

*Esko Nevalainen*

## A Necessary Union with a Powerful but Divided People: The Covenant-Centred British Agenda of the Scottish Covenanters during the British Civil Wars

### Introduction

A variety of interpretations of the British Civil Wars exist, ranging from a nation-centred focus, in many cases Anglo centric as the name English Civil War implies, to studies with broader British views.<sup>1</sup> Concerning the British Civil War period, from the late 1630s to 1651, it is well-known that the Scots, as allies of the English Parliamentarians, helped to defeat the English Royalists. This alignment was realised in the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643 that united, at least outwardly, the Scottish Covenanters and the English Parliamentarians. King Charles I was executed in 1649 as a consequence of these wars, and within a few years Scotland and Ireland were conquered by the English armies and ruled by the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the Solemn League and Covenant, an Anglo-Scottish alliance based on military expediency, political pragmatism and religious faith.<sup>2</sup> Kirsteen MacKenzie's recent three kingdoms approach, with her focus on the "Covenanted interest" in the three kingdoms,<sup>3</sup> is of particular interest in

---

<sup>1</sup> One enlightening discussion on the intellectual foundations of the Civil War historiography, and also on changing theories about the causes of these wars, is in John Adamson, "Introduction: High Roads and Blind Alleys – The English Civil War and its Historiography". *The English Civil War. Conflict and Contexts, 1640–49*. Problems in Focus Series. Edited by John Adamson. Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills 2009, 1–35. Larger international and comparative perspectives in the seventeenth century relationships of the three kingdoms is outlined in Allan I. Macinnes and Jane Ohlmeyer, "Introduction: Awkward Neighbours?" *The Stuart Kingdoms in the Seventeenth Century. Awkward Neighbours*. Edited by Allan I. Macinnes and Jane Ohlmeyer. Four Courts Press, Dublin 2002, 15–35.

<sup>2</sup> Edward J. Cowan, "The Solemn League and Covenant". *Scotland and England, 1286–1815*. Edited by Roger A. Mason. John Donald Publishers Ltd., Edinburgh 1987, 183, 192.

<sup>3</sup> Kirsteen M. MacKenzie, *The Solemn League and Covenant of the Three Kingdoms and the Cromwellian Union, 1643–1663*. Routledge Research in Early Modern History. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London 2018, particularly on 1–2, 8, 13, 23, 25, 36, 43–45, 48, 50–51, 55, 62–64, 70, 75, 98–99, 201–202.



this article. Allan I. Macinnes has maintained that the Scottish Covenanters aspired to a “confederation throughout and beyond the British Isles” and tried to transform a regal union into a confederal one.<sup>4</sup> The Committee of Both Kingdoms was set up for the war’s management and military policy to conclude the two kingdom’s military alliance.<sup>5</sup> My study’s viewpoint has been to reconstruct the collective identity of the Scottish Covenanting elite through the key concepts and images of others instead of focusing on these organisational aspects of the Anglo-Scottish cooperation. The focus in this representation is on the international dimension of the Covenanting identity and particularly on its British features from 1637 to 1649, a time when the Scottish influence in the affairs of the whole archipelago was most intense. The key concepts that seem to display this international dimension and the British agenda here are various references to Britain, the international reformation scheme and pan-Protestant ideals that are revealed in the writings of some key figures among the Covenanting elite.<sup>6</sup> I stress the interconnection of these studied concepts within the reformation scheme and the Covenanting schema in order to understand the covenant-centred British agenda that the Covenanting elite so devotedly insisted on.<sup>7</sup> The Scottish image of the English is also a methodological view of the Covenanters’ identity, and it helps to understand the Scottish self-image more clearly. Space constraints meant that it was not possible for me to study the English views of the Scottish Covenanters, although it would have been a relevant task related to this theme.

I hope to show in this article that it is useful, in an aspirational sense, to discuss a British Protestant identity in regards to the Scottish Covenanters and founded to say that the Scots were “more British” than their English counterparts. The Covenanters’

---

<sup>4</sup> Allan I. Macinnes, “Covenanting Ideology in seventeenth-century Scotland”. *Political Thought in Seventeenth Century Ireland. Kingdom or Colony*. Edited by Jane H. Ohlmeyer. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2000, 192–193. See Allan I. Macinnes, “The ‘Scottish Moment’, 1638–45”. *The English Civil War. Conflict and Contexts, 1640–49*. Problems in Focus Series. Edited by John Adamson. Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills 2009, 138, 141–142; Allan I. Macinnes, *The British Confederate. Archibald Campbell. Marquess of Argyll, 1607–1661*. John Donald, Edinburgh 2011, 6, 11–12.

<sup>5</sup> John Adamson, “The Triumph of Oligarchy: the Management of War and the Committee of Both Kingdoms, 1644–1645”. *Parliament at Work. Parliamentary Committees, Political Power and Public Access in Early Modern England*. Edited by Chris R. Kyle and Jason Peacey. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge 2002, 102, 104; MacKenzie 2018, 10, 39–40.

<sup>6</sup> My attention has been particularly on Archibald Campbell, the Marquess of Argyll, Archibald Johnston, Lord Wariston, a lawyer, and members of the clergy: Alexander Henderson, Robert Baillie and Samuel Rutherford, because they were key figures who were deeply involved in the relationship between Scotland and England and defining the British agenda at the time.

<sup>7</sup> The more in-depth theoretical premises and methods of my study are represented in Esko Nevalainen, *Providential Instruments for Reformation and Liberty. The Collective Identity of the Scottish Covenanting Elite, 1637–1647*. *Studia Historica Septentrionalia* 79. Pohjois-Suomen Historiallinen Yhdistys, Rovaniemi 2018, 36–45.

image of the English could be defined as an ambivalent one, ranging from seeing them as a godly and powerful people to a wavering and weak people and reaching to the lowest points of images of an enemy. In the discourse of co-operation and disputes between the Scottish Covenanters and English Parliamentarians, the Covenanters, with their British aspirations, supplied the English with additional resources, stimulating and invigorating ideas and impulses that eventually led to revolutionary results by the English Independents. I hope this article will shed more light on the difficult cooperation between the Scottish and English Parliamentarians at the time and help increase understanding of the Covenanters' unrealized vision for a new united Britain<sup>8</sup> in its international context, its significance in the British context and the reasons for its failure.

### **From a National Agenda to a British one – A Rescue Mission for Britain**

The Scottish National Covenant of 1638 was a stout statement of the Scottish Calvinist Protestants against King Charles I's church policy, which the Covenanters labelled as English with Popish features. Their agenda emerged from their national experience and from a threat to the integrity of their Presbyterian Church. For instance, Archibald Johnston, Lord Wariston, a lawyer and the legal expert of the Scottish Covenanters, emphasised the Scottish national experience of the Reformation and Covenant in 1638. He also explained how Scotland, with the perfection of the Reformation, could be an example to other nations.<sup>9</sup> This was the sense with which the Covenanting elite increasingly identified. The Covenanters strove for a closer cooperation with England,<sup>10</sup> particularly for unification in religion and church government "...as a

---

<sup>8</sup> See Esko Nevalainen, "The Quest for a British Reformed and Covenanted Union – An Unrealized Ideal of the Scottish Covenanters' Collective Identity". *Faravid* 49/2020, 5–26.

<sup>9</sup> February 27, April 17, April 19, May 4, May 5, September 10, 1638. *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston 1632–1639*. Edited from the Original Manuscript with Notes and Introduction by George Morison Paul. Publications of the Scottish History Society. Vol. LXI. Edinburgh 1911, 321–322, 340, 347, 384. [Hereafter Wariston, *Diary*].

<sup>10</sup> Instructions from the Committee of Estates to the Scotch Commissioners appointed for the treaty at London about obtaining the Scotch demands and securing a settled peace with England November 4, 1640. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Charles I 1640–41*. Edited by William Douglas Hamilton. Reprinted by arrangement with Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, by Kraus Reprint. Ltd. Nendeln, Liechtenstein 1967, 245–246 [Hereafter CSPD]; Index of the remanent heidis contentin in the 8 demandis foor establishing of a firme and dureable peace 1641. *Memorialls of the Trubles in Scotland and in England A.D. 1624–A.D. 1645*. By John Spalding. In two volumes. Volume II. Printed for the Spalding Club. Aberdeen MDCCCL-MDCCCLI [1850–51], 11–12.

*special mean to conserve peace in His Majesty's dominions*”,<sup>11</sup> during the peace negotiations after the Bishops' Wars of 1639 and 1640, in which the Scottish Covenanting forces had defeated the King's English army. The Scottish aspirations for a closer union were not met at that stage, yet the Covenanting elite, needing security, constructed a sense of Britishness in opposition to a common Popish enemy, based on a Protestant identity.

