into England's demand for the marriage.

Certainly every effort was made to insure that the tracts were circulated within Scotland. The proclamation of 4 September 1547 got into the hands of a number of Scots and copies were affixed to the doors of both St. Giles in Edinburgh and Glasgow cathedral; copies were read aloud in Dumfries and Dundee. The Scottish government was so alarmed that it forbade any to read, under pain of death, Somerset's proclamation 'set furth in prent in Scotland to seduce the harttis of the pepill to his openyoun'. The Epistle was given even a wider circulation: four editions were printed (two in Latin); copies were distributed to Scots during the February and April 1548 invasions; two hundred and sixty copies were sent to the
WAR AND PROPAGANDA

south-west for circulation; one copy was especially sent to Arran.\textsuperscript{17}

However, the important question is what effect did this propaganda actually have? With respect to the Scots, it is doubtful that many were seriously moved by it. English commanders reported that the audiences to which they read them all mumbled assent, but one would hardly expect otherwise.\textsuperscript{18} That any Scot collaborated because of the flood of arguments in print is fairly dubious. Fear of being attacked by an English force should they not collaborate, 'the feele of the whypp', was a much more potent inducement. One Scot dismissed the English tracts with the pithy assessment, 'Realmis ar nocht conquest be buiks, but rather be bluid'.\textsuperscript{19} Nonetheless, that very commentator had penned a violent attack on the English doubtless prompted by the English tracts, and it too was put into print, \textit{The Complaynt of Scotland}. Another Scot, William Lamb, was in the process of refuting both the \textit{Declaration} and the \textit{Epistle} in his 'Ane Resonyng of ane Scottis and English merchand betwix zeland and lions' when the war ended in 1550, at folio 21.\textsuperscript{20}

As for the English, the effects of the propaganda were various. For a time it would seem that the English themselves believed it. Scots who did collaborate were rewarded, protected and encouraged. Commanders in the field and statesmen abroad echoed its sentiments and spoke in glowing terms of the benefits to England and to Europe of the godly marriage.\textsuperscript{21} However, by the summer of 1548, with the war steadily going against them, they reverted to a more natural and easy pose: the Scots were rebels and deserved only an 'extreme plage with fiar and sword'.\textsuperscript{22}

The brief campaign did encourage others to write in support of Anglo-Scottish union. William Thomas, a noted English humanist, and embezzler, wrote of how in Italy he had defended English policy in terms similar to Somerset's.\textsuperscript{23} John Mardeley, a clerk in the mint, prepared a long poem complaining of 'the Ingratytube of our Countramen the scottes', arguing in this charming verse:

\begin{quote}
But come to the fountain and holesome spring
which is noble Edward our most Royal king
and fre without boundage with us to remaigne
As in one hole kingdom called great breataigne.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

The government also tried to make the idea of union with Scotland
WAR AND PROPAGANDA

popular in England, through its sponsorship of accounts of the war, especially William Patten's diary of the Pinkie campaign, through yet another tract on union, An Epitome of the title that the Kynges Maiestie of Englane, bath to the soveraigntie of Scotlande and A prayer for victorie and peace, read in English parish churches in mid-1548. The prayer was most effusive, asking God to ensure 'That the Scottish menn and wee might forever and hereafter in love and amitie, knit into one nation'.

Graunt, O Lorde, that thesame might go forward and that our sonnes sonnes, and al our posteritie hereafter, maie fele the benefite and commoditie of thy greate gyft of vnitie, graunted in our daies.

The English tracts did, incidentally, get abroad where they were at least read by protestants with approbation, to the point that a printer in the city of Erfurt, then sorely pressed by a victorious Charles v, printed a translation of the Epistle. However, the 'rough wooing' was not to be won in the pulpits of central Germany, any more than in the pulpits of central London.

It would seem then that the propaganda campaign of the 'rough wooing' had little effect and that perhaps it should be dismissed as a charming example of the naive belief of the English government that Scotland's conquest could even be assisted by 'buikis'. Although it was in 1548 that the term 'Great Britain' first appeared in print, as a result of this campaign, it is well known that Englishmen were not to have any affection for the title either in 1604, when James VI and I proposed that his royal style be altered to it, or in the 20th century, when to refer to the UK as GB or to call its inhabitants 'British' is either the oddity of international vehicle registration abbreviations or the quaint usage of American tourists.

However, one can see attitudes being formed as a result of this propaganda, attitudes which were to have a long-term consequence. Sir William Cecil, Elizabeth's great advisor, first came into contact with Scotland during the 'rough wooing' as a secretary to Somerset. When he began to deal with Scotland in 1559, many of his pronouncements directly echoed the sentiments of the propaganda and he was to argue that peace and union with England would lead to Scotland's 'wordly felicitie'. The wars with England had clearly hurt
WAR AND PROPAGANDA

Scotland, especially in that area of the country, the south, where the propaganda was most widely circulated. Perhaps the words of the tracts did impress Scots there and led them especially to celebrate James vi’s accession to the English throne in 1603 as bringing 'an end to all strife and bloodshed'.

MARCUS MERRIMAN

University of Lancaster

1 All the standard texts lay varying stress on this aspect, e.g. A.G. Dickens, The English Reformation, (1664), ad indices. But in particular, see G.R. Elton, Policy and Police (1972). See also H.S. Bennett, English Books and Readers 1475 to 1557 (Cambridge 1952). For two new accounts see C.S.L. Davies, Peace, Print and Protestantism, 1450-1558 (1977) and G.R. Elton, Reform and Reformation (1977).

2 Again, background literature is profuse although not always is it satisfactory: J.J. Scarisbrick, Henry viii, (1968), 424-45 passim; R.B. Wernham, Before the Armada (1966), 149-78. For the best account, see G. Donaldson, Scotland: James v — James vii, (1965), ch. 5.


4 A story which still needs telling well; R.K. Marshall, Mary of Guise (1977), does not do so.


7 Short Title Catalogue (hereafter stc), no. 9179. Most of the tracts were reprinted in The Complaynt of Scotlannde, ed. J.A.H. Murray, E.E.T.S. (1872-73). This one is at 191-206.

8 Statutes of the Realm, iii, 938; see also LP, xviii (1) no. 402, 9 LP, xix (1), nos. 231 (2.3), 389 (3). Although cf. Complaynt, 241.

10 STC, no. 12857 (Complaynt, 208-36).


12 STC, nos. 9181, 22268 (Complaynt, 237-46) and stc, nos. 9180, 22269.

13 See below at footnotes 24 and 25.

14 The best example is Henderson’s radical 'The Godlie and Golden Booke to peace and union' (Cal. State Papers relating to Scotland, i, no. 285) of July 1548.

15 Ibid., nos. 34 and 37.

16 Treasurer’s Accounts, ix, 110.

17 CSP Scot., i, nos. 156, 168; Cal. State Papers, Domestic Elizabeth and Addenda, 1547-65, 360-61.

18 Ibid., 360; CSP Scot., i, nos. 156, 168.

19 Complaynt, 82.
WAR AND PROPAGANDA

21 E.g., J. Hooper, *A Declaration of the ten holy commandements* (Zurich, 1548) fos. Aii-Aiii (STC, no. 13746).
22 For one of many examples, see *Mary of Lorraine Correspondence* (Scot. Hist. Soc., 1927), 278.
23 British Library, MS Harl., 353, fo. 31v.
26 STC, no. 16503.
27 A copy is in the British Library, shelf mark 597, d. 26.
29 CSP Scot., i, no. 536.