

Geoffrey Smith. *Royalist Agents, Conspirators and Spies: Their Role in the British Civil Wars, 1640-1660*. Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011. xi + 282 pp. + 3 Maps. \$114.95. TY M. REESE, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA.

This book begins and ends with Daniel O'Neill, a crafty Royalist agent whose strong survival skills, along with a host of other characteristics, allowed him to endure, with a few short prison stays, the British Civil Wars while working for the Royalist cause. O'Neill is but one of the numerous agents, conspirators and spies that Geoffrey Smith examines and whose actions and use by the Royalists leaders provide further insight into understanding the Royalist response to the events of this tumultuous period. For the author, O'Neill provides the cohesiveness to his work as he both survived and thrived, thereby providing a constant within the changing world of Royalist agents.

The importance of this work lies in its examination of the spies, agents and others who supported the Royalist cause throughout the British Civil Wars. The work, part of a growing trend in examining the other side of the Civil Wars, that of the Royalist cause, provides important insight into understanding how the crown reacted to the events of this period and how the factional nature of Royalist support created problems. Smith clearly illustrates how this "secret world" (3) of Royalist agents worked to sustain the Royalist cause. He argues, and clearly demonstrates, that as the political and military supporters of the crown became increasingly unable to protect the crown, through either a decisive military or political victory, the role of agents and spies increased in importance. Overall, the book provides insight into how the factional nature of the Royalist cause, mainly the competition between crown supporters for the favor of the king, created a varied, competing and problematic system of plots and policies. Many of these agents were drawn into the innumerable courts factions, and because of this, they came to compete against one another. Another problem discussed by Smith involved the lack of an individual granted the authority to oversee their actions. The closest to this was the secretary of state, Sir Edward Nicholas, but Smith shows that because of the multitude of issues that Nicholas faced, he could not control and direct the royalist agents; but his papers are

still important to this work. Because of this, the agents needed to find supporters within the royalist camp; for O'Neill this was James Butler, the Marquess of Ormond. Beyond the problems faced by the agents, Smith explores who these agents were. Primarily, the agents were employed as courtiers whose primary job was to deliver letters. Beyond this, they disseminated propaganda, worked to maintain open lines of communication, actively gathered intelligence, and occasionally they conspired. The men and women who became agents came from a variety of professions and backgrounds. O'Neill was a swordsman and courtier while others, such as Edmund Waller, were contemporary literary figures and some, such as Dr. John Barwick, were important members of the Anglican clergy. Beyond these figures from a more elite society were members of the general population. One example was David Kniveton, a haberdasher from Lugate Hill who was executed for being a spy. A final group who acted as agents and spies were women, with Jane Whorwood being one of the most well-established. The thing that tied all of them together was their loyalty to the Royalist cause.

Smith approaches his subject by dividing his work into ten narrative chapters that are each focused upon important events surrounding the Royalist cause from 1640-60. These chapters, which explore the endless array of victories and defeats, plots and counterplots, battles and conspiracies, and the immediate consequences of the Restoration, create specific opportunities through the major events to allow Smith to examine his subjects. The early chapters, which culminate in the execution of Charles I, work to place the agents and their activities within the war. The first chapter uses the Army Plots to establish the agents and their activities and to argue that the British Civil Wars were perfect for these types of individuals because of the intrigues involved. He also demonstrates in these early chapters the problems that the multitude of factions within the Royalist camp caused for these agents. Within this, Smith demonstrates that the majority of these individuals were not professional spies; rather, through a variety of reasons, most especially their support of the Royalists cause, they found themselves carrying letters or propaganda or even plotting to execute Cromwell. The execution of Charles I, the new place of Charles II, and the military and political defeat of the Royalist cause, the

subjects of chapters four and five, create important changes for these agents that Smith thoroughly explores. First, there was no longer a centralized court and thus a disbursement of agents and Royalists supporters occurred, thereby making their job more difficult. Beyond this, with Charles II becoming the new figurehead of the Royalist cause, the factionalism continued as individuals competed for his favor. The next few chapters deal with the royalists responses to Cromwell and the Commonwealth and the various plots to return the monarchy to power—often through the proposed execution of Cromwell. The book ends with the Restoration and the attempt by the Royalist agents to be awarded for their continued and dangerous service. Here, O'Neill became a groom within Charles II's bedchamber.

Smith has produced a work that provides important insight into the Royalist cause during the British Civil Wars, especially how the factions/rivalries within the court hindered the cause and how the agents, because of this factionalism, relied upon patrons to protect their position. Because of this, there was not a unified Royalist cause; rather, various groups saw individual opportunities within supporting the King. The work is solid and straightforward and works to expand our understanding of the other side of the British Civil Wars.

Francesco Benigno. *Mirrors of Revolution: Conflict and Political Identity in Early Modern Europe*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010. x + 334 pp. € 70.00. Review by THOMAS WORCESTER, COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS.

Most of this book was first published in the 1990s as articles and/or as a book, in Italian. The research is thus rather dated, with few references in this heavily footnoted work much less than fifteen or twenty years old. The book surely reflects the political context of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, and it was in part inspired by various “revisionist” interpretations of Communism and the Russian Revolution. But Benigno's focus is on revolutions of the seventeenth century, and he makes a solid case for approaching them comparatively. More specifically, he examines in detail more or less contemporary revolutions of the 1640s: especially the English Civil