

**THE POLITICS OF THE ARMY 1647-1660**

**(Two Volumes)**

**Volume One**

**by**

**DEREK P. MASSARELLA**

**Submitted for the degree  
of D. Phil. in the University  
of York (Department of History  
October 1977.**

## CONTENTS

	Page
CONTENTS	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
ABSTRACT	III
ABBREVIATIONS	V
INTRODUCTION	VIII
CHAPTER ONE	: July 1646–November 1647
Section I	: July 1646–August 1647 1
Section II	: August 1647–November 1647 57
CHAPTER TWO	: November 1647–January 1649
Section I	: November 1647–May 1648 97
Section II	: May 1648–August 1648 126
Section III	: September 1648–January 1649 131
CHAPTER THREE	: February 1649–April 1653
Section I	: February 1649–September 1649 196
Section II	: September 1649–April 1653 251
CHAPTER FOUR	: April 1653–January 1655
Section I	: April 1653–December 1653 307
Section II	: January 1654–March 1655 345
Section III	: Ireland 1649–1655 395
CHAPTER FIVE	: March 1655–May 1659
Section I	: March 1655–May 1657 419
Section II	: May 1657–September 1658 477
Section III	: September 1658–May 1659 507
Section IV	: Ireland 1655–1660 544

Contents Cont'd...

Page

CHAPTER SIX	:	May 1659-May 1660		
		Section I	: May 1659-October 1659	562
		Section II	: October 1659-December 1659	614
		Section III	: December 1659-May 1660	667
CONCLUSION				732
BIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX				743
BIBLIOGRAPHY				795

ERRATUM

Page 226, footnote<sup>2</sup>

for "Sedmere" read "Sedascue".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The subject of this thesis first suggested itself to me while I was an undergraduate at Exeter doing a special subject on 'Politics and Political Thought during the Interregnum'. It seemed to me then, albeit in a somewhat naive and poorly articulated fashion, that not enough was known about the politics of the men who contributed most to Oliver Cromwell's power, namely the members of the army. I felt that this was an interesting and worthwhile area of research, and one which had not hitherto been dealt with systematically. In the event I have been able to follow through this idea and this thesis is the outcome.

A great number of people have helped me during my research. I wish first of all to thank my father without whose generous support over many years this thesis would not have been possible.

I would like to thank Earl Fitzwilliam and his Trustees and the Director of Libraries, Sheffield, for permission to consult the Bright Papers in the Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments in the Sheffield City Libraries; the late Dr. R. A. Sayce, Librarian of Worcester College, Oxford, for permission to consult the Clarke Mss. and Miss Lesley Montgomery, the Assistant Librarian of Worcester College, for her great kindness, friendliness and hospitality during my stay in Oxford; Miss Elizabeth Heaps and the staff of the J. B. Morrell (University) Library York and Mr. C. B. Barr and his staff at the Minster Library, York, for their helpfulness, and patience, beyond

the call of duty; and the staffs of the many libraries and archives I have used in connection with my research.

I would like to acknowledge the financial support I have received from the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust, the Colthurst Educational Trust and the Department of History of the University of York.

My thanks are also due to the many relations and friends who have helped me in their own very individual ways during the last four years, and especially to Mr. Andrew Webster, now of the Cambridge College of Arts and Technology, with whom I shared a library 'carrel' where this thesis was written. I have benefitted greatly from his friendship, stimulation and criticism.

For the painstaking work involved in coping with a very difficult manuscript I would like to thank my typist Mrs. Sue Medd.

I wish also to thank Professor I. A. Roots for taking an interest in my original idea and for helping to get it off the ground.

Finally, but by no means least, I must record the huge debt I owe to my supervisor and teacher, Professor G. E. Aylmer, who took on a very unsure research student and gave him the confidence, encouragement, and discipline to produce this thesis. The final result is, of course, my own responsibility.

York, 10 October,  
MCMLXXVII

ABSTRACT

This thesis covers the army's role in politics from circa March 1647 to May 1660, that is from when it emerges as an active political force to the restoration of the Stuarts. The first chapter examines the politicisation of the army in 1647, its relations with the Presbyterian dominated Parliament and the threat to the leadership from the Levellers seeking to exploit army grievances. The second chapter deals with the reassertion of the power of the Grandees after Ware, the increasing disillusionment over trying to reach an accommodation with the King and the events leading up to and surrounding the revolution of 1648-1649. Chapter three pays close attention to the army's relations with the Rump Parliament, its desire to see the revolution advanced, and the dissolution of the Rump. Chapter four covers the army's role in the subsequent attempts to achieve settlement, namely the Barebones Assembly and the Protectorate and the opposition among some of the officers to the latter. The fifth chapter looks at the Major Generals, the kingship crisis, the death of Oliver Cromwell, the Protectorate of Richard Cromwell and the restoration of the Rump in May 1659. It is argued that the kingship crisis is a fundamental turning point in army politics in the period under examination. The final chapter deals with the relations between the restored Rump and the army, the split within the army, brought about by the coup against the Rump in October by a faction within the army, the collapse of

that faction which leads to the return of the Rump and the build up to the Restoration. There are also two sections on army politics in Ireland between 1649 and 1660.

ABBREVIATIONS

Add. Ms.	B.M. Additional Manuscript
Bodl.	Bodleian Library
B.M.	British Museum
<u>B.I.H.R.</u>	<u>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</u>
<u>C.C.A.M.</u>	<u>Calendar of the Committee for the Advance of Money</u> , M. A. E. Green (ed.), III Vols., one pagination, London, 1888.
<u>C.C.C.</u>	<u>Calendar of the Committee for Compounding</u> , M. A. E. Green (ed.), V. Vols., one pagination, London, 1889-1892.
<u>C. Clar. S.P.</u>	<u>Calendar of the Clarendon State Papers</u> , O. Ogle, W. H. Bliss and W. D. Macray (eds.), III Vols., Oxford, 1869-1876; F. J. Routledge (ed.), Vol. IV (1657-1660), Oxford, 1932.
<u>C.S.P.D.</u>	<u>Calendar of State Papers Domestic, The Commonwealth</u> , London, 1875-1886; <u>Charles II</u> , London, 1860-1947; volumes are normally designated according to the years covered.
<u>C.S.P. Ireland</u>	<u>Calendar of State Papers ... Ireland, 1647-1660</u> , R. P. Mahaffy (ed.) London, 1903.
<u>C.S.P.V.</u>	<u>Calendar of State Papers ... Venice</u> , H. F. Brown and A. B. Hinds (eds.), London, 1900-1940.
<u>Camb. Hist. Jour.</u>	<u>Cambridge Historical Journal</u> .
Carte	<u>A Collection of Original Letters and Papers ... 1645 to 1660</u> , T. Carte (ed.), II Vols., London 1739.
<u>C.J.</u>	<u>Journals of the House of Commons</u> fol., n.d.



Clarendon State Papers

State Papers collected by Edward, earl of Clarendon, commencing 1621, R. Scrope and T. Monkhouse (eds.), III Vols., fol., Oxford, 1767-1786.

Clarke Papers

The Clarke Papers, Selections from the papers of William Clarke, C. H. Firth (ed.), IV Vols., Camden Society, 1891-1901.

D.N.B.

Dictionary of National Biography

## Firth and Davies

The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army, C. H. Firth and G. Davies (eds.), II Vols., one pagination, Oxford, 1940.

## Firth and Rait

Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait (eds.), III Vols., London, 1911.

H.M.C.

Historical Manuscript Commission (designated by the number of the Report or the name of the collection calendared).

L.J.

Journals of the House of Lords, fol., n.d.

## N.L.S. Adv. Ms.

National Library of Scotland, Advocates' Manuscript.

## N.L.W.

National Library of Wales.

Nicholas Papers

The Nicholas Papers : correspondence of Sir Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State, Sir G. F. Warner (ed.), Camden Society, IV Vols., 1886-1920.

O.P.H.

The Old Parliamentary or Constitutional History of England, 2nd edn., London, 1761-1763.

## P.R.O.

Public Record Office.

## S.P.

State Papers (when cited direct from manuscripts and not from printed Calendars).

T.R.H.S.Transactions of the Royal Historical Society.ThurloeA Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Esq....., T. Birch (ed.), VII Vols., fol., London, 1742.

Wor. Co.

Worcester College, Oxford.

Other abbreviations : titles of books and articles have usually been shortened after their first citation.

Quotations have been reproduced as far as possible in their original form.

Dating : the year is taken to begin on 1 January, but in other respects the 'Old Style' is used.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to examine the role of the army in national affairs after victory in the field had been won. It concentrates on the politics of the army, both its internal politics and its relations with other political forces, and tries to evaluate the army's importance in the politics of the period in general.

One of the basic assumptions of the thesis is that the army was not important in politics merely as Cromwell's power base. Indeed, the description 'Cromwell's army' is very misleading. Cromwell emerged as the key man in the army only after his return from his successful campaign in Ireland. In the period 1647-1649 Henry Ireton was at least as important as the future Lord Protector and at the most crucial juncture during these years, the time preceding Pride's Purge, Cromwell was absent from London and from headquarters, leaving others to make the decisions which helped determine the subsequent course of the revolution. However, there can be no denying that from 1650 to his death in 1658 the towering presence of Oliver Cromwell looms very large in both army and in national politics in Britain. Thus, what one is concerned with in a large measure in this thesis is not Cromwell's army but Cromwell and the army; the interaction between a complex, charismatic and great figure and the power base he chose to adopt, the army. It was not his army, and he in turn was not its puppet. He could, after all, have chosen

to use the Commons as his power base. Whether, if had done this, he would have become as important as he did, and what effects this would have had on the English Revolution, are of course matters for speculation.

Having discarded the notion of Cromwell's army it emerges that the army was also a political force in itself. Two arguments which I hope to pursue in this thesis are firstly that the army was a revolutionary movement, which like any such movement was subject to stresses and strains caused by the diverse origins and temperaments, aims and ambitions of its many members, and secondly, that it was a movement, or body, which made the revolution of 1648-1649 and which sought to further that revolution. I hope also to explain why it collapsed as a revolutionary movement and why it failed to further that revolution, even to guarantee its - in the context of some of the other revolutionary visions around at the time - somewhat limited achievements, thereby contributing to the downfall of the 'good old cause' and the return of the Stuarts.

A detailed study of the politics of the army has been made more feasible by the appearance in recent years of some very substantial works on various aspects of politics, government, and society in the 1640's and especially in the 1650's. I must mention in particular the work of Professor Aylmer on the 'civil service' of the Commonwealth and Protectorate,<sup>(1)</sup> Professor Underdown on the parlia-

---

(1) G. E. Aylmer, The State's Servants, London, 1973.

mentary politics of the revolution of 1648-1649,<sup>(1)</sup> Professor Woolrych on Barebones and on 1659-1660,<sup>(2)</sup> Drs. Capp on the Fifth Monarchists,<sup>(3)</sup> Hill on the radicals of the English Revolution<sup>(4)</sup> and Worden on the Rump<sup>(5)</sup> as well as that of the contributors to two recent collections of essays<sup>(6)</sup> because it impinges most directly and obviously on the subject of this thesis. Together with the many other scholars working on the English Revolution and more so the 1650's they have mapped out the landscape and provided the necessary landmarks which give any historical work its justification, its relevance and contribution to a historical debate.

I must single out Professor Underdown's and Dr. Worden's work because methodologically I have chosen to follow their example and deal with the subject by way of a chronological narrative framework.<sup>(7)</sup> My justification for this is that it seemed the best way

---

(1) D. Underdown, Pride's Purge, Oxford, 1971.

(2) A. Woolrych, 'The Calling of Barebone's Parliament', E.H.R., LXXX, 1965. His most recent fullest contribution to the study of events in 1659-1660 is his introduction to Vol. VII of The Complete Prose Works of John Milton, New Haven, 1974.

(3) B.S. Capp, The Fifth Monarchy Men, London, 1972.

(4) C. Hill, The World Turned Upside Down, London, 1972.

(5) B. Worden, The Rump Parliament, Cambridge, 1974.

(6) G. E. Aylmer (ed.), The Interregnum : The Quest for Settlement 1646-1660, London, 1972; R. H. Parry (ed.), The English Civil War and After, London, 1970.

(7) I should also at this juncture like to refer to other research which impinges upon my subject especially that of M. Kishlansky, of <sup>the</sup> University of Chicago, on radical politics between 1645 and 1647, A. Lawrence, a research student of the University of Oxford, on army chaplains, and H. Reece, likewise a research student of the University of Oxford, on the military presence in England in the 1650's. Unfortunately, I have been unable to see Dr. Kishlansky's thesis but I have exchanged letters with him. Ms. Lawrence's and Mr. Reece's theses have not yet been completed but I have benefitted greatly from discussions with them.

of handling the very diverse nature of the source material. Besides, the subject and the material available do not lend themselves to thematic treatment. My research also overlaps with theirs. In the case of Professor Underdown's the availability of a large amount of source material directly relevant to army politics, and the fact that his primary concern, parliamentary politics, is different from mine has meant that I have been able to treat the story from a different angle, and with regard to army politics, I hope, more fully. In relation to Dr. Worden's work the varied nature of the source material for 1649-1653 and the lack of records to compare in richness with William Clarke's manuscripts covering 1647-1649 has necessitated a different approach : the exercise of judgment based on an analysis of as much of the available evidence as possible. This has, I trust, left plenty of scope for agreement and disagreement.

Any researcher into the period soon realises the enormous debt he also owes to past historians especially those great scholars S. R. Gardiner and Sir Charles Firth. Indeed, given the fact that Firth produced a first-class work on Cromwell's Army<sup>(1)</sup> and that post-humously a more detailed study of the army regiments from 1647 to 1660 appeared in collaboration with Godfrey Davies,<sup>(2)</sup> it might be asked why this thesis is really necessary. My answer is that the work of Firth, and Firth and Davies is based upon quite different assumptions from mine and pre-dates the work of modern scholars which has enabled

---

(1) First edition, London, 1902.

(2) The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army, Oxford, 1940.

us to see the 1650's in a different light. Besides, Cromwell's Army devotes only one chapter to politics while the Regimental History, in addition to being a rather awkwardly constructed book, does not present a thesis and becomes virtually a potted history of the various regiments and individuals it deals with rather than a unified analysis of army politics. This criticism is in no way intended to undermine its indispensibility as a source. My objections to the notion of 'Cromwell's army' have already been explained.

With regard to the sources used in this thesis, they are quite extensive. I have drawn heavily upon the indispensable Thomason collection of pamphlets and newsbooks in the British Museum. The newsbooks are particularly rich in material up to the imposition of censorship in September 1649, relatively thin, but nevertheless revealing for most of the 1650's and fuller again for 1659-1660.<sup>(1)</sup> These printed sources have been supplemented by the tracts in Worcester College, Oxford, many of which are unique.

Any student of army politics soon becomes conscious of the dearth of personal and family papers extant for army officers. Although such papers would be invaluable for army politics, their absence by no means excludes even a study of the attitudes of some of the individual officers. In addition to the printed sources just mentioned, the wide range of Mss. sources are important in increasing

---

(1) For newsbooks in general during the English Revolution q.v. J. Frank, The Beginnings of the English Newspaper 1620-1660, Cambridge, Massachuetts, 1961; A. N. B. Cotton, 'London Newsbooks in the Civil War', Oxford, D. Phil., 1972.

our knowledge. I have used the Mss. collections in the B.M., especially the Baynes Correspondence, some of which was printed in the nineteenth century,<sup>(1)</sup> and the many random Mss. in the various collections in that great library; the P.R.O., including State Papers Additional (S.P. 46), the Commonwealth Exchequer Papers (S.P. 28) and the Baschet transcripts of the French ambassadors' correspondence; the Bodleian Library, Oxford, especially the unpublished Thurloe State Papers in the Rawlinson Mss., as well as the Tanner Mss.

Perhaps the greatest as well as the most comprehensive collection for army politics is the collection of Clarke Mss. in Worcester College, Oxford. The most important and revealing of these were, by and large, printed by Sir Charles Firth in the four volumes of the Camden Society and in two volumes printed by the Scottish History Society, though obviously he did not print them all.<sup>(2)</sup> A re-examination of these manuscripts has proved worthwhile especially for the voting lists on some of the questions debated during the Whitehall debates.<sup>(3)</sup> The National Library of Scotland's Advocates' Mss. contains some of Clarke's Mss. not included in the Worcester College collection, some of which, though again by no means all, were printed by Firth in the fourth volume of the Clarke Papers.<sup>(4)</sup> This same

- (1) J. Y. Ackerman, (ed.), Letters from Roundhead Officers written from Scotland and chiefly addressed to Captain Adam Baynes, Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1856.
- (2) C. H. Firth (ed.), The Clarke Papers, IV Vols., Camden Society 1891-1901, 'Scotland and the Commonwealth', Scottish History Society, XVIII, 1895, 'Scotland and the Protectorate', Scottish History Society, XXXI, 1899.
- (3) q.v. below Chapter Two, Section III.
- (4) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 35.5.11.



collection also proved to contain the best 'find' of the research, a collection of letters sent from London covering the period from December 1648 to June 1649. These letters, probably by several authors, all of whom were very close to the army's most senior command, if not actually a part of it, possibly addressed to one recipient, are fundamental not only for army politics in that period but also for politics in general. They have not been used by previous historians.<sup>(1)</sup> Other locations which had useful Ms. material were the National Library of Wales (John Jones's Letter Book), the Minster Library, York, the City Library, Sheffield (Bright Papers), the Brotherton (University) Library, Leeds (Marten-Loder Papers) and the National Register of Archives, Chancery Lane, London (Saunders' Papers).

Recourse has also been had to the wide variety of printed source material, especially the Thurloe State Papers, the Calenders of State Papers, Domestic and Venetian, the Calender of Clarendon State Papers and the Clarendon State Papers, the various volumes of the H.M.C. and the numerous diaries and printed collection of letters. All of these have of course to be used with the requisite judgment required of any historian.

I hope that this thesis may help to fill a very important gap in our detailed knowledge of the English Revolution, and that it also helps towards a fuller understanding of that Revolution. Finally,

---

(1) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15.

if one accepts that by using the framework of a chronological narrative to discuss the politics of the army one is also telling a story, then that story is also one of how England moved from an atmosphere where a bold self-conscious, self-confident act of revolution could be performed to one whereby it desired, almost at any cost, a return to 'normality'. It is the story of the transition from the army's assertion in June 1647

"that we are not a mere mercenary army, hired to serve any arbitrary power of a state, but called forth and conjured by the several Declarations of Parliament to the defence of our own and the people's just rights and liberties." (1)

to the advice given in 1660 by John Wallwyn, dyer to the parish of Southwark :

"Fear God honour your king meddle not with those that are given to change, although you are forgiven by an earthly king know ye that hereafter you must come to judgement. Repent from the evil of your ways and sin no more unless worse befall you  
God bless King Charles the 2nd and send him long to reign 1660" (2)

- 
- (1) From A Declaration or representation from His Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax, and of the army under his command ... St. Albans, 14 June 1647, repr. in J. P. Kenyon, The Stuart Constitution, Cambridge, 1966, p. 296.
- (2) Stone plaque in Southwark Cathedral, inscribed "gift of John Wallwyn, dyer to this parish".

**CHAPTER ONE**

I.

JULY 1646-AUGUST 1647

The attempts to 're-model' the standing army under Sir Thomas Fairfax and to make it into a weapon of the Presbyterian peace party under Hollis and Stapleton do not begin suddenly in early 1647 but have their roots in events of the previous year.

On 23 July 1646 the Commons began a debate about disbanding soldiers and paying them part of their arrears.<sup>(1)</sup> On 29 July it was agreed that 5,000 of Fairfax's army should be sent to Ireland. But not all members were so wildly enthusiastic about this, especially with the Scottish army still occupying parts of England. They suggested that any disbanding should be stayed until the Scots returned north of the border. Some members even suspected a plot to weaken the army in England, so that they would be forced to make an unconditional treaty with the King. On 31 July the

---

(1) The following paragraph is based on B.M.Add.Ms. 10, 114, ('The Diary of John Harington'), f.16v; C.J., IV, pp. 631-632. In using the terms 'Presbyterian' and 'Independent', I follow the Pearl-Underdown interpretation, (V. Pearl, 'Oliver St. John and the "middle group" in the Long Parliament', E.H.R., LXXXI, 1966, pp. 409-519, esp. pp. 503, 516; D. Underdown, Pride's Purge, Oxford, 1971, p. 72). According to this view the Independent party between 1645 and 1648 can be seen as an alliance between the middle group and the radicals, or war party, with close personal links existing with the army leadership, especially between Oliver Cromwell and Oliver St. John. In the course of 1647 the army assumed the role of guardian of this party but was not subservient to it. The Presbyterian peace party was dominated by Hollis and Stapleton, as illustrated in the divisions given below, and aimed at subordinating the army to parliament and restoring the King with assurances for Presbyterian church government. From December 1646 parliament was dominated by them, and in August 1647 they made their desperate bid to seize power risking all-out conflict with the army. Harington himself is a good example of the difficulties involved in classifying people as 'Presbyterian' or 'Independent' (Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 19-20, 55-56).

Commons divided on two important questions concerning Ireland. The first was whether the House should be turned into a Grand Committee to consider the Irish service with power to receive the reports on military forces from other committees. This was rejected by a majority of twenty. The tellers for the 'yeas' were Sir Arthur Haselrig and Lt. General Cromwell, and for the 'noes' Hollis and Stapleton, <sup>The result was</sup> a victory for the Presbyterian peace party. The second, and more important vote, was whether four foot regiments and two horse regiments of Fairfax's army should be sent forthwith to Ireland. It was defeated by a majority of one with Hollis and Stapleton as tellers for the 'yeas' and Haselrig and Sir John Evelyn of Wiltshire tellers for the 'noes'. These divisions illustrate the classic split between the Independent party and the Presbyterian peace party which existed between 1645 and 1647 and which came to a head in August 1647.

The debate must have caused feelings to run high. Cromwell denied there had been any wholesale purge of Presbyterians from the army. Only Col. Graves had been cashiered, he said, and that for distributing Scottish propaganda in the army and labouring to disaffect the army from parliament. (1)

The uncertainty about the future of the standing army continued throughout the summer. On 13 August the Lords repeated

---

(1) B.M.Add.Ms. 10,114, f.16v.

various votes concerning the Scots for the Commons' concurrence. These were for the punishing of the authors of anti-Scottish tracts; for the payment of arrears to the Scottish army; for the placing the armies of the two nations under 'friends' to both who were orthodox in religion; that the Scots should be assisted against the Irish; and for the setting up of a conference to settle the peace of the two kingdoms.<sup>(1)</sup> However, on 7 October the Commons voted to maintain the assessment for army pay for another six months as from 1 October which made the army's position a little more secure.<sup>(2)</sup> Harington subscribed to the view that the Scots would not depart unless Fairfax's army was used as a counterweight. He was rightly pessimistic about the future but for the wrong reasons saying that "terrible clouds hang over us and will fall on us".<sup>(3)</sup> The conflict was not to be with the Scots who accepted their money and went home peacefully, but between the army and its supposed masters, the Parliament. Perhaps some members could foresee this. On 9 October Harington reported that there was "some heat about ye army. Lt. Gen. Cromwell pleads for them and for charity".<sup>(4)</sup>

---

(1) C.J., IV, p. 643. The Lords' requests were based on a letter from the Scots commissioners in London printed in L.J., VIII, pp. 461-462.

(2) C.J., IV, p. 687. The following year there were army accusations that the money gathered in on this vote was not paid to the soldiery.

(3) B.M.Add.Ms. 10, 114, f.20v.

(4) ibid.

By December 1646 Hollis and his associates dominated the Commons and were able to rally support from outside. On 19 December the City presented a petition calling for the disbanding of the army. The petition was preceeded by an allegation in the House that Sir John Evelyn, the Wiltshire M.P., had said that, since the citizens of London intended to present their petition, Sir Thomas Fairfax's army should be sent for to quell their "mechanik" spirits. A committee was set up to look into the matter.<sup>(1)</sup>

The following month a deliberate campaign against the army appears to have taken place over religion. On 31 December the Commons had passed a declaration against preaching by unordained persons which was aimed primarily at the army. It was opposed by the Independents with Haselrig and Cromwell as tellers against the motion and Sir Walter Erle and Sir Anthony Irby for it.<sup>(2)</sup> The debate on the proposal continued throughout January and The Moderate Intelligencer said that the proponents and opponents of the measure were "each pleading for no lesse then heaven".<sup>(3)</sup> A trooper of Colonel Rich's regiment was reported to the Council of War by a Northampton minister for accusing the minister of being of Anti-christ not of Christ, and for preaching and expounding erroneous

---

(1) C.J., V, pp. 15-17; A Perfect Diurnal, 14-21 December, 1646.

(2) C.J., V, p. 34.

(3) The Moderate Intelligencer, 28 January-4 February 1647.

doctrines. There were other reports in the press of army chaplains encroaching on the rights of local ministers, and, in the manner of Edward's Gangraena, the third part of which had been published at the end of 1646, of atrocities committed by the army. A Perfect Diurnal, The Moderate Intelligencer and The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer <sup>lept</sup> to the army's defence, refuting the charges and reporting that Fairfax was careful to keep the soldiery out of pulpits and that the army was full of civility. But this did not stop the anti-army propagandists.<sup>(1)</sup> On 30 January Fairfax wrote from his headquarters at Northampton complaining bitterly of such propaganda suggesting that "those Malignants and Cavaliers who could not prevaile by power will endeavour to do it by Pollicy".<sup>(2)</sup> These charges were a way of whipping up anti-army hysteria and helped prepare the way for decisive action against the army.

In order to achieve the settlement they were after, the Presbyterian peace party's policy required the removal of the standing army, or at least its transformation from a powerful fighting

---

(1) A Perfect Diurnal, 11-18 January 1647; The Moderate Intelligencer, 31 December-7 January 1647; The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 5-12 January 1647; Mercurius Diutinus, 13-20 January 1647; E372(20), The Copy of a letter written from Northampton containing a True Relation of the Souldiers preaching and murdering a Woman : which are very grossly misrepresented by the Diurnal and Moderate Intelligencer; B. Whitelocke, Memorials of English Affairs, IV Vols., Oxford, 1853 (hereafter cited as Whitelocke, Memorials), II, p. 104; E371(18), A Bloody Plot discovered against the Independents; E372(22), A Just Apologie for an abused Armie. The trooper concerned in the Northampton incident was John Gregory. He was not proceeded against by the Council of War on the grounds that he had not infringed any of the articles of war and after a token imprisonment for one night he was released. For further details of his career q.v. biographical appendix.

(2) A Perfect Diurnal, 25 January-1 February 1647.



force with its own sense of identity into an instrument under their control. Hollis and his party seriously underestimated the power and esprit de corps of the army in their attempts to dismantle it in early 1647. The Irish question provided the Presbyterian peace party with the ideal chance of dealing with the army.

As we have seen, Ireland had been under consideration since the previous year. Lord Lisle had been appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland at the beginning of 1646, but it was not until January 1647 that he set out for Ireland with a small expeditionary force which included amongst its officers Sir Hardress Waller and Thomas Harrison, both of whom were later to be important in army politics. The expedition was a failure. It led to a dispute with Inchiquin over authority and responsibility for the forces and Lisle was soon back in England.<sup>(1)</sup>

On 28 January the Commons ordered a report from the Derby House Committee about what sort of army would be necessary to fight an offensive war in Ireland. By 6 March it had been decided to take 3,000 horse and seven foot regiments out of the standing army "for the vigorous prosecution of the war" in Ireland.<sup>(2)</sup> Overtures had been made to Fairfax about the best way of raising forces for Ireland, and he expressed his willingness to further the service. Colonel Robert Hammond volunteered to go there. Hammond put forward proposals for

---

(1) L.J., VIII, pp. 127, 261; S. R. Gardiner, History of the Great Civil War, 1642-1649, IV Vols., London, 1893, III, p. 232. In The Hipocrites Unmasking (Wor. Co. AA.8.3(5)) Prynne attacks Lisle and Waller for exploiting the mission for their own financial benefit.

(2) C.J., V, pp. 68, 107.

his terms of service. He wanted to be made governor of Dublin and his tour of duty not to exceed two to three months. He also requested that shipping should be provided to transport his force back at the end of their stay. Parliament accepted these demands.<sup>(1)</sup> The stage seemed set for a Blitz krieg against the Irish rebels. On 16 March Parliament resolved to stop paying the Scots army in Ireland and to carry on the war with its own forces.<sup>(2)</sup> Parliament's call had met with a small degree of success and there was no obvious sign of opposition to the Irish service in the army. What in fact created opposition in the army was Parliament's intentions for that part of the army not going to Ireland.

On 5 March the Commons debated and voted on the motion whether Fairfax should command the forces to be kept on in England. The 'yeas' carried it by 12 votes (their tellers Sir William Armyne and Sir John Evelyn; those for the 'noes' Sir Walter Erle and Sir William Lewes). As Whitelocke remarked "some wondered it should admit a debate and question".<sup>(3)</sup> Three days later the House passed more votes. They voted that no officer in the army was to be kept on in the army above the rank of Colonel, (other than Fairfax presumably), that no M.P. was to hold any military command. (this

---

(1) C.S.P.D. 1645-47, pp. 525, 531; Whitelocke, Memorials, II, p. 119; H.M.C. Portland, I, p. 414; C.J., V, pp. 109, 112. Prynne denounced Hammond for making "unreasonable proposals" (The Hipocrite's Unmasking).

(2) C.J., V, p. 113.

(3) C.J., V, pp. 106-107; Whitelocke, Memorials, II, p. 119.

would have affected Cromwell, Ireton, Rainborowe, Harrison, Fleetwood and Rich), and that all officers were to take the Covenant and conform with Church government as established by both Houses. These votes would have destroyed the Independent party's close links with the army and established a Presbyterian hegemony over the army, or what remained of it. Petitions from Essex and the City complaining of the burden of free quarter reinforced the Presbyterians in their hard-line towards the army.<sup>(1)</sup> It is not clear if the Presbyterian leaders thought the army would accept these measures passively and comply with them, but by the time the commissioners (Sir William Waller, Sir John Clotworthy and Richard Salway) were sent down to the army on 20 March the situation had been radically transformed.

The Moderate Intelligencer reported that on 15 March the House should have considered the maintenance of forces for Ireland but this was laid aside because of the presentation of a petition entitled The Humble Petition of Many Thousands earnestly desiring the Glory of God, the Freedom of the Commonwealth, and the Peace of all Men (the so-called 'large petition'). The petition, which contained the basic Leveller demands to be repeated over and over again for the next few years, was too far-reaching for most M.P.s, and it was felt that its dissemination had to be stopped, especially as the gathered Churches were being used as centres for subscription.<sup>(2)</sup> In connection with the petition Nicholas Tue (or Tew) was arrested for abusing

---

(1) C.J., V, pp. 107-108, 109-110, 115, H.M.C. 4th Report, p. 274.

(2) The Moderate Intelligencer 11-18 March 1647; D. Wolfe Leveller Manifestoes of the Puritan Revolution, repr. 1967, p. 133. The petition itself, with its assumption that sovereignty lies in the House of Commons, is printed in L.J., IX, pp. 82-85; Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, pp. 135-141; G. E. Aylmer, The Levellers in the English Revolution, London, 1975, pp. 76-81.