A common Protestant cause and common, international, Roman Catholic enemy in these wars seemed to strengthen the ideal of a unified Britain when the Civil Wars erupted, first in Ireland in 1641 and then in England in 1642. The reformation of, and uniformity in religion in, all three kingdoms, “...according to the word of God, and the example of the best Reformed Churches”, was clearly stated in the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, as was the aspiration for a firmer peace and union between Scotland and England and also the emphasis on the solidarity and cohesion in the united cause.<sup>12</sup> These were part of their British agenda from the Scottish viewpoint, but the Scots' self-interest in ensuring the achievements of their “revolution” during and after the Bishops' Wars is important to remember.<sup>13</sup> Robert Baillie, one of the seminal ministers of the Covenanting Scots at the time, thought that not only was it necessary for the Scots “...to hazard their own peace” and, with compassion, to help the English in their desperate situation but also that the whole Isle of Britain was threatened.<sup>14</sup> He emphasised a necessary “*Union of the nations...for both of their subsistence*”, and he stressed the interest for a straighter union of Britain in the summer of 1645 amidst the raging civil war.<sup>15</sup> Samuel Rutherford, a seminal

<sup>11</sup> Our desires concerning unity in religion, and uniformity of church government, as a special mean to conserve peace in His Majesty's dominions. In the Appendix of Hetherington, *History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines*. 1853. Third Edition 1856. (Books for the Ages. AGES software. Albany, OR USA. Version 1.0. 1997, <https://reformed.org/reformed-books>, on-line source, date accessed August 5, 2019), 315–316.

<sup>12</sup> The Solemn League and Covenant 1643. *Source Book of Scottish History*. Volume 3. Edited by William Croft Dickinson and Gordon Donaldson. Second Edition. Thomas Nelson and sons Ltd., London 1961, 122, 123–124. [Hereafter *The Solemn League and Covenant 1643*].

<sup>13</sup> In a quite recent short account, Julian Goodare has analysed the nature of the Scottish revolution of 1638 and compared it to other revolutions and revolts at the time. Julian Goodare, “The Scottish Revolution”. *Scotland in the Age of Two Revolutions*. Studies in Early Modern Cultural Political and Social History. Volume 20. Edited by Sharon Adams and Julian Goodare. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Baillie to William Spang September 22, 1643. Robert Baillie, *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, A.M. Principal of the University of Glasgow M.DC.XXXVII.–M.DC.LXII. Edited by David Laing. In three volumes. Volume II. Edinburgh MDCCLXLI [1841]. [Hereafter Baillie I or II], 88, 90, 100; Baillie *For Scotland* [no specific address in this letter] January 1, 1644, 127; Baillie to Captain Porterfeild July 16, 1644. Baillie II, 207. See Baillie to Lord Eglington July 18, 1644. Baillie II, 210.

<sup>15</sup> Public Letter April 25, 1645. Baillie II, 267; Baillie [to the Earl of Lauderdale] July 1, 1645. Baillie II, 294–295. The need for a close union was also expressed on other occasions. Baillie [to the Earl of Eglington] July 8, 1645. Baillie II, 299; Public Letter July 8, 1645. Baillie II, 301–302.

author of the Covenanting clergy and mentioned as the most distinguished theorist of the Scottish Revolution,<sup>16</sup> also seemed to reflect strongly the British aspect in his writing at the time.<sup>17</sup> He wrote in 1644, referring to the Covenant, that the Scots were “*obliged by God’s law...to help their brethren of England*”.<sup>18</sup> The Scottish agenda was a rescue mission for Britain with a reformation scheme. The defensive Scottish national agenda had transformed into a British transnational one.

### **“A powerful people; but very feeble”<sup>19</sup> – The Scottish Covenanters’ ambivalent image of the English**

The Scottish Covenanters, in the spirit of the Solemn League and Covenant, sent their commissioners to England to work for unity and union from 1643 onwards. The Covenanters’ image of the English during this work appears to have been dualistic, containing ambivalent features. This is not surprising, because the English society, in a religious sense in particular, was not a homogenous one from the Scottish perspective. However, some of their southern neighbors, the “godly people”, particularly the

<sup>16</sup> John Coffey, “Samuel Rutherford and the Political Thought of the Scottish Covenanters”. *Celtic Dimensions of the British Civil Wars*. Proceedings of the Second Conference of the Research Centre in Scottish History. University of Strathclyde. Edited by John R. Young. John Donald Publishers Ltd., Edinburgh 1997, 77, 91.

<sup>17</sup> [Samuel Rutherford], *The due right of presbyteries or, A peaceable plea for the government of the Church of Scotland, wherein is examined 1. The way of the Church of Christ in New England, in brotherly equality, and independency, or coordination, without subjection of one church to another. 2. Their apology for the said government, their answers to thirty and two questions are considered. 3. A treatise for a church covenant is discussed. 4. The arguments of Mr. Robinson in his justification of separation are discovered. 5. His treatise, called, The peoples plea for the exercise of prophecy, is tryed. 6. Diverse late arguments against presbyteriall government, and the power of synods are discussed, the power of the prince in matters ecclesiastical modestly considered, & divers incident controversies resolved*. London: Printed by E. Griffin, for Richard Whittaker, and Andrew Crook 1644, preface A3–4 [Hereafter Rutherford, *A peaceable plea* 1644]; Samuel Rutherford, *A sermon preached to the Honorable House of Commons: at their late solemne fast* January 31, 1643 [1644]. Published by order of the House of Commons. Printed at London by Richard Cotes, for Richard Whittakers & Andrew Crooke, [London] 1644, introduction p. 2, *Sermon*, 9, 38, 39, 41, 48, 51, 55, 60. [Hereafter Rutherford, *Sermon to the House of Commons* 1644].

<sup>18</sup> Samuel Rutherford, *Lex, Rex: The Law and the Prince: A Dispute for the just Prerogative of King and People: Containing the Reasons and Causes of the most necessary Defensive Wars of the Kingdom of Scotland and of their Expedition for the ayd and help of their dear Brethren of England...* Published by Authority. London: Printed for John Field. October 7 1644, Question XL, 400.

<sup>19</sup> Baillie to Robert Ramsay January 15, 1646. Baillie II, 339.

Puritan pro-Presbyterians in the City of London,<sup>20</sup> were regarded as friends whom they relied on.<sup>21</sup> On the contrary, the Arminians or the “*Canterburian faction*” in the Church of England, whom the Covenanters defined as leaning too much toward Popish features, were certainly depicted as enemies on many occasions.<sup>22</sup> The Scots declared from the early stages of the conflict that the English had the same common enemy who was misleading the king, and they maintained that their enemies were among the “*Faction of Papists and Prelats*”.<sup>23</sup> It is understandable that, in using the concepts of Reformation and a unified Britain, the Covenanters strove for a sense of unity with the Parliamentarians, because religious disintegration in England was becoming apparent in 1644 and had already partly occurred in 1641 from the Scottish viewpoint.<sup>24</sup> The English were regarded as an indecisive people who were divided and weak or, as Robert Baillie remarked at one point in 1644, as a “*wavering*

<sup>20</sup> The strong support for the covenanted cause in the Capital is stated also in MacKenzie 2018, 48, 50–51, 55, 71, 75, 97. See Ann Hughes, “‘The remembrance of sweet fellowship’: relationship between English and Scottish Presbyterians in the 1640s and 1650s”. *Insular Christianity. Alternative models of the Church in Britain and Ireland, c. 1570–c. 1700*. Edited by Robert Armstrong and Tadhg O Hannrachain. Manchester University Press, Manchester 2013, 171, 173, 176, 178.

<sup>21</sup> *The Lord Lovvden his learned and wise speech in the Vpper House of Parliament in Scotland September 9, 1641 declaring the great grievances of that kingdome and the cause that moved them to take up armes against England: also manifesting what great benefitis and honour will arise of this happy peace and unity concluded on betwixt both kingdomes: with his honourable motion for the raising of an army in both kingdomes to the restoring and setting of the prince elector in his country*. London: Printed for Iohn Thomas, 1641, 2–3 [Hereafter Loudoun, *Speech in the Parliament of Scotland* 1641]; Baillie to the presbytery of Irvine March 15, 1641. Baillie I, 306; Baillie to Mr. George Young July 8, 1645. Baillie II, 296. A Covenanting clergyman George Gillespie noted the godliness of London in comparison to other parts of England. George Gillespie, *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons At their late solemn Fast*, Wednesday March 27. 1644. Published by Order of the House. Robert Bostock. London 1644, 19. [Hereafter Gillespie, *Sermon to the House of Commons* 1644].

<sup>22</sup> Baillie to Dr. Strang [no date], 1638. Baillie I, 69 and passim; Baillie to Spang, February 12, 1639. Baillie I, 117 and passim; Baillie to Spang, September 28, 1639. Baillie I, 198. See also [Robert Baillie], *Satan the leader in chief to all who resist the reparation of Sion. As it was cleared in a sermon to the Honourable House of Commons at their late solemn fast, Febr. 28. 1643. Published by order of the House of Commons*. London: Printed for Samuel Gellibrand 1643 [i.e. 1644], 28. [Hereafter Baillie, *Sermon to the House of Commons* 1644].

<sup>23</sup> *The intentions of the Scottish army* [1640]. Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, Volume 3, 1639–40. Originally published by D. Browne. London 1721. British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rushworth-papers/vol3/pp283-291>, date accessed June 10, 2009, 283–291. See also *Information from the Scottish nation, to all the true English, concerning the present*, [no date supposedly 1640], 1.

