

Thomason has dated the following 'Aprill 1643.' and noted that it is written 'By HENRY PARKER, Esq.'

To the High Court of PARLIAMENT:

The humble Remonstrance of the Company of *Stationers*, LONDON.

SHEWETH,



That the Mystery and Art of Printing is of publike and great Importance, and ought to be held worthy of extraordinary regard and consideration, in all well-govern'd States. *China* having had the use of Printing and Guns, long before they were invented in *Europe*, makes no doubt to magnifie her self, as seeing with two Eyes; whereas *Europe* (as she pretends) sees but with one. And in *Europe* the more civill and knowing each Countrey is, the more carefully they provide for the prosperity of this ingenious Craft, and it were strange if they should not; for as Learning must needs make us favour Printing, so Printing is a great means to advance

Learning amongst us. But *France* especially is famous for the value she sets upon that Profession and Trade of men (whom we in *England* incorporate by the name of Stationers) for there they are priviledged above meer Mechanicks, and honoured with a habitation, as it were, in the Suburbs of Literature it self.

The like reason also which makes Printing, &c. favoured and promoted in generous Countries where Learning is esteemed, renders it odious amongst Barbarians, where superstition and darknesse is affected. *Muscovy* professes enmity to Printing, and so does *Turkie*, for Learning's sake: And therefore the setting up of a Greek Presse at *Constantinople*, sent thither out of *England*, had like to have cost CYRILLUS the Patriarke there his Life, and the Greeks their fatall Ruine. [RICHARD KNOWLES] *Turkish history*, page 1491. [Ed. 1638.]

Neverthesse, it is not meere Printing, but well ordered Printing that merits so much favour and respect, since in things precious and excellent, the abuse (if not prevented) is commonly as dangerous, as the use is advantagious. *Germany* had the happy Sagacity to invent Presses, Watches, &c. yet now, for want of reglement, her reputation is lost in those Manufactures, a German Impression, or Watch, *eo nomine*, is undervalued. In the United-Provinces also, there are not above three or foure Eminent and rich Printers by reason of ill order, and were it not for the great Stocks of Moneyes which enable those men to print the greater Volumes, and of more generall use, that Trade would there also further decay. And commonly where Printing droops, and Printers grow poor by neglect of Government, there errors and heresies abound, also by the same neglect as in *Poland*, and some parts of the Netherlands is manifest, where the poyson of *Socinus* and *Arminius* spreads unregarded. We must in this give Papists their due; for as well where the Inquisition predominates, as not, regulation is more strict by far, then it is amongst Protestants; we are not so wise in our Generation, nor take so much

care to preserve the true Religion as they do the false from alteration: and for that cause not onely their Church is the more fortified, but the Art of Printing thrives, and the Artists grow rich also beyond any examples amongst us.

The first and greatest end of order in the Presse, is the advancement of wholesome knowledge, and this end is meerly publike: But that second end which provides for the prosperity of Printing and Printers, is not meerly private, partly because the benefit of so considerable a Body is of concernment to the whole; and partly because the compassing of the second end does much conduce to the accomplishing of the first, as is now to be further explained: For, upon further examination, it must needs cleerly appear, That the late decay of the Stationers (chiefly brought upon them by want of due and Politick regulation) has been an occasion of emboldning Printers to run into enormous disorders, and in the like manner the same disorders haue been a further occasion of bringing a decay upon the Company. *England* was not heretofore without a regulation in Printing, as well knowing that the publike good was very much concerned in that Art and that no act did more depend upon the publike Care. Wholesome Ordinances therefore were provided and great circumspection was used, that those Ordinances might be punctually pursued. In the 8th and 28th of Queen *Elizabeth* divers good Decrees were made; and in the fourth of Queen *Elizabeth* such Orders of the same nature as had been before in force, were revised and approved of by our Reverend Judges CATLYN and DYER [see pp. 189-190]. Also the third and fourth of *Edward* sixth; and the third of King *James*; and other Statutes need not now to be instanced in.