Colonel Leigh's committee enquiring into unauthorised preaching, and Major Alexander Tulidah was ordered to be sent for and detained as a delinquent.<sup>(1)</sup> Tulidah was a member of the army at this time, but his regiment and earlier career are unknown. Along with Tue he became a focus of attention for the Levellers, who protested against such arbitrary proceedings by Parliament. On 26 March he was bailed and his case was committed. On 4 May he was called before the House to give an account of himself and his commitment. In the army he was soon rewarded with promotion.<sup>(2)</sup>

Concurrently with the large petition in London a petition circulated in the army ranks.<sup>(3)</sup> It was widely reported in the newspapers, which derived their information from a letter from army headquarters dated 18 March, that a petition was circulating amongst the soldiery.<sup>(4)</sup> The petition was drawn up by troopers of Rich's regiment and some other regiments, and circulated amongst soldiers quartered in the Eastern Association. Various discontents were aired, such as pay arrears, as well as statements that they would only serve in Ireland

- (1) C.J., V, p. 118. John Lilburne (E393(39), Rash Oaths Unwarrantable, 1647, pp. 35-36), said that Tue had been expelled from the committee chamber and with fellow petitioners assembled in a nearby house where he read out the petition.
- (2) C.J., V, pp. 125, 162. For details of Tulidah's subsequent career q.v. biographical appendix.
- (3) My account of the army petitions at this time differs substantially from Gardiner's (Great Civil War, III, pp. 223-230) and very substantially from the most recent account by Dr. Gentles (I. J. Gentles, 'Arrears of Pay and Ideology in the Army Revolt of 1647' in B. Bond and I. Roy (eds.) War and Society, Croome Helm, 1975, pp. 45-46). I base my arguments on The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 16-23 March 1647; The Weekly Account, 17-24 March 1647; A Perfect Diurnal, 15-22 March 1647; E390(26), The Declaration of the Army under Sir Thomas Fairfax as it was lately presented at Saffron Walden (May 16) 1647; E381(18), An Apologie of the Soldiers to all their Commission Officers ... (26 March) 1647.
- (4) The Weekly Account, 17-24 March, 1647 says the author of the letter was Fairfax.

with their own General, and that they would not be pressed into service abroad. Some asked what had made them so odious that petitions were presented to parliament against them, such as the Essex petition, when they had never disobeyed commands or complied with the enemy. According to the officers' version of events, printed in May,<sup>(1)</sup> the soldiers approached them to ask if they would petition parliament on the behalf of the soldiery as they had long been acquainted with their grievances which were felt to be common to both officers and men. The officers alleged that they had discouraged petitioning in the army for as long as possible because they were confident that parliament would remedy grievances. But the soldiers had grown suspicious of their superior officers whom they felt might betray them, as they were in a better position to put pressure on the authorities for their arrears and to be free from molestation or impressment after disbanding, because of their status. The soldiery threatened to take matters into their own hands if the officers did not respond. This was stated forcefully in An Apologie of the Soldiers to all their Commission Officers, which claimed that they had fought under their officers to free the land from tyranny and oppression and for the just rights and privileges of parliament. Fearing that they would suffer once disbanded, they claimed that they were forced into petitioning parliament. They wanted the officers to approve this course of action. They suggested that the likelihood of great estates being settled upon the officers would only be "like the trumling of a goulden bal before you

---

(1) E390(26), The Declaration of the Army ...

to make you run after it, with an intent never to let you have it". For themselves their liberties were dearer than their arrears, and they called for solidarity with 'the honest people', that is those who supported the 'large petition', urging the officers to join with them or to let them proceed along. They claimed that all they wanted was to be able to enjoy what the various declarations and protestations of parliament had promised them. (1)

It was quite a radical document, and <sup>it is</sup> hardly surprising that the officers who could sympathise with rank and file feeling, sought to control such discontent and to prevent the possibility of "ill affected spirits" stirring up mutiny. The officers discovered that drafts of many petitions were circulating in the army, including demands which they felt were beyond the concern of soldiers qua soldiers, and "took one draught which they found least obnoxious that way", and altered it to make it less distasteful or inconvenient to the authorities. It was also agreed that the petition should be offered to the General. (2) By May, however, the officers had changed their minds about what concerned members of the army qua members of the army. They argued that the right of petitioning belonged to members of the army in both their military and civilian capacity. The point was also made in March in the letter of the 18th from Saffron Walden :

"I suppose the Army shall not be deprived of the common privileges which every English-man is born unto." (3)

- 
- (1) E381(18), An Apologie ... Cf. Aylmer, Levellers, pp. 22-23.
- (2) E390(26), The Declaration of the Armie ...; The Weekly Account, 17-24 March 1647.
- (3) ibid. It was a very Leveller point.

So at this juncture, the time when the officers were ready to meet the commissioners from Derby House, a situation existed in the army whereby the officers sought to moderate and control the potentially explosive feeling in the ranks which could quite easily lead to a confrontation with parliament. They were trying to win over the soldiery to the view that once sufficient guarantees were produced to satisfy their material grievances, the army would comply with parliament's wishes. But already the distinction between material grievances and political ones was blurred and the two were soon to merge with the army claiming that it was not just a sectional interest pursuing its own ends but that it represented the aspirations of the nation more accurately than the parliament. The seeds of this are to be found in the army's claim that as soldiers its members had not forfeited their civil rights. That claim had already been articulated in March. It is from then that the start of the army's political role can be dated.

The image that the army wanted to project at the time of the March meeting with the commissioners was one of sweetness and reason. The pro-army newsbook, The Moderate Intelligencer, in a report from headquarters said that the horse were "civill for the generality" with none preaching or disturbing public preachers. The army chaplains were doing public relations work around the various quarters, pointing out how the soldiers "have adventured their lives for your liberties, to subdue your enemies, to recover your trades again" and that they had never quartered in that area before and would soon be disposed of by parliament. <sup>(1)</sup>

---

(1) The Moderate Intelligencer, 18-25 March 1647.

The field officers around Saffron Walden had been instructed to attend the meeting, and on 21 and 22 March they met with the commissioners. The convention was well attended with forty-five officers, including Fairfax, present on the first day and fifty-two on the second.<sup>(1)</sup> The officers decided not to commit themselves one way or the other to the commissioners about the Irish service but said that, whether they engaged or not personally :

"... they shall in their severall places be ready to further and advance it amongst those under their respective commands."

There were four questions about which they were uneasy and which they wanted to have resolved : who was to command the Irish expedition, details of the forces that were to remain in England, so that those not staying in England would not be withheld from engaging for Ireland by expecting to stay in England, what arrangements had been made for pay and maintenance for those going to Ireland, and what was to be done about pay arrears and about indemnity for actions committed during the war. A group of officers dissented from these votes. Colonel Harley, Colonel Fortescue, Colonel Butler, Lt. Col. Jackson, Major Fincher, Captain Farre and Captain Nevill from the first and the same group together with Colonel Rich, Major Duckett, Captain O'Hara, Captain Audley and Captain Young from the second. With the exception of Colonel Rich, a future adherent of the Fifth Monarchists and opponent of the Protectorate, and Captain Lewis Audley, the future elected officer of Fairfax's foot regiment, these officers adhered to the

---

(1) E409(25), A Declaration of the Engagements, Remonstrances, Representations, Proposals, Resolutions from His Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax and the General Council of the Army, (27 September) 1647 (hereafter cited as Book of Army Declarations) p. 2; L.J., IX, pp. 112-113.



group willing to serve in Ireland on parliament's terms. Thus the first split in the officer corps in 1647 was between those willing to serve on parliament's terms, "undertakers", and those with varying degrees of reservations. (1)

The issues of pay arrears and indemnity should be distinguished from each other. In a highly legalistic age the latter, not a purely military concern, became an important question especially with the ending of hostilities. In February A Perfect Diurnal reported that Fairfax received constant complaints from countrymen and soldiers about cases being brought by malignants against them for horses "which they took from the Enemy, with the hazard of their lives in the field ...". The newsbook said that this was likely to ruin many of the parliament's friends unless stopped. Cases were also brought against officers. In March a Lt. Freeman was indicted for some actions he had committed during the war. The House ordered his relief and also that all those on charges concerning actions in the war were to be discharged. The Moderate Intelligencer felt that :

"This will be much to the content of the souldier, for they were much afraid they should be questioned for so much as free quarter hereafter."

Besides the seizure of horses and free quarter, actions could be brought for the seizure of supplies and equipment. The following month during the discussions with the parliamentary commissioners, the officers told the commissioners that the soldiery would not be satisfied with the issue of indemnity merely being referred to the judiciary. They

---

(1) My account of proceedings at Walden is based on L.J., IX, pp. 112-113; The Moderate Intelligencer, 18-25 March 1647. I differ from Gardiner (Great Civil War, III, pp. 223-224) on some points. Captain Lewis Audley continued to favour the Irish service until at least April (Rushworth, VI, p. 465); but cf. The Moderate Intelligencer, 15-22 April 1647, when it is alleged that Audley had said "such and such ingaged for Ireland's affairs were not worthy to wipe his horse's taylor". For contemporary use of the term "undertakers" q.v. Clarke Papers, I, p. 1.

cited the case of a soldier in Lincoln who had not been handed over to the army for trial by martial law. The commissioners showed some responsiveness to the concerns expressed by the officers. On 7 May an indemnity ordinance for actions in the war, applicable to both civilians and military persons, was read for the first time. Parliament also revoked an order whereby soldiers could be tried by oyer et terminer commissions. The indemnity ordinance was finally published on 21 May 1647.<sup>(1)</sup>

The shortcomings of the ordinance of 21 May were soon realised. The Heads of the Proposals included a demand for a more general Act of Oblivion to be included in any settlement.<sup>(2)</sup> From 6 July 1647 until March 1648 there was a protracted case involving Francis Hacker who was to become quite important in army politics in the following years and who in January 1649 was to command the guards at the king's execution, and the Accounts' Sub-Committee of Leicestershire, where Hacker had fought in the Civil War.<sup>(3)</sup> The cause of the dispute arose out of Hacker's imprisonment by the Sub-Committee for which he sued them. The Sub-Committee appealed against

- (1) A Perfect Diurnal, 8-15 February 1647; 8-15 March 1647; 3-10 May 1647; Moderate Intelligence, 11-18 March 1647; 15-22 April 1647; Kingdoms Weekly Intelligencer, 4-11 May 1647; B.M.Add.Ms. 37, 344, f.180; C.J., V, pp. 109, 110, 166, 181. The indemnity ordinance is repr. in Firth and Rait, I, pp. 936-938.
- (2) S. R. Gardiner, The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625-1660, Oxford, 1906 etc., pp. 323-324.
- (3) His regiment does not appear to have become a part of the army until 1648 and Hacker only attended meetings of the Council of Officers from late 1648; he was not a member of the Army Council in 1647 (Firth and Davies, p. 231; Clarke Papers, II, pp. 274-275). For further biographical details q.v. biographical appendix.

this and the case was re-heard before a well-attended meeting of the Indemnity Committee, a Committee of both Houses set up under the May Ordinance which became staffed exclusively by M.P.s by the autumn of 1647. Those attending included Cromwell himself whose only recorded attendance this was, thus showing how much importance he laid on the case. The case against Hacker was dismissed only to be brought up before the Commons, possibly at the prompting of the Committee for taking the Accounts of the Kingdom on which Prynne, a rabidly anti-army figure, was active, but nothing seems to have come of it.

The Indemnity Committee itself continued to exist until 21 April 1652 when it was dissolved, although from January 1649 it had been a committee of the Rump. From June 1652 non-parliamentary commissioners took over the powers of the Committee and they continued to operate with some slight changes of membership and under different authorities caused by the changes of government until 1655.<sup>(1)</sup>

The importance of indemnity in politicising the army should not be underestimated. It was an issue capable of uniting both officers and men, although much of the impetus for some sort of indemnity seems to have come largely from the ranks. Cases brought against individuals for seizing horses especially affected the horse regiments, which of course led the way in politicising the army in

---

(1) For the two paragraphs above I have drawn heavily upon an unpublished paper by my supervisor Professor G. E. Aylmer ('Indemnity and Oblivion') which has helped clarify the intricacies involved in the question of indemnity and to provoke further thought about its implications, especially for the army.

1647, while the question of apprentices seeking exemption from completing their time in their respective trades and crafts after military service, a promise made by parliament, must have affected many of the infantry as well. The indemnity issue also serves to show that while the army undoubtedly became a revolutionary movement it remained very concerned with legal propriety and procedure, a concern that was to colour its political aspirations and political role in the following years.

However, to return to the narrative of events in 1647; during the meeting with the parliamentary commissioners at Saffron Walden in March, the soldiers' petition, now thoroughly revised by the non-engaging officers and soldiery, was presented on behalf of the officers and soldiery, asking the officers to hand it to the General and, if he approved of it, then to the parliament.<sup>(1)</sup> All the evidence points to this petition as being the one printed in the Lord's Journals.<sup>(2)</sup> According to the officers' version of

(1) The Moderate Intelligencer, 18-25 March 1647.

(2) L.J., IX, p. 114. It is the petition annexed to the declaration of the officers in May (E390(26)) and the one printed in the Book of Army Declarations, pp. 1-2. This petition should not be confused, as is done by Dr. Gentles ('Arrears of Pay', p. 45), with a petition presented to both Lords and Commons on 22 March (L.J., IX, pp. 95-96). This petition was presented by Sir Thomas Essex and signed by him and 13 other officers including a Colonel Matthew Alured, possibly the same man as the future opponent of the Protectorate. It was a Presbyterian petition calling for public worship to be settled according to the Word of God and the example of the best reformed Churches, for the subject to have the benefit of Magna Carta, the removal of county committees and the auditing of their accounts, the payment of arrears, the satisfaction of public faith debts, and an act of indemnity. The petition is qualitatively different from the one circulating in the standing army. The identity of Sir Thomas Essex is rather a mystery. J. R. McCormack identifies him as Sir Thomas Fairfax (Revolutionary Politics in the Long Parliament Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1973, p. 172), and indeed the diarist Lawrence Whitacre states that the petition was brought in by divers Colonels and Lt. Colonels "whereof Sir Thomas Fairfax was ye Leader" (B.M. Add. Ms., 31, 116, f. 305). This seems highly improbable as Fairfax was at Saffron Walden at the time.

events written in May, most of them took a copy of the petition to their quarters, to acquaint the soldiers with what had been agreed on for their better satisfaction. In this way they could hope to maintain their control over events. However, some persons at Saffron Walden, whom the officers described as "malicious Incendiaries endeavouring to beget mis-understanding betwixt the Parliament and their Army", got hold of a copy of the petition "surreptitiously" and "unreasonably" sent it to parliament, claiming there was a dangerous design in it.<sup>(1)</sup> The officers might well have had Waller and Clotworthy in mind. According to Waller, he and Clotworthy received a copy of the petition while they were still at Walden and were told that it had been presented at the convention of officers in the General's own quarters. It was said that Rich had reproached Quarter Master Fincher for opposing it, "as a person not deserving to live in the army".<sup>(2)</sup> The activity in favour of the petition must have given encouragement to the 'undertakers'. Twenty nine officers, including Fincher, drew up a Declaration indicating that they would accept parliament's terms for the Irish service, confident that parliament would remedy their grievances.<sup>(3)</sup> Waller and Clotworthy informed

(1) E390(26), The Declaration of the Army.

(2) Sir William Waller, Vindication of the Character and Conduct of Sir William Waller, London, 1793, p. 51.

(3) This was presented to the Commons on 27 March (C.J., V, p. 127). The Declaration is printed in L.J., IX, p. 114. In June the 'undertakers' complained that, when the petition came to light, it ought to have been debated fully in a free and general Council of War, or to have been countenanced by the General or some superior officer. They suggest there was a conspiracy to prevent them from debating it, that there was no precedent for it and that there was no general discontent among the army only among some regiments. (E394(3), A Vindication of 167 Officers that are come off from the Army, (26 June)).

Fairfax of the petition, and he assured them that he would suppress it if it came before him.<sup>(1)</sup> But, despite this, the petition continued to circulate in the army. Waller alleges that it was ordered that those not subscribing to it "should be crossed out of the muster-roll".<sup>(2)</sup> On 27 March the two commissioners informed the House of Commons of the petition, and the House ordered the matter to be committed. They re-affirmed their "good opinion of the Army" but requested Fairfax to stop the petition from proceeding in the army.<sup>(3)</sup> Two days later the House received more news of the petition in the form of two letters to the 'undertakers' Colonels Harley and Rossiter. The letter to Harley said that his Lt. Colonel (Pride) had drawn up the regiment to a rendezvous where the petition was read and signed by about 1,100 persons. Pride was supposed to have said that those not signing would be cashiered. Other regiments were reported to be drawing near to headquarters. The correspondent over-optimistically suggested that, if the parliament provided money and sent for Skippon, "I am confident they (the parliament) might do what they please with the army". The other letter mentioned that the petition had come to the regiment, directed from Lt. Griffith Lloyd to Lt. Byfield and Lt. Scott for subscription. The returns were to be sent to Colonel Robert Hammond, Lt. General Thomas Hammond, Commissary General Ireton, Colonel Robert

---

(1) Waller, Vindication, p. 51.

(2) ibid., p. 55.

(3) C.J., V, p. 127.

Lilbume or Lt. Colonel Grimes. All of these, with the exception of Ireton, Byfield and Scott, were sent for by the House. Skippon was ordered back from Newcastle and a further letter was ordered to be sent to Fairfax. (1)

On 30 March, the same day as parliament voted all who continued to advance or promote the petition "as enemies of the State and disturbers of the public peace", Fairfax wrote a conciliatory and respectful letter to the Speaker of the Commons. He said that the officers, on being acquainted with the letter and order of the House, felt deeply unhappy

"in being misunderstood in their clear intentions, which were no other than by way of petition to represent unto me those inconveniences which would necessarily befall most of the army after disbanding ... assuring me, that they would wholly acquiesce in whatsoever I shall judge reasonable to offer, or you to grant, on their behalf."

He said he had also sent up the officers desired by the House, to give an account of the petition, "as far as they are acquainted therewith". He denied that the regiments were marching towards a general rendezvous. (2)

The petition itself was quite moderate, and did indeed limit itself to material grievances, calling for indemnity, the auditing of arrears, no impressment of soldiers who had served voluntarily in the war, provision for widows, orphans and maimed

(1) C.J., V., p. 129; H. Cary, Memorials of the Civil War II Vols., London, 1842, I, pp. 183, 185. For the accusation against Pride q.v. also H.M.C. Portland, I, p. 418.

(2) L.J., IX, p. 115; Cary, Memorials, I, pp. 187-188.

soldiers, and some short-term means to be devised for supplying the wants of the army. The petition was prefixed with a short remonstrance recalling the army's previous actions and obedience to the parliament.<sup>(1)</sup> The vehemence with which this petition was treated by the Presbyterian majority in parliament contrasts sharply with the slight reprimand delivered to the Presbyterian officers' petition of 22 March. They were told that the House resented their intrusion into public matters, but in view of their past service and profusion of loyalty the House would overlook it.<sup>(2)</sup> The officers sent up by the army denied the charges against them, but there was not much the House could do without risking a confrontation with the army, so they were sent back to the army. Hollis was to say this was done "rather with respect than otherwise".<sup>(3)</sup>

Relations between parliament and army turned into distrust and dislike symbolised by a near duel between Ireton and Hollis.<sup>(4)</sup> The votes of the House in early April were designed to make the Irish service as attractive as possible and to drive a wedge into the army.<sup>(5)</sup> The non-engaging officers aimed to counter this and to preserve the unity of the army as far as possible even if this meant alienating the 'undertakers' irrevocably. However, at this stage, they did not

- 
- (1) The petition is printed in C.J., IX, p. 114.
- (2) C.J., V, p. 120.
- (3) D. Hollis, Memoirs of Denzil Lord Hollis in F. Maseres, Select Tracts Relating to the Civil Wars in England, II Vols., London, 1815, I, p. 232.
- (4) Gardiner, Great Civil War, III, p. 231.
- (5) Waller, Vindication, p. 65.



possess a fully developed policy. That was only to evolve over the next few weeks in response to the policies of the Presbyterian peace party and to pressure from below, from the rank and file. It was not until November at Ware that they were able to consolidate their authority, and in the interim it is clear that at times the officers were pushed along with great reluctance.

On 4 April the horse were reported to be much troubled by a petition circulating in Essex and allegedly sent down from London. The petition was being read in several Churches in Essex by ministers to procure subscriptions. The soldiers considered it highly unfair that they should be prohibited from petitioning while petitions against them were tolerated if not actually encouraged.<sup>(1)</sup> There was also fear of a surprise attack. Lt. Colonel John Jubbes, later a Leveller sympathiser, came up to headquarters with reports that private orders had been sent to Colonel Middleton, of the ancillaries, to rise against the army, and Captain John Reynolds, likewise a future Leveller sympathiser, came up to report that the horse kept guard fearing a surprise attack.<sup>(2)</sup>

But efforts both to promote and oppose the Irish service continued. On 15 April new commissioners went down to Walden to hasten on the service. They were Presbyterians and included Waller, Massey and Clotworthy (who followed later). With the appointment of Skippon

---

(1) The Moderate Intelligencer, 1-8 April; A Perfect Diurnal, 5-12 April; Whitelocke, Memorials, II, p. 128.

(2) Clarke Ms. 41, f.5. For Reynolds' subsequent career q.v. biographical appendix.

and Massey as commanders for the Irish service, it seemed the task might be easier. Skippon was especially popular with the army. But it was reported in The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer that the officers knew even before the commissioners did that Skippon was reluctant to command in Ireland. He was quite old and infirm and his son had recently died.<sup>(1)</sup> Fairfax had instructed the field officers and Captains and Lieutenants of every troop and company to be present at the meeting, to make it as representative as possible of the officer corps. The 'undertakers' reiterated their position, and Colonel Robert Hammond

"... for himself and in the name of the rest declared that if assurance was had that Major General Skippon would go he was confident that a great part of the army would engage in that service."

He does not appear to have found backing for his claim.<sup>(2)</sup> The non-engaging officers organised themselves more effectively and the two Hammonds along with Colonels Lambert, Lilburne, Hewson and Rich were appointed to represent their views which were largely the same as in March. It was emphasised that these officers were not merely stating their own views but those of all their colleagues. According to The Weekly Account, the authorisation for these representatives was signed by more than 100 officers.<sup>(3)</sup> The officers were also better informed of what was happening in London. From at least the end of March there was a steady stream of letters from the capital to the army, giving

---

(1) The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 13-20 April 1647.

(2) ibid.

(3) Clarke Papers, I, p. 7; The Weekly Account, 14-21 April 1647; The Kingdoms Weekly Intelligencer, 13-20 April 1647.

full information about developments in London. These letters were addressed either to an officer or to William Clarke himself, and were possibly from a single source.<sup>(1)</sup> The fact that the non-engaging officers authorised some of their own number to represent their views serves to remind us that the idea of representation did not emerge solely from the ranks with the agitators; it was common to both officers and soldiers. The officers appointed were largely those who had been involved in the revision of the soldiers' petition the previous month, infused with the new blood of Lambert, a rising star, and Hewson newly returned from Ireland.<sup>(2)</sup> But discontent remained and was by no means confined to the soldiery.

Lt. Colonel Kempson of Robert Lilburne's regiment, an 'undertaker', tried to march the regiment to Chester despite contrary orders from Lilburne. It was even suggested that Lilburne was no longer the Colonel. Sixteen of Kempson's company plucked up the courage to complain to Fairfax, fearing they would be led to Ireland without their own consent. They told the General that they would only go to Ireland with him and their other officers, saying they distrusted those officers who had led them off, and that they had served parliament for three or four years now and only wanted to return to their trades. The grass roots views expressed in Robert Lilburne's regiment were probably felt in other regiments. Fairfax

---

(1) Clarke Papers, I, p. 1 ff. The author of the letters even wrote to Fairfax keeping him up-to-date (ibid., p.2).

(2) Lambert seems to have been the most active, q.v. Whitelocke, Memorials, II, p. 132. He was Colonel of a foot regiment at this time. In July he took over as Commander-in-Chief of the northern forces (Firth and Davies, p. 399). For fuller details about his career between 1647 and 1650 q.v. biographical appendix.

complained to the commissioners of such underhand dealing, and suggested a rendezvous of the army when the votes of parliament could be read to the regiments and decisions made in a more relaxed atmosphere. On 27 April the Commons, after a division, decided to send for Robert Lilburne to account for his role in trying to dissuade that part of his regiment from marching off. It also transpired that Ensign Francis Nichols of the same regiment who had been apprehended by and sent up in custody to the Commons by Captain Francis Dormer, also of the regiment but an 'undertaker' officer, had distributed the March petition and had said that Robert Lilburne would recruit the regiment and that it would be a standing one (presumably in the sense that it would be one of those kept on in England; it was already a part of the New Model). Such defiance of parliament was beyond what any of the senior officers contemplated at this stage. Nichols had had his pockets searched and money and papers taken from him while in custody. These arbitrary proceedings against an individual who was subject to martial law only helped antagonise the officers.<sup>(1)</sup> Nichols was released on 25 May with some loss of face to the Commons who rejected, by a narrow margin, a proposal to offer him a gratuity lest it be implied that he had been wrongfully arrested. By the end of the month he was back in the army and active in the Council of War.<sup>(2)</sup>

---

(1) For the trouble in Robert Lilburne's regiment q.v. Gardiner, Great Civil War, III, pp. 234-235; Firth and Davies, pp. 453-455; A Perfect Diurnal, 19-26 April 1647; ibid., 26 April-3 May 1647; The Moderate Intelligencer, 15-22 April 1647; C.J., V., p. 154; L.J., IX, pp. 153-156; Clarke Papers, I, pp. 10-11; Rushworth, VI, pp. 460-463.

(2) Perfect Diurnal, 10-17 May 1647; C.J., V, pp. 175, 184, Clarke Papers, I, pp. 84, 109. For further details of his career q.v. the biographical appendix.

Major Robert Saunders of Hammond's regiment was sent for at the same time and was accused of trying to stop men from enlisting for Ireland saying :

"That the whole bulk of the army stays, and none of the Godly Party will go." (1)

There were attempts in other regiments to draw men off for Ireland, but the soldiers proved as reluctant as Lilburne's men. Captain Evelyn's troop in Sheffield's regiment drew up a declaration, saying that they refused to go until their arrears were settled, and until the reservations which the officers had put forward in March and again in April to the parliamentary commissioners were answered. They added that, though the kingdom needed help, they could not "deprive ourselves of our just rights and liberties". (2)

The influence of London radicals continued to make an impact on the army. On 23 April the Commons committed two papers, A New Found Stratagem, formed in the Old Forge of Machivilisme and put upon the Inhabitants of the County of Essex and An Apologie of the Soldiery to all their Commission Officers, to find out who was responsible for them and how they had been distributed in the army. Thomason records that A New Found Stratagem was scattered about the army when the commissioners went down to it on 15 April. The tract

---

(1) C.J., V, p. 154; L.J., IX, p. 156. For further biographical details on Saunders q.v. the biographical appendix.

(2) Clarke Papers, I, pp. 16-17, esp. p. 17; A Perfect Diurnal, 26 April-3 May 1647. For further details of Evelyn's career q.v. biographical appendix.

denounces the Essex petition and accuses Colonels Rossiter and Harley of inciting ill-feeling in the army at the time of the March petition. According to one of the army's correspondents in London the Apologie was intended to be the unanimous opinion of the whole army, and had been sent to Whalley's regiment and was "soe weake and impertinent that few or none of the Army (especially if they have one dram of sense or reason) will owne". Hollis tried to represent it to the House as the army's view.<sup>(1)</sup> On 27 April along with Colonel Lilburne and Major Robert Saunders, Captain William Styles and his sergeant, Roger Crofts of Lambert's regiment were summoned before the Commons for their part in distributing A New Found Stratagem.<sup>(2)</sup> On the same day seven officers were sent up to the House to present The Petition and Vindication of the Officers of the Army...<sup>(3)</sup> The seven officers were Colonels Okey and Hewson, Lt. Colonels Reade and Pride, Major Rogers and Captains Reynolds and Goffe. All were

---

(1) C.J., V, p. 133; E384(11), A New Found Stratagem; Clarke Papers, I, p. 15. Firth takes the Apologie to be The Second Apology of all the Private Soldiers ... in the Book of Army Declarations p. 9. This is quite probable. The style is very similar to the March Apologie (E381(18) referred to above) and the content is very political, saying that "the meanest subject should fully enjoy his Right. Libertie and properties in all things". It also says that if their grievances are not relieved "we shall be forced to that, which we pray God to divert". The Worcester College copy is inscribed "16 April". (Wor. Co. B.B. 8.16.(17)).

(2) C.J., V, p. 154; L.J., IX, p. 156. On 1 May John Eve, sergeant to Lambert, was ordered to appear before the committee of the House of Commons in connexion with A New Found Stratagem (H.M.C. Portland, III, p. 157). For the subsequent careers of Saunders and Styles q.v. biographical appendix.

(3) E385(19).

to become important figures in army politics over the next months and to remain so during the next decade. The contents were similar to the Declaration given to the Parliamentary commissioners the following month, vindicating themselves on the right of soldiers to petition, and calling for settlement of pay arrears, using the argument that they had left their trades and callings and taken up arms for Parliament's sake. It was signed by 150 officers. The petition was not read until the 30th, by which time it was overtaken by direct action from the ranks.

The threat of direct action from the ranks had been brewing up throughout April. On the 27th a paper was laid before Parliament by Lt. Colonel Kempson, in the form of information from James Rose, Ensign to Captain George Weldon of Lilburne's regiment. It was dated 18 April and stated that, when he was marching to Bury St. Edmunds to quarter, one Mr. Philips and another person from Cromwell's own troop approached him requesting a private conference. This took place in "The Bushel" in the company of others. He was asked how the foot stood affected to the horse and whether they would join together to stand up for their arrears. He was told that two horse regiments were voted for Ireland, including Whalley's, and that they were being contacted in an effort to get them to stand up for their arrears. The old petition (i.e. the March one) was being revived, and a declaration and remonstrance were being drawn up for presentation to Parliament. Rose also reported that on 17 April, as he was going to a rendezvous of the regiment, he met with some horse going to Newmarket who cried out to the foot "Fellow soldiers, now stand all for your Arrears".<sup>(1)</sup> On the same day as Kempson's paper was

---

(1) C.J., IX, p. 156. For Rose's subsequent career q.v. biographical appendix.

presented a letter was read in the Commons about discontent among the soldiery of Ireton's regiment at Ipswich. This is the famous letter which refers to Lilburne's books being "quoted by them (the soldiery) as statute-law". The letter mentions the soldiers determination to carry on with the petition and that they will send it to the parliament with two from every troop. This was the origin of the agitators. They also said that they had fought "all this tyme to bring the king to London, and to London they will bring the king", a view that was not shared by their superiors. Bitter language was used against the parliament and especially against Hollis and Stapleton.<sup>(1)</sup> The discontent of the soldiery was amorphous and disparate. The officers had seen the need to temper and control it but had not been successful. There now followed a new attempt to exploit this energy. This came from a different source; the agitators working in association with the London Levellers.