<sup>24</sup> Baillie to the presbytery of Irvine March 15, 1641. Baillie I, 305–306, 307, 311; Baillie *For Scotland* January 1, 1644. Baillie II, 126. Baillie emphasised trust in Providence in a sermon to the House of Commons during the same winter. Baillie, *Sermon to the House of Commons* 1644, 3–4; Baillie to Spang April 12, 1644. Baillie II, 164.

and fickle”<sup>25</sup> people. The ambivalent feature was further stated when he remarked in 1646 that the English were “...a powerfull people; but very feeble”.<sup>26</sup> The English procedures and the slow progress of the reformation work frustrated the Scottish commissioners who worked with their southern neighbours.<sup>27</sup> The image of the English as a weak, indecisive and a factional people seemed to reflect the inverse ideal self-image of the Covenanters as unified, dutiful to the Covenant and standing for a Reformed and orderly church government.<sup>28</sup> Samuel Rutherford’s lengthy publication, *A Peaceable Plea*, described disputes as understandable but declared there should be no division over the word of God.<sup>29</sup> Unity in matters of religion and reformation, including the Presbyterian organisation of the church, was one of the key features in the Covenanting identity that becomes clear in their image of the English. It is obvious that uniformity was considered a virtue, and this ideal was contradicted in their image of English divisiveness. This ideal, however, was by no means explicitly a Scottish feature at the time.<sup>30</sup>

A specific problem in the cooperation and the divisions connected to it concerned freedom of conscience and toleration of the sects. Robert Baillie bluntly noted, already in the spring of 1644, that an open schism existed between the Scots and the English Independents. He referred to the possibility that the Covenanters would have to “...deal with them as open enemies”, due to their associations with the religious sectaries, Anabaptists and Antinomians.<sup>31</sup> It is indeed noteworthy how many times

<sup>25</sup> Baillie to Spang April 26, 1644. Baillie II, 169; Alexander Henderson to Robert Douglas November 3, 1643. Baillie II, 484; Baillie *For Scotland* January 1, 1644. Baillie II, 126–127. Baillie described the English also as “...fainting and weak-hearted people”. Baillie to Spang April 26, 1644. Baillie II, 170.

<sup>26</sup> Baillie to Robert Ramsay January 15, 1646. Baillie II, 339.

<sup>27</sup> Frustration concerning the English passiveness existed as early as in 1644. For example, see Public Letter April 2. Baillie II, 154; Baillie to Spang April 12, 1644. Baillie II, 164; Baillie to Ramsay May 9, 1644. Baillie II, 176–177; Baillie to Dickson September 16, 1644. Baillie II, 230.

<sup>28</sup> Nevalainen 2018, 265, 269–270.

<sup>29</sup> Rutherford, *A Peaceable plea* 1644, [To the Reader] A4–5. This tenet of uniformity with no contradictions, related to the interpretation of the Bible, is mentioned in the Scottish Confession of 1560 in article 18. “Skotlantilainen tunnustus” [Original Scots Confession in 1560]. Translated by Juha Ahvio. *Reformaation tunnustukset*. Edited by Risto Saarinen. Suomalainen Teologinen Kirjallisuusseura, Helsinki 2009, 118.

<sup>30</sup> The sectarian tendency in Protestantism has been matched by a pull towards unity. Alec Ryrie, *Protestants. The Radicals Who made the Modern World*. William Collins. London 2017, 61. The paradoxical features of the Reformation concerning the aspiration for unity and the consequential diversity has been noted also in Peter Marshall, *Reformaatio*. Translated by Tapani Kilpeläinen. *Niin & näin*, 2017, 143–145.

<sup>31</sup> Baillie to Spang April 19, 1644. Baillie II, 168. The problems with “*the Independent partie*” were also discussed in Baillie to Mr. D[ickson] July 23, 1644. Baillie II, 212; Baillie to Mr. Dickson [no date. This letter is marked “*for yourself and Mr. Robert (Ramsay) only*”]. This letter was likely written in 1644. Baillie II, 157; Public Letter September 16, 1644. Baillie II, 228; Baillie to Spang October 25, 1644. Baillie II, 236. See Nevalainen 2018, 259.

the Covenanting elite mentioned factions and parties related to religiously derived concepts of their time, such as sectaries.<sup>32</sup> However, from a larger perspective, the lack of unity has been a major feature among the Protestants.<sup>33</sup> There is nothing new in this British experience as part of Reformation history. It has also been noted that the Covenanting movement was divided and that dissonances existed among the Scottish ministers.<sup>34</sup> However, I stress that until the Engagement of 1647–48, in which some of the Scottish nobles chose to stand for the king against the English Parliamentarians, the Covenanting elite had both a relatively strong sense of coherence in the substantial matters of the church and a unified aspiration for a British reformed union.

The English divisions into several contesting groups resulted not in one image of the English in the Covenanters' eyes but in many images of various groups or "factions". Religious or ecclesiastical positions are what appear to have been determining factors in categorizing by the Scots. This point underlines the emphasis that the Covenanters' elite placed on the reformation scheme. English ethnicity as such did not seem to reflect a negative image, despite centuries of war and antagonism between the two kingdoms. Much of the trouble in fulfilling the Presbyterian aspirations in adopting a system of ecclesiastical discipline emerged from the English Parliamentarians' suspicion and fears of arbitrary clerical tyranny. The idea of a "troubled marriage" between the English Westminster Church Assembly and the English Parliament is worth remembering.<sup>35</sup> The English Parliament, not the king, seemed to retain the Erastian stand to control the church at this stage. Indeed, it has been noted how the issue over the royal supremacy and the ecclesiastical powers, as a phase of English reformation history, also remained highly important in the restoration era in England.<sup>36</sup> Divisions in church politics were considered problematic, which suggests the great relevance of religion in the political arena and to the religion-derived values and "political" concepts of the time.

---

<sup>32</sup> This is such a large theme that it is inappropriate to discuss it here. I have studied this theme in chapter 1.3 in Nevalainen 2018, particularly on pages 207, 233, 259, 265, 266, 284 and 286.

<sup>33</sup> Ryrie 2017, particularly 6, 61, 67–69, 70–71, 72–78.

<sup>34</sup> Alexander D. Campbell has remarked on these dissonances in his study of Robert Baillie's life and works. Alexander D. Campbell, *The Life and Works of Robert Baillie (1602–1662). Politics, Religion and Record-keeping in the British Civil Wars*. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge 2017, 3–4, 12, 18, 226–227.

<sup>35</sup> Chad van Dixhoorn, "Politics and religion in the Westminster assembly and the 'grand debate'". *Insular Christianity. Alternative models of the Church in Britain and Ireland, c. 1570–c. 1700*. Edited by Robert Armstrong and Tadhg O hAnnrachain. Manchester University Press, Manchester 2013, 130, 133, 138. See Robert Armstrong and Tadhg O hAnnrachain, "Alternative establishments? Insular Catholicism and Presbyterianism". *Op.cit.*, 18.

<sup>36</sup> See more of this issue in Jacqueline Rose, *Godly Kingship in Restoration England: The Politics of Royal Supremacy, 1660–1688*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2011, e.g. 1–3, 9–10, 15.

It is worth noticing that the factional rivalries and unprecedented access into political life led to a critical response by the English contemporaries of these factions and also to new tactics and unintended consequences.<sup>37</sup> Was the Scottish preference for the British agenda deemed a factional influence in Parliamentary politics? It seems that, to the English, the Scottish endeavors implied a potentially diminished significance of English traditions and integrity. The English were even less likely to comply when they sensed that the Scottish pressed this agenda on them. This arising animosity was reflected in the Covenanters' image of the English, which at the time was ambivalent, differing from depictions of godly brethren to a weak, divided and factious people. The ambivalence in this image is understandable, though, when we realise the gap between the idealistic aspirations of the Scots and the real politics in English affairs. The Covenanters' point of view was that their reformation scheme was the core of the British politics they were advancing. The leading Scottish Covenanted theologian Alexander Henderson was quite explicit when he remarked how uniformity and reformation were to be achieved "...by common consent", and a new form was to be set by all,<sup>38</sup> yet it is evident that the Scottish and English allies did not have a common and unified plan for reformation. One possible explanation is that Protestantism was able to unify the Scots and the English as long as they had a common enemy, but their different views became problematic when this threat faded along with their battlefield victories.

### The Sunset of the Covenanters' British Aspiration

The Civil War in England was at its end in 1646 when the notable Covenanted leader Archibald Campbell, the Marquess of Argyll, addressed the grand committee of both Houses of Parliament and emphasised settling the issue of religion and establishing the peace and union of both kingdoms.<sup>39</sup> He also clearly stated that the way to achieve these aspirations was to stand by the Covenant. Indeed, Argyll

<sup>37</sup> John Peacey, "Perceptions of Parliament: Factions and 'The Public'". *The English Civil War: Conflict and Contexts, 1640–49*. Problems in Focus Series. Edited by John Adamson. Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills 2009, 84–85, 94–95, 99, 104–105.

<sup>38</sup> Henderson to Baillie April 20, 1642. Baillie II, 2.

