

Milton's attack upon Charles I seemed to L'Estrange a heinous and sacriligious act. In 1681 he used it as an example in *Dissenters Sayings* to illustrate the type of seditious statements printed after the Civil War. Likewise, on 19 March 1683 the *Observer* reminded its readers of 'those Execrable Libels of Eiconoclastes'.

'Sedition' and 'seditious' are liberally used throughout L'Estrange's work and they require some definition before we proceed. The *Oxford English Dictionary* provides two definitions of 'seditious' which would, perhaps, find L'Estrange's approval: '1. Of a person or body of persons: Given to or guilty of sedition; in early use, "Factious with tumult, turbulent"; now chiefly engaged in promoting disaffection or inciting to revolt against constituted authority. 2. Of, pertaining to, or of the nature of sedition; tending to incite to or provoke sedition'. From L'Estrange's work 'constituted authority' meant the King and the Church of England. To challenge or even question these institutions with their established traditions and privileges, either in the press or the pulpit, was to promote disaffection and 'to delude the people'. Milton's attack on *Eikon Basilike* and L'Estrange's attack on Milton emphasise the essentially different political, religious and cultural interests of these men.

L'Estrange's sensitivity to the 'seditious' statements of Milton continued through his unswerving perusal of numerous pamphlets as he ferreted out the offending statements and cautioned the supposedly unsuspecting reading public. Pamphlets such as *Plain English* not only challenged the growing support for Charles Stuart by reminding the readers of the spiritual and political liberties to be lost by restoring him, but also appealed to both the man who held ultimate power at the time, General Monck, and the army with its varied interests. Open appeal to the army through the press was condemned as a seditious and mutinous act. *An Alarum to the Armies of England, Scotland and Ireland* and *An Eye-salve for the English Armie* urged the army to take the law into their own hands. These ranting publications set a dangerous precedent and the Council of State issued a proclamation ordering the arrest of such persons as 'do attempt the debauching and alienating the affections of some in the Army'.¹⁵ L'Estrange, likewise, had his answer prepared for publication after reading these tracts, once again pointing out their seditious content. *Physician Cure Thyself, or, An Answer to a Seditious Pamphlet, Entitled Eye Salve for the English Army* was written to allay the soldiers' fears of persecution under a new king. Charles had promised to respect religious liberty and only those who opposed 'constituted' authority would be in any danger.

While desperate attempts were made through the press for the army to prevent the restoration, the pulpit was being used by a