The climax of developments in April was the letters from the agitators of the eight regiments of horse (Fairfax's, Cromwell's, Ireton's, Fleetwood's, Rich's, Sheffield's, Whalley's and Butler's) to Fairfax, Cromwell and Skippon.<sup>(2)</sup> The letter to Skippon was presented to him by Edward Sexby, William Allen and

---

(1) C.J., V, p. 154; H.M.C. Portland, III, pp. 155-156. The trouble was not just confined to Ireton's regiment. Four regiments may have been involved. Major Huntingdon of Cromwell's regiment helped restore order by appointing an officer and trooper of each troop to meet and advise about affairs (A Perfect Diurnal, 19-26 April 1647). Again it is noteworthy just how extensive the idea of representation was at this time.

(2) L.J., IX, p. 164; Cary, Memorials, I, pp. 201-205; Book of Army Declarations, pp. 7-9.



Thomas Shepherd, respectively of Fairfax's, Cromwell's and Ireton's regiments, and on 30 April Skippon and Cromwell presented the letters to the House. In the letters the agitators threw themselves upon Fairfax, Cromwell and Skippon as their "patron and protector" and urged them to "cease not to speak for us". The letters were a blatant condemnation of the parliamentary Presbyterians, characterising them as "some who have lately tasted of sovereignty" who were now degenerating into tyrants.<sup>(1)</sup> The three troopers were called into the House and asked to account for their behaviour. But they refused to give away much, and emphasised that they were individuals and could not be accountable for a joint action.<sup>(2)</sup> Fearing that things were getting out of hand in the army, the House immediately ordered Skippon, Ireton, Cromwell and Fleetwood to go down to the army to quieten distempers.<sup>(3)</sup> The letter from the agitators overthrew completely the official army line that, given the right commanders, then the soldiery would go to Ireland. The letter said that even with Fairfax as commander they would still be "averse to that service until our just desires be granted, the rights and liberties of the subjects of England vindicated and maintained."<sup>(4)</sup> For them the

(1) Cary, Memorials, I, loc. cit.

(2) C.J., V, p. 158; Tanner Ms. 58, f. 84, reprinted in Clarke Papers, I, pp. 430-431. Sexby was to become one of the most important soldier agitators. For his subsequent career q.v. biographical appendix. Allen is the same person as the future Adjutant General of horse whose political career spans the 1650's (q.v. biographical appendix). Of Thomas Shepherd little else is known. He remained as agitator to Ireton's regiment (Clarke Papers, I, p. 88).

(3) C.J., V, p. 158.

(4) Cary, Memorials, I, p. 204.

cause of the army and the cause of the kingdom were becoming indistinguishable. It was further than the officers had dared to go as yet, but by the beginning of June the officers would adopt such a position and in the name of the whole army. The emergence of the agitators pushed the officers into pursuing a more radical course of action. However, the officers were determined not to let rank and file feeling get out of hand.

The dispatch of the military M.P's as commissioners was designed to appease. Of the four, Ireton had been a consistent opponent of the Irish service, as propounded by parliament, from the start. Fleetwood did not figure at all and Skippon and Cromwell had been and continued to be slightly favourable towards it. Major Robert Huntingdon, in his Sundry Reasons, alleged that from this time Cromwell and Ireton "very much hindered that service" by encouraging disobedience to parliament. But I follow Gardiner in rejecting this smear, certainly with regard to Cromwell. Ireton's role is more ambiguous.<sup>(1)</sup> The appeasement tactic was continued. On 1 May the Commons refused to vote on a motion for calling Colonel Lilburne, Major Saunders, Captain Styles and Sergeant Crofts to the bar of the House.<sup>(2)</sup> Attempts were also made to organise the promotion of the Irish service on a more systematic basis. It was decided that the officers should have until 14 May to communicate

---

(1) E458(3) Sundry Reasons inducing Major Robert Huntingdon to lay down his Commission repr. in Maseres, Select Tracts, II, pp. 397-407, p. 397; Gardiner, Great Civil War, III, p. 246n.

(2) C.J., V, p. 159. They were discharged along with Ensign Nichols on 25 May (ibid., p. 184).

the votes of the House to their charges and to give the commissioners a return thereon.<sup>(1)</sup>

However, during this time the agitators re-organised themselves. The soldiers chose committees from every troop and company. A committee of troopers met at Bury St. Edmunds and the foot chose two representatives from every company, to confer with them, to which every foot soldier contributed four pence to offset the costs.<sup>(2)</sup> In the meantime parliament made concessions over the questions of pay and indemnity.<sup>(3)</sup> The regiments made their returns to headquarters, and from them the officers culled a composite paper which was then presented to the commissioners.<sup>(4)</sup> This process involved toning down some of the language and excluding some of the demands in the regimental returns, especially those which were deemed to be too extreme. For example Ireton's regiment complained that they were being forced to serve in Ireland before "the reall freedome of the free people of England be established" which was why there had been a war in the first place. Rich's regiment claimed they had ventured their lives and liberties for the privileges of parliament. Fairfax's foot complained that the

---

(1) Rushworth, VI, p. 480.

(2) ibid., p. 485.

(3) C.J., V, pp. 173-174.

(4) Cary, Memorials, I, p. 215.

laws of the land were in an unknown language and that, unless their grievances were redressed, "we shall be hanged like dogs for the good service we have done the kingdome".<sup>(1)</sup> The returns were endorsed by the officers and sent to Lambert. Lt. Colonel Thomas Reade of Herbert's regiment wrote a covering letter, in which he said that

"... you would be pleased to alter adde or dismiss what may seeme to be imperfect or improper alwaies provided that you retaine the same sense and Capacitie that now it passeth from under their hands."

Reade's remarks show that at least some of the more senior officers sympathised with the more radical aspirations coming from the ranks.<sup>(2)</sup>

The composite grievances were presented to the parliamentary commissioners on 15 May and debated over two days.<sup>(3)</sup> The document was drawn up by Colonels Whalley, Hammond, Rich, Lambert, Ingoldsby, Okey, Hewson and Majors Disborowe and Cowell.<sup>(4)</sup> It was presented largely by the same men.<sup>(5)</sup> The meetings revealed the extent of the

(1) Clarke Ms. 41, ff. 111v, 113.

(2) ibid., f. 31. For further details about Reade q.v. biographical appendix.

(3) Gardiner (Great Civil War, III, pp. 247-248) identifies the composite grievances as E390(26), The Declaration of the Army. This document vindicates the army's proceedings, especially regarding the March petition, and blames the subsequent "irregular" developments, that is the emergence of the agitators, on the parliament's hysterical over-reaction to the petition. This Declaration differs from the one printed in the Book of Army Declarations pp. 17-21 which deals much more with material grievances. Despite the different emphasis the essence is the same.

(4) Clarke Papers, I, p. 80n.

(5) E390(26), The Declaration of the Army claimed to set forth to the commissioners as M.P.s the army's "real love, diligent care to discharge that duty for which they were raised, as will manifestly appeare in time to all that wish well to Mercy, Peace and Justice". It prophesies, rather ironically, "The Time is coming when God will execute justice and judgement on the earth".

split between the 'undertakers' and non-undertakers, and also the hatred between the two which Skippon had to cool.<sup>(1)</sup> The main problem was whether the intended declaration of the army could be considered representative of all the army, especially as some officers dissented from it and from the way in which it had been produced. Lambert countered such charges, saying that the composite grievances had been drawn up with the unanimous consent of the army and were not representative of only a few officers. He also became quite irritated with the 'undertakers'.<sup>(2)</sup> Rich was rather shocked at some of the things said in his regiments' return, finding them too extreme. For him the concerns of the army ought to be arrears and the Irish service. He emphasised the moderation of the officers, and that the excesses spoken by some officers and soldiers were not representative of the army, and that they had tried their best to stop "distempers" and to promote parliament's affairs in England and Ireland.<sup>(3)</sup> Lt. Colonel Grimes of Lambert's regiment argued that "7 or 8 men do not make a dissent in the army".<sup>(4)</sup> Cromwell wore the hat of a parliamentary commissioner rather than a military

---

(1) Clarke Papers, I, pp. 53, 57, 77.

(2) ibid., pp. 37-38. The undertakers later accused Lambert of having manipulated the returns and called for an investigation (E394(3), A Vindication of 167 Officers lately come off from the Army).

(3) Clarke Papers, I, pp. 62-63, 74-75.

(4) ibid. p. 70. For details of Grimes's career q.v. biographical appendix.

one. He claimed impartiality, and suggested that a field officer from each regiment and two captains should further examine the contents of the regimental returns. The rest of the officers, he continued, should return to their commands, to advance the Irish service and especially the House's votes of 14 May.<sup>(1)</sup> This did not satisfy Colonel Whalley, whose suggestion that one or more of the commissioners go to London to present a vindication of the officer's proceedings was supported by Cornet Joyce, Colonel Hammond and, significantly, by Ireton as well.<sup>(2)</sup>

Nevertheless, shorn of their more overt political language, the grievances as presented to the commissioners were still formidable and raised fundamental questions about the extent of parliament's authority in such areas as the subjects' right to petition, parliament's right to imprison (the Nichols case), and freedom and control of the press. The officers realised that power lay in parliament. They were claiming that this power was being misused and that this ought to be stopped. Thus, despite their reasonable and respectful language it would be wrong to classify the grievances as "moderate" and "non-political".<sup>(3)</sup> That was how they were meant to appear for public consumption, and that was how the officers wanted to project them, and what in fact came across in the newsbooks.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Clarke Papers, I, pp. 72-73.

(2) ibid., pp. 76-77.

(3) Gentles, 'Pay Arrears', p. 49.

(4) The Perfect Weekly Account, 12-19 May 1647; The Moderate Intelligencer, 13-20 May 1647.

It appeared that there was a chance of a compromise between the army and parliament. Fairfax sent a letter to his officers, stating that as the grievances of the army had been presented the soldiers should be stopped from acting further without their officers and that there should be no more meetings of the soldiers at Bury or elsewhere. The headquarters were also moved to Bury "that so he might be nearer the House, and the better take notice of their temper".<sup>(1)</sup> In reality, given the actions and intentions of the Presbyterians, there was little chance of a compromise. They had been busy laying the basis of an army which they were prepared if necessary to commit to the field against Fairfax.<sup>(2)</sup> A new round of tension between army and parliament was created by the vote of 25 May to disband the army. This was to be done piecemeal, starting with Fairfax's own foot regiment. The recent votes of parliament and a declaration acknowledging the army's service was to be read at the head of each regiment. Sir William Waller considered that the release of Ensign Nichols and other officers at this time was a show of good faith.<sup>(3)</sup> The reaction to this plan was unprecedented. On 28 May A Perfect Diurnal reported that the army was not satisfied with the pay voted them, complaining that 56 weeks pay was due. To prevent trouble Fairfax sent for his officers to confer with them.<sup>(4)</sup> The meeting was held on 29

---

(1) A Perfect Diurnal, 24-31 May 1647; Perfect Occurrences, 21-28 May 1647.

(2) On their detailed and well-planned preparations see V. Pearl, 'London's Counter-Revolution' in G. E. Aylmer (ed.) The Interregnum, London, 1972, pp. 44-46.

(3) C.J., V, pp. 183, 185; Waller, Vindication, p. 128.

(4) A Perfect Diurnal, 24-31 May 1647.

May. The officers expressed solidarity with the "generality of the army"; but they were clearly afraid that they were losing control. They recommended Fairfax to bring the regiments nearer to headquarters "which may thus have a readier Influence upon all, for the better preserving of good Order" (it would also make military action easier if need be), to call a general rendezvous, to urge the House to resume discussion of the votes of 25 May and "suspend any present Proceeding thereupon" and to reconsider the grievances of the army as presented to the commissioners.<sup>(1)</sup> This amounted to an ultimatum to parliament. The officers were under considerable pressure from below. A soldiers' petition signed by the agitators of 16 regiments was presented to the Council of War, calling for a rendezvous and for no disbanding before grievances had been redressed. They threatened to take action themselves.<sup>(2)</sup> Mutiny broke out in Fairfax's regiment as the commissioners for disbanding arrived at Chelmsford.<sup>(3)</sup> However, before the crucial rendezvous to restore order and unity took place, the most important variable in the nation's constitution, the king, was seized by a party of horse under George Joyce and brought under army control. The extent of the involvement of Ireton and Cromwell in the abduction remains

- 
- (1) L.J., IX, pp. 226-227. The names of those present at the Council of War are printed in Book of Army Declarations p. 15.
- (2) ibid., p. 16.
- (3) Gardiner, Great Civil War, III, pp. 262-263; Perfect Diurnal, 31 May-7 June 1647. There was also trouble in Rainborowe's regiment (ibid.).



unclear, but the king was willing to go with Joyce, and both Cromwell and Ireton were quick to exploit the new situation.<sup>(1)</sup>

At the time of the king's seizure two rendezvous were held near Newmarket on 4 and 5 June. The outcome was the important Solemn Engagement of the Army.<sup>(2)</sup> It declared that :

"... for the better satisfaction to the Parliament and Kingdome, concerning our desires of conforming to the Authority of the one and providing the good and quiet of the other"

and to ensure that things come to an issue there would be no disbanding until grievances were remedied, and that a Council of the Army, consisting of the general officers, two commission officers, and two soldiers for each regiment, would be set up.<sup>(3)</sup> The institutionalisation of the agitators could make it possible to control them more effectively. An impressive display of union was mounted at Triplow Heath on 10 June which was to go down in army mythology.<sup>(4)</sup> The Moderate Intelligencer, reporting the rendezvous, said the army "are unanimous and as a wall of brass". They want a settlement but are not enthusiastic about the propositions offered

- (1) For a discussion of the seizure of Charles I from Holmby q.v. Gardiner, Great Civil War, III, pp. 266-274; Clarke Papers, I, pp. XXIV-XXXI; W. C. Abbott (ed.), The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, IV Vols., Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1937-47, I, pp. 452-457; C. Hill, God's Englishman, London, 1970, pp. 88-89. Joyce was soon rewarded with promotion. On 4 September the committee of general officers resolved to give him the late Captain Layton's troop, as the General had promised him the first one that fell free (Clarke Ms. 66, f.6). On 15 September it was decided to give him a commission to be governor of Southsea Castle (ibid., f.13v.).
- (2) E392(9). It was officially published on 8 June, and is reprinted in Rushworth (VI, pp. 510-512).
- (3) Rushworth, VI, pp. 510-512.
- (4) For Triplow Heath see Gardiner, Great Civil War, III, pp. 286-287; Rushworth, VI, p. 556.

so far, "they are for justice, and that's the crie, never was so civill an army seen, they have won much the affection of the country people". Chaplains made their contribution. John Saltmarsh said that, since he had come to the army, he had seen a desire for peace and preservation of the kingdom.

"There is a generall cry in the Counties as wee march, that the Army would help them, and be their Mediators to the Parliament for Justice and Righteousnesse."

The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer reported that there were petitions from Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk to the army, urging no disbanding until the grievances of the kingdom were settled. Perfect Occurences reported :

"The Country pities the Armies want of moneys to pay their quarters. A poore man that lives by day-labour, sold all his Pewter to buy victuals for some of them."

All this propaganda was designed to present the army not as a sectional interest but as representative of national grievances, even of national aspirations.<sup>(1)</sup> By thus slipping on to the stage of national politics the officers had to fight on four fronts : the king, the parliament, the City and the soldiery. The events of early June and the army's defiant attitude towards the parliament also brought about the final breach with the 'undertakers' many of whom began to leave the army. The departure of men such as Fortescue, Harley, Herbert, Butler, Pye and Rossiter meant the advancement of Barksted, Pride, Overton, Harrison, Thomlinson and Twisleton all of whom were to be

---

(1) The Moderate Intelligencer 3-10 June; E392(6), J. Saltmarsh, A Letter from the Army (10 June); The Kingdoms Weekly Intelligencer, 8-15 June 1647; Perfect Occurences, 11-18 June 1647. For the petition from Norfolk, Suffolk and Norwich see Rushworth, VI, p. 559; cf., ibid., pp. 573, 575.

quite important in army politics over the next years. There was also pressure from the agitators for the removal of unreliable officers, that is those who were considered discontented with the army's stand. (1)

Shortly after the seizure of the king from Holmby, a deputation of senior officers went to see him. This group comprised Cromwell, Ireton, Skippon, Thomas Hammond, Lambert, Whalley, Rich and Deane, with several of the field and commission officers as well as the chaplains Peters, Dell and Sedgwick. (2) There appears to have been some mistrust of the king, as well as differences between Cromwell and Ireton. Cromwell believed that only when the king enjoyed his rights could they be secure in theirs. Ireton was more straightforward :

"Sir, you have an intention to be the Arbitrator between the Parliament and us, and we mean to be it between your Majesty and the Parliament." (3)

- 
- (1) Clarke Papers, I, pp. XXXIII, 139-140, 428.
- (2) Sir Thomas Herbert, Memoirs, repr. in A. Fea, Memoirs of the Martyr King, London, 1905, p. 87. Herbert's Memoirs were originally published in 1678.
- (3) Sir John Berkeley, Narrative of Sir John Berkeley, repr. in Maseres, Select Tracts, II, pp. 360-361. Sir Lewis Dyve (H. G. Tibbutt (ed.), The Tower of London Letter Book of Sir Lewis Dyve, 1646-47, Bedfordshire Records Society, XXXVIII, 1958, pp. 56-57) said that feelers were put out from the army for contacts with the king in late May. The date of composition of Berkeley's and his fellow royalist Ashburnham's accounts is uncertain. However, Clarendon was familiar with them and speaks of them writing "Apologies ... which they made not public" (Edward, Earl of Clarendon, The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, ed. by W. D. Macray, VI Vols., Oxford, 1888, IV, p. 269). Berkeley's Narrative was published in 1699, Ashburnham's Narrative was not published until 1830.

But there was a genuine desire to make the king central to any settlement. This feeling was not just confined to the most senior ranks. On 7 June John Lilburne's fellow prisoner in the Tower, Sir Lewis Dyve wrote to the king recommending Major Paul Hobson of Robert Lilburne's regiment as an intermediary. It seems likely that he was intended to act in this capacity between the king and the Levellers, but especially John Lilburne. (1)

On 10 June a letter was sent to the City of London signed by Fairfax, Ireton, Cromwell, Thomas Rainborowe, Robert Hammond, Lambert, Thomas Hammond, Robert Lilburne, Sir Hardress Waller, Thomas Harrison, Rich, Pride and Disborowe. It was an important document and with it these army Grandees were able to take the wind out of the sails of the Presbyterians in both the Common Council and parliament. (2) But it also marked the entrance of the army into national politics with political aspirations of its own. Gone was the pretence that it was merely concerned with material grievances. The army declared that both as Englishmen and as soldiers they wanted :

"... a settlement of the Peace of the Kingdom and of the Liberties of the Subject, according to the Votes and Declarations of Parliament which before we took up arms, were (by the Parliament) used as Arguments and Inducements to invite us, and divers of our dear Friends out." (3)

- 
- (1) Dyve, Letter Book, pp. 58-59, 92. For Hobson q.v. biographical appendix.
- (2) Rushworth, VI, pp. 554-555; Pearl, 'London's Counter Revolution', in Aylmer, Interregnum, p. 47.
- (3) Rushworth, VI, pp. 554-555.

The letter prepared the way for the presentation of the Declaration of the Army of the 14 June, which put forward a comprehensive programme for settlement.<sup>(1)</sup> The Declaration was widely supported and once in print, the agitators of horse undertook to distribute it in the north.<sup>(2)</sup>

Having won over the king and appeased the City it remained for the army to deal with Hollis and his allies. This was set in motion with the charge of impeachment against the 11 members.<sup>(3)</sup> The charge was launched against a background of continued activity amongst the soldiery. Rainborowe's regiment, which had been ordered westwards, left its officers and returned to the army with a few of the junior officers, declaring that they would not engage for Ireland until the kingdom was settled in peace. A similar thing happened with six companies of Fortescue's regiment and Colonel John Birch M.P., while on his way to Hereford for the Irish service, was seized by some of Rainborowe's regiment and brought before the Colonel.<sup>(4)</sup> The agitators continued to meet, despite Fairfax's orders, and one writer went so far as to say that "what ever they conclude upon the

---

(1) For the Declaration q.v. Rushworth, VI, pp. 564-570; Gardiner, Great Civil War, III, pp. 293-294.

(2) R. Bell, Memorials of the Civil War, II Vols., London, 1849, I, p. 357.

(3) For the charge q.v. Rushworth, VI, pp. 570-571.

(4) Perfect Occurrences, 18-25 June 1647; Cary, Memorials, I, pp. 251-253; E393(14), The Last Newes from the Army.

army gives their whole consent".<sup>(1)</sup> The elected officers, elected according to the Solemn Engagement, were also active. On 18 June they joined with the agitators in an address to the masters of Trinity House calling for solidarity with the army.<sup>(2)</sup> It seems that this was done on their own initiative.

In the north a concerted attack on the Presbyterian Commander-in-Chief, Colonel Sydenham Poyntz, was well under way by this time. Three agitators from Fairfax's army had been sent sometime in the latter part of May with the composite grievances, presented to the parliamentary commissioners at Saffron Walden. The three were Richard Kingdom of Cromwell's regiment, Thomas Diggel of Harrison's (late Sheffield's) and John Caseby of Fleetwood's. By the beginning of June meetings of officers and soldiers were taking place at Pontefract. One of the leading figures in all this was Major Henry Lilburne, brother of Robert and John. He defected to the Royalists the following year and endeavoured to betray Tynmouth Castle. The soldiers of the northern army wanted to address their grievances to Fairfax, possibly with the encouragement of such figures as Ireton and Whalley. By July agitators had been elected, and eventually Poyntz was seized by his own men and brought to Fairfax's headquarters at Reading. One of the charges against him was that he intended to ally with the Presbyterians in London and attack the standing army. Poyntz was replaced by Lambert, a fellow Yorkshireman who displayed considerable talents in his new command.<sup>(3)</sup>

---

(1) E393(18), A Conference between the King's Most Excellent Majesty and Mr. Peters.

(2) Cary, Memorials, I, pp. 237-240; L.J., IX, pp. 284-285 which gives a fuller list of names than Cary.

(3) Clarke Papers, I, pp. 89-92, 92n, 121, 142-147, 163-169; Bodl. Tanner Ms. 58, ff.272, 275, 277, 278; Clarke Ms. 41, ff. 72v, 169, 180.

In the south pressure was kept up on parliament which was reluctant to expel the 11 members as well as on the City. On 21 June, Fairfax wrote to the <sup>Lord</sup> Mayor saying that he was sure that the City fathers wanted to promote peace but that information was reaching headquarters of the "underhand workings of some men to List men" and that "agents" were being sent to various parts of the kingdom to raise forces. He alleged that Worcester had been appointed as the place for a rendezvous where the forces destined for Ireland, formerly a part of the standing army, had been ordered to march by the committee at Derby House. Fairfax said that some of those who had left the army for the Irish service realising that they were to be a part of a new army for a new war had returned. This was probably a reference to Rainborowe's and Fortescue's regiments. He further alleged that moves were afoot to bring in troops from Ireland, France and Scotland. All these reasons, real and imagined, were advanced to justify the army's approach nearer to London. Fairfax said they could not move back until the 11 M.P.s had been removed from the parliament, all the forces raised or enlisted in or about the City had been disbanded and all public and private attempts to raise further forces had been suppressed. He guaranteed that in the interim the army would not stop supplies from reaching the City. On 25 June the City government replied claiming that it would try to satisfy the army's demands but urging it not to approach any further because its presence was having a bad effect on the City's economy. The army also had supporters in the City who posted up pro-army propaganda in the City urging men not to join the 'City

army' which would only bring about their ruin but to be "one with the Army for those just ends : and you will soon see a happy alteration".<sup>(1)</sup>

On 25 June, despite the City's pleas, headquarters were moved to Uxbridge, and the next day it became apparent that some regiments had moved their quarters even nearer to London. This was claimed to be a mistake and orders were sent to stop them.<sup>(2)</sup> But deliberate or not the point could not have been missed by the parliament. At the end of the month and the beginning of July, there were further negotiations between army and parliament at Wickham. On the army side the officers involved were Cromwell, Ireton, Fleetwood, Rainborowe, Harrison, Sir Hardress Waller, Rich, Lambert, Robert Hammond and Disborowe.<sup>(3)</sup> At the same time a further charge was drawn up against the 11 M.P.s. A committee of Grandees, elected officers and agitators was instructed to meet with the lawyers, about the drawing up of the charge, the persons to present it and the manner of its presentation.<sup>(4)</sup> It was agreed that Scrope, Okey, Hewson, Pride, Bowen, Goffe, Berry, Clarke, Sexby and Gethings, and

- (1) Wor. Co. B.B. 8.16(43), Severall Letters sent from his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax and the Officers of the Army to the ... Lord Mayor, Aldermen etc. ... of London, 1647; ibid., (65).
- (2) Gardiner, Great Civil War, III, p. 304; A Perfect Diurnal, 21-28 June 1647.
- (3) L.J., IX, p. 312. The orders said "the major part to be of the Five last", probably to safeguard more controversial figures like Cromwell and Ireton from accusations of acting in a double capacity.
- (4) The committee comprised Cromwell, Lambert, Okey, Hewson, Barksted, Thomlinson, Major Bethel, Captains Berry, Clarke, Carter, Colonels Pride and Scrope, Lt. Colonels Bowen and Goffe, Adjutant General Deane, Major Rainborow and Captain Rolphe. (Clarke Papers, I, p. 151).



Captains Carter and Rolphe should present the charge.<sup>(1)</sup> It was a fair cross-section of the commissioned ranks and agitators and the charge was presented on 6 July. There was much feeling in the army to back up the move with a march to London and a purge of parliament. Pressure for this came from below. On 16 July three elected officers (Major Daniel Abbot of Okey's regiment, Captain John Clarke of Waller's, and Captain Edmond Rolphe of Hammond's) signed a representation to the Council of the Army. They called for the sequestration of the impeached members, their prohibition from sitting in the House, the return of the City militia to its former Independent commissioners, the publication of a declaration against the raising of any forces, foreign or domestic, except such as were approved by Parliament or Fairfax, the release of political prisoners including John Lilburne, Mrs. Richard Overton, and Mr. Tew, and for those remaining in the army to be given equal pay with those who had left it and volunteered for Ireland. As we have seen, many of these demands had already been made by Fairfax in his letter to the City. However, the three officers went further than their superiors and urged that their demands should be met within four days as they feared that pre-emptive action was necessary to avoid a Presbyterian counter-attack. Their paper was followed by "additional Reasons more fully explaining our Desires for a speedy march towards London".<sup>(2)</sup>

---

(1) ibid. The Perfect Weekly Account (29 June-7 July 1647) gives the list with slight variations.

(2) Clarke Papers, I, pp. 170-175. For biographical details of Abbot, Clarke and Rolphe, q.v. biographical index. Clarke and Rolphe had joined with other elected officers and agitators in a letter to the seamen calling for solidarity and the removal of all oppression and oppressors from the Kingdom (E393(33), A Copie of a Letter... repr. in Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, pp. 145-153).

The question of an immediate march on the capital was central to the Reading debates. The debates showed that different views existed between the Grandees and elected officers over tactics. Major Tulidah called for a march on London and was supported by Cornet Joyce, Captain Clarke and the agitators William Allen and Nicholas Lockyer.<sup>(1)</sup> Cromwell countered this by calling for a fuller debate, and argued that the army's supporters were on the winning side in the House; therefore it would be better to wait, so "that wee and they gaine in a free way" which he considered "better then twice so much in a forct".<sup>(2)</sup> Ireton said that no force should be used until the army had thrashed out its own programme for settlement, one that could be offered to the nation (i.e. the Heads of the Proposals). He disagreed with Cromwell about a treaty with parliament, and criticised the agitators for complaining of delays but not proposing anything towards a settlement themselves. Disborowe supported him.<sup>(3)</sup> Cromwell dismissed Cornet Spencer's assertion that the enlisting of apprentices for an anti-army force was proceeding in London.<sup>(4)</sup>

On 17 July the Heads of the Proposals themselves were considered. Only a fragment of the discussion has come down to us,

---

(1) Clarke Papers, I, pp. 178, 180-182, 187.

(2) ibid., pp. 191-193.

(3) ibid., pp. 181-182, 194-199, 208.

(4) ibid., pp. 208-209.

and this shows the Grandees, particularly Ireton, Cromwell and Lambert, perhaps deliberately, overwhelming the agitators with highly sophisticated arguments. William Allen, reminding his superiors "that wee are most of us butt young Statesmen", asked for more time to consider the Heads.<sup>(1)</sup> A report on the Council's proceedings by Rushworth commented on the fact that the agitators were "now in prudence" admitted to the debates "and it is not more than necessary they should be, considering the influence they have upon the souldiers". Rushworth was surprised at how their admission had prevented distempers in the army.<sup>(2)</sup> On 18 July Fairfax appointed a committee of officers to perfect the Heads.<sup>(3)</sup> At the same time a smaller committee was appointed to attend daily at Fairfax's quarters "to advise upon all emergencys of the affairs of the army".<sup>(4)</sup>

The Grandees did not go without criticism, especially from the London Levellers and their contacts in the army. The author of A Copie of a Letter sent from one of the Agitators in the Army to an Agitator in the Citie commented on the fruitful co-operation between the two groups in the army and City. His views on soaking the rich

---

(1) ibid., pp. 211-214.

(2) ibid., pp. 214-216.

(3) Ireton, Fleetwood, Rich, Harrison, Horton and Disborowe for the horse; Rainborowe, Colonel Hammond, Waller, Lambert, Lt. Colonel Cowell and Adjutant General Deane for the foot. They were to meet with the twelve agitators (Clarke Papers, I, pp. 216-217).

(4) Thomas Hammond, Thomlinson, Scrope, Pride, Goffe and Reade. (ibid., loc. cit.)

and keeping the army as a "seminary and sanctuary for the saints" could hardly be countenanced by the superior officers, but that did not matter as he wanted a purge of both parliament and army, especially of Lt. General Hammond, Colonels Rich (a bête noire of the Levellers but a future opponent of the Protectorate) and Fleetwood "who are great scandals to our army for they are covetous, and want both interest and courage". The author recommended that Cornet Joyce should be advanced, and Cromwell should be made head of the army. But he was completely misinformed about proceedings at Reading, saying that the General and Grandees, "except brave magnanimous Cromwell", were against a march on the City. The king was to be used as "our bow to shoot at the parliament" but the ultimate aim was to set up a Republic.<sup>(1)</sup> This ecstatic view of Cromwell was not shared by John Lilburne. Lilburne was afraid of Cromwell selling out to parliament, especially in view of the Commons vote of £2,500 per annum to him and of the influence of St. John and the younger Vane on him. Rich was denounced as "a juggling paltry base fellow" and stooge of Cromwell. The Grandees were accused of trying to emasculate the agitators, whom Lilburne claimed to have had a hand in establishing as a counterweight to the self-seeking Grandees. He considered the Council of the Army no more than "a cabinet Junta of seven or eight proud selfe ended fellows", manipulated by Cromwell and felt that it did not live up to the expectations of the Solemn Engagement.<sup>(2)</sup>

---

(1) E399(29), A Copie of a Letter ..., which Thomason dates 22 July.