<sup>39</sup> *The Paper wherein the Commissioners for the Kingdom of Scotland consent to the propositions peace June 25, 1646. In The Lord Marques of Argyll's speech to a grand committee of both houses of Parliament the 25<sup>th</sup> of this instant June, 1646 together with some papers of the commissioners for the kingdom of Scotland, wherein they do give their consent to the sending of the propositions of peace to His Majesty, and desire their armies to be supplied, and the accounts between the kingdoms to be perfected, to the end all armies may be disbanded, &c.: also His Majesties letter to the Marques of Ormond discharging all further treaty with the Irish rebel: and a letter from General Major Monro concerning the state of affairs in Ireland*. London: Printed for Lawrence Chapman, June 27, 1646, 3. [Hereafter Argyll's Speech 1646].

chose his words in a way that implied the uniformity between the two kingdoms had already been accomplished, as when he claimed that Scotland and England had “...one Language in one Island, in one Religion, yea one in Covenant, so that in effect we differ in nothing, but in the name”.<sup>40</sup> This statement, clearly a British one in essence, was also a highly idealistic and a covenant-centred one. The need for the reformation of the church and a British solution for peace and unity between Scotland and England were still in focus. Robert Baillie wrote of his astonishment over both the dreadful situation a few weeks later and the endeavor to keep Scotland and England together, although he admitted that he was skeptical of the outcome.<sup>41</sup> The Scottish commissioners, despite the difficulties with the English Parliamentarians, emphasised the Solemn League and Covenant as a solution in their attempt to keep the British aspirations intact.<sup>42</sup> The commissioners of the English and Scottish Parliaments, including the leading Covenanting aristocrats, the Scottish Chancellor, the Earl of Loudoun, and the Marquess of Argyll, the Commissioner of the Parliament, presented their sixteen propositions or demands to the king in 1646. These propositions could be named as the last united political actions that the Covenanters and their English Parliamentarians undertook concerning this matter. Many central aims of the Covenanters – for example, the signing the Solemn League and Covenant by the king and all the subjects in both kingdoms, the abolishment of the bishops, the reformation of religion according to the Covenant, and uniformity in religion – were mentioned in the propositions.<sup>43</sup> The Scottish commissioners who consented to the conditions for peace were clearly displeased that their aspirations for uniformity and reformation in religion, which they considered “...the chief end” of the war, were unmet. However, they agreed for the sake of peace and in hopes that the king would agree to the conditions.<sup>44</sup> The king did not accept these propositions, which represent the British dimension of the Covenanting aspirations, unfortunately

---

<sup>40</sup> Argyll’s Speech 1646, 4. See also Trevor Royle, *Civil War. The War of the Three Kingdoms 1638-1660*. Reprinted. Abacus. London 2012, 386–387.

<sup>41</sup> Baillie to Spang August 7, 1646. Baillie II, 387.

<sup>42</sup> [The Earl of Loudoun 1646], *Some papers given in by the Commissioners of the Parliament of Scotland, to the Honourable Houses of the Parliament of England. In answer to their votes of the 24. of September. 1646. concerning the disposing of His Majesties person*. Edinburgh [i.e., London?]. Printed by Evan Tyler, printer to the Kings most Excellent Maiesty [i.e., Robert Bostock?], 1646, 4–5.

<sup>43</sup> *The propositions presented to His Majestie at Newcastle, the 24 day of July 1646. by the Earles of Pembroke and Suffolke... Commissioners from the Lords and Commons assembled in the Parliament of England, in the name, and in the behalf of the Kingdoms of England and Ireland, and by the Earle of Lowdon Chancellor of Scotland, and the Marquesse of Argyle Commissioner of the Parliament of Scotland, in the name, and in the behalf of the Kingdome of Scotland. With His Majesties gracious answer thereunto: at Newcastle the first day of August 1646*. Printed by Evan Tyler. Edinburgh 1646, 2–3.

<sup>44</sup> Argyll’s Speech 1646, 8–10.

for the Scots, and negotiations with him came to nothing. The Scottish efforts for a covenanted British solution came to a dead end.

One particular problem with the quest for a unified British confederation must have been the joint monarch.<sup>45</sup> The Covenanters had considerable problems with the English Parliamentarians regarding the deposition of the king in 1646.<sup>46</sup> They still believed in the limited monarchy and that the king's person should be protected. Robert Baillie mentioned this problem and the conflict with "*the Faction*" in England who supported continuing the war and opposed negotiations for peace. Baillie wrote, "...our great perplexity is for the King's disposition" and that the King did not yield in the negotiations.<sup>47</sup> Some of the English Independents' views on monarchy, according to the Covenanters, had become appalling and alarming. That the king had surrendered to the Scots' army and the Covenanters were negotiating with him seemed to disturb the English, and the king's adamant stance towards the peace propositions was ultimately a primary reason for the destruction of the Covenanters' British vision.

Of great importance, from the viewpoint of the collective identity, is the Covenanting schema – a covenanting people striving for reformation and liberty by God's Providence – and these ideas were connected to monarchy. This schema represents a lasting and intertwined set of ideas that the Covenanting elite resolved to stand for.<sup>48</sup> Robert Baillie framed their view in May 1646 as, "...we shall be honest, and sticke by our Covenant".<sup>49</sup> "*The rule of the Covenant*," a phrase of another leading Covenanting minister, Robert Blair, that prevailed, is revealing.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the Covenanters were some sort of wayward royalists when they wanted a limited monarchy. They had consolidated their "revolution" in 1641 by the king and stuck

<sup>45</sup> Kirsteen Mackenzie has also pointed out this problem concerning the relationship with the King that beset the covenanted interest from the late 1640's to the mid-1650s. MacKenzie 2018, 62, 63.

<sup>46</sup> The Scottish commissioners to the Committee of Estates in Edinburgh October 6, 1646 and October 8, 1646. *Correspondence of the Scots Commissioners in London 1644-1646*. Edited by Henry W. Meikle. The Roxburgh Club. Edinburgh MCMXVII [1917], 220, 221 [Hereafter *Correspondence of the Scots Commissioners*]; Baillie to Spang June 26, 1646. Baillie II, 374, 376-377.

<sup>47</sup> Baillie to Spang May 15, 1646. Baillie II, 370.

<sup>48</sup> See Nevalainen 2018, in particular 144 and 157. See more of the Covenanting schema concept in Nevalainen 2018, 62, 81, 82, 95, 133, 134, 139, 145, 281, 287, 298, 299 and 349.

<sup>49</sup> Baillie to Spang May 15, 1646. Baillie II, 371.

<sup>50</sup> *The Life of Mr. Robert Blair, Minister of St. Andrews, containing his autobiography, from 1593 to 1636, with supplement to his life, and continuation of the history of the times to 1680, by his son-in-law, Mr. William Row, minister of Cleves*. Edited by the Wodrow Society from the original manuscript by Thomas M'Crie. Wodrow Society, Edinburgh MDCCCXLVIII [1848], 130. [Hereafter Blair, *Life*]. See Nevalainen 2018, 140.

to their promise in the Covenant to secure the monarch.<sup>51</sup> The cooperation with the English Parliamentarians was proving to be increasingly tedious, yet the Marquess of Argyll, in 1648, expressed his desire for a union and emphasised the unifying features of the two kingdoms with almost the same words as two years earlier.<sup>52</sup> Allan Macinnes's depiction of Argyll as a "British Confederate" is indeed valid.<sup>53</sup> The previous expressions surely indicate that some of the Covenanting elites' principals did not mitigate their British aspirations, even at the time of the English Second Civil War, although in terms of political reality their prospects were poor. Considering the political reality of the time should not, however, lead us to underestimate the evidence of the aforementioned British indications in the Covenanters' identity.

We must remember that there were virtually no republican undertones in the Covenanting movement as were beginning to appear among the English Independents.<sup>54</sup> The antimonarchical opinions among some of the Independents worried the Covenanting elite, and the Scots also seemed to identify with the King.<sup>55</sup> It was impossible for the Covenanting Scots to accept the regicide of 1649, against which the Scottish commissioners protested. Blame for this action was put on the English in the biography of Robert Blair, "...these treacherous and covenant-breaking king-murderers...and these active agents of Satan".<sup>56</sup> Robert Baillie more stoically

<sup>51</sup> See also Sharon Adams, "In Search of the Scottish Republic". *Scotland in the Age of Two Revolutions*. Studies in Early Modern Cultural Political and Social History, Volume 20. Edited by Sharon Adams and Julian Goodare. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge 2014, 102.

<sup>52</sup> This speech might also have been a reference to the dangers of the Engagement in 1648. *The Marquess of Argyll his speech concerning the King, the Covenant, and peace or warre betweene both kingdomes. Also, a letter to the Parliament of England, from Mr. Marshall. Some votes past in Scotland, and the particular parties which would engage against England, and who are against it*. London: Printed by Barnard Alsop, 1648, 3.

<sup>53</sup> For more detailed insights into the ideas and importance of the Marquess of Argyll, there is reason to read the work of Allan I. Macinnes in *The British Confederate. Archibald Campbell. Marquess of Argyll, 1607–1661*. John Donald, Edinburgh 2011.

<sup>54</sup> However, Sharon Adams has noted some Covenanting leaders who were lukewarm in their support for Charles II, but the few hints for any republican aspirations are "context-specific" and relating to the idea of a limited monarchy. Adams 2014, 110–111, 114.

<sup>55</sup> Baillie to Henderson May 19, 1646. Baillie II, 373; Baillie to Spang April 23, 1646. Baillie II, 364; Baillie for Mr. Henderson May 16, 1646. Baillie II, 371; Baillie to Henderson, being at Newcastle with the King [the end of July 1646]. Baillie II, 383. This feature of the Covenanting movement was evidently seen also in the French endeavours as intermediators between the King and the Scots. Montereuil to Mazarin January 4 and 14, 1646. *The Diplomatic Correspondence of Jean de Montereuil and the Brothers of de Bellievre French Ambassador in England and Scotland. 1646-1648*. Edited with an English Translation and Notes by J.G. Fotheringham in two volumes. Printed at the University Press. T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society. Scottish History Society XXIX, Volume I. Edinburgh 1898, 85; Montereuil to Mazarin January 15, 25, 1646. Op. cit., 103, 105; Instructions given to President de Bellievre on his departure as Ambassador to England June 1646. Op. cit., 583. [Hereafter Montereuil I].

