Jacobitism and Anti-Jacobitism in the British Atlantic World, 1688-1727

Review Number: 2248

Publication date: Thursday, 31 May, 2018

Author: David Parrish

ISBN: 9780861933419

Date of Publication: 2017

Price: £50.00

Pages: 199pp.

Publisher: Royal Historical Society

Publisher url: <https://boydellandbrewer.com/jacobitism-and-anti-jacobitism-in-the-british-atlantic-world-1688-1727>

Place of Publication: London

Reviewer: Simon Lewis

Many years ago, J. H. Overton drew a fine line between Non-Jurors on the one hand and Jacobites on the other. The former, according to Overton, were 'in no active sense of the term Jacobites' because they were 'content to live peacefully and quietly without a thought of disturbing the present government'. Overton was correct in the sense that relatively few Non-Jurors actively participated in Jacobite conspiracies and revolts. (1) In today's Western society, we place relatively little emphasis on oath-swearing. It is therefore easy to underestimate the feelings and emotions which surrounded a person's status as a Non-Juror during the 18th century. A refusal to swear the oaths of allegiance was tantamount to saying that the individual occupying the English, Scottish or, ultimately, British throne had no right to be there. As Paul Monod argues convincingly, the Non-Jurors were 'Jacobites by definition'. Moreover, their 'political statement' was a 'very strong' one. (2) Thus, it is unsurprising that Non-Jurors faced much opposition during the 18th century. Of course, a willingness to take the required oaths did not always mean that one was freed from suspicions of Jacobitism. Throughout the 1710s and 1720s, there was considerable overlap between the political and religious agendas of Jacobites and conforming Tories. Thus, to many Whig politicians and clergymen, conforming Tories were simply Jacobites in disguise (an accusation which sometimes proved to be true). (3)

This relationship – or perceived relationship – between Toryism and Jacobitism is at the heart of David Parrish's refreshing monograph. In this study, Parrish describes Jacobitism as something which was perceived as an ever-present, lingering, threat throughout the American colonies. Much of this anti-Jacobite hysteria was triggered by events in Britain, and it is these transatlantic connections which Parrish is keen to highlight. Indeed, the notion of a transatlantic 'public sphere' – in which news of political conflicts between Tories and Whigs was exchanged across the British Atlantic world – is central to Parrish's discussions. But were these accusations of Jacobitism simply imagined? While Parrish concedes that Jacobite rebellions and conspiracies were virtually absent in America, he does not take this to mean that the colonies were devoid of Jacobite ideas and expressions. Rather than viewing colonial Jacobitism as an imagined Catholic 'other', which contributed towards a transatlantic Protestant identity, Parrish illuminates the ways in which Jacobitism – in its broadest sense – operated as 'part of the transatlantic political culture bound by a series of shared words, images and forms of behaviour' (p. 3). Through a series of informative case studies, Parrish explores the ways in which Jacobitism was expressed in the colonies, and the reactions which such

expressions generated. These case studies are, in many ways, a succession of conflicts between Non-Juring and High Church colonists on one side, and Low Church/Dissenting colonists on the other. Therefore, Parrish's discussions also serve to highlight the highly fractured and disparate nature of Protestantism in the 18th-century British Atlantic world.

The first three chapters focus on specific themes. The first chapter explores party politics. It succeeds in its aim to illuminate Jacobitism and anti-Jacobitism as 'linking elements' which, by the start of the 18th century, joined disparate political cultures throughout the British Atlantic world (p. 14). A focus of this chapter is the theme of seditious expressions, and the ways in which individuals expressed Jacobitism in relatively subtle manners. Importantly, Parrish notes that Jacobitism was something which transcended social, as well as spatial, boundaries. The fact that pirates and criminals sometimes utilised 'Jacobite cant and seditious words' shows that 'the language of party politics and seditious words were an essential aspect of British Atlantic culture even as far down the social scale as plebeian criminals' (p. 19). Elsewhere, it is noted that political victories and defeats in Britain often had a direct impact on colonial affairs. Colonial governors were usually appointed by patrons in Britain. For instance, the appointment of Richard Coote, Lord Bellomont, as governor of New York and Massachusetts resulted from the Whig victory in 1696. Bellomont, an Irish Protestant and Williamite, was seen by the Whigs as a safe pair of hands, who would take a hard line against Tory/Jacobite colonists. Yet, when their patrons lost their political positions, colonial governors were instantly occupying a hostile environment. Shortly before the Tory victory of 1710, Robert Lowther was appointed governor of Barbados by the Whig Lord Treasurer Godolphin. Thus, Lowther became an almost instant target for the island's Tory colonists, who understood that his patronage had ended.