(2) E400(5), Jonah's Cry from out of the Whale's Belly, (25 July).

The Grandees were also using contacts in London. Scout Master Leonard Watson and Muster Master General Staines, both of whom had also been denounced by Lilburne in Jonah's Cry, had been in London negotiating with the Independents, Vane, Lord Wharton and St. John, about furthering the army's demands.<sup>(1)</sup> Things seemed to go well. On 22 July the Commons voted to restore the City militia to its old Independent commissioners.<sup>(2)</sup> But this provoked the Presbyterian backlash and the attempted coup. Over 70 M.P.s, including the Speaker, by either fleeing to the army or signing the engagement of 4 August, called on the army to restore 'normality'. The army obliged by marching into London and re-instating the M.P.s. Thus, ironically it was the Presbyterians who ended up by politically providing the army with the opportunity to intervene in politics. It was also the first time of many over the next few years that the army was to act decisively in a political crisis.<sup>(3)</sup>

In the meantime the Grandees had been negotiating with the King about the Heads of the Proposals. Sir John Berkeley was the important go-between on behalf of the King with the army and

- 
- (1) Dyve, Letter Book, p. 68. Presumably the discussions centred on the army's position in any settlement.
- (2) C.J., V, p. 254. The House was thinly attended, the vote for putting the question to the vote was passed by 77 to 46 votes.
- (3) For a fuller account of the coup q.v. Pearl, 'London's Counter Revolution', in Aylmer (ed.), Interregnum, pp. 50-53.

Major Robert Huntingdon on behalf of the army with the king. (1)

Berkeley, unlike the king, was a political realist and a shrewd judge of what was politically possible. He had a hand in revising some of the Heads before they were presented to the king. (2) He assessed the situation in the army at the time in the following words :

"First that the Army was governed partly by a Council of War, and partly by a Council of the Army, or Adjutators, wherein the General had but a single voice; that Fairfax, the General, had little power in either; that Cromwell, and his son Ireton, with their friends and Partisans, governed the Council of War absolutely, but not that of the Army, which was the most powerful, though they had a strong party there also; but the major part of the Adjutators carried it. Amongst these Adjutators there were many ill-wishers of Cromwell, looking on him as one who would always make his advantages out of the Army." (3)

- 
- (1) For Berkeley's appointment q.v. his Memoirs (Maseres, Select Tracts, II, pp. 355-356). My account follows Berkeley's (ibid., pp. 355-371) and Huntingdon's (ibid., pp. 399-403) and Gardiner (Great Civil War, III, pp. 340-343) who omits details of importance to army politics. Staines and Watson were also employed as intermediaries, although it seems likely that they came to be mistrusted by the army leadership (Holmes, op. cit., p. 128). Berkeley refers to them as the two "general officers" (Maseres, Select Tracts, II, p. 361). Q.v. also Edward, Earl of Clarendon, The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, Book X para. 135. Staines and Watson were also distrusted by John Lilburne who further suggests that Ireton had a low opinion of them (Jonah's Cry, pp. 8, 10). For Staines and Watson q.v. also biographical appendix.
- (2) Maseres, Select Tracts, II, p. 363.
- (3) Maseres, Select Tracts, II, p. 364. Cf. John Lilburne's remarks that the Council of War, as opposed to the Army Council which the agitators had the right to attend, was just "a Cabenet Juncto of seven or eight proud selfe ended fellowes" dominated by Cromwell (Jonah's Cry, p. 9).

A fair evaluation, but perhaps whitewashing Fairfax too much. Berkeley felt that the officers were more easily fixed to the king "by a visible prospect of their interest", and so concentrated his efforts on Hugh Peters and the agitators "who urged their officers more than their officers commanded them, and it was more hard to satisfy them (being many) in point of interest, than their officers who were few".<sup>(1)</sup> Berkeley most certainly exaggerates the strength and influence of the agitators. The Heads were presented to the king on about 23 July and from the start his attitude was ambivalent.<sup>(2)</sup> Eventually, a delegation of senior officers was sent to the king to discuss the proposals and to try to get an agreement before the army began its inevitable march on London.<sup>(3)</sup> The delegation was made up of Ireton, Thomas Rainborowe, who had now emerged as a leading figure in army politics, Robert Hammond and Rich, and attended the king at Woburn.<sup>(4)</sup> A royal endorsement of the army's moderate proposals, which could find wide support amongst many M.P s

---

(1) ibid., p. 366.

(2) This emerges from both Huntingdon's version (ibid., p. 401) and Berkeley's, who on one occasion told the king "never was a crown (that had been so near lost) so cheaply recovered, as his Majesty's would be, if they agreed upon such terms". (ibid., p. 367).

(3) The army was well-informed, with hourly intelligence according to Dyve, of what was happening in London (Dyve, Letter Book, p. 75).

(4) Maseres, Select Tracts, II, p. 401. According to Huntingdon, Fairfax was little consulted about the sending of this delegation.

and the political nation, was essential to give the greatest possible respectability to the army's political aspirations and to its plans for a settlement.<sup>(1)</sup> However, the king stuck to a hard line, despite Berkeley's advice, and went so far as to say that the officers could not do without him, "you fall to ruin if I do not sustain you". He felt in a strong position because of the Presbyterian activity in London and the possibility of a deal with the Scots. Berkeley was shocked at the king's attitude and, according to his own account, Rainborowe left the conference and stirred up the army against the king, although there is no <sup>other</sup> evidence to corroborate this. Berkeley approached the officers at headquarters and asked what would happen if the king granted the Heads. He was told they would go before parliament. In the event of the king refusing, they would not commit themselves, probably because they had not thought too hard about this possibility. The officers felt confident they could prevail with parliament, and Rainborowe added :

"If they will not agree we will make them; to which the whole company assented." (2)

Berkeley judged that those

---

(1) Cf. Gardiner (Great Civil War, III, p. 330) who considered the Heads "too far in advance of their time to be generally acceptable" and Pearl ('London's Counter Revolution', in Aylmer (ed.), Interregnum, p. 49) : "These proposals struck a deep well of sympathy among parliamentarians."

(2) Maseres, Select Tracts, II, pp. 368-369.



"supposed best inclined to his Majesty, in the Army, seemed much afflicted with his Majesty's backwardness to concur with the Army in their proposals."

The king's stalling tactics meant that a letter to the army supporting the march on London was lost. This must have disappointed the superior officers, but it was taken as a minor setback, and in their act of thanksgiving on the successful outcome of the march they decided to

"keep still to their former engagements to his Majesty, and once more solemnly vote the Proposals, which was accordingly done." (1)

The dealings of the Grandees, especially those of Cromwell and Ireton, were condemned by John Wildman. He alleged that the royalists had too easy access to army headquarters and that what was done in the General Council was known to the king in two hours. He also alleged that Ireton steamrollered the decision to present the Heads to the king through the General Council. However, Wildman overlooks the point that if there was as much opposition to dealing with the king in the General Council as he tries to imply, then Ireton could have been outvoted. Moreover, as we have seen, John Lilburne favoured dealing with the king. Wildman was really attacking the Grandees for giving away too much to the king in the Heads. As to

---

(1) ibid., p. 370, q.v. Gardiner, Great Civil War, III, p. 343, especially for the king's informal contact with Ireton through Huntingdon. Charles is reported as being ready to throw in his lot with the army and its proposals for settlement. Ireton was rapturous saying "we should be the veriest knaves that ever lived, if in everything we made not good whatever we had promised, because the king, by his not declaring against us, had given us great advantage against our adversaries". (Maseres, Select Tracts, II, p. 402.)

the charge of royalists having too easy access to headquarters, Fairfax had issued a proclamation on 22 July instructing all officers to find out the numbers of cavaliers in their respective troops or companies and if any to remove them and to receive no more in the meantime.<sup>(1)</sup>

On 6 August the army marched to London and with the minimum of force entered it.<sup>(2)</sup> The next day there was a victory parade through the City and out towards Croydon. It was an impressive show of strength, and by all accounts well staged. The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer commented that Captain Joyce and others attended the General bareheaded. The foot was led by Skippon, and Cromwell brought up the rear as if to emphasise the marriage between parliament and army. Rich led the horse and had the honour of bringing in the first bow of bays, which all officers and soldiers wore, and which was intended to symbolise peace and the union between the City and the army. The Moderate Intelligencer declared :

"Bays or Laurell is always green, so may this beginning of an accord be, things of slowest growth, are longest in decay, a deliberate accord is usually lasting."

The march was orderly and no damage to property was done.<sup>(3)</sup>

---

(1) E421(19), Putney Projects; A Perfect Diurnal, 19-26, July 1647.

(2) Gardiner, Great Civil War, III, p. 345.

(3) The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 3-10 August 1647; The Moderate Intelligencer 5-12 August 1647; A Perfect Summary, 2-9 August 1647; A Perfect Diurnal, 2-9 August 1647.

A Perfect Diurnal added that the force with Rainborowe on the south bank, Ingoldsby's foot at Oxford, Skippon's regiment at Newcastle, Whally's regiment with the king and the forces in Yorkshire "if they were all joined together would make another good Army". Military force had entered into the heart of the nation's political life in no uncertain way. But the superficial harmony between army and parliament did not last long.

## II.

AUGUST-NOVEMBER 1647

The army's occupation of London effectively eliminated the capital as a potential base for a counter revolution. The army itself gained in prestige. According to The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, the army

"who were lately the jealousie and feare of many honest men are now become their love, for they doe deport themselves with that constant moderation, that civility and temper, that those men doe now resound their praises." (1)

Some of the Life Guard who had left the army to serve in Ireland earlier in the year petitioned Fairfax, saying that their action in leaving had been wrong. (2) The agitators did not confine themselves solely to political matters. Perhaps in response to Ireton's criticism at Reading that their attitude was always negative, they took part in army administrative work. Perfect Occurrences wrote that they presented papers to a committee of officers on the subject of regulating garrisons in England. Indeed a point about the agitators which has not

(1) The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 10-17 August 1647. As a symbol of good-feeling the City presented Fairfax with a basin ewer of beaten gold, (A Perfect Diurnal, 2-9 August 1647).

(2) Perfect Occurrences, 27 August-3 September 1647.

received attention is that until Ware they were paid out of army petty cash funds.<sup>(1)</sup>

However, there was considerable pressure on the Grandees especially for retribution against those responsible for the attempted coup.<sup>(2)</sup> John Lilburne's fellow prisoner in the Tower, Sir Lewis Dyve, claimed to have prevailed upon the agitators to put off proceedings against eleven of their officers whom they suspected of being won over by bribes and offers of advancement from the City, until it could be seen what Fairfax had to offer the House. He argued that the agitators action would ruin the army.<sup>(3)</sup> This is unsubstantiated by any

- (1) Clarke Papers, I, p. 197; Perfect Occurences, 27 August-3 September 1649. In October the Committee of General Officers ordered William Clarke to pay Lt. Edmund Chillenden and Edward Sexby £20 out of petty cash "in consideration of so much money expended by them in their going into Kent to take account of the several garrisons there which money appears to have been laid out by them in the service of Parliament and Army by a certificate in their hands" (Clarke Ms. 66, f.30v.). This is confirmed by some accounts published by E. Kitson ('Some Civil War Accounts', Thoresby Society, XI, 1904, p. 143). The accounts cover the period from January 1647 to July 1650 and as the editor points out wherever the word "agitator" appears it is crossed out and some other word used. I am grateful to my supervisor, Professor G. E. Aylmer, for this reference. Perhaps the costs of the agitators in distributing the Declaration of the Army in the north (Bell, Memorials, I, p. 357) were met out of these funds.
- (2) Perfect Occurences, 6-13 August 1647, 13-20 August 1647; A Perfect Diurnal, 23-30 August 1647.
- (3) Dyve, Letter Book, p. 78.

other source and it remains likely that Dyve, full of his own self-importance, was exaggerating. More accurate was his assessment of the Presbyterians. He suggested they were growing more self-confident again and considered the army less formidable than they had feared. Dyve added that the Commons sided with the City in defying the army "which is to me a matter of amazement".<sup>(1)</sup>

Meanwhile, the House refused to nullify its proceedings after 26 July, when force was put on it by the apprentices. This amounted to a slap on the face to the army. A call to end this situation came first of all from the agitators and elected officers. On 14 August they demanded

"that all and every person that have sate in that pretended Parliament, or adhered to them or their votes, when the free legal Parliament was by violence suspended, might immediately be declared against, as persons incapable of sitting or voting in this Parliament." <sup>(2)</sup>

The signatories included such figures as John Blackmore, later Major in Cromwell's horse regiment, John Reynolds, the future Commissary General of horse in Ireland, John Clark who remained active in army politics in the 1650's, George Joyce and Edmund Chillington (Chillenden). This demand for a large-scale purge was taken up in the name of the whole army a few days later in the army's Remonstrance. By all accounts the possibility of a purge had been considered even

(1) ibid., loc. cit.

(2) E402(8), The Humble Address of the Agitators. For more on Reynolds, Clark and Chillenden q.v. biographical appendix.

before the march to London. Colonel Thomas Rainborowe had intimated so much to Sir John Berkeley, and his fellow officers had concurred with him. Ireton had assured the King, in his famous remarks :

"that they would purge, and purge, and never leave purging the Houses, till they had made them of such a temper, as should do his Majesty's business."<sup>(1)</sup>

However, in the Remonstrance of 18 August this was toned down considerably and a compromise formula put in. This envisaged a very limited purge of the ringleaders of the attempted coup only. As for the members who sat while the Speaker was with the army, they were to be called upon to give a satisfactory account of why they had done so.<sup>(2)</sup> This could find more widespread support, especially within Parliament, than a call for a wholesale purge, but it was quite a radical proposal in itself, (even if it stopped well short of the agitator demands) and looked forward to the engagements required of M.P.s in the Protectorate Parliaments.

Fairfax might well have had his doubts about the morality of a purge, but so too did Cromwell and Ireton, not least on grounds of efficacy. They still intended to work with and through Parliament to achieve a settlement. But they were not averse to a show of force. On 20 August, the same day as the ordinance against Parliament's proceedings during the Speaker's absence was brought in again, a

---

(1) Berkeley, Memoirs, in Maseres, Select Tracts, II, p. 369; Huntingdon, Sundry Reasons, in Maseres, Select Tracts, II, pp. 403-404.

(2) E402(30), A Remonstrance from His Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax and the Army under his Command, repr. in L.J., IX, pp. 391-397.

horse regiment was ordered to rendezvous in Hyde Park. Who ordered this is unclear. However, the view that Fairfax was a reluctant fellow-traveller at this time is by no means conclusive, based as it is on his own highly unreliable Short Memorials. On the same day, 20 August, Rushworth wrote to Cromwell, at the General's command, requesting him at some time during the course of the day

"to present this paper concerning the prisoners in the Tower, and to endeavour the obtaining as effectual an order for their relief as the House will grant."

This was a key agitator demand. It is as plausible to argue that Fairfax was in-step with his colleagues as that he was out-of-step. The ordinance passed with a comfortable majority in a reasonably full house and the Presbyterian leaders fled. Such lobbying may have been ominous for the future but the middle group with whose co-operation it was still intended to implement a settlement remained intact.<sup>(1)</sup> The Grandees, particularly Cromwell and Ireton tried very hard, almost ruining their own credibility with the army, to win the King's approval for the Heads of the Proposals, but these attempts

---

(1) Huntingdon, Sundry Reasons, in Maseres, Select Tracts, II, p. 402 (Cromwell's remark about pulling M.P.s out by their ears can be read as referring to the 11 impeached members or to a wider group); Hollis, Memoirs, in Maseres, Select Tracts, I, pp. 288-289; T. Fairfax, Short Memorials, in Maseres, Select Tracts, II, p. 446; H.M.C. Portland, I, p. 473; C.J., V, p. 280; Gardiner, Great Civil War, III, pp. 346-352, esp. pp. 351-352 for his emphasis of Fairfax's moderation (I differ from Gardiner on points of interpretation); Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 84-85. C.f. also C. Walker, The History of Independency, Pt. I., p. 22, who argues that there was army pressure on Parliament on 20 August with officers walking in the lobby of the Commons enquiring how things were going and making threats.



were to be futile, not just because of the King's intransigence but also because of opposition from within the army.<sup>(1)</sup>

At the beginning of September the agitators reminded the Grandees that no action had yet been taken against those responsible for the recent attempted coup and called for something to be done in this respect. The letter, like the one in August, was signed by both agitators and elected officers.<sup>(2)</sup> Pressure from this source was kept up. Fairfax was presented with The Humble Proposals of the Adjutators ... concerning divers that suffer in Matters concerning the King. This complained that some soldiers and ex-soldiers had been arrested and their goods confiscated for speaking against the King. This they claimed brought to light yet again one of the army's original grievances, the need for indemnity

"For want of which our Enemies have so great advantage of all the well-affected in the Kingdome, That if not timely remedied, they will recover more upon our words, then we of them by our swords."

The elected officers signing this document included John Reynolds, Francis White and Edmund Chillenden. Their respectful plea was taken up by Fairfax either out of sympathy, but more likely in order to provide a safety valve to release such grievances. On 12 September he wrote to the Speaker urging him to consider the cases of James Simbal, Francis Wade, Robert White and Roger Crabb,

---

(1) Gardiner, Great Civil War, pp. 353-374, passim.

(2) E405(22), The Resolution of the Agitators of the Army.

all of whom had been imprisoned for speaking words against the King in time of war "which thing I in no sort approve of ..."(1)

This sort of pressure was quite different from the Leveller brand. The London Levellers had continued to direct propaganda at the army. On 11 August Richard Overton had written his 18 Reasons Propounded to the Souldiers ... why they ought to continue the several Agitators. In this he declared that the members of the army were bound

"each unto other, severally and conjunctively to maintain and defend, and protect each other both in your Individuall and contract capacity."

and, that only the Council of the Army because of its elective nature could claim to represent the whole army in both its military and civilian capacities. The propositions affirm the importance of the soldiers' contribution to the Council of the Army and that

"A military Commission doth not confere wisdome to the Officers, but it is properly and purely the gift of God, distributed according to his good pleasure. Therefore wisdome in their Councill is as probably to be expected from the Soldier, as well as the Officer and so much ground to continue the one or the other."(2)

Some of Overton's points, as well as those of other Leveller writers, were taken up by Major Francis White of Fairfax's foot regiment. On 9 September White was expelled from the Army Council. His case is worth considering at some length. White had

---

(1) Book of Army Declarations, pp. 139 (149)-156; c.f. Gardiner, Great Civil War, III, p. 362.

(2) B.M. 534 d.10., 18 Reasons ...

said that there was "now no visible authority in the kingdom but the power and force of the sword", but in his version of the affair White claimed he was not expelled just for saying this but for his criticisms of the Grandees' policy. He said that this was no better than trying to revitalise a discredited form of government, and that Parliament would not dare do anything disagreeable to the army and that it was grown into parties and factions. He accused the Grandees of conspiring to subvert the Army Council, a point implied in Overton's pamphlet and by John Lilburne, by trying to give the General a veto over its proceedings, and to sell out the army far short of its original demands. Ireton called for his immediate removal but this did not silence White. He said that at first his comrades supported him but the Lt. Colonel (William Cowell) and two Captains ordered changes in a declaration from the regiment to the General asking why the Major had been dismissed. During September White wrote to both Fairfax and to his fellow officers to justify his words and setting out his views much more fully. He claimed the army was

"the highest power visible in this kingdom, and if you see not a good Government established for the weale of the people, according to equity and reason, it will lye upon your Excellencie's and the Armye's account."

The sword should be used to bring this about and then be sheathed. He considered the end of all actions the glory of God and the safety of the people whereof neither the King, the army nor the present Parliament, so unequally chosen, could judge, "but a free parliament equally chosen, with every free man of age having his voice", a Parliament with limitations and lasting a fixed period. He argued

for use of the sword, saying that the army's allies in Parliament had called upon them for help when they had been re-instated in early August as they were not able to carry on the business. White's views on the sovereignty of the people, like his denunciation of tithes and the excise, are very Levellerish :

"But what reason can be given that one man's wit should contradict the wisdom of 400, the wisest men that can be chosen in a Nation. I know not, or that all laws that a people shall chuse for their well-being and safety should be accounted of as acts of grace and favour from a single person, unless it were in his power to consume them, or they in his hands, as the clay in the hands of the potter? It is beyond my capacity to conceive the equity thereof, this is no other but the adoring that image spoken of in Daniell the second, which shall be as chaffe before the threshing flowre, verse 26."

On the question of military discipline White was also very outspoken, claiming that

"the General doth not stand so strong by vertue of his Commission from the Parliament as he doth by vertue of the Solemn Engagement of the Army." (1)

Theoretically his views were very radical, and he was put out of the Army Council for them. But he had also struck a very sensitive nerve. Ireton and Cromwell must have seen that White was correct in his assessment that military power was the key variable in the situation and a logical, if undesirable, way to resolve conflict.

---

(1) E413(17), The Copy of a Letter to his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax. For more on White q.v. biographical appendix.

Even the royalist Mercurius Pragmaticus agreed with White's evaluation : "I am sure few wise men can see any else as yet".<sup>(1)</sup> Force was something the Grandees did not like to contemplate. White, however, had shrewdly anticipated the situation that was to emerge a year later. Then Ireton was not to flinch. But in September 1647 both he and Cromwell were still determined to work as far as possible within the existing constitution until that approach was exhausted.

A more important and more powerful ally for the Levellers than White was Colonel Thomas Rainborowe. It was not until the Putney debates that he can be positively identified as on the Leveller side, but by early September the division between Rainborowe and Cromwell was apparent.<sup>(2)</sup> On 5 September Dyve wrote to the King that Rainborowe "whose credit with the common soldiers is not inferior to any officer of the army" had been thwarted in his desire to become Vice-Admiral by Cromwell and his "Cabinet Councell, which are the Lord Say, Saint Jon and Vaine the younger, who now steer the affaires of the wholl Kingdome" because they wanted someone more amenable to their interest. The move had been made in an underhand way.<sup>(3)</sup> On 17 September there was nearly a fight between the two men with Rainborowe insisting on having the Vice-Admiral's job.<sup>(4)</sup> These reports emanating from Royalists must

- (1) Mercurius Pragmaticus, 14-21 September 1647.
- (2) On Rainborowe's association with the Levellers q.v. Aylmer, Levellers, pp 28-29.
- (3) Dyve, Letter Book, pp. 84-85. The phrase "Cabinet Councell" might well have been picked up from John Lilburne.
- (4) ibid., pp. 89-90; Gardiner, Great Civil War, III, p. 365.

be treated cautiously. They probably exaggerated the differences between the two men. But Cromwell and his middle group associates were possibly afraid of Rainborowe becoming too powerful with influence in both army and navy. His distrust of negotiations with the King had been evident from early August, and Huntingdon reports that Cromwell favoured forcing Rainborowe and his Republican friend Henry Marten out of the House and out of the army "because they were now putting the Army into a mutiny".<sup>(1)</sup> Rainborowe had been a member of the Admiralty Committee since early September. On 27 September the Commons nominated him Vice-Admiral and Commander-in-Chief of the winter guard. The Lords agreed to this and on 8 October he was appointed Vice-Admiral. His instructions were issued on 19 October by the Admiralty Committee. However, as a result of his political activity during October and November he did not take up his command. But, as we shall see, in the mood of reconciliation after Ware his colleagues in the army supported a request to Parliament that he be allowed to go to the fleet to take up his appointment.<sup>(2)</sup>

---

(1) Huntingdon, Sundry Reasons, in Maseres, Select Tracts, II, p. 404; Berkeley, Memoirs, ibid., p. 369.

(2) C.J., V, pp. 318, 328; D. E. Kennedy, 'The English Naval Revolt of 1648', E.H.R., LXXVII, pp. 248-249. Dr. Kennedy is perhaps a little misleading in not making it clear that Rainborowe was appointed Vice-Admiral in October 1647. The dispute with the Lords in December to which he refers was not over whether he be appointed Vice-Admiral or not, but whether he be allowed to proceed to the fleet to take up his command (ibid., p. 249; but q.v. C.J., V, pp. 403, 405, 406; L.J., IX, p. 615 which makes it clear that he was Vice-Admiral at this time. Rushworth, VII, p. 943 and A Perfect Diurnal, 20-27 December 1647, quoted by Kennedy, are both misleading on this point). Firth and Davies (p. 422) are wrong about the date when the Commons voted him Vice-Admiral. It was 27 September not the 26th. Their source (Rushworth, VII, p. 822) confuses the days of that week: Sunday was the 26th, Monday the 27th (not the 24th or the 26th) and Friday, which Rushworth gets correct, the 1st of October (ibid., pp. 821-827).

Meanwhile, Cromwell aimed at reconciliation with John Lilburne. He visited him in the Tower on 6 September but Lilburne refused to give a guarantee that he would live peaceably if released until

"he should be satisfied with the justice of their  
(Parliament's and army's) wayes."

Cromwell declared that he would persist in his efforts in Parliament to get Lilburne's liberty, but he did not follow this up.<sup>(1)</sup> However, by the end of September the situation had changed yet again with the election of the new agitators or agents.<sup>(2)</sup> On 21 August John Lilburne had advised the army to change their agitators frequently "for standing waters though never so pure at first, in time putrifies".<sup>(3)</sup> On 15 September he wrote to Henry Marten recommending that the soldiers recall their agitators and demand an account of their "Stewardship" or "Adjutatorship" and to send new ones in the place of those who could not give a satisfactory account. He claimed that some of the agitators were more interested in seeking preferment for themselves than in serving the regiments and the kingdom. He also alleged that there had been attempts by the Grandees to corrupt the agitators by bribing them and offering them places. Perhaps he had in mind the payments made to the agitators we have already mentioned.<sup>(4)</sup>

- (1) Dyve, Letter Book, pp. 85-87.
- (2) I follow Sir Charles Firth in the use of the term 'agents' to describe these men (Clarke Papers, I, p. XLVII).
- (3) E411(21), The Jugglers Discovered.
- (4) E407(41), Two Letters writ by Lt. Col. John Lilburne ... to Col. Henry Marten.

On 29 September Dyve wrote to the King that six regiments had cashiered their old agitators and chosen new ones. In fact five did so : Cromwell's, Fleetwood's, Ireton's, Whalley's and Rich's, all of whose Colonels were Grandees.<sup>(1)</sup> Dyve alleged that John Lilburne was the guiding hand behind this. He also said that Rainborowe

"is allready become suspected with them since the House voted him a thousand pounds and to be vice-admirall for they look upon all the acts of the House as tending to their ruin and the enslaving of the subject." (2)

Considering the new agents' Leveller views Dyve was probably close to the mark in his first allegation. On 5 October Dyve wrote again to Charles informing him that the agents were meeting daily in London.<sup>(3)</sup> Like Major White they were suspicious of the Grandees selling out to the King. Dyve said

"they are resolved to doe their uttmost for the suppressing of Cromwell's faction and to put a period to this Parliament"

but they are suspicious of the King's motives and intentions. On Lilburne's recommendation he suggested that the King send for some

(1) Dyve, Letter Book, p. 90. Strictly speaking not all the agents were new. William Prior of Fleetwood's regiment signed the Declaration of the Agitators of 17 May (Clarke Papers, I, pp. 78-79) as an agitator for the regiment and continued to sign documents such as E402(8), The Humble Address of the Agitators, 17 August. John Dover (Dober) of Rich's regiment signed the letter of the Agitators to Wales on 12 July (Clarke Papers, I, p. 161). Sexby also appears as an agent (q.v. below).

(2) Dyve, Letter Book, p. 91.

(3) ibid., loc. cit.



of them to try to convince them of his good intentions in the way he had done with the Baptist, William Kiffin. He named the three principal figures who should be sent for : Captain John Reynolds, Major Francis White and Edward Sexby. He suggested Major Paul Hobson as intermediary.<sup>(1)</sup> Reynolds, White and Sexby were quite radical but when the crunch came in mid-November they stuck by the army.

The culmination of the Leveller-agent meetings in London was The Case of the Army Truly Stated.<sup>(2)</sup> The Case was signed by the agents at Guilford on 9 October and appeared in London on the 15th. It was presented to Fairfax on the 18th. He decided it should be presented to the General Council. On 21 October the General Council met and the agents' papers were debated. The effect seems to have been to unify the Grandees, and it was considered that some officers believed to have had a hand in the papers would be sent for. The Council reached several decisions. A committee comprising Ireton, Sir Hardress Waller, Adjutant General Deane, Colonels Overton, Rich and Hewson, Quarter Master General Thomas Ireton, Captain Rolph, Captain Leigh, Captain Carter, Lt. Colonel Cowell, William Allen, Nicholas Lockyer, John Willoughby, Edward Vaughan, Edward Sexby, Samuel Whiting, Captain Deane, Captain Clarke and Lt. Scotten was appointed to meet at Ireton's quarters to consider the Case, to send for people if need be, to prepare an

---

(1) ibid., pp. 91-92. Berkeley also commented on agitator suspicion of Grandee intentions (Memoirs, in Maseres, Select Tracts, II, p. 371.).

(2) E411(9), repr. in Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, pp. 199-222.

agenda for the next General Council on 28 October and to draw up a vindication of the army from the aspersions cast on them by the Case.<sup>(1)</sup> The committee was quite representative of all shades of opinion that had existed in the army since March, although it did not include any of the agents, as opposed to the earlier agitators. It did, however, include Sexby, Allen and Lockyer who acted as spokesmen of the agents during the first day of the Putney debates.<sup>(2)</sup> The other resolutions of the General Council's meeting were concerned with the collection of royalist compositions, the abatement and easing of free quarter, the reducing of troops enlisted since the army's march to London, and for a way to be devised for provision of pay arrears.<sup>(3)</sup> Because of the wide spectrum of views represented by the members of the committee, it will be worthwhile looking at the recorded contributions of its members at Putney.