1. But as to the first and publike aym of regulation in Printing, &c. *Viz.* The advancement of Knowledge, &c. The main care is to appoint severe Examiners for the licensing of things profitable, and suppressing of things harmfull: and the next Care is, That the endeavours of those Examiners may not be frustrated. The Starre-Chamber, and High Commission Court is now removed, and for supply of that Government which is faln therewithall, a new Bill is to be passed in Parliament; and till that Bill can be passed, sundry good temporary Orders have been made to redresse the exorbitancies of the Presse. Neverthelesse, tis too apparent, that those Orders have not been so succesfull as was wished and expected; and since the want of successe therein, cannot be imputed to the change of Judges, or change of Laws, it must needs be imputed to the change of prosecutors. The Parliament wants no power to punish Delinquents, the Orders of the Parliament want no vigour for searching of Printers houses, and seizing, taking away and defacing the Instruments of Printing, and for punishing and imprisoning all Delinquents; onely those that are the most fit Informers, want authority and encouragement to discover offences to the Parliament, or to put in execution the Orders of Parliament.

The Stationers therefore humbly desire to represent three things to the Parliament:

(1) That the Life of all Law consists in prosecution.

(2) That in matters of the Presse, no man can so effectually prosecute, as Stationers themselves.

(3) That if Stationers at this present do not so zealously prosecute as is desired, it is to be understood, That it is partly for want of full authority, and partly for want of true encouragement.

2. In the next place also, as to the second aym of regulation, *viz.* The flourishing of Printing and Printers; the Stationers further humbly desire, That their advantage and benefit may be so far onely tendred and regarded, as it co-operates to the due ordering and reforming of the Presse; That authority and encouragement which they seek for, to engage them to activity and alacrity in this service of the State, if it be not such as is consistent with the publike good, if it be not agreeable to the Discipline of former times, if it be not vigorous and efficacious for the Reformation of Printing desired, they shall be no longer Suitors for it. As for matter of power, 'tis not the desire of the Stationers

to be solely or confusedly entrusted with the Government of the Presse: They desire no authority in order to judgement or punishment, but onely in order to prosecution of Delinquents; and that power also they desire not to have it committed to the whole Company (though that lately hath expressed a good affection to the Parliament) but to some choice Committee, nominated by the Company, and further approved and allowed by the Parliament. Neither is it the Stationers desire that this Committee of the choicest Stationers should be enabled with too vast a Latitude of making Orders to binde the whole Company in all cases whatsoever, such limits as other Companies are confined to, such as preceding Stationers have submitted to, such as are consistent with the publike good, and Laws of the Land (according to their Charters granted by severall Princes) such and no other do they aspire to. But some abuses there are likely to arise emergently, which without extraordinary provisions *pro re natá*, can scarcely be suppressed; and therefore that favour which they desire, is, That they may not be abridged of all power in this kind.

Within these last four yeers, the affairs of the Presse have grown very scandalous and enormous, and all redresse is almost impossible, if power be not given by some binding order to reduce Presses and Apprentices to the proportion of those times which did precede these last four yeers. This is so farre from an Innovation, that tis the removall of a dangerous Innovation, and without this removall, the Company of Stationers being like a feeld overpestred with too much stock, must needs grow indigent, and indigence must needs make it run into trespasses, and break out into divers unlawfull shifts; as Cattle use to do, when their pasture begins wholly to fail.

Besides the same disorder which undoes Stationers by too great multitudes of Presses and Apprentices among themselves, causes also Strangers, as Drapers, Carmen, and others to break in upon them, and set up Presses in divers obscure corners of the City, and Suburbs; so that not onely the ruine of the Company is the more hastened by it, but also the mischief, which the state suffers by the irregularity of all is the lesse remediable. *A multis quicquid peccatur, inultum est.* Where Delinquents grow too numerous, they grow out of the Eye of government; tis not possible for the Stationers themselves at this day to discover their own trespassors, and tis not possible that the State should any way haue the steering of the Presse, when Stationers cannot assist them therein.