Chapter two provides a concise but informative introduction to the crucial relationship between Jacobitism and religion. The reviewer was particularly interested in Parrish's discussions of the relationship between Quakerism and Jacobitism. Under James II, Quakers had enjoyed a period of relative toleration. Such toleration, inevitably, fuelled suspicions that Quakers were Jacobite spies. There were traces of truth in this accusation. Indeed, William Penn's friendship with James II is said to have persisted during the latter's exile. Parrish acknowledges the unlikelihood that 'many Quakers in the colonies were Jacobites' (p. 41). Yet, as Parrish argues convincingly, the fact that so many colonial Quakers were charged with Jacobitism illustrates the transatlantic nature of anti-Jacobite stereotypes. Paradoxically, it was High Church Anglicans and Scottish Episcopalians – two groups who were resolutely opposed to Quakerism – who usually met with charges of Jacobitism. Where the former was 'increasingly aligned' with Toryism throughout the 18th century (p. 45), the latter had been 'forced into nonjuring following the refusal of the Scottish bishops to swear the required oaths of allegiance' (p. 46). All this information sets the scene for Parrish's subsequent discussions, which focus on the ways in which these religious identities played out in the colonies.

Central to Parrish's discussions is the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), which was founded in 1701. Parrish notes that, in Britain, the SPG had a diverse membership, which included prominent Whigs, such as White Kennett, and Non-Jurors, such as Robert Nelson. Nevertheless, many of the clergymen who chose to undertake missionary work for the SPG had strong High Church Tory sympathies. Unsurprisingly, many of these SPG missionaries were Scottish Episcopalians, who were unable to find employment closer to home. Intriguingly, a shortage of Anglican clergymen in the colonies meant that, in their desperation, the vestries of vacant parishes sometimes resorted to accepting Non-Juring ministers, who were unlicensed. After 1710 – the year of Henry Sacheverell's trial, and a decisive Tory victory in Parliament – SPG missionaries increasingly believed that the established Church would provide a sympathetic ear for their grievances. SPG missionaries in New England were particularly keen to describe their alleged experiences of persecution in Congregationalist strongholds. Reactions to such news were mixed in Britain. To High Church Tory divines, stories of SPG missionaries being persecuted by Dissenting colonists only fuelled their belief that their Church was in danger. On the other hand, to Low Church and Dissenting Whigs, such stories merely confirmed their belief that SPG missionaries were predominantly High Church fanatics, who were intentionally stirring up anti-Dissenter sentiments in the colonies. Parrish closes this chapter with some insightful discussions of the survival and persistence of Roman Catholicism in

the colonies. As one would expect, this Catholic-Jacobite presence was at its strongest in Maryland, where some of Lord Baltimore's circle remained (though, as Parrish notes, Catholicism maintained a visible presence in other locations, such as Pennsylvania and Antigua).

Chapter Three makes an original contribution to the growing scholarship on eighteenth-century transatlantic print networks by focusing on the ways in which Jacobitism and anti-Jacobitism played out in the public sphere. As Parrish argues convincingly, the public sphere 'provides an excellent foundation and framework for understanding the communication of both Jacobitism and anti-Jacobitism in the British Atlantic' (p. 70). News about Jacobite rebellions and conspiracies spread throughout the colonies. Indeed, items from London newspapers were often reprinted in colonial newspapers. Unlike newspapers in England, colonial newspapers 'did not exhibit the same clear Whig or Tory partisan divisions' (p. 79). Some newspapers, such as the *New England Courant*, were particularly keen to stress their impartiality. Nevertheless, as Parrish notes, colonial newspapers sometimes conveyed a sense of partisanship through their selection of items from London newspapers. Of course, colonial newspapers did much more than simply relay news from Britain. Rather, newspapers provided colonists with a forum to voice their own ideas and opinions.