Ireton's anti-Leveller views are too well-known to need repetition. Sir Hardress Waller had been designated to command an expedition of 6,000 foot and 2,000 horse for Ireland at the end of August, if pay and provisions were provided for them. The matter

- 
- (1) Rushworth, VII, pp. 849-850; The Perfect Weekly Account, 20-26 October 1647. The committee marks the first appearance of Colonel Robert Overton on the national scene, although his views, if any, have not been recorded. For details of Overton's career at this time q.v. biographical appendix.
- (2) Clarke Papers, I, pp. 226, 227-228, 233-234, 275.
- (3) Rushworth, VII, p. 850.

was ordered to be dealt with by the Derby House Committee.<sup>(1)</sup>

Waller's contribution at Putney was slight. He urged that differences should be composed as soon as possible<sup>and</sup> with as little discussion as possible, and he also recommended relieving the country of free quarter.<sup>(2)</sup>

Rich agreed with Ireton on the question of the franchise and opposed a wide one. He was sensitive to Colonel Rainborowe's interpretation of his views, especially about the poor, claiming that the point he was making was whether they should have an equal interest with the rich.<sup>(3)</sup>

Hewson was against allowing the King a negative voice.<sup>(4)</sup> Captain Rolphe spoke in favour of maintaining army unity and working out a compromise between the Leveller and the Grandee viewpoints.<sup>(5)</sup>

Captain John Carter found that, after a process of introspection, he was less inclined than formerly to pray for the King.<sup>(6)</sup> William Allen on 1 November, felt that the

- (1) Perfect Occurences, 27 August-3 September 1647; C.J., V, pp. 237, 289. One of the complaints of the Case was against this proposed expedition, (Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, p. 202). The expedition suffered a set back because of the reaction of commanders already in Ireland who seem to have resented the idea of yet another commander being sent from England, (H.M.C. 5th Report, p. 179). Perhaps memories of Lisle's ill-fated expedition still left a nasty taste in the mouth. The Irish service remained under discussion during the autumn, Clarke Ms. 66 (Minutes of the Committee of General Officers), f. 20 : proposals for speeding the Irish service, 5 October.
- (2) Clarke Papers, I, pp. 339, 345.
- (3) ibid., pp. 315, 320-321.
- (4) ibid., p. 390.
- (5) ibid., p. 337.
- (6) ibid., pp. 281, 368.

differences between the agents and the Grandees might be a "mis-apprehensive disunion amongst us". He said that the three declarations of 14 June, 21 June and 18 August were all given much emphasis in the Case and if put forward as the sense of the army could be the basis for a compromise. For his own part, he said he was in favour of setting up the King so long as this was not prejudicial to the liberties of the kingdom and he conceived this was likewise agreed to by the authors of the Case.<sup>(1)</sup> Lockyer suggested that the proposals being sent to the King should be brought to the Army Council for inspection before they were passed on to the King. He said he was concerned lest they contain things "destructive" (i.e. a sell-out).<sup>(2)</sup> Sexby associated himself with the Case and told Ireton and Cromwell their "creditts and reputation hath bin much blasted upon these two considerations" (i.e. their dealings with the King and Parliament) and urged them to consider what was offered by the agents and to join with them. Cromwell objected to these insinuations and, speaking for himself, he claimed, with reasonable truth, that his actions had been carried out "with the publique consent, and approbation and allowance of the General Council". Sexby also argued passionately, but effectively, that many soldiers had ventured their lives to recover their birthrights and privileges as Englishmen, but that, judging from the Commissary General's

---

(1) ibid., pp. 371-372, 376-377.

(2) ibid., p. 275. The negotiations with the King had begun to come unstuck in mid-October (Gardiner, Great Civil War III, pp. 371-373).

remarks, only people with considerable estates would have the vote. Sexby felt the men had been deceived and the ends they had fought for betrayed. He denied he was trying to divide the army "if I were butt soe, I could lie downe and be trodden there". Shortly after he argued that the cause of the present difficulties was the fact that the army was going about to set up the King. Despite such fundamental disagreements with the Grandees, Sexby continued to play an active part on the various committees set up during the debates and did not join with those who favoured mutiny. His views, especially regarding the setting up of the King, suggest a difference of policy with John Lilburne.<sup>(1)</sup> Captain Clarke spoke in favour of waiting on the Lord and on 29 October called for yet another prayer meeting that afternoon.<sup>(2)</sup> He considered that property was the foundation of all constitutions and that the franchise should be restricted accordingly.<sup>(3)</sup> During the debates other speakers besides

- (1) Clarke Papers, I, pp. 227-228, 229, 273, 322-323, 329-330, 363, 377-378. When Cromwell rebukes "the gentleman in the window", (ibid., p. 379) for using the expression "setting up" claiming the army doesn't intend to set up anything, it is possible he had Sexby in mind although Firth takes it to be Allen (ibid., p. 379 n.).
- (2) The nature of such meetings to seek the Lord is of interest in itself as, especially in the 1650's, it was usually the prelude to some sort of decisive action. It could be that besides prayers, tactics were also discussed and courses of action settled upon. At Putney Goffe's suggestion of a prayer meeting was received enthusiastically by Cromwell and Ireton, and the Lt. General was very sensitive to the charge that the meeting would be a cover for politicking, (Clarke Papers, I, pp. 253-259).
- (3) ibid., pp. 330-331, 338-339, both speeches are probably variations on one argument.

Sexby, Allen and Lockyer, who as we have said were virtually spokesmen for the agents, showed sympathy for their views. But the middle group policy of reconciliation with the King came under fire especially from the more junior officers.

Even before the debates began the agents had appealed over the heads of their superiors to the rank and file. On 28 October the agents published open letters to the army calling for implementation of the Leveller programme. They appealed to the esprit of their comrades :

"We doubt not but the hazarding of our lives together for our Countries freedome, have endeared us each to other, and so imprinted the principles of common freedome in our hearts, that it's impossible to divide us each from other."

They also complained that the proposals to reduce the train were in breach of the Solemn Engagement and imply that the two agitators of the train, Messrs Tomlins and Robinson, had been bought off with promotion.<sup>(1)</sup> The following day the London Leveller John Wildman's A Call to all the Souldiers of the Army by the Free People of England appeared. It claimed that the King, as well as the Parliament were oppressive. The Parliament should have punished the King but in turn had become arbitrary itself, especially with the levying of the excise. The main thrust of the argument, however, was against

---

(1) E412(6), Two Letters from the Agents of the Five Regiments of Horse (28 October). An Edward Tomlins signed the Humble Address of the Agitators of 5 August and a Captain Tomlins was a regular attender at army meetings in late 1648 (E402(8); Clarke Papers, II, p. 280) as is a Captain Robinson (ibid., p. 278)

the army Grandees and notably against Ireton. Wildman showed himself well-informed of proceedings at Putney. Ireton was denounced for manipulating the Council of the Army with his "art and cunning, (and) smooth delusion". As for Cromwell, he was "betrayed into these mischievous practices" by his son-in-law, but Wildman believed that there was still hope that he could be weaned away from them. The policy of achieving a settlement with the King came under attack. The soldiery were urged to remember that "a long time staggered" before the officers engaged with them and only did so to preserve themselves from the Presbyterians. But now that they had become masters of King, Parliament and City "they despise and neglect you contrary to former engagements". They had not purged the Parliament and in it Ireton and Cromwell "so earnestly and palpably carry on the King's design" with their allies, the middle group leaders, Wharton, Fiennes, Vane and St. John, "the greatest deceivers this day living". They were charged with turning against the army itself. Addressing the soldiers, Wildman said

"Your Adjutators ... are esteemed but as a burden to the chief officers, which we judge to be the reason that all things now are in such a languishing condition."

He was pessimistic and anxious lest the soldiery acquiesce passively in their officer's decisions and felt that "since there is no remedy, ye must begin your work anew". Their action in late May at Bury St. Edmunds when the rank and file forced a general rendezvous on their superiors was deemed a precedent to be emulated:

"Ye have men amongst you as fit to govern as others to be removed. And with a word ye can create new officers. Necessity hath no law, and against it there is no plea. The safety of the people is above all law." (1)

It was a clear call to mutiny. It went further than the agents had gone in their vindication from the charges that they intended to divide the army. (2)

Mutinous behaviour had already broken out in Robert Lilburne's regiment which had been ordered northwards to the still vulnerable Scottish border area under its Major, Paul Hobson. The regiment marched as far as Dunstable. The soldiers refused to obey their officers, with the exception of Captain William Bray, a Quarter Master and one other. Bray later claimed that he stayed with the men to prevent them from falling under "an unjust influence" or the enemy. He in turn was alleged to have said that Parliament were the enemy and that there was no visible authority in the kingdom but the General, a position more akin to Francis White than to Wildman. Bray led the regiment back south where it took part in the rendezvous at Ware without orders. There was obviously much sympathy with the demands of the agents. (3)

- 
- (1) E412(10), partly repr. in A. S. P. Woodhouse (ed.), Puritanism and Liberty, London, repr. 1966, pp. 439-443. C.f. H.M.C. 5th Report, pp. 173, 179 for further evidence of the suspicions aroused by Cromwell's dealings with the King and the attempts of his parliamentary opponents to exploit this.
- (2) Rushworth, VII, p. 857. Their vindication was printed in Perfect Occurrences, 22-29 October 1647.
- (3) E558(14), The Justice of the Army against Evill Doers Vindicated, (5 June) 1649; Perfect Weekly Account, 26 October-1 November 1647; Dyve, Letter Book, p. 94.



According to Sir Lewis Dyve, John Lilburne was very optimistic and confident about Leveller support in the army. He felt that the Commons could soon be purged and the army Grandees arrested. Dyve, writing to the King assured him that Lilburne had no ill-intentions to him. This was not the way Charles saw it a couple of weeks later, and not the way Wildman had seen it. Dyve also reported that Colonel Rainborowe the "liklyest man to become head of this faction" (i.e. the Levellers in the army) had visited Lilburne on 31 October and spoken favourably of the King. But the King distrusted Rainborowe and he wrote to Dyve expressing this. Dyve replied saying that Rainborowe's words had been corroborated by others present but his motives for saying them remained inscrutable.<sup>(1)</sup> Whatever Rainborowe's feelings were, Lilburne had seriously mis-read the situation. A Leveller deal with the King at this juncture was not on.

The events leading up to Ware are very complicated. The Leveller supporters in the army, with the prompting of the London Levellers, called for a general rendezvous of the army. Colonel Rainborowe made this demand on 29 October and it is very possible that the intention was to use the occasion as a means to promote the Agreement.<sup>(2)</sup> Instead it was decided that there should be three

---

(1) ibid., pp. 95-97. C.f. P. Gregg, Freeborn John, London, 1961, p. 200.

(2) Clarke Papers, I, p. 346; Aylmer, Levellers, p. 73.

separate rendezvous which would obviously be easier to control. On 8 November it was resolved that the officers and agitators should return to their charges to prevent distempers in the army and to prepare for the rendezvous. In other words, the Council of the Army was to be suspended temporarily. A committee was also set up to consider what was to be offered to the regiments at the rendezvous and to consider a letter sent to Parliament on 5 November.<sup>(1)</sup> The members of the committee were Cromwell, Ireton, Sir Hardress Waller, Colonels Okey, Titchbourne, Hewson, Rich and Thomlinson, Commissary Staines, Scout Master Watson, William Allen, Captain Clarke, Nicholas Lockyer, Captain Deane, Lt. Colonel Goffe, Major William Rainborowe, Lt. Colonel Cowell and Commissary Cowling.<sup>(2)</sup> The agents responded by publishing A Copy of a Letter ... to all the Souldiers (sic) in the ... Army which, according to Thomason, was scattered up and down the streets.<sup>(3)</sup> It claimed that the Agreement was in keeping

---

(1) Clarke Papers, I, pp. 412-413. The letter referred to had been inspired by Rainborowe and sent in the name of the Council of the Army. It rejected a report made in the Commons that the army supported the latest propositions being offered to the King. This caused great offence to Ireton who had probably made the report in the House. He left the Army Council in despair at its proceedings but returned shortly after. On 9 November the Army Council dissociated itself from the letter, showing how fickle it had become. For a full discussion of the letter q.v. Clarke Papers, I, pp. 416-417, 440-442; Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, p. 8.

(2) Clarke Papers, I, p. 413.

(3) E413(18). Thomason's date is 11 November.

with the army's former declarations and remonstrances and repeated the charge that there was obstruction at headquarters and that the Grandees were dragging their feet as they had done in March. It called for action : "you have been fed with papers too long". It concluded with a post-script saying that Parliament had refused to grant the dean and chapter lands as part of security for pay arrears. This, it alleged, made a general rendezvous all the more necessary.

But not all regiments were radical hotbeds. One writer estimated that only a fifth of the whole army were trouble makers.<sup>(1)</sup> On 4 November Hewson's regiment presented a remonstrance to the General which expressed fears of a "dismal cloud arising over our head from divisions and discontents". Despite Fairfax's lack of success in getting the question of pay arrears remedied, the regiment pledged allegiance to his authority especially against incendiaries.<sup>(2)</sup> Fairfax's foot was reported to be for the King. Major White had drawn the regiment to a rendezvous on Thursday 11 November and told the soldiers that they must be under a new form of government to which they threw up their hats and cried "A king,

---

(1) E411(19), Papers from the Armie. Thomason's date is 23 October.

(2) E413(6). The signatories included the Colonel, the Lt. Colonel (John Jubbes) a man with his own views on a political settlement, (Clarke Papers, I, pp. 372-373), the elected officers Captains John Carter and Alexander Brayfield, Edmund Garne (or Garney) one of the original agitators and now an Ensign, and other agitators including Thomas Shepherd, Richard Nixon and Daniel Hinchman. In all it was signed by 39 persons.

a king". At this White was reported to have hastened away. The author of this report was amazed that none of the commission officers joined with the soldiers.<sup>(1)</sup>

Other regiments kept in close contact with London, and with each other. In the Worcester College collection is the tract A Copy of a Letter from the Commissary General's Regiment ... to the Convention of Agents at London.<sup>(2)</sup> It was written sometime between 11 November and 15 November and was signed by George Garret, William Symons, John Wood, Thomas Beverley and William Hitel. Garret and Beverley were agents while Wood and Symons had been among the original agitators. Wood and Beverley were in the custody of the Marshal General by 28 November.<sup>(3)</sup> The letter is an important document not just because of its context but also for what it has to say about Leveller organisation. It says that "our friends" employed by the respective troops of the regiment to find out the truth about the Case of the Army which was in dispute with the officers have reported back. The concern of the London agents for the regiment is now made known and as for the Case some things which appeared needless, even offensive, to many are now approved of, and the regiment is unanimous and resolved to insist

---

(1) Clarendon State Papers, II, pp. XLI-XLII.

(2) Wor. Co. A.A.1.19.(145).

(3) The Case of the Army truly stated, in Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, p. 218; Clarke Papers, I, pp. 161, 438, 419.

on all their just privileges and to stand up for them even to the death. Many soldiers want to come to a general rendezvous saying they could lie in the fields winter after winter to achieve their just desires. There is an account of the situation in Scrope's regiment. The officers there have persuaded the regiment to dissolve its agitators, except those at headquarters, under the pretence of saving costs, (further evidence that the agitators were being paid out of official army funds). As a result they are ignorant of the army's proceedings. The officers exploit this situation so that if any soldier speaks anything "contrary to the afitiated (official ?) sense" he is cashiered and replaced by a new man "which shall be rightly relished for their pallats". Anyone coming to declare the proceedings of the army to them is threatened by the new man to be reported to the officers. Ireton's regiment recommend that a letter be sent to Scrope's, and an agent of all the horse regiments that concur be sent to request the Colonel, or in his absence the Major, to draw forth the regiment or the respective troops to deliver the message. The chances of such a thing being permitted by Scrope or his colleagues were pretty small. As for non-army affairs, Hampshire is partly minded to send agitators to sit with the county's agitators at London and the constables of the hundreds have desired the other constables to meet at Winchester. This point is extremely interesting. On 12 July a circular was drawn up at Kingston-on-Thames. It has a Leveller ring to it and called for two or more from every country "that have called this Army by their late petitions to engage for their liberties" to be chosen as agitators for the

counties and to sit at headquarters, at least during the time of the treaty, to ensure that the liberties of the freeborn were safeguarded and to liase with the counties. The editor of the H.M.C. volume questions the date and suggests it might have been drawn up in August when the army headquarters were at Kingston. On 12 July they were at Reading, not far from Kingston, and it is possible that this was in fact the date, as it was immediately prior to the important army debate on the Heads of the Proposals. If this is so, then it may well have been representative of a minority of agitators. The majority of agitators, including elected officers, signed a letter sent to Wales on 12 July at Cambridge. On the other hand, it could well be the work of non-army radicals indicating that some form of Leveller organisation existed outside of London before January 1648 when we have evidence of London Leveller overtures to the counties to organise support for the January petition. It is also interesting that during the Putney debates one of the recorded speakers is entitled simply a "Bedfordshire Man". His remarks imply that he was not a member of the army which suggests that perhaps in addition to representatives of the London Levellers representatives from other parts of the country might have attended the debates as well.<sup>(1)</sup>

---

(1) H.M.C. Portland, I, pp. 432-433; Clarke Papers, I, pp. 161, 251-252; H. N. Brailsford, The Levellers and the English Revolution, Stanford University Press, 1961, pp. 313-314; E427(6), A Declaration of Some Proceedings of Lt. Colonel John Lilburne, 1648, repr. in W. Haller and G. Davies; The Leveller Tracts 1647-1653, Gloucester, Massachuetts, 1964, pp. 102-104. Woodhouse (Puritanism and Liberty, p. 17) takes the "Bedfordshire Man" to be a member of Whalley's regiment, but the speaker's remarks that he was ignorant of the army's Engagements would seem to suggest that he was not a member of the army.

The letter from Ireton's regiment continues with an account of the rendezvous of the regiment on 8 September (November) at which five troops signed a document, presumably the Agreement. But part of Ireton's<sup>own</sup> troop kept aloof. Money is desperately needed. This would help them win over those that stood off. They close the letter saying that they have sent their fellow agitator, George Linbury, as messenger. In the same tract is a letter sent to the agents of the army from members of Twisleton's regiment, dated Cambridge 11 November. They acknowledge receipt of copies of the Case and the Agreement and pledge to stand by them "with our lives and fortunes" for the kingdom, the rights and privileges of the subject and for the bringing to justice of all offenders who stand or who shall stand in opposition to their (the agents') just and equal demands. It was signed by 23 troopers.

It has already been argued that, despite the strenuous efforts of Cromwell and Ireton to reach a compromise with the King, there was a growing hard-line attitude among their colleagues towards any more dealings with him. This was evident at Putney and was to be found right across the spectrum of views.<sup>(1)</sup> However, according to George Joyce writing some four years later, Majors Huntingdon, Hobson and Tulidah and others spoke with the King while he was in

---

(1) For example Lt. Colonel Jubbes, Captain Bishop (both of whom were hostile to the King), Lt. Colonel Goffe, Captain Carter, William Allen, Captain Audley, Colonel Hewson, Colonel Titchbourne and Commissary Cowling (Clarke Papers, I, pp. 368, 383, 373, 374, 377, 390, 396, 401).

the army's custody and advocated a personal treaty with him. They promoted a petition in London for it, which Joyce warned them against, arguing that it would split the army and the godly. Joyce alleges that the reports given out, especially by Henry Lilburne, that the Levellers would kill the King arose after the stopping of the petition. Joyce says it was stopped once it was realised how dangerous it could prove.<sup>(1)</sup> On 11 November, however, no less a person than Colonel Thomas Harrison denounced the King as "a Man of Bloud" who should be prosecuted.<sup>(2)</sup> Unfortunately, only a fragment of the debate has come down to us, but Harrison's remarks must have shocked many. Cromwell countered Harrison "by putting severall cases in which merther was nott to be punished" and Ireton supported his father-in-law saying "we are nott to sin, or to goe in any unlawfull way to doe that which is for bringing a delinquent to Judgement". Fairfax and Cowling also disapproved of Harrison's statement.

Harrison spoke on the same day as the King made his escape from Hampton Court. He had been contemplating such a move

- 
- (1) E637(3), A Letter or Epistle to all well-minded People, 1651. On 28 November a number of men who were in the custody of the Marshal General signed a petition to Fairfax urging him to call upon Henry Lilburne to support his allegations. They were John Wood, William Bray, William Thomson, John Crossman, William Prior, William Eyres, George Hassel, Thomas Beverley and William Everard, some of whom had of course been imprisoned for their part in the mutiny at Ware. (Clarke Papers, I, p. 419 + n.).
- (2) ibid., p. 417.



since at least 3 November although he had no definite idea about where to go and received conflicting advice from his courtiers.<sup>(1)</sup> As feeling in the army grew in intensity, it was not just the King who took fright but also Cromwell himself. It seems likely that, despite conflicting evidence, Cromwell still favoured a deal with the King and that he was not alone in this but was supported by some of his senior colleagues. On 1 November a royalist newsletter reported that Cromwell's, Ireton's, and Whalley's wives "relished the Court".<sup>(2)</sup> The Lt. General wrote to Whalley (commander of the guards about the King), who received the letter on the 11th, that

"There are rumours abroad of some intended attempt on his Majesty's person. Therefore I pray have a care of your guards, for if any such thing should be done, it would be accounted a most horrid act." <sup>(3)</sup>

As early as 29 October Wildman in his Call to the Army had urged the soldiery to make sure that their comrades about the King kept him securely. Just prior to Charles's escape one Thomas Griffin claimed to have discussed the King's future and a purge of the Commons with Thomas Allen, agent of Harrison's regiment.<sup>(4)</sup> Allen

---

(1) Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 9-10.

(2) Clarendon State Papers, II, p. XL.

(3) W. C. Abbott, The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1937-1949, I, pp. 551-552; Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, p. 16.

(4) The agent for Harrison's regiment was in fact Joseph Alleyn (E413(18), A Copy of a Letter sent by the Agents).

is reported to have said :

"What is the King more than you, or I, or any other? You shall see within 6 Dayes what we intend to doe with the King."

He said agents had gone to the army to urge them to meet as a body and to march to Westminster to purge the House of 80 members. Some of them, including the Speaker, he alleged had cozened the state of £100,000, a very erratic accusation.<sup>(1)</sup> The Moderate Intelligencer reported that Allen persuaded the regiment to go to the rendezvous at Corkbush Field telling them

"he had found out as much money of a Malignant, as would pay the Army for three Months, and his Excellency had made choice of that Regiment to secure it." (2)

It was a straight appeal to material grievances. However, Cromwell's news which Whalley passed on to the King provided the excuse which Charles needed to justify an escape. A convincing refutation of the view that Cromwell engineered the escape is contained in Gardiner.<sup>(3)</sup> An interesting piece of evidence tending to support this exists in the State Papers Additional. This says that when news of Charles's arrival on the Isle of Wight was brought to

(1) F. Peck, Desiderata Curiosa, II Vols., London, 1779, II, p. 373.

(2) The Moderate Intelligencer, 11-18 November, 1647.

(3) Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 16-17; c.f. Gregg, Freeborn John, pp. 203-205 and Hill, God's Englishman, pp. 96-97.

headquarters, Cromwell "started upp and said, Oh I am gladd of yt".<sup>(1)</sup>

The picture of the army that emerges at this time is one of serious crisis. It was split ideologically at a variety of levels, it was threatened with mutiny and the Grandees' policy of achieving a settlement with the King appeared to be in ruins. But not all of those who dissented from this policy sided with the Levellers; in fact, very few did so. The army leadership was uncertain as to how strong the mutinous elements were in the army but they were determined to check them. In retrospect it can be seen that the politically conscious group of Leveller supporters in the army was not very strong, but this was not at all obvious at the time.

On 14 November, the day before the rendezvous at Ware the Grandees drew up A Remonstrance from his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax and his Council of War (sic) concerning the late Discontent and Distraction in the Army. This document was a conscious attempt on the part of the army leadership to re-assert its authority and prevent any further possible swing in favour of the Levellers. The agents were denounced as seeking to divide the army and as hindering

---

(1) S.P. 46/97, f. 71. The document is a report by the Commissary General of the Irish Horse, John Reynolds, the radical elected officer of 1647, against one Nathaniel Rockwell of Harrison's regiment. It is dated 30 November 1653 from Bunhill (there is a Bunshill in Bucks. and in Herefordshire) which gives it additional importance, as this is a few days before the collapse of Barebones and the subsequent fall of Harrison. For this reason it must be used with caution, especially as it contains allegations against Harrison himself (see below) and might well be part of a frame-up. However, at his interrogation, Rockwell acknowledged that he told Reynolds he heard Cromwell's remarks as above, (ibid., f. 77).

attempts to reach a settlement. To put a stop to all this, it was proposed to hold three rendezvous of the army, except for such units as were on duty elsewhere, and to dismiss all officers and agitators to their respective regiments for a fortnight "to satisfy and compose these Discontents and Division". If necessary, it was said, there would be one general rendezvous. The Remonstrance also accused the agents of trying to subvert the first rendezvous which was to be held at Ware. It said that unless these discontents stopped the General would resign. It could be that this was a mere ploy to win back the loyalty of the men, or that Fairfax had genuinely had enough; he had been ill twice that year, the last bout of illness occurring at the end of October. Even if he had resigned his place would have been filled. The officers had too much to lose by withdrawing from the political struggle. Fairfax's continuance as Lord General was made contingent upon the army supporting him in the prosecution of achieving satisfaction for its material grievances and for the implementation of a political programme, which although not as radical as some of the Leveller demands, was nevertheless breaking new ground. The present Parliament was to set a date for its dissolution and to provide for a successor. This was to be freely and equally elected and "(as near as may be) an equal Representative of the People that are to elect" (i.e. there was to be no universal suffrage). All other things were to be left to Parliament to decide. However, the army envisaged itself as maintaining the role of watchdog over the proceedings of Parliament, to be able

"to mind the Parliament of, and mediate with them for, Redress of the common Grievances of the People, and all other Things that the Army have declared their Desires for."

Here we can see in embryo the sort of political presence the army came to possess in the 1650's; ever present and ever concerned in politics but reluctant to seize power unequivocally and to attempt to rule alone. As we shall see, one of the main contributions to disequilibrium in the next twelve or so years is that the army's immense de facto political power is never adequately institutionalised. This power always protruded . . . obviously, and, at times, . . . dramatically. The army was tied up in a Gordian Knot. It could not claim with one voice to be determined to leave certain things to Parliament, and by implication to civilians, to decide and with another claim to be judge of whether the actions of Parliament were in keeping with what the nation wanted, or rather, what it, that is the army, considered the nation wanted. The Remonstrance concluded with a declaration which it was intended the officers and soldiers of the various regiments present at the rendezvous should sign. The declaration was in support of the programme outlined above and included an undertaking to acquiesce in the decisions of the General Council of War (i.e. the Army Council) in matters concerning the Army's engagements and, in matters of discipline, to the Council of War and the superior officers. <sup>(1)</sup>

---

(1) E414(14), repr. in Abbott, Writings and Speeches, I, pp. 557-560; Maseres, Select Tracts, I, pp. XXXIII-XXXIX; L.J., IX, pp. 529-531.

The Leveller attempt to push the army further to the left, and to use it as the vanguard to implement their programme by gaining control of it with a mutiny, failed because they over-estimated the extent of their support within it. They had obviously frightened the Grandees, but when the cards were on the table and the discipline and unity of the army were threatened, the vast majority of the officer corps, some of whom the Levellers might have been able to win over by argument, closed ranks with their superiors. So too did numbers of the soldiery. According to Wildman

"Did not many Regiments at Ware cry out, for the King and Sir Thomas, for the King and Sir Thomas."(1)

The official accounts of the rendezvous play down the mutinous aspect and portray the officers as very much in control. This was probably a fair assessment, as the attempted mutiny was suppressed with ease, but it ignores the other differences over the aims of army policy which had emerged at Putney. At Ware Fairfax's horse and foot regiments, Rich's, Fleetwood's, Twisleton's, Pride's, and Hammond's regiments were designated to participate but were joined, contrary to orders, by Harrison's and Robert Lilburne's. From the accounts the leading figures in the mutiny were Major Thomas Scott, Colonel William Eyres, and Captain Lt. William Bray of Lilburne's regiment.<sup>(2)</sup> Scott was a recruiter M.P. for Aldborough and was not the same person as the famous Republican M.P. for Aylesbury. His

(1) E421(19), Putney Projects.

(2) Maseres, Select Tracts, I, pp. XI-XLII; L.J., IX, pp. 527-528; E414(13), A Full Relation of the Proceedings at the Rendezvous of that Brigade of the Army ... repr. in Maseres, Select Tracts, I, pp. IV-IXVII and partly repr. in Rushworth, VII, pp. 875-876.

military title was probably a courtesy one. He was put into the custody of Lt. Edmund Chillenden and sent up to Parliament. He died in January 1648.<sup>(1)</sup> Eyres's, or Ayres, title was probably a courtesy one as well, although he was a member of the army at this time. He was arrested as was Bray<sup>(2)</sup>

Colonel Thomas Rainborowe was present at Ware, at least for part of the time. On the 15 November, the day of the rendezvous, The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer reported that Rainborowe addressed the Commons. He "presented some smart expressions both against Lt. General Cromwell and Commissary Ireton" and suggested the King might still be hiding at Hampton Court preparing some new design, whereupon a search was ordered. Rainborowe also warned the House that there could be trouble at the rendezvous as there was no money to pay the soldiers. A debate followed about trying to postpone the rendezvous, but nothing could be done as the soldiers were already marching to it.<sup>(3)</sup> More interesting is the allegation that Harrison supported his regiment's mutiny. This charge is contained in Reynolds' information against Rockwell referred to above and, for the reasons given there, it must be used cautiously. According to Reynolds, Rockwell said that

- (1) Maseres, Select Tracts, I, p. LVII; D. Brunton and D. Pennington, Members of the Long Parliament, London, 1954, p. 35.
- (2) For further career details of these men q.v. biographical appendix.
- (3) The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 9-16 November 1647. It is not clear where Rainborowe was first that day, whether at Ware or Westminster. Assuming that he was in the Commons earlier in the day he must have moved very fast to cover the 24 miles to Ware.

"Maior Gen<sup>rll</sup> Harison did at yt time side with ye Souldiers and made a longue speeche to yo, yt did so metle yo yt yo scarce hade paitiance to sitt on yo (ur) horse to heere him."

Harrison was also alleged to have "deserted" Cromwell at about this time for treating privately with the King.<sup>(1)</sup> This squares with Harrison's remarks at Putney on 11 November. The first part of the charge cannot be corroborated from any other source, but this is not to say that there could not have been a profound disagreement between Harrison and Cromwell or that a quarrel did not take place. The post-Ware spirit was one of reconciliation and patching up of differences. Only a few soldiers were punished as an example.<sup>(2)</sup> No action was taken against Thomas Rainborowe whose behaviour in November was far more divisive than that levelled at Harrison in 1653.<sup>(3)</sup>

John Lilburne who had been freed from his confinement in the Tower on bail made his way to Ware but received word that the attempted mutiny had failed and beat a retreat.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) S.P.46/97, f. 71.

(2) Rushworth, VII, p. 937.

(3) The Royalist Mercurius Elencticus (19-26 November 1647) accused Harrison of being involved in the fabricated charges against Hugh Peter and William Dell of plotting against the King. Harrison was said to love a King "as a Linck Boy does a full moone which he not a little resembles too (for he hath had as many Religions as she changes in her whole revolution)". Harrison achieved notoriety with the Royalists, so much so that the King was pleasantly surprised by him when he came to escort Charles from Hurst to London in December 1648, (Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 279-280).

(4) Maseres, Select Tracts, I, p. LVIII.



The other two rendezvous were held on the 17th and 18th at Ruislip and Kingston. At Ruislip three troops of Okey's dragoons and Waller's and Lambert's foot regiments expressed "continued concurrence with and submission to the General" and dissociated themselves from attempts to divide the army.<sup>(1)</sup> The last rendezvous involved the Life Guard, Cromwell's, Ireton's, Whalley's, Rainborowe's, Barksted's, Overton's and Hewson's regiments. All showed

"an ardent affection to his Excellency, desirous that all cause of discontents might be removed, the souldiers not put to shifts, or the country so grievously oppressed." (2)

On 19 November the Commons heard a report from Lt. General Cromwell about the rendezvous and that

"by the great Mercy of God, upon the Endeavours of the General and Officers, the Army was in a very composed State of Obedience to the superior Officers, and Submission to the Authority of Parliament."