This is of main consequence; For were there but a modest limited power in the Stationers to reduce Presses and Apprentices to a convenient number, by advice amongst themselves, the reformation of the Presse, would become a feasible thing; not onely all odious opprobrious Pamphlets of incendaries, Printed and invented at *London*, but penned in the Universities also, and re-Printed at *London* would be quashed: by the same means also, the shamefull custome of selling Pamphlets by Sempsters, &c. and dispersing them in the streets by Emissaries of such base condition; and the abuse of Printing in such despicable Letters [*type*], and base Paper, and many other exorbitancies, now offensive to the whole age, would be rectified.

3. The next thing is matter of priviledge or encouragement. As the case now stands, Stationers are so farre from having any encouragement to make them active and alacrious in the service of the state, that they cannot serve it without discouragement; and they are so farre from enjoying priviledge, that they are abridged of their ancient Right, Propriety of Copies being now almost taken away and confounded, if one Stationer preferre any Complaint against another, the Complainant shall be sure to have his Copy re-Printed out of spite, and so the ruine of himself and family, is made the reward of his zeal and forwardnesse. And to instance onely in propriety of Copies, that in some mens understanding, is the same thing as a Monop[o]ly: Though it be not so much a free privilege as a necessary right to Stationers; without which they cannot at all subsist, Yet some men except against it as a publike injury and grievance.

Nevertheless, Justice and Policy depend as much upon propriety [*i. e. individual ownership*] of some things, as upon Community of others; and 'twould as much dissolve the bonds of humane society, to lay open some benefits of nature, as to inclose others. Therefore that an orderly preservation of private Interest, and propriety in Copies is a thing many wayes beneficiall to the state, and different in nature from the engrossing, or Monopolizing some other Commodities into the hands of a few, to the producing scarcity and dearth, amongst the generality. The Stationers desire leave to offer these considerations.

(1) Books (except *the sacred Bible*) are not of such generall use and necessity, as some staple Commodities are, which feed and cloath[e] us, nor are they so perishable, or require change in keeping, some of them being once bought, remain to Childrens Children, and many of them are rarities onely and usefull only to a very few, and of no necessity to any, few men bestow more in Books then what they can spare out of their superfluties, and the gain of such as live by selling of Books is not so great, as to raise them to an equality of riches with many others of more sordid and ignoble professions. And therefore propriety in Books maintained amongst Stationers, cannot have the same effect, in order to the publike, as it has in other Commodities of more publike use and necessity.

(2) A well regulated propriety of Copies amongst Stationers, makes Printing flourish, and Books more plentifull and cheap; whereas Community (though it seeme not so, at first, to such as look lesse seriously, and intentively upon it) brings in confusion, and many other disorders both to the damage of the State and the Company of Stationers also; and this will many wayes be evidenced.

For first, If it be lawfull for all men to Print all Copies, At the same time severall men will either enviously, or ignorantly [*i. e. of the others' impressions*] Print the same thing, and so perhaps undo one another, and bring in a great waste of the Commodities, whereby the State shall be at losse, and discord, and enmities will also follow, whereby Christianity it self shall be scandalized.

Secondly, The fear of this confusion will hinder many men from Printing at all, to the great obstruction of Learning, and suppression of many excellent and worthy peeces. Doctor PRESTON, Doctor SIBB[E]s his [or rather *their*] works, a large *Concordance for the Bible*, and very many other Books of singular use and esteem, are now out of Print, and the age must still be deprived of them, for no man dares, or can with safety Print them. In other countries where regulation is strict, the Tomes and Volumes of Fathers and Schoolmen, and some Books with costly Plates, are Printed to the honour and benefit of the publike many wayes, whereas the Printing of Pamphlets is now the utmost ambition of Stationers in *England*. And even in Pamphlets too there is a great hazard, for scarce one book of three sells well, or proves gainfull to the publisher, and therefore the certaine charge of Printing being so great, and the profit so unsure, it is no policy to venture too far.