<sup>56</sup> Blair, *Life*, 214–215.

referred to the King's execution as, "...one act of our lamentable tragedy".<sup>57</sup> There could hardly be brotherly negotiations or compromise with the regicidal English at this point. These castigations of the English reveal the fundamental significance of the Covenant to the Scots. The English Independents had broken a sacred bond of the Covenant, which was considered a grave mistake and sin.<sup>58</sup> It is evident that the British dimension in the Covenanters' aspirations was connected to the monarchy. This becomes perfectly clear in the resolutions between 1649 and 1651, when Charles II was crowned King of *Great Britain*, not only of Scotland, and he had to take the oath of both Covenants. The quest for a "covenanted king"<sup>59</sup> continued after the Scottish Covenanting community became divided. The decision to support Charles II was not surprising but was consistent with the political principles of the Covenanting movement.<sup>60</sup> Robert Baillie, still reflecting the British agenda, referred in 1649 to the Solemn League and Covenant "...wherein all the well-affected of the three kingdoms are entered, and must live and die in, upon all hazards".<sup>61</sup> He seemed to recognise and identify with the "British Covenanters", yet the Scottish decision set the Covenanters strictly against the newly formed English republic. Indeed, it has been noted that the Scottish (and Irish) reactions to regicide, upholding the overthrown monarchical regime, simplified the English (Commonwealth) attitudes in the 1650s towards the other kingdoms as enemies within a "process of prejudice".<sup>62</sup>

It is revealing that the terms "English or Irish Covenanters" have hardly been used, although, in principle, the Solemn League and Covenant brought all these nations together. This seems to show how strongly the Covenant has been linked strictly to

<sup>57</sup> Baillie to Spang February 7, 1649. Robert Baillie, *The Letters and Journal of Robert Baillie*, A.M. Principal of the University of Glasgow M.DC.XXXVII.-M.DC.LXII. Edited from the Authors' Manuscripts, by David Laing. In three volumes. Volume III. Edinburgh M.DCCC.XLII [1842], 66 [Hereafter Baillie III].

<sup>58</sup> Nevalainen 2018, 269.

<sup>59</sup> The appropriate concept of "a covenanted king" has been used by Allan MacInnes. Macinnes 2000, 202; Allan I. Macinnes, *The British Revolution 1629–1660*. British Studies Series. Palgrave Macmillan. Houndmills 2005, 116; Macinnes 2009, 127; Macinnes 2011, 110, 253. See MacKenzie on the ideal of a covenanted monarchy. Mackenzie 2018, 63–64.

<sup>60</sup> Laura A. M. Stewart, *Rethinking the Scottish Revolution: Covenanted Scotland 1637–1651*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016, 25. See James B. Torrance, "The Covenant Concept in Scottish Theology and Politics and its Legacy". *Scottish Journal of Theology*. Volume 34, Issue 03, June 1981, 237–238.

<sup>61</sup> Baillie to Spang February 7, 1649. Baillie III, 66.

<sup>62</sup> Sarah Barber has related this attitude to the "rhetoric of antithesis". Sarah Barber, "The formation of cultural attitudes: the example of the three kingdoms in the 1650s". *The Stuart Kingdoms in the Seventeenth Century. Awkward Neighbours*. Edited by Allan I. Macinnes and Jane Ohlmeyer. Four Courts Press, Dublin 2002, 169, 171, 176, 178, 179, 185.

the Scottish national agenda.<sup>63</sup> However, it implies that the British dimension of the Covenanters' aspirations and identity has been neglected or understated.

### Protestantism in the “Britishness” of the Covenanters and in English national identity

Was Protestantism too nonspecific a common factor to unite the seemingly equally motivated Protestants of England and Scotland? The answer to this question is ambiguous. It has been noted that, although an Anglo-Scottish Protestant culture, based on a Protestant ideology and the English language, was able to promote cultural integration between the two countries, this was deceptive. This culture was unable to provide a common ecclesiastical organisation or political institution. A cultural bond is not an identity.<sup>64</sup> This reasoning makes sense when applied to the Solemn League and Covenant and the Westminster Assembly. Religion or Protestantism as such could not unify aims. Positive common features, religious or political, were not enough to form a united British Commonwealth when the common enemy appeared to be weaker, though a religious sense of identity certainly unified the Protestants against the Catholics. I would like to claim that there was no common British identity that could have bound the two nations together, although there certainly were features of a common Calvinist religious identity and much more of a common Protestant identity. But these conceptions are not specific. We are justified in claiming that an identification with national aspects of culture might be an explanation for the difficulties that arose. One could assert that the English had a strong sense of national identity or consciousness and were sensitive and easily offended enough to react to Scottish interference.

---

<sup>63</sup> Nevalainen 2018, 304. Some historians, however, have discussed the common covenanting tradition in the British Isles. Edward Vallance has recognized that the agreement between the English Parliamentarians and the Scottish Covenanters was also a presentation of a commitment that bound the Kingdoms together as a religious covenant for personal and national reformation. Edward Vallance, “An Holy and Sacramental Paction: Federal Theology and the Solemn League and Covenant in England”. *English Historical Review*, Volume 111, Issue 465, February 2001, 50–51; Edward Vallance, *Revolutionary England and the National Covenant. State Oaths, Protestantism and the Political Nation, 1553-1682*. The Boydell Press. Woodbridge 2005, 58–59, 66–67. Robert Armstrong has shown interest in this theme concerning the “British” Protestants in Ireland in Robert Armstrong, *Protestant war: The ‘British’ of Ireland and the wars of the three kingdoms*. Manchester University Press, Manchester 2005.

<sup>64</sup> Jane Dawson, “Anglo-Scottish protestant culture and integration in sixteenth-century Britain”. *Conquest and Union: fashioning a British state, 1485–1725*. Edited by Steven G. Ellis and Sarah Barber. Longman Group Limited, Harlow 1995, 113–114.

The importance of Protestantism in the English national identity has been noted in a number of studies.<sup>65</sup> Some scholars have remarked that in the construction of the myth of an elect nation, the English did not seem to give much credence to other Protestants of the British Isles.<sup>66</sup> There is reason to assume that the British aspiration was not as important to the English as it was to the Covenanters.<sup>67</sup> Pasi Ihalainen, in his comparative study of institutional national identities, as indicated in state sermons between 1685 and 1772, has remarked that pan-Protestantism as a unifying feature of a British identity was not openly apparent in English state sermons. Pan-Protestantism strengthened the unique role of England in Protestantism. He has also pointed out that Protestantism could not effectively unite the English and the Scottish, even in the eighteenth century.<sup>68</sup> Jenny Wormald has, likewise, set forth not only the national emphasis of English Protestantism but also the Scottish “European” features in regard to a universal reformed church.<sup>69</sup> Conversely, Linda Colley, for instance, studying a time period of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, has asserted that

---

<sup>65</sup> Broadly, regarding this aspect, see for example David Loades, “The Origins of the English Protestant Nationalism”. *Religion and National Identity*. Papers read at the nineteenth summer meeting and the twentieth winter meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society. Edited by Stuart Mews. Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1982, 297, 306–307; Anthony Fletcher, “The First Century of English Protestantism and the Growth of National Identity”. *Op. cit.*, 311–312, 316. See Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: ethnicity, religion and nationalism*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997, 4–5; Pasi Ihalainen, *Protestant Nations Redefined: Changing Perceptions of National Identity in the Rhetoric of the English, Dutch and Swedish Public Churches, 1685–1772*. Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions: History, Culture, Religion, Ideas. Ed. by Andrew Colin Gow. Brill, Leiden 2005, 240. Hilary Larkin has written about the importance of anti-Catholicism in the English national identity (from 1550 to 1650) in Hilary Larkin, *The Making of Englishmen. Debates on National Identity 1550–1650*. Studies in the History of Political Thought. Series editors: Terence Ball, Jörn Leonhard and Wyger Velema. Brill, Leiden 2014, 125–206.

<sup>66</sup> Tony Claydon and Ian McBride, “The Trials of the chosen peoples: recent reinterpretations of Protestantism and national identity in Britain and Ireland”. *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c. 1650–c. 1850*. Edited by Tony Claydon and Ian McBride. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, 15. See Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 2003, 120–123; Hastings 1997, 4–5.

<sup>67</sup> Concerning the English New Model Army, in particular from 1646 to 1648, and the sense of common identity as free Englishmen, see James Scott Wheeler, “Sense of Identity in the army of the English republic”. *The Stuart Kingdoms in the Seventeenth Century. Awkward Neighbours*. Edited by Allan I. Macinnes and Jane Ohlmeyer. Four Courts Press. Dublin 2002, 153, 155–156, 167.

<sup>68</sup> Ihalainen 2005, 93, 176, 188, 250–251, 254, 259, 266–267.

<sup>69</sup> Jenny Wormald, “The Union of 1603”. *Scots and Britons. Scottish political thought and the union of 1603*. Edited by Roger A. Mason. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1994, 28.

Protestantism was the key element in forging Britain.<sup>70</sup> Tony Claydon has noted the multilayered features of English national identity and the interaction of antipopery and cosmopolitan connections with Continental Europe during the period from 1660 to 1760.<sup>71</sup> There is reason to discuss some comparative views on this subject to understand more profoundly the essence of Covenanters' vision of Protestant Britain.