Unsurprisingly, it was rare to see overt Jacobite views being expressed in colonial newspapers. Considerably more common, however, was the use of colonial newspapers as an anti-Jacobite tool, which enabled colonists to expose their allegedly subversive neighbours. For example, Parrish draws attention to a 1722 issue of the *American Weekly Mercury*, in which an anonymous Pennsylvania layman attempted to expose his minister as a Jacobite. The most fascinating aspect of this chapter, however, is undoubtedly Parrish's discussions of almanacs – a topic which, as he rightly states, has not 'been examined as part of a Jacobite subculture' (p. 87). In England, Tory authors, such as George Parker, published almanacs, which celebrated Whig defeats and commemorated the deaths of High Church martyrs, such as William Laud. In America, this was mirrored in the almanacs of Daniel Leeds, a New York colonist, who converted from Quakerism to Anglicanism. Leeds's almanacs, like Parker's, highlighted such dates as 30 January (King Charles I's execution) and 29 May (restoration of the monarchy).

The latter three chapters focus specifically on individual colonies. Chapter four focuses on Jacobitism and anti-Jacobitism in South Carolina. In addition to being a plantation society, South Carolina was a proprietary colony until 1719. While the proprietors wielded much influence on religious affairs, they were not a politically homogeneous group – quite the opposite, in fact. Indeed, the proprietors lacked any political unity, meaning that battles between Whig and Tory colonists were common. One individual who features particularly in this chapter is Sir Nathaniel Johnson, who, after a period as governor of the Leeward Islands, served as governor of South Carolina between 1703 and 1709. While Johnson had been a Non-Juror throughout William's reign, he agreed to swear the oaths of allegiance upon the accession of Anne. Unsurprisingly, Johnson's tenure as governor was characterised by a High Church zeal, and a desire to quash Protestant Dissent.

In 1704, Johnson passed a Test Act, which prohibited those who refused to receive the Anglican sacrament of communion from serving in public office. As Parrish notes, the fact that this legislation was based on anti-Dissenter laws in England provides further evidence of the transatlantic nature of these religious disputes. Inevitably, Johnson's Dissenting and Whig enemies often alluded to his Jacobite history. Intriguingly, Johnson and his allies subsequently deployed the charge of Jacobitism in their attacks on a rival High Church faction which was led by Edward Marston, an Anglican divine of Charleston, and former Non-Juror. Marston's dispute with Johnson rested on the latter's support for an Establishment Act (1704), which stipulated that a lay commission should have the authority to dismiss negligent or scandalous ministers. Crucially, by illuminating this dispute, Parrish has shown that the charge of Jacobitism was something which High Church Tories were happy to hurl at each other. Johnson's removal as governor in 1709 did not prevent the growth of a 'Tory political culture which often looked suspiciously like Jacobitism' (p. 114). Often, such sentiments were prevalent among the laity. For instance, Parrish draws attention to a 1715–16 incident, in which a leading vestryman launched a campaign against his incumbent, whom he deemed to be too Low Church.