£20,000 was ordered to be paid to the Treasurers at War for the Army's pay. Cromwell, on behalf of the House, was asked to inform Fairfax

---

(1) A Perfect Weekly Account, 17-23 November 1647. The address of Waller's regiment, signed by the Colonel, Lt. Colonel (Edward Salmon) and the Major (Thomas Smith) and subscribed "by the rest of the Officers and Soldiers of the Regiment Unanimously", is printed in Rushworth, VII, pp. 878-879.

(2) A Perfect Weekly Account, 17-23 November 1647.

"that this House will be at all times ready to receive and give such Answer as is fitting, in a Parliamentary Way, to such humble Addresses as should be made from the Army to this House, by the General." (1)

This showed how far the wheel had turned since March when the army was hysterically chastised for daring to interfere in affairs of state. This polite and formal exchange papered over divisions, not just between Parliament and army, but also within the army itself.

The debacle at Ware resolved the issue of control of the army. That was to remain with the officers and not to come from below. The Levellers failed to drum up enough support amongst the rank and file, so essential if they wanted to use the army as a launching pad to have their programme implemented nationally. Their contacts in the army leadership were not enough. The Leveller leaders continued to be important figures on the London political scene and remained so even into 1649. In 1647 they might have helped to push the army further to the left.<sup>(2)</sup> But during the course of the year there had been such a shift anyway, in response to a variety of factors of which the Levellers were only one. The other variables were the Parliament, the City, and the King, and internal army pressure. Yet one thing was clear after Ware, the army remained

---

(1) C.J., V, pp. 363-364; A Perfect Weekly Account, 17-23 November 1647.

(2) C.f. Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 87.

committed to seeing the introduction of a programme of political reform. Ware had been about discipline; the struggle to attain a political settlement still remained to be fought out.

**CHAPTER TWO**

I.

NOVEMBER 1647-MAY 1648

The restoration of discipline after Ware was swift and was made to be seen <sup>to be</sup> so. Lilburne's mutinous regiment drew up a representation to Fairfax subscribed by the officers, including the two elected ones (Captains Abraham Holmes and Richard Deane), Lt. Francis Nicholls, who as Ensign Nicholls had been detained by Parliament in March, Jacob Somers (Summers), one of the agitators and now an Ensign, and Herbert Field, also an Ensign, who had signed the letter of the agitators to Wales. <sup>(1)</sup> The Remonstrance suggests that the recent distempers were not just limited to the regiment although they manifested themselves there first. There is an emphatic reassertion of Fairfax's authority :

"as soldiers ..., we owe all Obedience and Subjection to your Excellency's Authorities and Commands; from which we humbly conceive neither Birthrights, nor other Priveledges whatsoever, whereof we have or ought to have an equal share with others, can or ought in the least to disoblige us."

They hope that both Parliament and army will unite to finish the great work and

"that the whole kingdom may be prosperous in the enjoyment of a Free Parliament and every particular Person in his own proper Interest, that the World may bear us Witness, that we do not only declare for, but prosecute the obtaining of their Liberties and Freedoms."

---

(1) E417(15), A Remonstrance sent from Colonel Lilburne's Regiment to his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax; Rushworth, VII, pp. 913-914; A Perfect Diurnal, 22-29 November 1647. The Remonstrance as printed in Rushworth suggests that Robert Lilburne signed it but the Thomason version omits his name.

In other words, there was to be no back-peddling from the June declarations and subsequent ones, a view in keeping with the Remonstrance of 14 November. On 22 November a declaration from eight regiments was presented to the General from the Life Guard and Cromwell's, Ireton's, Rainborowe's, Whalley's, Barksted's, Overton's and Hewson's regiments. It expressed their loyalty to the King, their respect for Fairfax and their desires concerning the public good.<sup>(1)</sup> There were also declarations of loyalty from three troops of Okey's regiment and from Thornhaugh's Nottinghamshire regiment, which, although it had elected agitators, was not part of the standing army.<sup>(2)</sup>

As far as the eventual settlement of the kingdom was concerned the problem of the King still remained. There was a hardening of attitude towards further dealings with him and the army leadership turned very frosty on his emissary Sir John Berkeley. The latter was sent to army headquarters with letters from the King and the Governor of the Isle of Wight, Colonel Robert Hammond, for the army leaders. Berkeley claimed this was done at Hammond's prompting. Hammond had become governor of the island at the end of August and had given up command of his regiment which passed to Issac Ewer. He had been unhappy with the political activities of the army.<sup>(3)</sup> In view of this it is not surprising that the King

---

(1) E416(35), A New Declaration from eight Regiments in the Army.

(2) Rushworth, VII, pp. 930-931.

(3) Cary, Memorials, I, p. 349, L.J., IX, p. 423; Abbott, Writings and Speeches, I, p. 696.

sought refuge there. Hammond, flushed with the success of Ware, felt it was opportune to break with the agitators. He urged a speedy settlement with the King. This showed just how out-of-touch he had become with army affairs since his arrival on the Isle of Wight in early September. This must have become apparent to Berkeley even before he arrived at Windsor, where the headquarters had been removed to, in late November. On his way there he met with, or was approached by, George Joyce who "seemed much to wonder that I durst adventure to come to the Army". Joyce informed Berkeley that the agitators had discussed bringing the King to trial which he personally favoured,

"not ... that he would have one haire of his head to suffer, but that they might not bear the blame of the War."

presumably he meant in the sense of being responsible for the Civil War. Berkeley was received coldly by the General and his fellow officers. Fairfax claimed that as they were the Parliament's army they could only refer the King's letter to that body. This was somewhat hypocritical given the extent and nature of the contacts between the army and the King that had existed over the summer, to say nothing of the dramatic seizure of the King from Holmby, but it did reiterate that the army was still determined to bring about a settlement by constitutional means. Hammond's letter to Cromwell and Ireton was looked on contemptuously. Later, Berkeley was visited by a general officer who was very much in favour of reaching an agreement with the King. This officer, most likely Scout Master

Leonard Watson, claimed that Ireton and Cromwell were determined to bring down Charles by sending 800 of the most disaffected in the army to secure him and bring him to trial. The reason behind this was that despite the appearance of order and discipline having been restored to the army

"yet they were so far from being so indeed, that there have been with Cromwell and Ireton, one after another, two third parts of the Army to tell them, that, though they were certainly to perish in the attempt, they would leave nothing unessayed, to bring the Army to their sense; and if all failed, they would make a division in the Army, and join with any that would assist in the destruction of their opposers."

The two Grandees, according to Berkeley's informant, interpreted this as meaning that the majority would side with the Presbyterians thus bringing about the ruin of the Independents who would be forced to treat unconditionally with the King. Cromwell and Ireton, he alleged, felt that

"if we cannot bring the army to <sup>our</sup>sense, we must go to theirs, a schism being evidently destructive."

Cromwell was also said to have sent "comfortable messages" to the prisoners arrested for mutiny urging them not to worry "for no harm should befall them, since it had pleased God to open his eyes".<sup>(1)</sup>

There had been strong pressure on the two commanders to break off negotiations with the King and a soft line was indeed pursued against those arrested in the aftermath of Ware. Only one

---

(1) The above paragraph is based on Berkeley, Memoirs, in Maseres, Select Tracts, II, pp. 382-386; Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 35-36. Berkeley's mission and Fairfax's reply were reported in the press, The Moderate Intelligencer, 25 November-2 December 1647.



member of Robert Lilburne's regiment, Richard Arnold, was shot at the time of the mutiny. Three had been drawn out at random as an example and lots were drawn to see who would die. But others had been arrested in connection with the events. At the end of November a petition from various officers and soldiers in the custody of the Marshal General called on Fairfax to send for Henry Lilburne to prove his accusation that some in the army favoured assassinating the King. It was signed by John Wood, William Bray, William Thomson, John Crossman, William Prior, William Eyres, George Marsall, Thomas Beverley and possibly William Everard.<sup>(1)</sup> Henry Lilburne was the younger brother of Robert and John, and John later alleged that the allegations that some members of the army favoured assassination had been a part of a put-up job to discredit himself. Henry Lilburne defected to the Royalists during the second Civil War and was killed in the retaking of Tynemouth Castle of which he was governor and which he had declared for the King.<sup>(2)</sup> Wood and Beverley were agitators in Ireton's regiment and had been closely associated with the London Levellers.<sup>(3)</sup> Bray and Eyres had been arrested at Ware itself.<sup>(4)</sup> About Prior, one of the agitators in Fleetwood's regiment,

- 
- (1) There are copies of the petition in Clarke Papers, I, p. 419 and E419(23), England's Freedome, Souldiers Rights, repr. in Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, pp. 248-258 which adds Everard's name.
- (2) E548(16), The Second Part of England's New Chains Discovered, repr. in D. M. Wolfe, Milton in The Puritan Revolution, London, 1963, p. 404.
- (3) Wor. Co. AA.1.19(145), A Copy of a Letter from the Commissary General's Regiment ... For a discussion of this important document q.v. above.
- (4) q.v. above.

and Crossman less is known. But in the 1650's Prior maintained contacts with William Eyres and Crossman and was detained for interrogation at the time of the Three Colonels' Petition and Wildman's 'plot'. One Prior was arrested in May 1649 for endeavouring to raise a tumult at the proclamation of the act abolishing kingship, and in August 1659 a William Prior was granted a warrant to be Lieutenant in a troop of well-affected to be raised by Captain Edmund Hale in Hants.<sup>(1)</sup> Crossman wrote a fluent and articulate letter to Fairfax on 20 December 1647 denouncing his imprisonment, claiming that martial law did not operate in peacetime and that Strafford had been charged with such an abuse of martial law. He considered his imprisonment was contrary to the laws of England and the Solemn Engagement. Such arguments were used by Leveller writers, especially John Lilburne. Little has come to light about Crossman's subsequent career, although he appears to have remained in the army, and it is very likely that he was the Lt. Crossman who informed Prior in January 1655 that William Eyres was in London asking after him.<sup>(2)</sup> Thompson, a

---

(1) Clarke Papers, I, p. 79; Thurloe, III, pp. 126, 146; C.S.P.D. 1649-1650, p. 150; C.S.P.D. 1659-1660, p. 564.

(2) Clarke Ms. 257 (calendered in H.M.C. Leyborne-Popham, p. 6); Thurloe, III, p. 146. For examples of Leveller attacks on martial law in peace time q.v. John Lilburne's A Defense for the honest Nonsubstantive Soldiers of the Army against the Proceedings of the General Officers to punish them by Martiall Law, repr. in Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, pp. 243-247, from E427(4), The People's Prerogative. The separate version of this tract which Wolfe was unable to trace (ibid., p. 243) is in Worcester College (AA.1.19(147)), A Plea for the late Agents of the Army against the Proceedings of the General Officers to punish them by martial Law). This version concludes with an attack on Cromwell and Ireton as the men responsible for abusing martial law. Lilburne says they are "both now transcendently Kingified and Lordified".

corporal in Whalley's regiment, achieved fame as the leader of the Leveller rising in May 1649. Although he signed the petition of 28 November his offence seems to have been of a different nature. He was cashiered in October for assault and drunk and disorderly behaviour at an inn in Colabrooke. He refused to accept the sentence and hung around the regiment distributing radical tracts and trying to disaffect the soldiery. He was re-arrested and detained at Windsor but tried to have things both ways claiming he was no longer in the army but a civilian. This was the essence of his vitriolic pamphlet against courts martial England's Freedome, Souldiers Rights which was stylistically akin to John Lilburne and incorporated many of the latter's arguments.<sup>(1)</sup> William Everard was probably the same man as the future Digger and guiding light of that movement in its early stages.<sup>(2)</sup> About Hassel little is known. If, as John Lilburne claimed, these arrests were part of a frame-up then the policy was unsuccessful. Bray, Crossman, Beverley and Hassel were re-admitted to the army upon acknowledging their crime.<sup>(3)</sup>

- 
- (1) Clarke Papers, II, p. 200n; Firth and Davies, pp. 221-222; E419(23), England's Freedome Souldiers Rights, repr. in Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, pp. 248-258.
- (2) Hill, World Turned Upside Down, pp. 228-230.
- (3) Rushworth, VII, p. 943; Perfect Occurences, 24-31 December 1647 which adds the name of Joseph Allen of Hewson's regiment which had rendezvoused at Kingston.

Other figures involved in the mutiny were on the whole dealt with lightly. However, on 15 December, Bartholomew Symonds of Robert Lilburne's regiment was condemned to death as a ring-leader in the mutiny. The charge against him throws light on the ad hoc character of the mutiny. He apparently shouted out that Major Gregson of Pride's regiment was against the King when the Major requested the soldiers of Lilburne's regiment to submit to army discipline. At this some of the regiment began to stone the Major. One Bell was also sentenced to run the gauntlet twice for his part in the mutiny.<sup>(1)</sup> Bigger fish were treated leniently. On 22 December after a solemn fast at Windsor, at which there was "a sweet harmony" and at which the Lt. General, Commissary General, and Colonels Titchburn and Hewson together with Hugh Peters "pray'd very fervently and pathetically", it was decided that despite Colonel Rainborowe's recent actions and with his recantation the General should write to the Commons asking for Rainborowe to be allowed to take up his duties as Vice-Admiral. The Commons were sympathetic but the Lords opposed it. Nevertheless, he was allowed to join the fleet because of a mutiny at Newport, Isle of Wight in January 1648 and because it was more desirable to have somebody committed to the policy of no further addresses to Charles I in charge of the navy. In fact Rainborowe's naval service was short-lived. In May there was a revolt in the fleet off Kent which the instigators of the Kentish petition in favour of a personal treaty with the King sought to exploit. Dissatisfaction with Rainborowe as Vice-Admiral amongst some members of the navy in fact preceded

---

(1) Rushworth, VII, p. 937; A Perfect Diurnal, 13-20 December 1647.

the drawing up of the petition. The seamen refused to allow Rainborowe to join his ship and on 29 May Parliament appointed Warwick Lord High Admiral. The revolt was not in favour of an unconditional re-establishment of the King in power. The seamen emphasised that they wanted a personal treaty but also emphasised the privilege of Parliament and the liberty of the subject. The revolt was more akin to a dramatic rejection of the radical line being pursued by the army in politics and religion which Rainborowe was felt to personify. Rainborowe returned to the army and received a new regiment. His old one had been given to Richard Deane who ironically was to serve in the navy himself. The navy went on to accept the revolution of late 1648 and early 1649.<sup>(1)</sup>

A dispute arose at the court martial of Major John Cobbett of Skippon's regiment, again for participation in the Ware mutiny. John Lilburne said that Cobbett had tried to promote the Agreement of the People at Ware. Captain Lt. John Ingram of the Life Guard claimed that Cobbett's case was more a matter for the General Council than for a court martial. This shocked many present and Ingram was ordered to retract the statement or be cashiered. He wrote to the General justifying his view with the same sort of arguments as Thompson and John Lilburne had employed. He appears to have been cashiered. The Kingdom's

---

(1) C.J., V, pp. 403, 405, 406, 413; L.J., IX, p. 615; Rushworth, VIII, p. 943; Kennedy, 'The English Naval Revolt of 1648', pp. 249-256 (the ambiguities in all these sources relating to Rainborowe's position as Vice-Admiral have already been discussed in the previous section); Firth and Davies, p. 422.

Weekly Intelligencer commented "so strict an observation there is of military discipline". Cobbett himself was re-instated.<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus, Berkeley's interpretation, based on that of his informant, was substantially correct regarding the lenient treatment of those involved in the mutiny, a policy which must have originated from the army leadership itself. But he was wrong in conjecturing an imminent split in the army, even if one accepts that Cromwell and Ireton were accommodating themselves to pressure from their comrades to break with the King. What is important about Ware is that despite a degree of sympathy for the Leveller viewpoint, which could be detected even among some officers at Putney, and the more widely felt antipathy towards Charles I, very few in the army supported let alone contemplated splitting it. Such a development could lead to ruin for all. The divisions caused by the dispute over the Irish service earlier in the year, which had been exploited by those seeking to disband the army and neutralise it as a political force, as well as the attempted Presbyterian coup of late July and early August, were still fresh enough in memory to haunt the army and remind it of the danger of a collapse of army unity. This concern with unity was to remain in the 1650's, although, as we shall see, it came under increasing strain, and finally broke down in the course of 1659 with disastrous consequences. Berkeley's interpretation was also well

---

(1) Rushworth, VII, p. 940, 943; The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 21-28 December 1647, 28 December 1647- 4 January 1648; A Perfect Weekly Account, 22-28 December 1647; E427(4), The People's Prerogatives and Privileges asserted and vindicated; E548(16), Second Part of England's New Chains discovered, repr. in Wolfe, Milton, p. 405; Clarke Papers, II, pp. 247-248. For more on Cobbett q.v. biographical appendix.

wide of the mark in asserting that if a split occurred most of the army would have swung over to the Presbyterians, even if this is defined very broadly. The experience of the past few months did not support such a conclusion.

The Grandees maintained pressure on the Parliament to redress the material grievances of the army, rightly assessing that these remained the most important concern of the vast majority of the soldiery. They had not been indolent in this respect. On 21 October Fairfax had written to Parliament with proposals for using the dean and chapter lands and revenues from delinquents' estates to pay the army's arrears. On 8 November he wrote complaining about the burden of free quarter on the country, a complaint shared both by the army and its opponents.<sup>(1)</sup> A further request to remedy these things was made on 7 December in An Humble Representation from his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax and the Council of the Army concerning their past Endeavours, and now final Desires.<sup>(2)</sup>

The desires outlined in this document were constant pay, the removal of free quarter, the prevention of further arrears accruing, and the disbanding of supernumeraries. Although it was described as being representative of Fairfax and the Council of the Army, the Representation is more the work of the officers alone and includes an apologia for their recent conduct. There was resentment at the attacks made particularly on the officers for the delays in

---

(1) E412(7), The Desires of Sir Thomas Fairfax and the General Council of the Army; E413(19), A Letter from Sir Thomas Fairfax to the Speaker.

(2) L.J., IX, pp. 556-563.

easing the kingdom of its financial burden and in bringing about a settlement. The Representation suggested that these delays caused both soldiers and citizens

"to hearken to any Party, and try any new Way proposed, under the Notion of more speedy and effectual, though perhaps, so far from real Remedy, as that it indeed endangers the utter Loss of their End, with Ruin and Destruction to both."

It re-stated unequivocally that

"the General (as we all with and under him) stands engaged to the Army, for the lawful Prosecution of the Soldiers Concernments, and some general fundamental Things for the Kingdom."

The emphasis here was on the General, and by implication the officers, rather than the "we" of the General Council. There was a suggestion that the idea of disbanding the army was circulating again. There followed a justification of the way things had been handled in the face of rising discontent : since the army

"was raised into such Resolutions and driven into such a posture, as put it past the Power of the Officer to bring it to a quiet Disbanding without further Satisfaction and Security, it hath been our main End in continuing with it, and almost our whole Work, to keep it within Compass and Moderation, to with-hold it from Extremities of all Sorts, and from that Mischief to the Kingdom, or itself, which our withdrawing and taking off our Hands from the Government of it would have let it loose unto."

Despite these efforts, aspersions were still being cast on the army by many people including M.P.s, whose preservation they claimed to have fought for. They felt that the nation was given up to its own destruction. There was a veiled threat to retire to private life



and let confusion rule but this was ruled out because neither God nor man could sanction such a move. On a less moralistic level, it would have been against their own self-interest to withdraw from politics and abdicate from a prominent part in settling the kingdom. They called on Parliament to consider once more the demands put forward in the Remonstrance of 14 November which had been designed to be presented to the regiments at the rendezvous. The document then dealt with detailed proposals about how best to remedy the material grievances of the army. The Representation was presented to Parliament by Colonels Sir Hardress Waller and Whalley, two senior officers. Its demands were speedily taken into consideration and complied with. The Commons resolved that for eight days its business would be taken up with the settlement of the kingdom, army and navy affairs, the removal of free quarter and Ireland. The outcome of these intensive debates was the series of ordinances passed by the Commons on 23 December on the subject of free quarter, the payment of army arrears, the provision of army pay from bishops' and delinquents' lands and from the excise, a source of revenue consistently attacked by the Levellers, the auditing of soldiers' accounts including those to be disbanded, the freedom of apprentices and relief of maimed soldiers.<sup>(1)</sup> However, the army continued to consider political matters. At a General Council at Windsor which began on 21 December several of the officers spoke their mind on current affairs. But

---

(1) C.J., V, pp. 376, 399-400; E421(9), Severall Ordinances of Parliament; Firth and Rait, I, pp. 1048-1056.

the prevailing mood of the meeting was to promote unity in the army as was made apparent in the efforts to reconcile and forgive those officers, especially Rainborowe, who had been involved in the Ware mutiny. This spirit of unity could only strengthen the army's political power.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the meantime, negotiations between King and Parliament had been continuing, with the four fundamental bills as the basis of discussion. Charles pondered over these bills and finally rejected them on 28 December having decided to throw in his lot with the Scots in the belief that they would re-establish him on the throne. He even attempted an escape from the Isle of Wight. This resulted in the dispatch of a powerful and impressive force to secure it. In the eyes of the army leadership a peripatetic King was not acceptable even if such a one had got them off the hook before Ware. The force was under Vice-Admiral Thomas Rainborowe and included Sir William Constable, Lt. Colonel Goffe and Lt. Colonel Salmon of Waller's regiment.<sup>(2)</sup> The King's behaviour served to push army and Parliament closer together, at least temporarily. On 31 December some officers were reported to have visited the parliamentary commissioners working at headquarters on the question of disbanding the supernumeraries. These officers assured the commissioners that

---

(1) Rushworth, VII, p. 943; cf. Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 43-44.

(2) This account is based on Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 38-41, 48-50; Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 87-88; Rushworth, VII, p. 952.

"the Spirit of the Army was, That since God hath put an Opportunity now into their Hands of purpose to settle the Kingdom, if God should honour the Army to be further helping to them, the Army would live and die with them and for them willingly."

Cromwell, Ireton and other senior officers dined with the commissioners and both sides parted on friendly terms with a 25 gun salute.<sup>(1)</sup> On 3 January 1648 the Commons passed the vote of No-Addresses to the King in the light of his rejection of the four bills. Further dealings with him would have amounted to exalting him to the position of victor and reducing them to that of vanquished, an outcome that the army had striven hard to avoid during the previous year. But the Commons passed the vote not just out of deference to the army but out of self-interest as well.<sup>(2)</sup> During the debate Sir Thomas Wroth spoke out bitterly against the prevarications of Charles I and the fruitlessness of further dealings with him :

"It's now high time, up and be doing. I desire any government rather than that of Kings."

Cromwell, in a hawkish speech, supported by Ireton, urged the House not to fall out-of-line with the wishes of the people it represented, reminding them of the recent traumatic troubles

"we have bin in the army for your service, and have appeased them upon our confidences given the soldier, that upon answer to your late application you would doe what should make for the peace of the Kingdome."

(1) Rushworth, VII, p. 952; A Perfect Diurnal, 20-27 December 1647.

(2) For the important debate preceding the vote q.v. Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 88-89; Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 50-51.

Clement Walker added that by the end of his speech Cromwell had his hand on his sword, perhaps both ominous for the future and symbolic of where he considered power and the initiative now lay.<sup>(1)</sup> The next day an important committee of 107 M.P.s was established to consider the people's grievances and means for their redress, the easing of financial burdens, freedoms and liberties, law reform and trade regulation, in other words all the necessary variables for a settlement of the kingdom. The brief also ran to preparing bills and ordinances for the implementation of these reforms. The members of the committee included Cromwell, Skippon, Fleetwood, and Ludlow who was already an influential political figure.<sup>(2)</sup> But this attempt at peaceful, yet revolutionary change, in which there was no mention of Charles I, was unable to get off the ground. If successful it might well have emasculated the Levellers, but the chances of the thorough-going reforms envisaged by the army getting through an unpurged House must be considered minimal. This became increasingly obvious in the course of 1648.

But in the short-term the concordat between Parliament and army continued. On 11 January the army presented a Declaration of support for the vote of No-Addresses to the Commons. It was in the

---

(1) D. Underdown (ed.), 'Boys Diary', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, XXXIX, 1966, pp. 155-157; Walker History of Independency, London, 1648, part I, pp. 42-43.

(2) C.J., V, p. 417. For Ludlow's involvement in discussions with the middle group, including Cromwell in early 1648, q.v. Ludlow, Memoirs, I, pp. 184-186; Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 89; Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 58-59.

name of the General Council and was presented by Waller, six other Colonels and some other officers "of rank and quality". The Colonels included Whalley, Okey, Barksted and Pride, all confirmed Grandees. There was no mention of agitators. The declaration had been drawn up at a meeting of the General Council on 8 January and was dated 9 January. This was the last meeting of the General Council of the Army as it had been established by the Solemn Engagement. In future the Army Council was made up only of officers; the agitators had been quietly dropped.<sup>(1)</sup> Evidence of this can be seen from an army committee set up the following month at Whitehall to receive petitions and consider business relating to the army. Its members were Cromwell, Ireton, Lt. General Hammond, Colonels Fleetwood, Harrison, Rich, Barksted, Whalley and Deane, Commissary General Staines, Scout Master General Watson, Quarter Master General Grosvenor, Lt. Colonel Cobbett, Majors Briscoe and Husband, the Judge Advocate Henry Whalley, and Adjutants Evelyn and Bury, and such of the field officers who happened to be in town.<sup>(2)</sup> The passing of the agitators was not opposed by the ranks.

The Lords were reluctant to concur with the Lower House in the vote of No-Address but they were prevailed upon by the Commons, with the help of the army, who put on a show of strength. On 17

- 
- (1) E422(21), A Declaration from his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax and the General Council, repr. in Rushworth, VII, pp. 961-962; The Kingdom's Weekly Post, 5-12 January 1648; Clarke Papers, I, p. LIX.
- (2) A Perfect Diurnal, 21-23 February 1648.

January the Upper House passed the vote.<sup>(1)</sup> On the same day Sir Hardress Waller was once again at Westminster presenting yet another Declaration from the army. This one was addressed to the Lords denying that the army had intended to overthrow them.<sup>(2)</sup>

In the earlier part of 1648 the army became more involved with internal security. In mid-January Waller's regiment was sent to Salisbury and five troops of Harrison's were sent to quarter in Cornwall, while Constable's regiment was sent to secure Gloucester where there had been an attempt by some discontented officers to seize the town. The officers involved belonged to Kempson's, Eyres's, Herbert's and Cooke's regiments which were not part of the standing army. Indeed, Kempson's and Herbert's regiments had been designed for Ireland. The grievances revolved around pay and the sting was taken out of a potentially dangerous situation by making provision for pay.<sup>(3)</sup> In London the army took on a policing role when it was

- (1) Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 52-53. The regiments that came to quarter in the Mews were Rich's and Barksted's. Barksted was a strict disciplinarian (Perfect Occurences, 14-21 January 1648, 7-14 April 1648).
- (2) L.J., IX, p. 664. The Declaration significantly came from the General and Council of War.
- (3) Perfect Occurences, 14-21 January 1648; Rushworth, VII, pp. 974-975; B. M. Stowe Ms. 189, f. 39 (William Clarke to John Rede, 25 January 1648). The activities of provincial armies during this period await a thorough investigation. For a pioneering article q.v. J. S. Morrill, 'Mutiny and Discontent in English Provincial Armies 1645-1647', Past and Present, 56, 1972, pp. 49-74. Herbert's and Kempson's regiments were disbanded in February (The Kingdom's Weekly Post 22 February-1 March 1648).

asked by the Commons to help suppress meetings intended to promote the Levellers' January petition.<sup>(1)</sup> All this activity served to increase the importance of the army nationally.

Despite the seeming resolve to settle the kingdom, without the King if necessary, there was still a lot of shilly-shallying. This indecision imposed a strain on the middle party and finally led to a split between its civilian and military components.<sup>(2)</sup> William Clarke wrote to his friend Lt. Colonel John Rede, Governor of Poole, complaining that the army were blamed for all troubles. He mentioned the Leveller petition and re-arrest of Wildman and John Lilburne as well as the trouble at Gloucester. He concluded gloomily

"I feare wee goe to support a rotten structure which God will have to fall. Hee's happy that can escape crushing if once the pillors breake." (3)

In this atmosphere there was an attempt to re-kindle the political zeal of the previous months amongst the rank and file. At the end of February Henry Gethings, Thomas Latham and John Malthorse, all of Harrison's regiment, were condemned to death for causing a tumult in the regiment on its recent march westwards, probably to Cornwall.

(1) C.J., V, p. 438.

(2) Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 89-90 and references therein cited.

(3) B. M. Stowe Ms.189, f. 39, Rede was to be ousted from the governorship of Poole in 1651 for allowing it to be used by Levellers and Ranters (ibid., ff. 52-53v., 74; C.S.P.D. 1651, pp. 149, 168, 171, 173, 195; K. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, London, 1971, p. 373).