Claims from a broader perspective have been made that early expressions of Britishness largely focused on antipathy towards a continental autocracy and Catholicism. Otherness was exemplified in the wars against Spain and France, and it is proper to say that the British national identity was moulded during these wars.<sup>72</sup> These are valid explanations of the premises upon which British identity has been forged in the context of international relations, particularly with France, during the eighteenth century. However, if we take the seventeenth century relations into account, English and Scottish antipathy towards Spain was obvious, and suspicion towards the French was apparent in perceptions.<sup>73</sup> However, when we consider the British elements of the Covenanting identity during the Civil Wars, there is reason to say that the Covenanters were "more British" than English Parliamentarians in their aspirations, because the Scots were more willing than their English counterparts to establish a new reformed Protestant, presumably some sort of confederal, union. One possible explanation is that the national identity in England, with its strong ties to legal tradition, common law and the Westminster Parliament, was a stumbling block to the Scottish unifying efforts. We should remember that the English Parliament had rejected "Great Britain" and a supranational British kingdom that King James I had

---

<sup>70</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons – Forging the Nation 1707–1837*. Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1992, 22, 23, 25, 30, 49, 53, 54, 366–368, 369. For the Scottish Protestant viewpoint of Britishness in the eighteenth century see David Allan, "Protestantism, Presbyterianism and national identity in eighteenth-century Scottish history". *Protestantism and National Identity, Britain and Ireland. c. 1650–c. 1850*. Edited by Tony Claydon and Ian McBride. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, 197, 199–200, 203–204.

<sup>71</sup> Tony Claydon, *Europe and the Making of England, 1660–1760*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007, e.g. 4–8, 12, 81–82, 122–124, 253, 256–257, 354–356.

<sup>72</sup> Jeremy Black, "Great Britain – The confected nation state". *Histories of Nations. How Their Identities Were Forged*. Edited by Peter Furtado. Thames and Hudson Ltd., London 2013, 199. Hilary Larkin has emphasized the role of anti-Spanish and anti-French sentiment on the English national identity already from 1550 to 1650. Larkin 2014, for example on pp. 9, 11, 17, 126, 128, 133–134, 148–151, 161, 189, 191, 200, 278, 292.

<sup>73</sup> Nevalainen 2018, 200–219.

proposed.<sup>74</sup> It appears that the English Parliament was no more willing to form a new union of the kingdoms with the instigation of the Scottish Covenanters.

It is understandable from the viewpoint of national identity that the English proudly displayed their own national sense of freedom and felt the English national spirit threatened by the Scots' intervention in their affairs. According to Hilary Larkin's studies, in the debates on English national identity from 1550 to 1650, Englishness became construed particularly by plainness, freedom and Protestantism. These elements were interrelated in many senses; masculinity, anti-Spanish and anti-French sentiments are also important to notice.<sup>75</sup> Clearly a parallel exists here with the Scottish self-image, particularly in the strong fostering of liberty, anti-Catholic feelings and anti-Spanish views that were connected to a larger threat of the Popish archenemy. The image of the French seems to have been more ambiguous among the Covenanters than among the English.<sup>76</sup>

There is reason to believe that the English felt uncomfortable that they were in some way dependent on Scottish help, especially in 1640–41 and 1643–44 when the Scottish military presence in British affairs was most crucial for the English Parliamentarians. This must have gone against the grain of the emerging neo-Roman sense of liberty in which dependency or the mere possibility of being under tyranny could be interpreted as a sort of slavery.<sup>77</sup> I find it possible that, concerning the deteriorating relationship between the Parliamentarians and Covenanters, the English felt this way. Therefore, the contrast is substantial if one takes seriously the notes on references to masculinity and the image of the manly and fearless Englishmen,<sup>78</sup> the

<sup>74</sup> David Starkey, *Monarchy. From the Middle Ages to Modernity*. Harper Perennial, London 2007, 98–99. See also John Morrill, "The National Covenant in its British Context". *The Scottish National Covenant in its British Context*. Edited by John Morrill. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 1990, 5–6; Wormald 1994, 20, 24, 27. Hilary Larkin's study of English national identity from 1550 to 1650 has also stated that the sense of Englishness was constant and dominated the discourse of identity construction, not Britishness. Larkin 2014, 5–6.

<sup>75</sup> See some main points concerning these features in Larkin 2014, for example in pp. 3, 8–9, 12–14, 15, 133–134, 139–140, 209, 216, 222. The strong anti-Spanish sentiments among the English Puritans have been emphasized also in Arthur Marvin Breslow, *A Mirror of England: English Puritan views of Foreign Nations, 1550–1640*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1970, 143, 148, 155.

<sup>76</sup> See the Covenanters' image of Spain in Nevalainen 2018, 202–204, 217. See Nevalainen 2018, 211–216, 217, on the ambiguous image of the French.

<sup>77</sup> Quentin Skinner and Hilary Larkin have written about this element in the neo-Roman thoughts of freedom in England. Quentin Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, 46, 70, 84, 86; Larkin 2014, 252, 257, 264, 268, 271–272. Markku Peltonen has mentioned many notable examples of the impact of classical humanism and particularly of republicanism in pre-revolutionary English political thought. Markku Peltonen, *Classical humanism in English political thought from 1570 to 1640 with special reference to classical republicanism*. Helsinki 1992, 16, 18, 47, 69, 102–103, 118, 137–138, 144–146, 154–155, 176, 191, 193, 197, 267–269.

<sup>78</sup> Larkin 2014, particularly 8–9, 133–134, 139–140, 222.

previously mentioned Scottish image of a “fickle” and “feeble” people, regardless that it was related particularly to their lack of speed in decisions concerning the reformation of the church. Scottish remarks on their indecisiveness and other sort of rebukes must have been irritating to an English audience. It is thus worth noting that a need exists for more comparative work on the English parliamentarians’ images of the Scottish Covenanters to be done.

It seems that the Scottish Covenanters had a longstanding and strong sense of identification with the ecclesiastical construction of the Reformed church and with the international Calvinist tradition of the covenant or a federal theology.<sup>79</sup> It has been said that the English notion of an “Anglican” rather than a Protestant church resulted, so that the Scots had more cultural continental links and coreligionists in Europe.<sup>80</sup> The Scottish clergy was more internationally based than many of their English counterparts from this ecclesiastical viewpoint. I want to underline the point that the Covenanters aspired for a united Britain because they identified so strongly with the unifying imperative of the Covenants in the work of reformation, and the force behind these aspirations was the belief in God’s Providence that gave them courage and strength to go on. There is reason to apply R. G. Collingwood’s concept of absolute presupposition here.<sup>81</sup> The threat to the religio-national identity intensified their reformatory aspirations and encouraged them into a providential enterprise within the British, and even more the international, framework.

---

<sup>79</sup> It appears that during his exile on the Continent, the Scottish reformer of the sixteenth century, John Knox, asked advice of the great Swiss reformers, e.g., John Calvin and Heinrich Bullinger, concerning the resistance to ungodly rulers. Jasper Ridley, *John Knox*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 1968, 178–180; Quentin Skinner, *The foundations of modern political thought. Volume II: the age of reformation*. Cambridge University Press, Reprinted, Cambridge 1980, 216–217. More broadly on the Scottish scholars’ international status see Sarah Barber, “A state of Britishness?”. *Conquest and Union: fashioning a British state, 1485–1725*. Edited by Steven G. Ellis and Sarah Barber. Longman Group Limited, Harlow 1995, 307. Heinrich Bullinger seemed to interpret the Reformation as a renewal of the Covenant. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation. Europe’s House Divided 1490–1700*. Penguin Books, London 2004, 178–179, 354–355; J. Wayne Baker, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed tradition*. Athens, Ohio 1980, 103–104. It seems that the Scottish Covenanters followed suit.

<sup>80</sup> Conrad Russell, “Is British history international history?”. *The Stuart Kingdoms in the Seventeenth Century. Awkward Neighbours*. Edited by Allan I. Macinnes and Jane Ohlmeyer. Four Courts Press, Dublin 2002, 67.

<sup>81</sup> R. G. Collingwood’s definition of absolute presupposition is to be found in his *Essay on Metaphysics*, first published in 1940. R. G. Collingwood, *An Essay on Metaphysics*. Revised edition with Lectures 1926–1928. Function of Metaphysics in Civilization, Notes for an Essay on Logic. Edited with an Introduction by Rex Martin. Clarendon Press, Oxford 2002, 32–34, 40, 54–55, 60, 66–67. See Nevalainen 2018, 186.

### The international pan-Protestant context of the Covenanters' British aspirations

Some historians have noted that the insistence by the Scottish Covenanters on a British union of the kingdoms during the British Civil Wars may be viewed within a wider context of the Thirty Years' War, a part of the Reformation and opposition to monarchical empires.<sup>82</sup> It is important to remember the pan-Protestant features connected to the apocalyptic visions of the Covenanting identity. It seems that the Scottish Covenanters were more interested in defining the Protestant and Reformation cause in an international pan-Protestant mold than were the English, due not only to their relative weaknesses in the economic, political and military senses but also to their covenant-centred identity. Alec Ryrie has aptly referred to the uniting aspirations of the Calvinists with the phrase, how “the weak pursued unity”.<sup>83</sup> The Scottish Covenanters' efforts with the English Parliamentarians seem to fit this tenet, but this supposition requires that one must remember the aforementioned strong belief in Providence that evidently encouraged the Scottish efforts.