Chapter five discusses the ways in which these accusations of Jacobitism played out in the Mid-Atlantic colonies. Up until the accession of Queen Anne, much of the Middle Colonies were a Dissenting stronghold. Where Quakerism had continued to dominate Pennsylvania, New York was characterised by its 'ethnic diversity' (p. 120). Yet, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, things started to change. In 1702, Edward Hyde, Lord Cornbury, was appointed governor of both New York and New Jersey. A staunch Tory and High Churchman, Cornbury encouraged the growth of Anglicanism in the Middle Colonies. One colonial clergyman who complemented Cornbury's vision, was John Talbot, an SPG missionary, who subsequently became a Non-Juring bishop. A fierce opponent of Quakerism, Talbot particularly admired the anti-Quaker writings of the Irish Jacobite, Charles Leslie. Unsurprisingly, such sentiments were decidedly unpopular in a region in which Protestant Dissenters had traditionally flourished. Indeed, Cornbury faced contempt from Whigs on both sides of the Atlantic. Such hostility ultimately contributed towards his removal from office in 1708. Robert Hunter, an ardent Whig, who served as governor of New York and New Jersey between 1710 and 1720, was considerably more sympathetic towards the plight of Dissenters.

As Parrish argues convincingly, the backlash which resulted from Hunter's Low Church sympathies needs to be viewed as part of a wider, transatlantic, campaign to portray the Church of England as an institution which was in grave danger. During the early 1710s, Hunter sided with the predominantly Low Church vestry of Jamaica, Long Island, which had refused to pay the salary of their newly appointed incumbent, Thomas Poyer, a staunch High Churchman. Hunter also apparently failed to act quickly when vandals ruined the clerical robes of William Vesey, a Tory High Church divine of New York, who was appointed commissary of the colony in 1715. Hunter's other controversial measures included the passing of an act, which enabled Quakers to 'affirm rather than take an oath' (p. 127), and the publication of a satirical play, in which he mocked his High Church adversaries. Parrish's attention to the transatlantic nature of these disputes is evidenced further by his discussions of the 1715 Jacobite rebellion, and how it enabled Hunter to fuel anti-Jacobite hysteria in the Middle Colonies. Intriguingly, it was because of events in England and Scotland that some High Churchmen in the Middle Colonies, such as Vesey, began to distance themselves from the 'Church in danger' outcries which were commonly associated with Jacobitism.

The transatlantic dimensions to these controversies are elucidated further in the final chapter, which explores the New England colonies. Centre stage in this chapter is John Checkley, a Boston bookseller, who was arguably the staunchest advocate of High Church Tory principles in New England. Checkley's tactics included a 1719 republication of an anti-Deist work by Charles Leslie. While Leslie's anti-Deist sentiments would have been agreeable to Boston Congregationalists, these Puritan colonists would have noted the provocative agenda behind Checkley's republication of a Non-Juror's work. More explicit was the inclusion, in an appendix, of a letter written by the first-century apostolic father, Ignatius of Antioch, which advocated episcopal government. This publication, in turn, led the Boston authorities to request that Checkley swear the oaths of allegiance as proof that he was not a Jacobite. Parrish does not underestimate the severity of

Checkley's refusal to take the oaths. He argues persuasively that, 'by refusing the oaths, Checkley was tacitly acknowledging the exiled Stuarts' right to the throne' (p. 152). Also, by showing that Checkley's network of contacts extended to conforming High Church Tories in England, such as Zachary Grey, Parrish complements the recent work of Richard Sharp, who has similarly illuminated examples of friendship and cooperation which transcended this divide.[\(4\)](#)

Other fascinating discussions include a description of a controversy which erupted in 1721 over the issue of smallpox inoculations. This dispute, as Parrish shows, became a 'party controversy' between Congregationalists and Tory High Churchmen, the latter of whom were perceived by the former as being the primary opponents of inoculations (p. 155). There was an element of truth in this stereotype. As Parrish shows, it was a group of Anglicans who published an attack on inoculations in an issue of the *New England Courant*. As ever, this stereotype was fuelled by events in England, where High Church Tories were similarly viewed as the main antagonists against inoculations.

