

various parties hoped to influence public attitudes and thereby gain popular support.

The image of the king and the promised stability of a monarchy became the focus of discussion in the press. During the interregnum the clandestine royalist press kept the role of kingship alive for the public by publications such as *Eikon Basilike* 'the *Pourtraicture of His Sacred Majestie in His Solitudes and Sufferings*'. With most copies containing a highly emblematic frontispiece of Charles I in prayer, the publication won favour in both literate and illiterate circles. The popularity of *Eikon Basilike*, much to the annoyance of the Council of State, was clearly evident in the 1650s with thirty-five editions being printed in London within a year.<sup>1</sup> Despite Milton's efforts to attack the publication in *Eikonoklastes*, interest in kingship was prevalent and by 1660 a conflation of political events, economic hardship and pamphlet literature had prepared the public for the Restoration. The printed word and rumours which circulated in the coffee houses and the streets of London endorsed the royalist appeal to the magic of kingship.

This was a period where the press was free not by statute, but by the inability of the Stationers' Company and the Council of State to censor and enforce existing legislation which would regulate the activities of the press. Although General Monck and the Council of State had taken control of the newsbooks, the *Parliamentary Intelligencer* and *Mercurius Politicus*, pamphlets were in circulation which threatened the stability of the state. Monck's brother-in-law Thomas Clarges had advised Monck to make use of the press in furthering his purposes and had recommended both Muddiman and Dury to be responsible for the printing of official news.<sup>2</sup> On 2 April 1660 Marchamont Nedham, the opportunist editor, was discharged from writing the official newsbook and the executive Council of State ordered:

That the Master and Wardens of the Stationers Company, London, be, and are hereby required to take care that no bookes of Intelligence be printed and published on Mundayes or Thursdayes weekly, other than such as are put forth by Mr. Henry Muddiman, and Mr. Giles Dury, who have an allowance in that behalf from the Council of State.<sup>3</sup>

Monck now had control of domestic and foreign news and the readers of the newsbooks were kept informed of his activities; this enhanced the general's growing esteem. From being the official organ of news which expressed anti-monarchy sentiments, the newsbooks prepared their readers for the King's return.

Booksellers and printers had enjoyed considerable freedom through most of 1659; however those openly allied to the Republican cause were threatened with arrest. As a warning to the