The Covenanters were not parochialists. The Covenanting elite identified themselves in many instances, in a universal sense, as integral to a Reformed Protestant community. There were sporadic definitions of Scotland as a chosen nation on a crusade, even as an ideal for other nations, when placed in a large international context.<sup>84</sup> Their pan-Protestant ideas and activity on an international level were represented in their public statements, particularly in Robert Baillie's “newsletters”.<sup>85</sup> Baillie's aspiration for “a British Presbyterian Church settlement” and his steeping in the broad intellectual traditions of Reformed Europe have also been noted by his latest biographer.<sup>86</sup>

A certain amount of solidarity existed among the Covenanters towards oppressed foreign fellow Protestants due to the war in Continental Europe. There were aims in 1641 for a specific military expedition of Scottish and English forces to the continent

<sup>82</sup> Macinnes and Ohlmeyer 2002, 18. See Macinnes 2005, 120; Allan Macinnes, “Preface”. *Scotland and the Thirty Years' War 1618-1648*. Edited by Steve Murdoch. Brill, Leiden 2001, ix–x.

<sup>83</sup> Ryrie 2017, 76–77.

<sup>84</sup> Lord Wariston gives us a good example in his diary when he wrote about a parallel between Israel and the Church of Scotland as “...the only two sworn nations to the Lord...” April 19, 1638. Wariston, *Diary*, 344. See January 17, 1638. Wariston, *Diary*, 301. See Baillie *For Scotland* January 1, 1644. Baillie II, 127; Public Letter June 7, 1644. Baillie II, 192.

<sup>85</sup> Baillie *For Scotland* January 1, 1644. Baillie II, 127; Public Letter June 7, 1644. Baillie II, 191–192. See Rutherford, *Sermon to the House of Commons* 1644, 7.

<sup>86</sup> Campbell 2017, 37, 59, 226.

to aid the Palatinate, an idea that was publicly encouraged in the Scottish Parliament.<sup>87</sup> The fate of the king's sister, the Dowager Queen, Elizabeth of Bohemia and her family, was seen as shameful, and a proposed military expedition was combined with a Protestant and Providential cause.<sup>88</sup> Robert Baillie and General Alexander Leslie, the Earl of Leven and a veteran of the Swedish army, were particularly committed to “*British*” aid for the Palatinate, especially in the second half of 1641. Baillie emphasised Scottish readiness for this expedition and mentioned the Swedish connection. He expressed the hope of a unified British action in the continental war and that “...*the British Army may appear in Germany*”. Alexander Leslie, in his letter to the Swedish chancellor, Axel Oxenstierna, mentioned the matter of the Palatinate several times, using the term “*Britannie Rex*” in relation to this subject.<sup>89</sup> The Earl of Loudoun's parliamentary speech described a common enemy as a means of unification, and he concluded his speech with high hopes for a Providential and united cooperation of Scotland and England that would “...*not onely bring both Nations to a condition of prosperity at home, but make us formydable to our enemies abroad*”.<sup>90</sup>

It is clear that the Covenanters were eager to unite the forces of Scotland and England with the interests of the king and his relatives on the Continent, and this British military project was in coherence with a united international Protestant

<sup>87</sup> Charles I declared his intentions to use his own arms and the help of allies in the Palatinate affair. *His Majesty's Manifest twitching the Palatinate* [28th] August 1641. *Acts of Parliaments of Scotland*. Volume V. A.D. M.DC.XXV.–A.D. DC.XLI. Printed by command of His Majesty King George the Third, in pursuance of an address of the House of Commons of Great Britain. M.DCCC.XVII [1817], 385–386. [Hereafter APS]. It is not surprising that the Scottish Parliament approved this willingly. APS V, 386.

<sup>88</sup> Loudoun, *Speech in the Parliament of Scotland 1641*, 3–4; *A second speech made by the Lord Lowden, in the Parliament of Scotland the 24. of Septemb. 1641. Being in answer to some objections made against the honourable designe of the Palatinate*. London: Printed by A.N. for I.M. at the George in Fleetstreet, Anno 1641, 1–3, 6–7. [Hereafter Loudoun, *Second speech in the Parliament of Scotland 1641*]. Defense of Stuart honor and of the Palatinate have been noted as being important to Scottish soldiers in the Thirty Years War. Alisdair McRae, *How the Scots won the English Civil War. The Triumph of the Fraser's Dragoons*. The History Press, Stroud 2013, 27.

<sup>89</sup> Baillie to Spang July 15, 1641. Baillie I, 357; [Account of the Proceedings of the Parliament of Scotland, in July and August 1641] August 25 [1641]. Baillie I, 387; Baillie to Spang [no date]. Baillie I, 398; Alexander Leslie to Axel Oxenstierna October 4, 1641. *Rikskansleren Axel Oxenstiernas Skrifter och Brevvexling*. Volume 9. Norstedt & Soners Forlag, Stockholm 1896, 486–488.

<sup>90</sup> Loudoun, *Speech in the Parliament of Scotland 1641*, 5. Regarding high expectations for a joint expedition, see Loudoun, *Second speech in the Parliament of Scotland 1641*, 3.

cause.<sup>91</sup> These high hopes obviously vanished as soon as the Civil War broke out in Ireland and England,<sup>92</sup> although cooperation with Sweden was considered as late as 1644. The Scottish Commissioners in England and the Committee of Estates in Edinburgh strove for cooperation or even an alliance with Sweden, at least from February to August 1644. Indications were seen of a possible "... *strict league with both kingdoms*".<sup>93</sup> Alexia Grosjean, who has studied Scottish contacts with Sweden, has noted that active cooperation and an endeavor for an alliance between Scotland and Sweden occurred during this time period.<sup>94</sup>

The conflict of the Thirty Years' War was occasionally a widely discussed issue among the Covenanters. General Alexander Leslie spoke about Gustavus Adolphus as an example to emulate in driving the Roman Catholics out of England and uniting with other Protestants on the Continent.<sup>95</sup> Other notable examples of high-minded visions of Providentially inspired pan-Protestant enterprises also existed among the Covenanting elite.<sup>96</sup> The Covenanting elite also viewed the Solemn League and Covenant as encouragement, in an international sense, for Reformed churches abroad. Alexander Henderson expressed Providential hope for a greater deliverance

---

<sup>91</sup> More broadly on the Scottish involvement in the cause of Elizabeth Stuart, the Queen of Bohemia, see Steve Murdoch, "Introduction". *Scotland and the Thirty Years' War 1618–1648*. Edited by Steve Murdoch. Brill, Leiden 2001 3–5. More specifically on the Scottish parliamentary proceedings concerning the Palatinate matter in 1641, see John R. Young, "The Scottish Parliament and European Diplomacy 1641–1647: The Palatine, The Dutch Republic and Sweden". *Op. cit.*, 78–81, 86.

<sup>92</sup> Dowager Queen Elizabeth seemed to discover that the Irish rebellion hindered resolution concerning this aspiration. Elizabeth Queen of Bohemia to Sir Thomas Row [Roe] November 22/December 2, 1641. CSPD 1641–43, 172; Elizabeth Queen of Bohemia to Sir Thomas Row [Roe] February 7/17, 1642. *Op. cit.*, 276.

<sup>93</sup> Scottish Commissioners to the Committee of Estates at Edinburgh March 5, 1644. *Correspondence of the Scottish Commissioners*, 9. See also Scottish Commissioners to the Committee with the Army February 22, 1644. *Correspondence of the Scottish Commissioners*, 5; The Committee of Estates at Edinburgh to the Scottish Commissioners August 16, 1644. *Correspondence of the Scottish Commissioners*, 36. Robert Baillie mentioned that the Swedes had "...*sent agents for a strict league with...*" the Scots. Public Letter June 7, 1644. Baillie II, 191. See more on the Covenanters' image of Sweden in Nevalainen 2018, 243–245.

<sup>94</sup> Alexia Grosjean, *An Unofficial Alliance: Scotland and Sweden 1569–1654*. The Northern World: North Europe and Baltic c. 400-1700 A.D. Peoples, Economics and Cultures, vol. 5. Brill, Leiden 2003, *passim*.

<sup>95</sup> According to a French diplomat, M. de Boisivon, Leslie made bold statements to Lord Hume at a large a meeting of nobles. Counter Statement: Proposals made by M. de Boisivon to the Council of Scotland, received with his despatch of November 20, 1643. Appendix. *The Diplomatic correspondence of Jean de Montreuil and the Brothers of de Bellievre French Ambassador in England and Scotland 1645–1648*. Edited, with an English Translation, Introduction and Notes by J. G. Fotheringham in two volumes. Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society Scottish History Society XXX. Volume II. Edinburgh 1899, 556.

<sup>96</sup> Here are two examples. Public Letter June 17, 1644. Baillie II, 191–192; Gillespie, *Sermon to the House of Commons* 1644, 8–9.