Parrish's concluding chapter stresses several key points. First, it stresses that Jacobitism remained an integral aspect of 'political culture and religious controversies' across the British Atlantic world between the 1688–9 revolution and 1727, the year in which George I died (p. 166). While Jacobitism in America did not consist of rebellions and conspiracies, it did manifest itself in aspects of colonial Toryism. The fact that colonial political divisions often interacted with and were informed by events in Britain forms the second part of Parrish's conclusion. More specifically, Parrish argues that analysing Jacobitism and anti-Jacobitism in a transatlantic context illuminates the 'vibrancy of political and religious exchanges in the British Atlantic world' (p. 166). Such exchanges were enabled by the growing emergence of a transatlantic public sphere, in which news was disseminated through pamphlets, sermons and, most notably, newspapers – a relatively new medium. Following the exposure of the Atterbury plot in 1722, the fate of the Tory party was sealed for a generation. According to Parrish, it was because of this new Whig hegemony that anti-Jacobitism had, by the late 1720s, largely shifted from being anti-Tory and anti-High Church to being 'virulently anti-Catholic' (p. 170). While the reviewer does not doubt that there is much truth in this argument, it was certainly not unusual to see Low Church and Dissenting Whigs linking Jacobitism with High Church Anglicanism after this point. Indeed, later anti-Jacobite pamphleteers often combined attacks on 'popery' with attacks on High Church 'fanaticism'. For instance, in one of the most famous attacks on 18th-century Methodism, George Lavington, the Whig bishop of Exeter, portrayed John Wesley as a 'popish' High Church fanatic, whose alleged crypto-Jacobitism was evidenced by his prayers for the dead. This 'popish' practice, Lavington noted, was something which Wesley had acquired from his association with Thomas Deacon, a Manchester Jacobite.[\(5\)](#)

Since Parrish's emphasis is on the 'public sphere', it is inevitable that much of his primary source material consists of printed pamphlets and newspapers. Nevertheless, Parrish is to be applauded for consulting an extensive range of manuscript sources, including the Fulham colonial papers at Lambeth Palace Library, the SPG correspondence in the Weston Library, Oxford (formerly housed in Rhodes House Library), and the National Archives, Kew. One very minor criticism is that, by devoting the first three chapters to themes and the latter three chapters to locations, Parrish does, occasionally, repeat information which appeared earlier (though it could be argued that this serves to remind the reader of earlier discussions).

Parrish's monograph is a laudable achievement. By illuminating the ways in which Jacobitism and anti-Jacobitism operated as part of a transatlantic 'public sphere', it makes a valuable and original contribution to the growing literature on the exiled Stuarts and their supporters. It speaks not only to historians of Jacobitism, but also to those whose focus is on other spheres of 18th-century history, including: print culture, colonial America, religion, and politics. While the book is aimed predominantly at an academic readership, its great clarity makes it accessible to a much wider audience. Anybody with an interest in Jacobitism and/or ecclesiastical politics in 18th-century America will undoubtedly find it to be an informative and enjoyable read.

Notes

1. J. H. Overton, *The Nonjurors: Their Lives, Principles, and Writings* (London, 1902), p. 14.[Back to \(1\)](#)
2. Paul K. Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688–1788* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 139.[Back to \(2\)](#)
3. For the relationship between Jacobitism and Toryism, see Daniel Szechi, *Jacobitism and Tory Politics, 1710–1714* (Edinburgh, 1984). The case of Francis Atterbury, the bishop of Rochester – who was arrested and charged with conspiring in a treasonous plot to restore the Stuarts in 1722 – was the most notable example of crypto-Jacobitism among ‘conforming’ Tories. For more on the Atterbury Plot, see G.V. Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State, 1688–1730: The Career of Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester* (Oxford, 1975).[Back to \(3\)](#)
4. Richard Sharp, ‘Our Common Mother, the Church of England’: Nonjurors, High Churchmen, and the evidence of subscription lists’, in *Loyalty and Identity: Jacobites at Home and Abroad*, ed. Paul K. Monod, Murray Pittock and Daniel Szechi (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 167–79.[Back to \(4\)](#)
5. [George Lavington], *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared. Part II* (London, 1749), pp. 166–7.[Back to \(5\)](#)

Source URL:<https://reviews.history.ac.uk/review/2248>

Links

[\[1\] https://reviews.history.ac.uk/item/296079](https://reviews.history.ac.uk/item/296079)