Thirdly, Confusion or Community of Copies destroyes that Commerce amongst Stationers, whereby by way of Barter and Exchange they furnish bookes without money one to another, and are enabled thereby to print with lesse hazard, and to sell to other men for lesse profit.

Fourthly, Community as it discourages Stationers, so it's a great discouragement to the Authors of Books also; Many mens studies carry no other profit or recompence with them, but the benefit [*copyright*] of their Copies; and if this be taken away, many Pieces of great worth and excellence will be strangled in the womb, or never conceived at all for the future.

Fifthly, In many cases Community will [cause] injustice, as well as discouragement; for many Families have now their Lively-hoods by Assignments of Copies, some Orphans and Widows haue no other Legacies and Dowries to depend upon: and there

is no reason apparent why the production of the Brain should not be as assignable, and their interest and possession (being of more rare, sublime, and publike use, demeriting the highest encouragement) held as tender in Law, as the right of any Goods or Chattells whatsoever.

And as these and many other are the mischiefs of Community, redounding so many severall wayes to Authors, Owners, to Printers, to the State, and to the Church, so propriety produces the contrary effects; for he that is sure of his Copy [*Copyright*], though the same cost 3 or 400^l if he cannot raise his money disbursed at the first Impression, yet being assured of benefit by after Editions, he may sell cheaper at first then he buyes, to the great ease of other men.

Besides, it will be a means to relieve the poverty of the Company of Stationers, and by that means remedy those many disorders which necessarily attend poverty; and if any disorders happen, it will animate and sharpen Stationers to be zealous in detecting them, and bringing the offenders to condign punishment:

And as this may be truely said in defence of Propriety, as it concerns private men in their Interests, so much more may be said for Propriety of such Copies as the whole Company have a Right in, the good of so many hundreds being far more considerable then the good of any particular (which cannot be reputed a Monopoly, though of common and universall use, because common to the entire Profession.) For since Propriety has been confounded, and their Interest lost in those Copies which anciently belonged to them, the whole Company (whose chief, and almost sole Revenues and support, was the annuall benefit accrewing from their Copies now Printed from them) has drooped and grown poor. It has no common stock to provide Magazines of Corn, Arms, &c. for the States necessities, nor to pay Subsidies, or other frequent Assesments, charged by Parliament; nor to maintain their poor, being many, and requiring 200^l *per annum*. And all the freehold they now have belonging to the Corporation, together with their Common-seal, lyes at this present engaged for 1500^l, borrowed lately at interest for the service of the Parliament. Nor have they so much as a Common-Hall of their own to assemble in; nor can they any longer remain incorporate, or any way priviledged by their Charter, but must immediately moulder away, and dissolve without some redresse of this irregularity.

More of propriety needs not be said, nor of any other domesticall Priviledges or Rights belonging to the Stationers.

And for forraign abuses, little need to be alleadged. Tis obvious to all, That (if we will establish a just regulation) forraign Books must be subjected to examination, as well as our own, and that all such Importation of forraign Books ought to be restrained as [it] tends to the disadvantage of our natiue Stationers. By the first of *Richard* the third, forraign Books were allowed, the manufacture of Printing being then rude, and imperfect in *England*. But by the 25 of *Henry* 8. the English being then grown more expert, for their benefit it was repealed. And in *France* where Printing eminently flourishes, if any Books be brought from *Geneva* to *Lyons*, or from *Lyons* to *Paris* Printed there [*i. e. at Geneva*], they are seized by the Searchers, and confiscate[d] without remedy; And nothing conduceth more to the flourishing of that profession there, then this rigid and severe observance of regulation.

Now therefore all these premises considered, and forasmuch as irregular Printing, hath of late been the fewell in some measure of this miserable Civill-Warre, by deceiving the multitude, and hath brought into both Church and State, sundry other mischiefs and miseries, as well as poverty and desolation upon the Corporation of Stationers. It is most humbly prayed, That some speedy course may be taken for such a perfect regulation of the Presse, as may procure the publike good of the State, by the private prosperity of the Stationers Company.

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And the whole Company shall ever pray, &c.