"...from the Antichristian yoke and tyranny", and the end of the Covenant contains an explicit encouragement to other Christian churches for the same.<sup>97</sup> It has been noted that some in the Westminster Assembly viewed it within a context of unifying European Protestantism against a Catholic threat, and the text was delivered to other Reformed churches.<sup>98</sup> The anti-Catholicism of the Solemn League and Covenant defined itself as part of an international pan-Protestant struggle against a Popish enemy. Samuel Rutherford exhorted the English Parliament and referred to an opportunity to "...send the Glory of Christ over Sea to all Europe".<sup>99</sup> Indeed, it seems that the Covenanting elite perceived themselves in a grand-scale struggle for reformation. These aspects fit a framework of a Second Reformation. Pan-Protestant visions with international prospects seemed to be current at the time.<sup>100</sup> These visions increased the Scottish need for British cooperation; thus, the Covenanters' British efforts were internationally flavored and did not mean any turning away from European connections.<sup>101</sup>

### **Conclusions: The British Agenda of the Covenanters as an Additional Resource to the English Parliamentarians**

Regarding the identity of the Scottish Covenanters, we are invited to consider that the Scots were, partly due to their minor political and economic resources, "more British" than their English counterparts. This "Britishness", however, seems to have increased a sense of national identity among the English Parliamentarians. Thus, alas for the Scottish Covenanting movement and due to their quarrels with the English Independents, the Scots had ahead of them a large amount of troubles that they could not overcome. I emphasise that the British vision the Covenanters exemplified is not an example of political naiveté; rather, it is a sign arising from the sense of the necessity to work with the English to achieve the goals of reformation, freedom

<sup>97</sup> [Alexander Henderson], *The Covenant with a Narrative of The Proceedings and Solemn Manner of Taking it by the Honourable House of Commons, and Reverent Assembly of Divines the 25th day of September, at Saint Margarets in Westminster. Also Two Speeches Delivered at the same time; the one By Mr. Philip Nye, The other by Mr. Alexander Hendersam*. Printed for Thomas Vnderhill at the Bible in Wood-Street. London 1643, 32–33; *The Solemn League and Covenant* 1643, 125. A letter of Robert Baillie confirms that the Covenant was to be sent also to the Protestant churches abroad. Baillie to Spang February 18, 1644. Baillie II, 130.

<sup>98</sup> Vallance 2001, 68–69.

<sup>99</sup> Rutherford, *Sermon to the House of Commons* 1644, 7.

<sup>100</sup> Nevalainen 2018, 242.

<sup>101</sup> John R. Young has also defined the British agenda of the Scottish Covenanters in an international and pan-Protestant context. John R. Young, "The Scottish Parliament and European Diplomacy 1641-1647: The Palatine, the Dutch Republic and Sweden". *Scotland: The Making and Unmaking of the Nation c. 1100-1707* (vol. 4). Edited by Bob Harris and Alan R. MacDonald. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2007, particularly 141, 142, 143, 146.

and security and that a united and reformed Britain was needed to accomplish this. Moreover, what for the Scots was a matter of necessity seems to have been a burden for the English Parliamentarians, particularly for the Independents. The English ultimately had no need for a British solution, because they did not see the destinies of the kingdoms and churches as interdependent like the Covenanters did. The English Independents lacked the covenant-centred British vision of the Scots.

There must be a reason why there has hardly been any discussion of “English Covenanters”, not even of “British Covenanters”, though the Solemn League and Covenant was not a Scottish national one. One appropriate explanation is that the idea of Covenanters as a community, although the Covenant itself is a biblical concept familiar to Christians universally, has been connected mostly to the Scottish experience, especially for Calvinists. The Scottish aspirations must have been perceived as Scottish imports from the English Independents’ viewpoint.<sup>102</sup> Anyway, from the viewpoint of the Scottish Covenanting identity, I do not see it as misleading to define “the godly Presbyterians” as friends of the Scots, and there were many of them in London who also stuck with the Solemn League and Covenant as “English Covenanters”. I agree in this sense with Kirsteen MacKenzie’s view that the “Covenanted interest” did not disappear, although the more prominent elements of the Anglo-Scottish alliance disintegrated.<sup>103</sup>

The Covenanters’ aspirations for a united Britain did not succeed, yet I agree with Professor Allan Macinnes’ claims that the early Covenanting movement had a “British” significance in rationalising the past and shaping the future.<sup>104</sup> I emphasise that there is reason to analyse the losers’ ideals in order to understand the actual political “reality”, shaped by the winners, in more depth. The Covenanters’ ideals and British aspirations intensified the politics of the English Civil War, particularly in regard to the sensitive matter of religion. Quentin Skinner has referred more generally to the essence of intellectual history as uncovering and displaying a neglected intellectual heritage. This helps us to note the past choices that have been made and equips us for a better understanding, appreciation and evaluation of

---

<sup>102</sup> It seems that there is a sort of a parallel in the way that Puritanism has tended to be referred to in English or American society and is only rarely used in the case of Scotland. John Coffey has discussed the validity of the category of “Scottish Puritanism” and its definition. John Coffey, “The Problem of ‘Scottish Puritanism’, 1590–1638”. *Enforcing Reformation in Ireland and Scotland, 1550–1700*. Ashgate Publishing Ltd., Abingdon 2006, 67, 72–73, 74–75, 76.

<sup>103</sup> MacKenzie 2017, 36, 42, 47–48, 70, 72, 75.

<sup>104</sup> Macinnes 2000, 191.

present day values.<sup>105</sup> I consider the Covenanters' ideals as such a neglected heritage worth studying. This perspective also enables us to better understand the differences between England and Scotland concerning not only their later British relationship but also their connections with Protestants on the European continent.

The Covenanters, with the revolutionary potential of their British vision of a reformed, godly and confederal Britain while on the periphery of the British Isles, established necessary elements that became additional resources for the English Parliamentarians, who were then able to execute their own political objectives in the centre of the Isles.<sup>106</sup> I do not mean by these resources only military help; I also include the religio-political ideals and aspirations concerning reformation and British union that also related to the king's position. The English had to answer the challenges the Scots represented and the Scottish aspirations derived from the Covenanting schema, "*the rule of the Covenant*",<sup>107</sup> that united the inalienable tenets of the Scottish Covenanting elite. Thus, although Scottish aspirations failed, they triggered a Civil War that led to a revolution. Another type of incorporated and English-dominated Britain under the rule of the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell was consequently established, yet it is problematic to define identity based on unwanted consequences rather than on unrealised aspirations.

### Abstract

The article concentrates on the international, and particularly British, dimension of the collective identity of the Scottish Covenanting elite during the British Civil Wars from 1637 to 1649. The Covenanters' identity is studied by the interconnection of the key concepts within the reformation scheme and the Covenanting schema and also by the Scots' images of the English. The Covenanting Scots' aspirations seemed to communicate a strong sense of British identity as they reached for a reformed and covenanted British union. The Protestant Reformed Christianity that the Covenanters represented was, and still is, an international religion, and it is notable

<sup>105</sup> Skinner 1998, 112, 118–119; Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics. Volume I: Regarding Method*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003, 6–7. See also Nevalainen 2018, 117. I combine Quentin Skinner's view on this subject with R. G. Collingwood's discussion on the past as "...an ideal element in the present". Lectures on the Philosophy of History in R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*. Revised edition with Lectures 1926–1928 [The first edition 1946]. Edited and introduction by Jan van der Dussen. Oxford University Press, Oxford 1994, 404–405.

<sup>106</sup> Olavi K. Fält has written of aspects of information that produce additional resources between the centre and periphery in connection to thermodynamics and the new network theory. I am grateful for conversations with him regarding these aspects. See Olavi K. Fält, "Keskus ja periferia – media globalisaatioverkoston 1860-luvun Japanissa". *Faravid* 36/2012, 232–233, 238; Olavi K. Fält, "Hävinneet voittajien maailmassa: Japani-kuva Suomessa syksyllä 1945". *Faravid* 37/2013, 95, 106; Olavi K. Fält, "Increasingly global and networked science – Yokohama as a stage for Western science in the early 1870s world". *Faravid* 45/2018, 23–24, 25, 30.

<sup>107</sup> Blair, *Life*, 130. See also footnote 50 in this article.

that the Covenanters also had greater pan-Protestant visions, such as their plan for a Palatinate expedition, inspired by their Providential beliefs. The Scottish sense of Britishness was linked to European Protestant culture and politics and, in the spirit of the Second Reformation, they displayed outward-looking ideas about the future.

The Covenanters' images of the English reflect ambivalence. Clearly the English royalists and the "Canterburian faction" were seen as enemies and the "godly Puritans" as brethren. But even the English Parliamentarians, due to their factional rivalries and strengthening of the Independents, were seen as weak, indecisive and factional people. However, the English nation's power was duly recognised, not underestimated. References to English divisiveness seemed to reflect the inverse ideal self-image of the Covenanters as unified, dutiful to the Covenant, standing for a Reformed and orderly church government and also for a limited monarchy.

It is useful in an aspirational sense to discuss a British Protestant identity in regards to the Scottish Covenanters and say that the Scots were "more British" and internationally oriented than their English counterparts. They understood that it was necessary to achieve their aspirations in cooperation with the English. This "Britishness" seems to have increased a sense of national identity among the English Parliamentarians just as fervently with a Protestant spirit as that of the Covenanting identity. In this discourse of cooperation and disputes between the Scottish Covenanters and English Parliamentarians, the Covenanters' unrealised ideal supplied the English with additional resources; the political turmoil eventually led to a revolution but not to the British union to which the Covenanters aspired. Regarding the mid-seventeenth-century Anglo-Scottish relations, the English resolutions mattered greatly to the Scottish people, just as they seem to do currently in the case of "Brexit". Indeed, the unifying essence of British identity is hard to perceive in both cases, though there clearly were and are reflections of it to be found.