Gethings had been one of the agitators of the regiment. Fairfax pardoned all except Gethings but it is not clear if, in the course of time, he too was not reprieved. The fact that he does not figure in the Leveller mythology of 1649 seems to suggest he was in fact reprieved.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the same week there was trouble in the Life Guard which was due to be disbanded. The colours were seized by one William Clark and taken away. Clark was court martialled and sentenced to be shot. His comrades petitioned on his behalf and he was pardoned. The Life Guard submitted and was duly disbanded. The cause of the incident appears to have been pay and the terms of disbanding.<sup>(2)</sup> However, despite the isolated nature of these affairs news of them travelled. In the Clarke Mss. there is an anonymous letter from Barnstaple, dated 3 March, unaddressed but signed "yor faithfull friend and fellow souldier in the ingagement of the army".<sup>(3)</sup> The writer says that his regiment, unidentified but possibly Waller's which was ordered to Devon in March,<sup>(4)</sup> is likely to reach some decision about disbanding contrary to the army engagements and that

- 
- (1) The Kingdom's Weekly Account, 22 February-1 March 1648; ibid., 1-8 March 1648; The Kingdom's Weekly Post, 2-9 March 1648.
- (2) Rushworth, VII, pp. 1007, 1009-10; Perfect Occurences, 25 February-3 March 1648; The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 29 February-7 March 1648.
- (3) Clarke Ms 41.
- (4) The Kingdom's Weekly Account, 8-15 March 1648.



the activists have resolved to address the army. New agitators have been chosen from every troop to organise the business. Further information concerning the Life Guard would be appreciated, as would the recipient's views on this. The letter closes with the promise of further correspondence "for the good of the whole". There was an attempt in print to make political capital out of the Life Guard incident. It was suggested that the disbanding of the Life Guard was contrary to the Solemn Engagement. Clark was treated leniently, according to the same source, because on hearing of the original sentence against him discontent broke out in Rich's regiment, a regiment which had been to the forefront in the political activities of the previous year. The Council of War was said to have disapproved of the very moderate petition from the Life Guard on Clark's behalf.<sup>(1)</sup> Corporal Thompson who had been imprisoned the previous autumn returned to the headlines as well. He had been released from Windsor on parole, but it was suggested that he used the opportunity to incite the soldiers to mutiny. He was ordered to be re-arrested by Cromwell and Ireton, whereupon wall posters appeared in London under the title The Grand Violation to the Rights and Liberties of the Free Commons of England. Thompson's status, whether civilian or soldier, was a sensitive issue which had been aired first of all in England's Freedom, Soldiers Rights. In the official account of his re-arrest it was stressed that his original offence, his involvement in a tavern brawl, was more dangerous to property, than his

---

(1) E430(15), The Displaying of the Life Guard Colours (3 March). The tract concludes with the moral that no soldier or commoner should be deflected from trying to bring about the country's freedoms.

present fate. Thompson was denounced for seeking a licentious freedom. It was said that the case against him could be inspected at Whitehall.<sup>(1)</sup>

This official account was challenged in a reply written by Thompson himself in which he claimed that a J.P. had decided that the tavern brawl was a matter to be settled between the two parties. But he alleged his Captain (Pitchford) wanted to exploit the event to get revenge on him because he had favoured prosecuting Lt. Savage for dissenting (at Newmarket from the Solemn Engagement). The Colonel, Whalley, favoured re-admitting Savage but the troopers would not have him despite Whalley's compromise offer to re-admit both Savage and Thompson. Thompson said he was cashiered by the officers of the regiment and that he only spoke of such concepts as freedom and liberty to clear himself and not to stir up mutiny. He then went down to Suffolk to promote the Agreement among Fleetwood's regiment. Fleetwood and his officers opposed it, so he went to the soldiers and agitators and read a letter to them from some of the 'free-born'. According to Thompson, the officers tried to persuade the soldiers not to listen, but did not try to stop him by force. He was arrested after the rendezvous at Kingston when he went to his Captain for a certificate of the length of his service. He accused Pitchford, who had left the army, of having cheated some of

---

(1) The Kingdom's Weekly Post, 2-9 March 1648; Clarke Ms.41, letter dated 6 March 1648 from Queen St. (London); E431(7), A Vindication of Lt. General Cromwell and Commissary General Ireton against the Scandalous Aspersion upon them . . . .

his troop of pay, and claimed that the Council of War considered him no longer a soldier yet he was still committed to the custody of the Marshal General. He also said that he had met Cromwell a few times before his re-arrest, and that despite his civil and respectful behaviour before the Council of War he was beaten by Richard Lawrence, the Marshal General of horse, and future Colonel in Ireland. He considered all the Grandees no better than apostates.<sup>(1)</sup>

Reading between the lines of the two versions Thompson had obviously been a political activist and there was an attempt to silence him by imprisonment. His quick temper provided the authorities with the ideal opportunity. Thompson's account also gives further evidence of the contacts between the London Levellers and army radicals and their joint efforts to stir up the army to make a stand for the Agreement in the pre-Ware days. In addition to these sporadic episodes, plenty of rumours circulated about a new wave of political activity in the army. The Kingdom's Weekly Post reported news from Bury St. Edmunds that three or four regiments had decided to rendezvous there and that the county was unaware if this was done with the General's authorisation or for what purpose.<sup>(2)</sup>

---

(1) E432(23), A True and Impartial Relation of the Whole Matter concerning ... W. Thompson.

(2) The Kingdom's Weekly Post, 2-9 March 1648.

Tensions between the army and the City over the question of money persisted, reflecting the unpopularity of the army at this time.<sup>(1)</sup> These tensions had existed since the summer, and shortly after Ware Fairfax ordered Hewson to march with his regiment into the City to demand payment of its contribution to the assessment. At the same time, as a gesture of good faith, the General ordered the removal of army headquarters from Putney to Windsor, with the exception of a few regiments which were to remain in London for security purposes. The Perfect Weekly Account commentated

"occasion may not be given to any to say that the Army is a cause of making all things deer at London." (2)

On 23 April 1648 the City's Common Council heard a report that the army intended to plunder the City if it did not pay money and that they held the City in deep suspicion, fearing it would most likely join the Scots if the latter invaded, in which case the army would speedily disarm it. The report emanated from one John Evertard who had overheard a conversation at Windsor between men he surmised to be army officers. Perfect Occurrences followed up its coverage of the affair with a declaration from some army officers about how they had heard the story from Ewers (misprint for Evertard), although they

- 
- (1) The refusal of Exeter to quarter part of Waller's regiment is interesting as a good example of the unpopularity of the army at this time, (Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 92 + n.55). The Speaker at first took the Mayor's side and wanted the soldiers out of Exeter and the arms and ammunition seized restored to the City, a stand for localism. However, in August the Devon Committee wrote to the Speaker, fearing that the order to remove Waller from Devon would be dangerous to the county as the militia was in a poor state, (Clarke Ms. 114, f.26; Bodl. Tanner Ms. 57, f.173).
- (2) Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 23-24, L.J., IX, p. 356; A Perfect Weekly Account, 17-23 November 1647.

stressed two points, firstly, that he had not seen the officers he alleged to have overheard, and whom he named as Quarter Master Grosvenor and Colonel Ayres, and secondly, that even if he had seen them he would not recognise them. Everard's story was seized upon by the City authorities as a useful piece of anti-army propaganda.<sup>(1)</sup>

In April there was a more serious attempt to re-ignite rank and file militancy. As with the previous year it was the horse which took the lead. A meeting was held at St. Albans on 24 April and Rich's regiment chose a soldier from each troop to attend. The meeting was broken up by Captains Brown, Gladman and Packer, all of Fairfax's horse, and some men were arrested.<sup>(2)</sup> According to a tract published in mid-May (Windsor Projects and Westminster Practices by Tom Tell Truth) the reason for the meeting was the preparation of a petition. Captain John Reynolds, who had been an important figure in army politics the previous year, played a leading part, was arrested, sentenced to three months imprisonment, and cashiered. A corporal of Rich's regiment was sentenced to be shot. The tract, like Wildman's earlier Putney Projects, bitterly attacked Cromwell as an

- (1) Perfect Occurrences, 21-28 April 1648; A Perfect Diurnal, 24 April-1 May 1648; L.J., IX, pp. 234-235, where the officers reported to have been overheard are said to be Grosvenor and Colonel Ewer "or some such name"; Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 115. The officers signing the declaration were Thomas Robinson, former agitator of the train and now a Captain, James Pitson, Captain of Fairfax's regiment, William Shambrooke, who had been appointed Lt. Colonel of the Tower guards in August 1647, and Edmund Chillenden, formerly an elected officer of Whalley's regiment. Perhaps they issued their declaration to counteract suspicions that they were the men on whom Everard had eavesdropped.
- (2) The following account is based on Perfect Occurrences, 21-28 April 1648, 28 April-4 May 1648; The Moderate Intelligencer, 27 April-4 May 1648; E442(10), Windsor Projects ...; E438(1), The Armies Petition; Rushworth, VII, p. 1070; Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 116-117.

ambitious double dealer. The petition that circulated at St. Albans was printed in The Armies Petition : or a new Engagement of many in the Army who are yet faithful to the People. It contained all the basic tenets of the Leveller programme in considerable detail. According to the author, the arrests made at St. Albans so incensed Rich's regiment that they drew up a petition saying they hoped the imprisonments were the result of a misunderstanding. They called for the release of those detained and for adherence to the original army engagements to the people and to each other for securing the nation's common rights and freedoms. Ludlow says that he and Cornelius Holland were sent down to headquarters with orders for the discharge of Reynolds and some others "called in derision Levellers".<sup>(1)</sup> The authenticity of this is doubtful as the Commons were very unlikely to interfere in army discipline, especially in a case like this where the matter was so clearly internal. Besides memories of the arrest of Major Tulidah and Ensign Nicholls just over a year before lingered on.

Within the officer corps the debate on the settlement of the kingdom continued. 20 April was kept as a day of humiliation at headquarters and the following Saturday (22 April) a general meeting was to be held to debate what, if anything, was to be presented to Parliament on the question of settlement, especially as Parliament itself intended to debate this matter fully. According to Perfect

---

(1) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 183.

Occurences, so few officers turned up at this meeting that it was put off until the following week. This was the famous Windsor Prayer Meeting, the exact dates of which are uncertain, but which took place against the background of Parliament's vote on 28 April not to alter the fundamental government of the nation by King, Lords and Commons, and a <sup>of</sup> rising in Wales. The best account we have of this event is that by William Allen, the agitator of 1647, written in 1659 as a polemic in that particular context. (1) According to Ludlow's retrospective account, Cromwell was convinced of the desirability of bringing the King to account and of establishing a commonwealth, but not of the "feasibleness of it". Ludlow also says that there were contacts between what he calls "the grandees of the house and army" and "the Commonwealths men". Who he has in mind is a mystery and his suggestion remains uncorroborated. However, what is clear is that by this time distrust of the King was endemic amongst the officers and it was not such a radical departure for the meeting to conclude that Charles Stuart "that Man of Blood", Harrison's phrase at Putney, should be brought to account

"for that Blood he had shed, and Mischief he had done to his utmost against the Lord's cause and People in these poor Nations."

Perfect Occurences reported that nothing was concluded at the meeting about proposals to be made to Parliament and that during the meeting

---

(1) W. Allen, A Faithful Memorial, repr. in Somers Tracts, 3rd Collec., IV Vols., 1751, III, pp. 307-313.

examinations of those involved in the St. Albans affair were also conducted.<sup>(1)</sup>

On 30 April Fairfax and the Council of War ordered Cromwell to Wales in view of the deteriorating situation there. He was to be accompanied by his own horse regiment as well as Pride's, Ewer's and Deane's regiments.<sup>(2)</sup> He was ordered to set out on 1 May but The Moderate Intelligencer recorded that he met with some resistance from his troops. There was resentment at the way Reynolds had been treated and some general disillusionment from war-weary men with what all the fighting had achieved. But these differences were resolved and the regiment was ready to march westwards, as the newsbook put it

"to the great grief of many, who were confident, that the soldiers had been so tampered with since they left fighting, that they would be divided, and draw severall wages." (3)

- 
- (1) Allen, Faithful Memorial, p. 310; Perfect Occurences, 28 April-4 May 1648; Ludlow, Memoirs, I, pp. 184-186; Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 118-120. There is no reason for Gardiner's statement that the meeting involved officers and agitators. For Allen q.v. biographical appendix.
- (2) Perfect Occurences, 28 April-4 May 1648; Moderate Intelligencer, 4-11 May 1648; Rushworth, VII, p. 1098.
- (3) The Moderate Intelligencer, 4-11 May 1648.



Professor Underdown interprets events in national politics by the end of April as "a great turning point" in the political developments of 1647-1649, marking the breach between the middle group leaders and their radical associates within and without the army.<sup>(1)</sup> But his view that the army was "out of hand" is questionable. The decision at Windsor to try Charles I was the culmination of a trend that had been growing since Putney. Windsor formalises a resolution common to junior officers and Grandees alike. But the decision also meant that the army was in danger of manoeuvring itself into political isolation. The trial of the King was unlikely to find widespread support at Westminster, let alone in the country at large. It also appeared that the constitutional settlement based on the Heads of the Proposals was being quietly abandoned, unless it was intended to substitute another member of the royal family as monarch, but there was no suggestion of this. The co-operation between Parliament and army manifest in December and January had evaporated. In its place there was now an impasse, an impasse that was only to be removed by the follies of the Second Civil War which in its turn was to push the army further to the left and into a committed revolutionary position from which it could bring about not just the King's trial but also his execution and from which it acted as the mid-wife of the new Republic.

---

(1) Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 96-97.

## II.

MAY-AUGUST 1648

The troubles in Wales which Cromwell was sent to suppress were only part of a spate of risings which took place throughout the country in early spring 1648 and which marked the prelude to the Second Civil War. There were risings at Norwich, Bury St. Edmunds and, most important of all, in the City of London. The army was used to suppress them all.<sup>(1)</sup> It is not intended to go into the events of the Second Civil War in any detail. A satisfactory account exists in Gardiner.<sup>(2)</sup> However, a discussion of some of the political developments during this period is necessary because of their subsequent implications.

The royalists did not give up hope of achieving the King's escape and in late May an unsuccessful attempt was made, ending in the fabricated accusation against Major Rolphe, newly promoted on 27 May, and who, as a Captain, had been an elected officer in Robert Hammond's (now Ewer's) regiment. Rolphe was charged by Richard Osborne, one of Charles's attendants, with having

---

(1) For these risings q.v. Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 90ff.; Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 97-98, 124ff. In the City rising some of Barksted's regiment were reported to have supported the rioters (Perfect Occurences, 7-14 April 1648).

(2) Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, chapters LXII-LXV.

urged the King to escape so that he could shoot him. Rolphe was not released until 4 September.<sup>(1)</sup> Such desperate tactics only served to heighten hostility and embitterment amongst members of the army against the king and his advisers.

In the course of the summer hostilities, the Presbyterians regained confidence and influence in the Commons, largely because many radical and middle group members were involved in military or administrative activities in the country. The Presbyterians could also rely on the support of the City which favoured a personal treaty with the King.<sup>(2)</sup> Ireton was fully conscious of all this and wrote to Robert Hammond about it telling him of harassment of the Parliament by cavaliers and the rabble. He said that the army was aware of these developments especially that they were taking place in the absence of the faithful members who were engaged in the country's service.<sup>(3)</sup> The army's relations with the City had been of a love-hate nature since 1647 and mutual suspicions continued. After the suppression of the City riot in April, Cromwell was reported as claiming that there were "stiffer joynts" behind the riot than the apprentices, and that action should be taken to counter-

---

(1) C.J., V, p. 575; Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, p. 131; Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 197; L.J., IX, pp. 345-346, 349, 355, 357, 367, 369, 370, 380, 407; Rushworth, VII, pp. 1162, 1168, 1171, 1173, 1181, 1183-1184, 1248, 1270; Peck, Desiderata Curiosa, II, pp. 383-384.

(2) Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 101. For the City's stance q.v. Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 129-130.

(3) T. Birch (ed.), Letters between Colonel Robert Hammond ... and the Committee ... at Derby House, London, 1764, pp. 79-81.

act these elements which had endangered both Parliament and army in order to prevent a repetition.<sup>(1)</sup> In June Mabbot reported that a group of Grandees, probably civilians, had their coach overturned by some apprentices as they were going from the City to the army. The apprentices said they were going to the "devils journeymen".<sup>(2)</sup> However, the Presbyterians scored an important victory in the build-up towards the re-opening of negotiations with the King. On 3 June the impeachment of the 11 members, a contentious issue between Parliament and army the previous year was dropped, and on 8 June they were allowed to take their seats again.<sup>(3)</sup> The Presbyterians seriously overestimated their chances of getting away with this, even despite the army's absence on active service. The re-admission of the impeached members was to be one of the justifications for Pride's Purge.

Encouraged by this Pyrrhic victory, the Presbyterians set about to discredit the army leadership, especially Cromwell and Ireton, and to try to get rid of Cromwell from his military command.<sup>(4)</sup> On 2 August Major Robert Huntingdon, who had resigned

---

(1) Mercurius Elenticus, 12-19 April, 1648. For the riot q.v. Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 97-98.

(2) N.L.S.Adv. Ms. 35.5.11, f.17v., (newsletter of Gilbert Mabbot, 20 June 1648).

(3) C.J., V, pp. 583-584, 589-590.

(4) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 196.

his commission sometime in May, presented his reasons for so doing in a paper to the Lords, probably on the instigation of some Presbyterian M.P.s.<sup>(1)</sup> Huntingdon's confused charge against Cromwell was that he held anarchistic political views, yet in a ruthless megalomaniac way was aiming to purge Parliament and support the remaining part of it with the sword, or, to end it completely. Huntingdon was called before the Lords and on the 8 August he swore his narrative was true.<sup>(2)</sup> The attempt failed and backfired badly. John Lilburne, who had been released from prison on 2 August, the same day as Huntingdon presented his charge, refused to join in the move to oust Cromwell and wrote to the Lt. General, then fighting the Scots at Preston, dissociating himself from it. The letter was carried by Edward Sexby and was said to have been "not a little welcome" to Cromwell.<sup>(3)</sup>

The re-opening of negotiations with the King (the treaty of Newport) was the climax of the Presbyterian come-back; but they were not alone in initiating this. They had the backing of the middle group who were disillusioned with all the delays in bringing about settlement, disheartened with the battles of the new war and convinced of the need to restore 'normality' even if this meant

- (1) Firth and Davies, p. 202; Ludlow, Memoirs, I, loc. cit. The paper, Sundry Reasons, as we have seen, is an important source for 1647. It is printed in L.J., IX, pp. 408-412, Thurloe, I, pp. 94-98; Maseres, Select Tracts, II, pp. 397-407.
- (2) Maseres, Select Tracts, II, p. 406; L.J., X, pp. 420, 424, 431.
- (3) Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 176-178; Gregg, Freeborn John, pp. 245-247. Lilburne's letter to Cromwell is printed in E560(14), The Legall Fundamentall Liberties of the People of England, partly repr. in Haller and Davies, Leveller Tracts, p. 414.

giving up ground to the King. The treaty of Newport has a double significance. It marked the end of middle group and army co-operation and it also prepared the way for the entry of the sword into politics as the centre of power, where it mattered, at Westminster, in the Commons itself.<sup>(1)</sup>

---

(1) For an analysis of the middle group during the summer q.v. Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 100-105.

III.

SEPTEMBER 1648—JANUARY 1649

One result of the Second Civil War was the return of tighter discipline in the army. Although radicals had disputed the validity of martial law in peace time, none had questioned its use in war. This benefited the army leadership and it is evident that throughout the political crisis of the winter of 1648-1649 the Grandees remained in control. Unlike the previous year there was no internal struggle for mastery of the army. In this respect Ware had been decisive. This is not to say that the army, or its leadership, were unanimous over policy. What happens during this period is that the Grandees themselves take up the revolutionary mantle thus seizing the initiative from those who had denounced them as backsliders the year before. This can be seen especially in relation to the Levellers who felt that the army's plans for a purge of Parliament and for the trial and eventual execution of the King were going too far, too fast, with little regard to what sort of settlement was to follow. The army emerged from the Second Civil War more embittered against the King and more convinced than ever that God was on its side.

However, with the ending of hostilities all parties were concerned with doing something to restore stability to the nation and to resolve the chronic divisions caused by the wars. The Presbyterians and middle group leadership in Parliament had already decided that this could only be achieved by an accommodation with the King, hence the Treaty of Newport. The problem for opponents of the Treaty was how to counteract this? There was also

the question of how the army would act. A Parliamentary radical like Ludlow thought it was necessary to stop the treaty by an immediate interposition of military force. In early September he went to army headquarters, still at Colchester, to make his views known and to win over army support. He found Fairfax "irresolute", unamenable to what he had in mind and instead went to Ireton. Fairfax who had gone along with army policy in 1647 and had kept a hand on the wheel increasingly took a back seat in army politics. He had served the army well in 1647 and early 1648 as a focus of unity; but what was needed at this juncture was intelligence and skill coupled with decisiveness and political cunning, a role better suited to Henry Ireton. Ludlow found Ireton in agreement with him about the need for the army to stop the treaty but he differed about the timing of it. Ireton preferred to wait until the King and Parliament had finished the treaty, by which time the nation would realise how it had been duped and join with the army and its Parliamentary allies to oppose it. This may have been an overconfident and oversimplified assessment of the situation but it contained the seeds of the sort of revolution Ireton was to favour: a limited or respectable one. Ludlow, on the other hand, favoured an immediate intervention, but Ireton was aware that he needed time to thrash out a policy and to win over the army, especially his officer colleagues, to it. The views of Lt. General Cromwell, with whom Ireton had worked so closely in the past, were important but so too were those of other officers. The army was no monolithic body. (1)

---

(1) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, pp. 203-205; Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 108; Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 212-213.



The likelihood of army intervention was pretty obvious to non-radicals as well. At the end of August Elizabeth, Countess Dowager of Lindsay, had written to Lord Montagu declaring "The army is now master of the kingdom". Three weeks later John Dillingham wrote to Montagu saying that Parliament was afraid that the King might seek vengeance upon the army and the people

"yet they do not in the least labour to content any party. The army heightened by victories and successes profess no less than a new government to be framed. The impediments they slight as the treaty." (1)

On 14 September Captain Richard Deane, the future Treasurer at War but then a member of Robert Lilburne's regiment, wrote to William Clarke from Plymouth Castle recalling how the army's first intervention in politics had brought trouble upon it and would have ended up in confusion if God had not prevented it. Despite this he felt that

"of necessity some thing must be done to sett his poore kingdome free from tirrany; what it is that will doe I cannot as yet in my owne thoughts determine but hope our father will in his due time shew it to us."

Deane wanted to be kept fully informed of developments in the south. (2)

---

(1) H.M.C. Duke of Buccleuch and Queensbury at Montagu House, I, p. 309; H.M.C. Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, p. 163.

(2) National Library of Scotland Ms. 35.5.11., f. 21. For Deane's subsequent career q.v. biographical appendix.

In the south the Levellers, an important variable in the crisis of the next few months, had re-asserted themselves with their petition of 11 September.<sup>(1)</sup> Modern commentators have been right to emphasise the moderation of the petition especially the dropping of their franchise demands, which had caused so much controversy at Putney, and the absence of any denunciation of the army leadership. There were a few things in the petition which were likely to be unacceptable to the army Grandees, especially proposals for the ending of enclosures and the abolition of tithes. But despite this and beyond the flattery of the army there was much in the petition that would appeal to officers and men alike. It was not designed to out-bid or out-flank the officers, or to appeal over their heads for rank-and-file support as had been the case in 1647. Instead, it opened the way to possible joint action with a view to attaining settlement in contrast to those who favoured selling the nation short with the Treaty of Newport.<sup>(2)</sup> Army, Levellers, and Parliamentary radicals like Ludlow could all agree that not just the King but the Long Parliament itself were obstacles in the way of a settlement. They could also agree on some of the ends they were aiming for. What was to cause fundamental disagreement was means, a feature common to all revolutions and revolutionaries.

---

(1) E464(19), The Humble Petition of Thousands of Well-Affected Persons, reprinted in Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, pp. 283-290 and Aylmer, Levellers, pp. 132-138.

(2) Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, pp. 279-282, Aylmer, Levellers, p. 131, and Brailsford, Levellers, pp. 350-353 have perceptive commentaries on the petition.

News of this petition, and of the one that was attempted to be presented a couple of days later, travelled fast. On 22 September the garrisons of Newcastle and Tynemouth wrote to Fairfax demanding justice, especially as the army had been shown to be successful, and urged solidarity with the well-affected petitioners. The letter was signed by Lt. Colonel Paul Hobson, Major John Cobbett, the Cobbett who was cashiered in 1647 for possible implication in the Ware mutiny, Captain John Clarke and Captain Robert Hutton. Just over a week later another letter was sent to Fairfax from the forces of the leaguer before Berwick. It was dated 30 September the day Cromwell entered the town but it cannot be taken to represent his views. It supported the aims of the petitions of 11 and 13 September and the authors said they had written to the presenters of the petitions in London expressing this.<sup>(1)</sup> On 9 October Hobson and Clark<sup>e</sup> put their names to another paper opposing the Treaty of Newport and calling on Fairfax to stand by the kingdom and the army in their just rights and privileges.<sup>(2)</sup> Mercurius Pragmaticus dubiously claimed the letters and petitions from the north were the work of Ireton and Cromwell and were promoted amongst the soldiery by Haselrig, Henry Marten, Hobson and Cobbett.<sup>(3)</sup> This was highly

- 
- (1) B.M.669 f.13(27), A Copie of two Letters from divers Officers of the Army in the North to Lord Fairfax.
- (2) E466(10), The Declaration of the Armie.
- (3) Mercurius Pragmaticus, 3-10 October 1648. C.f. Mercurio Volpone, 5-12 October 1648.

unlikely especially regarding the suggestion of connivance between Cromwell, then in the north, and Ireton, for, whatever contacts may have existed between the two men at this time they were certainly not<sup>as</sup> well co-ordinated and planned as the newsbook implied. Ireton had not made up his mind about policy. Cromwell even less so. What is more plausible is that the addresses were inspired by John Lilburne who had been in the north in September "about my own business". He met Cromwell and was in Berwick on 30 September. Lilburne certainly knew Hobson. As we have seen he had recommended him as mediator between the King and the army in October 1647.<sup>(1)</sup> If this is so then it makes Cromwell's encouragement of fresh negotiations with the Levellers more understandable. Perhaps he was impressed by Lilburne's and the Levellers' overtures and willingness to compromise. Or, on the other hand, afraid of a fresh outburst of Leveller agitation, and possible mutiny in the army, he might have felt it better, and safer, to involve them directly in the decision-making process. It would not be the first time that Cromwell struck first to avoid or remove possible opposition. What is not in doubt is that the papers from the north were welcome to Ireton in developing his policies. They anticipated the civilian

---

(1) E560(14), The Legall Fundamentall Liberties of the People of England, repr. in Haller and Davies, Leveller Tracts, p. 415; The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 3-10 October 1648, which gives the date of Lilburne's presence in Berwick. It is interesting that his moves should have been considered worth reporting.

ones from the City, Yorkshire, Somerset and from Newcastle, all opposing the Treaty of Newport.<sup>(1)</sup> Thus, parallel with the determined efforts at Newport to get the King to reach an agreement, pressure was being kept up both within and without the army to break off the treaty and to bring the King to justice.

An important step in this direction was the petition from Ireton's regiment. The petition, dated Farnham 16 October, attacked the King as the man chiefly responsible for the wars, for abusing the laws and, as a person, incapable of governing. It called for punishment of all contrivers of the Second Civil War regardless of rank. On a different plane it demanded the removal of free quarter and the payment of arrears, suggesting that assignments should be used for each regiment, troop and company to prevent embezzlement. The petitioners affirmed, as had the Levellers in their petition, that they would defend magistracy and property. The editor of The Moderate said that the petition "speaks the sense of the whole Army and all honest men in the Kingdom", obviously an exaggerated distortion of the truth. But it was certainly the "sense" of Ireton, and, as Professor Underdown has remarked,

"it ... marks the beginning of his campaign to make Fairfax and his fellow officers accept the risks of purposeful action." (2)

---

(1) Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 110 + n.; Mercurio Volpone, 5-12 October 1648; The Moderate, 10-17 October 1648.

(2) The Moderate, 17-24 October 1648; E468(18), The True Copy of a Petition Promoted in the Army; Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp.116-117.

The petition appeared at the time when there were reports that Ireton might lay down his commission after having fallen out with Fairfax and his fellow officers, possibly over the question of army intervention. The petition certainly buttressed Ireton's position, and, prompted as it was by an attempt to disperse the regiment into Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire, presumably on Fairfax's orders to forestall too close contact amongst its members and the danger of a repetition of the 1647 situation, it showed how unwise and difficult it would be to brush aside a man of Ireton's calibre.<sup>(1)</sup> The signatories of the petition were Captain Anthony Morgan, a figure of some importance in the 1650's, Lt. Sampson Towgood (Toogood), James Jefferies, William Rance and Henry Clare, junior, none of whom were very high ranking. It was said that when Fairfax received the petition his reply was that he would give no answer until a full Council of War had been called. He was loath to make any decisions on his own. Mercurius Militaris alleged that none other than Doctor William Staines "that sneaking sycophant", the Auditor General of the army, who had had an influential role in the army's negotiations with Sir John Berkeley the previous year, was the influential figure behind the scenes pushing Fairfax and inculcating him with the notion that authority was not to be resisted. The newsbook warned Staines not to close the General's ears to the cries of the oppressed soldiers and others lest the soldiery follow the example of those in

---

(1) Gardiner's account of this very obscure incident skillfully puts together the fragmentary evidence (Great Civil War, IV, pp. 215-216). Q.v. also Carte, I, pp. 175, 193 and Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 116 n. 26.

Poland who cut their landlords throats for ignoring their groans.<sup>(1)</sup>  
 That "quarkalver Stains" was attacked in another newsbook for trying to divide the soldiery in a case of military discipline involving some soldiers of Fairfax's regiment who had deserted their colours to fight under Colonel Reynolds, because their own officers, Captains Brown and Gladman, subjected them to a "Turkish slavery" by considering it a crime to distribute newsheets and petitions. The officers were also supposedly pro-Charles I, an unlikely charge unless it meant a desire to see a settlement including the King which some officers still favoured. The newsbook condoned the soldiers' action as "a little irregularity used to an honest end".<sup>(2)</sup>

At about the same time as Ireton's regiment's petition, or possibly before, there was a petition from Sir William Constable's. This one was as outspoken as that from Ireton's. The petitioners stressed that they did not have "seasonable knowledge" of what was happening at headquarters, because they were quartered at a distance. Nevertheless, they offered some points to the Council of War for consideration, stressing that by so doing they were intending to follow not to lead their superiors. They considered that the principles for which they had first engaged still remained and that despite the army's adherence to the Vote of No Address they could not sit back and let others do things which would prove harmful to the nation. Furthermore, their pride would be wounded if they had to beg pardon

---

(1) Mercurius Militaris, 10-17 October 1648.

(2) The True Informer or Monthly Mercury, 7 October-8 November 1648; Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 191.

for anything done in the late wars. They concluded by saying how sad they were that the honest endeavours for the subjects' ease and liberty had proved so fruitless. The petition was signed by 18 men including Lt. Colonel Mark Grimes, who had had a hand in promoting the revised army petition in March 1647, Major Wroth Rogers, Captain Lawrence Nunney, and Captain Mathew Cadwell. (1)

Solicited and unsolicited demands continued to arrive at headquarters and in the regiments themselves there were signs of activities similar to <sup>those of</sup> 1647. At the end of October part of Rich's, Ewer's and Rainborowe's regiments were reported to have rendezvoused in Hampshire to discuss the political situation and hear reports from others about it. (2) Radical propoganda from outside the army also ressembled that of 1647. Mercurius Militaris said there was discontent among the soldiers quartered in Suffolk. It alleged that there was a conspiracy to maintain free quarter to make the soldiers odious to the people. It also warned against attempts at disbanding, and Fairfax was reported to have consented to keep the numbers in every company to 80. The True Informer warned the soldiery

"your peevish officers may rid off whom they please; they'l disband and list, and then disband again, until their whole Troops are their Slaves. Besides remember how many Supernumeraries have bin hanged for want of an Act of Indemnity."

---

(1) A Ms. version of the petition exists in the Clarke Ms. 114, f.83v. This gives the date as 3 October and includes the names. The petition was printed in The Moderate, 10-17 October 1648. The True Informer ... (7 October-8 November 1648) says the petition was to be taken to headquarters by Constable personally.

(2) A Perfect Weekly Account, 25 October-1 November 1648; The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 31 October-7 November 1648.



The same newsbook hinted that some of the more radical figures were disillusioned and that Major (sic) Reynolds and John Wildman

"two that have suffered for pursuing publicke Justice, and their Countries Freedom"

were contracting with the Irish Committee to transport a horse regiment to Ireland.<sup>(1)</sup> Reynolds career at this juncture is interesting and worthy of further comment. We have seen how even into early 1648 he had remained quite radical and had been cashiered. During the second Civil War he became commander of a volunteer regiment of horse one of whose troops was commanded by William Bray who had been re-admitted to his regiment (Robert Lilburne's) after a trial in December 1647 for his part in Ware. Bray had been suspended from the regiment later on, allegedly because of the hostility of Henry Lilburne, hence his presence in Reynolds's regiment. Reynolds was still thought of as a radical. Bray admitted that he had no commission from Parliament or the General but

"his engagement with Colonel Reynolds for maintenance of truth and righteousness (was) far above any punctilio of a commission ..."

However, according to the retrospective evidence of John Naylier, Bray's Quarter Master, late in 1648, at about the time of the Isle of Wight Treaty, Reynolds started to use underhand means to try to get the regiment to go to Ireland (a commission for Reynolds to be Colonel of a regiment of 500 horse was issued on 24 October). It

---

(1) Mercurius Militaris, 24-31 October 1648; The True Informer or Monthly Mercury, 7 October-8 November 1648. C.f. the atmosphere of distrust and suspicion supposed to have existed at headquarters in early November (Carte, I, p. 194).

is interesting that The True Informer should ascribe his desire to serve in Ireland to disillusionment with political developments. He was in fact beginning to work his passage and to conform much more with the official army line. It is very possible that he is the Captain Reynolds who attended the King at Hurst and who was present at the Whitehall debates. If so, he was probably styled 'Captain' as that had been his rank in Cromwell's regiment. His own regiment was not established until February 1649. In May 1649 Reynolds was to play a leading part in the suppression of the Levellers at Burford, for which he was to earn the opprobrium of his erstwhile sympathisers, including Naylier.<sup>(1)</sup>

The question of army pay and the burden of free quarter had been, and remained of paramount importance to the army leadership, and the various petitions arriving at headquarters served to re-inforce the urgency of the problem. A Perfect Diurnal commented, at the end of September, that unless something was done about the matter neither the country nor the soldiery would put up with it.<sup>(2)</sup>

The problem of pay was coupled with that of the supernumeraries. On 21 October the Commons resolved to try their utmost

---

(1) E552(10), The New Made Colonel, by John Naylier; Clarke Papers, I, p. 412n.; ibid., II, p. 278-279; Herbert, Memoirs, p. 135; C.S.P. Ireland 1647-1660, p. 13; C.J., VI, p. 168. For further details on Reynolds q.v. biographical appendix.

(2) A Perfect Diurnal, 25 September-2 October 1648.

to get in the arrears of the assessments and a committee was ordered to go down to the army to discuss a reduction of the armed forces to that provided for in the Establishment, the arrears due since 15 January 1648, free quarter and new quarters for the army. It was probably these resolutions that provided the radicals outside the army with their propqanda.<sup>(1)</sup> Ingoldsby's regiment sent in a petition from Oxford against the treaty and despairing of a satisfactory outcome :

"it cannot but lye heavy upon our spirits, to apprehend that all our harvests should end in chaffe. And what Was won in the field should be given away in a Chamber."

They urged the reconvening of the Council of the Army (i.e. as it had been since January without soldier representation) to consider remedies such as those put forward in the recent London petitions and by others. After reading the petition Fairfax ordered a General Council to meet on 4 November.<sup>(2)</sup> In fact it was postponed until 7 November and met in the Abbey of St. Albans.

It was at the St. Albans meetings that Ireton, now very active in the army again, presented his draft programme which subsequently evolved into the Remonstrance of the Army, a document on which he had been working since his difference with Fairfax.<sup>(3)</sup>

- (1) C.J., VI, pp. 57-58. There is a brief summary of the decisions reached at the conference between the parliamentary commissioners and the army in Rushworth, VII, p. 1309.
- (2) The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 31 October-7 November 1648.
- (3) For what follows q.v. and c.f. Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 234-238 and the thorough account in Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 117-122.

The proceedings at St. Albans, about which we have only fragmentary evidence, showed up divisions in the army between those who favoured army intervention to end the nation's crisis and those who still hoped to avoid such action and preserve the existing government, including the King. Too much should not be made of these divisions. There were no factions, instead many individuals, not all of whom had closed minds but who were open to argument. Regimental petitions continued to come in. Fleetwood's, Whalley's, and Berksted's regiments considered the army "the only Barre" in the way of the malignant party. Amongst other things they called for impartial justice on all contrivers of the war, the supreme power to be declared and determined, a period put on the present Parliament and provision made for future Parliaments, a constitution to be worked out and the granting and redress of all the common grievances made known in the army declarations of 14 and 23 June 1647 and the London petition of 11 September 1648. Such demands went further than Ireton then had in mind. A similar petition was received from Rich's regiment which had been in the vanguard of radicalism in 1647, and possibly from Pride's.<sup>(1)</sup>

At St. Albans there appear to have been some waverers, unconvinced of the need for drastic action to settle the nation's political crisis despite the decision reached in the fervour of the

---

(1) E470(32), A Petition from several Regiments of the Army (13 November); E472(3), The Representations and Consultations of the General Council of the Army at St. Albans (14 November). For the dating of Pride's regiments' petition q.v. Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 118 n.31. There is a separate version of the petition from Fleetwood's regiment, (E468(32), The Copies of Two Petitions from the Officers and Soldiers of Col. Charles Fleetwood's Regiment.) The signatories are Major William Coleman, Captains Richard Sankey and Steven White, Lt. Robert Stannard, and Cornets William Ducke and William Williams.

Windsor prayer meeting. Fairfax, for his part, made it plain that he had no desire to overthrow the government of the kingdom and hoped for a just agreement, long desired, between all groups.<sup>(1)</sup> On 15 November some officers met at the Bull's Head in St. Albans and debated some matters concerning settlement. A letter was also sent by self-styled agents of the army, in their own name and that of the free-born, denying there was any intention to subvert the government of the nation.<sup>(2)</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that agents or agitators on the lines of 1647 were resurrected at this time, either with official approval or spontaneously. But there was propaganda urging the soldiers to do so.

In the Worcester College Collection exists one such propaganda tract which appears to be unique. A Watch Word to the Army, and Counties, Cities, and Garrisons in England<sup>(3)</sup> asked why no member of the army dared to speak out and ask why the agitators had been dissolved before satisfaction had been given for arrears, indemnity and the liberties of the nation. It said that no one dared read publicly the army's engagements and claimed this was being done to prevent the regiments from communicating with one another, "to break your minds one to another". The officers were trying to make the army mercenary and slaves to their wills, like

---

(1) E472(3), Representations and Consultations ...; c.f. Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, p. 237.

(2) E472(13), A Remonstrance from the Army; c.f. Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 120.

(3) Wor. Co. AA.1.14(14).

an army of "Switzers" with discipline being the strictest ever known as the incidents at Ware and Windsor and concerning the Life Guard and Captain Reynolds proved. The author, or authors, put forward a scheme for bringing down the Government. It is a mixture of Leveller notions and Ghandi's civil disobedience campaign. Agitators were to be chosen from every regiment and garrison, even if this meant cashiering officers. The cities and counties were to choose two representatives as well. All were to meet and consult about the petition of 11 September at some place near the army headquarters on 20 November. If by 15 days after that the Parliament had not conceded the particulars of the petition, a campaign of refusal to pay the excise and other taxes or to obey their votes and ordinances was to be launched, together with an Agreement of the People.<sup>(1)</sup> Such a vision, amounting to a partial declaration of independence, was naive and impractical in the context of late 1648. The Levellers had tried to get the soldiery to break from their officers just a year before and had failed. Now the London Levellers were trying to have their programme implemented by and through the army officers. In the eyes of the London Leveller leaders the author of A Watch Word was, to use modern revolutionary terminology, guilty of "an infantile disorder"; in his own eyes the author might have felt he was more representative of grass-roots feeling. In the end both were losers.

Despite the doubts felt by some officers at St. Albans about army intervention it is difficult to accept, as do Gardiner

---

(1) Wor. AA.1.14(14), A Watch Word to the Army . . . .

and Underdown, the authenticity of the report that a vote to abide by the outcome of the Treaty of Newport was passed by the General Council with only six votes against it.<sup>(1)</sup> In fact Professor Underdown's acceptance of the report tends to contradict his thesis that it was the news of the Treaty's completion that "enabled Ireton to secure the united front for which he had long been working", that is the united front based on his Remonstrance proposals, which of course called for a breaking off of the Treaty.<sup>(2)</sup>

Pay and free quarter were also discussed at St. Albans and some officers, as with propagandists outside the army, spoke of a conspiracy to stop pay for the army and criticised the lack of adequate provisions for the long standing grievances of widows and orphans.<sup>(3)</sup> The other important matter discussed at St. Albans was the murder of Colonel Thomas Rainborowe by Royalists at Pontefract. This must have strengthened the hawks.<sup>(4)</sup> On 16 November the General Council was asked to approve the draft of the Remonstrance which it did without opposition. A committee was set up to revise it for presentation to Parliament. The members were Ireton, Colonels Whalley, Sir William Constable, Scrope and Ewer, Lt. Colonel Kelsey,

- (1) Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, p. 237; Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 118.
- (2) ibid., p. 122. In fairness to Professor Underdown he does suggest that all the pamphlets exaggerate the strength of the opposition to the Remonstrance (ibid., p. 118 n.30).
- (3) E472(3), The Representations and Consultations ...; The Moderate Intelligencer, 2-9 November 1648; A Perfect Weekly Account, 8-15 November 1648.
- (4) There are lives of Rainborowe by Firth in the D.N.B. by E. Peacock ('Notes on the Life of Thomas Rainborowe', Archaeologica, 46, 1880) and by H. Ross Williamson (Four Stuart Portraits, London, 1949).

who had distinguished himself in the second Civil War, Adjutant General Evelyn, Captain Cannon of Whalley's regiment and Captain Messervey of Ingoldsby's regiment.<sup>(1)</sup> The committee did not contain any figures who can be said to have been very radical in 1647, although Cannon had been one of the elected officers of his regiment then and Evelyn, a member of Harrison's, late Sheffield's, regiment had signed the agitators' letter to Wales. The senior officers were all Grandees.

In the north Cromwell's forces, engaged in the siege of Pontefract, also met to discuss possible lines of action. Cromwell's secretary, Robert Spavin, wrote to William Clarke on 2 November welcoming the imminent breaking of

"that great idol the Parliament, and that old job  
trot form of government of King, Lords and  
Commons." (2)

There was confidence at St. Albans that Cromwell's forces would concur with Fairfax's and this was borne out.<sup>(3)</sup> At a meeting of representatives from the regiments in the north at York on 10 November

- (1) Clarke Papers, II, p. 54. The identity of Captain Messervey is a bit of a mystery but a Captain Francis Messervey crops up at various times in the 1650's. He seems to have left the army in 1649. In January 1656 the President of the Council of State wrote to the Governor of Jersey, Colonel Gibbon, asking him to watch out for Messervey "a person of dangerous principles" q.v. S.P.23/57, f.446; Calendar of the Committee for Advance of Money, p. 79; C.S.P.D. 1655-56, p. 113, and, ibid., 1650, pp. 534, 543; ibid., 1652-53, p. 170; ibid., 1655, p. 598; ibid., 1658-59, p. 111.
- (2) H.M.C. Leyborne-Popham, pp. 8-9.
- (3) E470(34), A Letter from the Headquarters at St. Albans, 10 November.



it was resolved to stand or fall with the army in the south. Representatives were to be sent to the headquarters at St. Albans to make this clear.<sup>(1)</sup> Cromwell's horse regiment presented the Lt. General with a letter and petition which they asked him to forward to Fairfax in which they said they would act not for their own or any particular party's interest but for the well-being of the kingdom. The signatories included Samuel Whitting, an agitator of the regiment in 1647, and Captains Joseph Wallington and Edward Scotten the elected officers in that year.<sup>(2)</sup> Cromwell, unlike Fairfax and Ireton in the south, seems not to have felt the necessity to institutionalise these proceedings in the form of a General Council. Lambert, his successor, did. Cromwell's attitudes at this time are difficult to assess. However, Professor Underdown is perhaps mistaken in his assertion that the Lt. General was still "a man of the middle group" in early November. The evidence he cites, Cromwell's letter to Robert Hammond of 6 November, by no means proves his case conclusively. In the letter Cromwell says that in a choice between Presbytery and a moderate Episcopacy the former would be the lesser of two evils :

"but if I have any logic it will be easier to tyrannise having that he (the King) likes and serves his turn (i.e. the bishops), than what you know and all believe he so much dislikes (i.e. Presbytery)."

- 
- (1) E472(6), A Declaration of the Army (14 November); E472(20), The Declaration of Lt. General Cromwell, 17 November, by no means Cromwell's views.
- (2) Clarke Ms. 257; H.M.C. Leyborne-Popham, p. 9.

But I read the ensuing sentence

"as to my brother himself (i.e. Vane, the younger) tell him indeed I think some of my friends have advanced too far, and need make an honourable retreat"

as meaning that his parliamentary colleagues at Newport had given too many concessions to the King and ought to back down, hardly the view of a middle group man. In an ambiguous sentence, Cromwell seems to be critical of the idea of a purge, yet on 20 November when forwarding the petitions of his forces to Fairfax concurring in the programme of the forces in the south, he wrote :

"I must confess, I do in all, from my heart, concur with them, and I verily think and am persuaded they are things which God puts into our hearts." (1)

A clear and consistent line does not emerge from the Lt. General until early January and then it is one of complete commitment to the revolution.

Despite John Lilburne's retrospective view of Cromwell as a megalomaniac, contacts between the Lt. General and the Leveller leader were kept up after the latter's visit to the north in September. Cromwell suggested a meeting between City Independents, Levellers and the army. (2) The meeting took place at the Nag's Head near Black-

(1) Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 119; Abbott, Writings and Speeches, I, pp. 676-678, esp. pp. 677-678, 690-691; q.v. also the undated letter to Fairfax written towards the end of November in which he writes "Wee have read your Declaration heer and see in itt nothings but what is honest and becominge Christians and honest men to say and offer" (Abbott, Writings and Speeches, I, p. 707). Underdown dates this letter sometime between the 23 and 25 November, (Pride's Purge, p. 149 n.17).

(2) For Cromwell's re-kindled sympathy for the Levellers q.v. his letters to Robert Hammond on 6 and 20 November in Abbott, Writings and Speeches, I, pp. 676, 698.

well Hall and the Levellers were represented by Wildman and Lilburne, the Independents by Col. Robert Titchborne who had commanded a London regiment raised in July and August 1647 (his commission lapsed in May or June 1648),<sup>(1)</sup> Colonel John White, Dr. John Parker, Daniel Taylor, John Price and some others. The Levellers, according to Lilburne, were told that the army should execute the King and purge the Parliament if not dissolve it. This was certainly not the official army line at this time, in so far as there was one. But the Levellers realised that the army was the major variable in all this. They also realised the dangers of it acquiring too much power and were unwilling to support military intervention if it resulted in the devolution of

"all the Government of the Kingdom into their  
(the Army's) wills and swords"

until a thorough-going constitutional settlement had been worked out. Lilburne pressed hard for the adoption of an Agreement of the People. The upshot of this was the establishment of a committee of four Independents and four Levellers (Titchborne, White, Parker and Price on the one hand, and Lilburne, Walwyn,<sup>(2)</sup> William Wetton and Wildman on the other) which thrashed out some proposals towards a revised Agreement. It is significant that these proposals included the suggestion that "some persons be chosen by the Army to represent the

(1) Firth and Davies, pp. 572-573.

(2) Walwyn was withdrawn because of the objections of the City Independents (E560(14), The Legall Fundamentall Liberties . . ., p. 30, repr. in Haller and Davies, Leveller Tracts, p. 416; Aylmer, Levellers, p. 40).

whole Body" in the discussions about a new Agreement implying they would be chosen by the officers and that consequently the Leveller leaders were abandoning the idea of agitators, and thus of rank and file representation on an Army Council, which they had exploited in 1647. It is quite a different stance from that advocated by the author of A Watch Word and provides further evidence of a split between what one can loosely call the Leveller leadership and their grass-roots supports. The proposals also called for the well-affected in the counties to choose representatives to attend the discussions at headquarters. On this point, at least, there was harmony with the grass-roots. The proposals were immediately sent to St. Albans and caused some last minute alteration to the Remonstrance.<sup>(1)</sup> No member of the army was directly involved in the meetings with the Levellers at this stage presumably because of the important discussions underway at St. Albans.

Mindful of the dangers of the King escaping and throwing everything into even greater confusion, approaches were made to Charles's keeper on the Isle of Wight, Colonel Robert Hammond, to try to win him over to the Remonstrance. On 17 November Ireton and Colonels Harrison,

---

(1) E560(14), The Legall Fundamentall Liberties ..., pp. 29-31 repr. in Haller and Davies, Leveller Tracts, pp. 415-418. C.f. Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 238-239; Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 122-123; Gregg, Freeborn-John, pp. 250-252. According to The Perfect Weekly Account (15-22 November 1648), some gentlemen and yeomen attended the proceedings of the General Council at St. Albans and made contributions to the debates on the obstruction of the assessment in the localities.

Disborowe and Qtr. Master General Grosvenor wrote to Hammond asking him to secure the King's person assuring him that he would shortly receive the same order from Fairfax, an indication of how Fairfax was beginning to take a back seat.<sup>(1)</sup>

Professor Underdown has raised serious doubts about Gardiner's contention that during the St. Albans debates it was resolved that the army should send some proposals to the King which if accepted would be sent on to the Parliament. Such a view over-emphasises the extent of the opposition to Ireton and his Remonstrance. Besides, following Underdown, if any official army approach had been made to the King it would surely have been reported more widely.<sup>(2)</sup> Fairfax was being kept informed of developments at Newport by one W. Troughton and of the King's deviousness in the negotiations. On 5 October Troughton wrote to Fairfax informing him of Charles's delaying tactics.<sup>(3)</sup>

The result of the St. Albans debates was the adoption of Ireton's Remonstrance together with the modifications requested by the Levellers. Only two officers were reported in the newsbooks

- (1) Birch (ed.), Letters between Colonel Robert Hammond ..., p. 87; Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 243-246; Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 129 n.37. Q.v. also Ireton's more personal and pleading letter to Hammond on 22 November in which he argues that the Long Parliament as it then stood, the King and the supporters of the Treaty of Newport were in opposition to "other higher and more public ends" (Birch (ed.), Letters between Colonel Robert Hammond ..., pp. 95-101, esp. p. 98).
- (2) Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, p. 238; Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 120, esp. n. 34.
- (3) N.L.S.Adv.Ms. 35.5.11, f.115.

as having opposed it : Colonel Nathaniel Rich and Captain William Cecil of Ireton's regiment. The former, a bête noire of the Levellers in 1647, was said to have

"left the small reliques of his faithfulness  
to the people's cause and his vallour, in the  
bosome of the Lady Cab's in Kent"

(he had fought in Kent during the summer). Cecil was said to have opposed it on the grounds that he was "a Cozen to one of his Majestie's Cozens".<sup>(1)</sup> The Remonstrance, with a covering letter from Fairfax, was presented to the Commons on 20 November by Colonel Ewer, Lt. Colonels Kelsey, Axtell and Cook, and Captains Pretty and Merrest, again all men who had not been politically prominent the previous year.<sup>(2)</sup>

Central to the Remonstrance was the maxim Salus Populi, Suprema Lex. This justified the use of extreme measures but also emphasised that when the "necessity" or "danger" was removed there would be a return to magistracy and order, but it was hoped that the use of force would not be required and that somehow the Parliament would see its errors and mend its ways accordingly. The Treaty of Newport was rejected and the House reminded that it had passed the Vote of No Address by its "own free Judgments ... not by Impulsion from the Army". Charles I, though not kingship, was denounced. There

- (1) Mercurius Militaris, 14-21 November 1648. It is interesting that Rich who became an opponent of the Protectorate should have opposed the programme for revolution in 1648.
- (2) The Moderate, 14-21 November 1648; Rushworth, VII, p. 1330 where it is emphasised that it "was presented to the House of Commons, not to the Lords". The Remonstrance (E473(11), A Remonstrance of Lord Fairfax and of the Generall Councill of Officers held at St. Albans) is repr. in O.P.H., XVIII, pp. 161-238.

was a call for exemplary justice on the King for the blood spent during the wars. The importance of parliamentary representation was stressed and future kings were to be elected by the people's representatives. The present Parliament was to set a date for its dissolution and there was to be provision for successive annual or biennial Parliaments guaranteed in a written constitution. The Remonstrance called for law reform and the remedy of other grievances contained in the petition of 11 September. In answer to those who thought it improper that the army should present such a far-ranging programme to Parliament, the Remonstrance claimed that both the Parliament and the army were servants of a higher body, the people. The Remonstrance was also justified on religious grounds. The army's military victories were advanced as proof that God was on its side and therefore legitimising their current actions. This argument had been largely absent in 1647 but it was one that was to be used more frequently in the future until by the end of the 1650's it had become a worn-out cliché.

The Remonstrance was immediately cold-shouldered by the Commons who resolved to postpone debating it for a week. The officers presenting it were said to have resented this delay and to have threatened some M.P.s. When the House finally took up the Remonstrance on 30 November they rejected it by 125 votes to 58. But by then the purge had already been decided upon. <sup>(1)</sup>

---

(1) C.J., VI, pp. 81, 90, 91; Mercurius Pragmaticus, 21-28 November 1648; c.f. Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 126-127.

The last week of November was a busy and decisive one for the army. With or without official prompting, regiments continued to send in addresses to headquarters supporting a hard line. The officers and soldiers at Newcastle, <sup>e</sup>Tynmouth, Hartlepool and the Holy Island sent a petition to Fairfax calling for the King's trial. There was also an interesting, if somewhat verbose, petition from Hewson's regiment denouncing free quarter and the Treaty and calling for a new constitution to end the supremacy of the legislature which they saw as an outcome of the Civil War :

"a Parliament rather being a medicine for male-administration and an institution to make laws with, then a proper Government."

remarks which are extremely important given subsequent developments under the Rump. The new constitution advocated by Hewson's regiment was not to be based on kingship because the so recently acquired and dearly bought freedom could not be subjected to one man's will. They suggested that the governments of Venice, Holland and Switzerland should be studied so that there would be no idolising of any individual, or in modern terms, cult of the personality. The petitioners also favoured a hard line against prisoners of war but they closed their address with a declaration of loyalty to the General. The two petitions went down well at headquarters. It was more outspoken than the address from Reynolds' regiment, a regiment which had a more obvious radical pedigree. Reynolds' regiment called on Fairfax "to advance yt Interest of impartiall justice and uprightnesse". As we have seen the Colonel was beginning to shed his more



radical sympathies by this time. There was a petition from Horton's regiment opposing the Treaty and supporting the petition of 11 September.<sup>(1)</sup>

On 25 November the General Council met at Windsor and the recent request of the four officers to secure the King was formalised and Colonel Issac Ewer was ordered down to the Isle of Wight. Ewer could be relied on to carry out his instructions.<sup>(2)</sup> A committee was set up to formulate army policy. Its members were Ireton, Lt. General Thomas Hammond, Colonels Constable, Harrison, now a leading and influential figure especially in the absence of Cromwell, Whalley, Thomlinson and Whitchcott, the governor of Windsor. The regiments were instructed to send an officer to headquarters so that the army (or rather the part of it that mattered most, the officers of the units at or near headquarters) could be kept in harmony. As we shall see the physical divisions of the army were to become extremely important over the next few years with those officers and regiments in or near London crucial in shaping events.

Headquarters seemed very confident that they were in charge and that the officers and men would follow. To present a

(1) E473(23), Two Petitions presented to the Lord Fairfax. The petitions were presented on 24 and 25 November (The Moderate, 21-28 November 1648). Just how representative the petition from Hewson's regiment was of all its officers remains unclear. Hewson himself played a leading part in the purge but despite his notoriety as a Baptist in the 1650's he continued to serve under the Protectorate and in 1659 the restored Rump demoted him to the rank of Lt. Colonel. The petition from Reynolds' regiment is in Clarke Ms. 114, f.119.

(2) For his mission, the securing of the King and Hammond's arrest and dismissal q.v. Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 254-256. The governor of Hurst Castle was Thomas Eyre not the recruiter M.P. William Eyre as Underdown says (Pride's Purge, p. 186).

united front to the outside world, the regiments were also instructed to send in a declaration of support for the Remonstrance. Three days later a similar letter was sent to the naval commanders. (1)

On 26 November the officers sought God for his blessing upon their actions and for some direction. This was usual in a time of crisis. Hugh Peters and Richard (?) Symonds were amongst the speakers while Issac Knight and Lt. Colonel Kelsey, and others, prayed very earnestly. According to a newsletter, the disputed issue which had prompted the prayer meeting concerned

"the opposing of a visible authority w<sup>ch</sup> some shew'd Reasons for, yett that nott being the business of the day but oneby to waite upon God for his direction, nothing of that nature was debated."

Some officers evidently still had scruples about the army's intended course of action, but whoever they were they were in a minority. (2)

During the last days of November it was decided that decisive action could no longer be put off. (3) On the 28th Lt. General Cromwell, still lingering in the north, was requested to hasten to Windsor "with all convenient speede possible". (4)

Contacts with the Leveller leaders had not been allowed to slip and in the crucial final week of November John Lilburne led

(1) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 55-56, 62; Clarke Ms.114, f.104. The letter to Colonel Robert Hammond is printed in L.J., X, p. 614.

(2) Clarke Ms. 114, f.111. The account printed in Clarke Papers, II, pp. 58-59 suggests there was unanimity at the meeting as does the brief mention in Rushworth, VII, p. 1338. The newsbook account limits itself to stating what happened (Perfect Occurences, 24 November-1 December 1648).

(3) Moderate Intelligencer, 23-30 November 1648.

(4) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 62-63.

a small delegation, including Wildman and Petty, to army headquarters to try and exert further pressure on the officers to modify the Remonstrance along the lines of the Leveller proposals. There was a disagreement between the two parties especially about liberty of conscience. Ireton adopted a hard-line on this question and favoured giving Parliament a coercive power. But he was opposed in this by some of his colleagues, especially Harrison, who Lilburne says "was then extreme fair and gilded". Liberty of conscience, like freedom of speech <sup>for us</sup> today, was a matter very dear to the Puritan heart and mind and continued to cause division during the Whitehall debates and in the 1650's. It seemed as if the talks between army and Levellers might break down but Harrison, probably with Ireton's backing, informally approached the Leveller leaders. He argued that the army could not delay its march to London and become involved in protracted debates about the future constitution especially as the Treaty of Newport was near completion. It is ironic that Harrison, the idealist of the 1650's, should be the pragmatist during the revolution itself. He also alleged that Major General Brown was raising a force to counter the army, as in the summer of 1647. The Leveller leaders were suitably impressed although they still had reservations about too much power accruing to the army. They suggested the establishment of a committee of 16 to work out a revised Agreement of the People. The committee was to be made up of four army members, four London political Independents, four

London religious Independents and four Levellers. The suggestion of a committee was accepted.<sup>(1)</sup> The army members were to be chosen from Ireton, Constable, Thomlinson, Barksted, Kelsey and Captain Packer, the majority of whom were Colonels.<sup>(2)</sup>

Preparations went ahead for the march on London. On the 28th the General Council voted it expedient to march up to London. There were no dissensions, and Ireton with Colonels Constable, Harrison, Whalley and Hewson were instructed to draw up a declaration justifying the march. The Declaration indicted the Parliament for "a treacherous or corrupt neglect of, and apostacy from the Publick Trust reposed in them" by pursuing the Treaty of Newport and ignoring the army's Remonstrance. It was therefore necessary to appeal "unto the extra-ordinary Judgement of God, and good People". The army claimed it wanted to see "a more Orderly and equal Judicature of Men in a just Representative, according to our Remonstrance" and demanded the voluntary withdrawal of those M.P.s whom "God hath kept upright" to act as an advisory body on State affairs until a new Parliament could be called and meet. However, before the army, which rendezvoused on Hounslow Heath on 1 December, arrived in London, Ireton had changed his mind and favoured a purge rather than a dissolution, along the lines Ludlow

---

(1) E560(14), The Legall Fundamentall Liberties, pp. 31-34, repr. in Haller and Davies, Leveller Tracts, pp. 417-421. I follow Professor Underdown's argument that Lilburne's appearance at Windsor was before the 28th (Pride's Purge, p. 129 n.57).

(2) Clarke Papers, II, p. 61.

had envisaged in September. This decision also abated the fears of the Leveller leaders.<sup>(1)</sup>

Despite the military occupation of London and the fact that the army was assuming some of the authority of Parliament by issuing a declaration by trumpet and drum ordering all delinquents who had not completed their composition fines to leave London for at least a month or be declared prisoners of war, Parliament pressed on with the Treaty.<sup>(2)</sup> The climax of this was the vote of 5 December that negotiations with the King should be continued. This was passed after an all-night session.<sup>(3)</sup> This vote was the immediate cause of the army's intervention, Pride's Purge, the first, but not the last time, that the army was to intervene decisively in national politics. After the vote there was a conference in the House between some of the leading officers including Ireton and Harrison and some M.P.s. Ireton appears to have reverted to his original view that a dissolution would be preferable to a purge, but he was soon won over to the latter course. A committee of six, three officers and three non-military M.P.s was set up to finalise the arrangements for the purge.<sup>(4)</sup>

- 
- (1) Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 132-133; Rushworth, VII, pp. 1341-1343.
- (2) A Perfect Diurnal, 4-11 December 1648; Whitelocke, Memorials, II, p. 467.
- (3) On this vital debate q.v. Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 137-140.
- (4) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, pp. 209-210; E560(14) The Legall Fundamentall Liberties, p. 34, repr. in Haller and Davies, Leveller Tracts, pp. 421-422. Another parliamentarian in touch with the army just before the purge was the Republican Thomas Scott, (B. Worden, The Rump Parliament, Cambridge, 1974, p. 35.).

Professor Underdown has speculated that the three officers probably included Ireton and Harrison and there is no reason to differ from this view.<sup>(1)</sup> The third member is likely to have been any one of the senior officers, who had sat on recent army committees. The committee did its work well and the following day, with a strong military presence around Whitehall, Colonel Pride held the limelight. The decision to purge, rather than dissolve, the Parliament, on the assumption that it would prepare the way for a new representative, was supported by the officers. On 12 December a source close to the army wrote that a forcible dissolution would have been "a rash act". However, the author's distinction between purging and seizing those members who were considered to have obstructed the proceedings of the House is mere sophistry.<sup>(2)</sup>

On 6 December, the very day of the purge, the army presented more proposals to the Commons by means of Lt. Colonel Axtell

---

(1) Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 141.

(2) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, ff. 1-2. (A variant of this letter is printed in Clarke Papers, II, pp. 67-69.) This is an octavo volume of 32 folios consisting of transcripts of weekly newsletters and opinions on national politics and policies covering the period from 12 December 1648 to 29 June 1649. There is no letter for 22 May. According to information provided by the National Library of Scotland there is a catalogue reference to the Ms. in 1742, but where it came from is a mystery. Judging from internal evidence it seems likely that not all the letters are by one author, but it is possible that there was one recipient who perhaps copied them out himself, or had them copied out. Weekly newsletters from London to important officers in the provinces were not uncommon (q.v., for example, Bell, Fairfax Correspondence, II, p. 10). This previously unused ms. source is extremely revealing about army politics and about national politics in general in the period it covers.

and Colonel Whalley, but in the confusion surrounding the purge there seems to have been some reluctance to let Axtell deliver his message. The army wanted the proceedings against the 11 impeached members to be started again and the arrest of Major General Brown. They also called on the House to fix a date for its dissolution and for provision to be made for a new Parliament, a desire that was to remain over the next four years.<sup>(1)</sup> During the evening of 6 December Cromwell finally arrived in London. His slowness in responding to Fairfax's request of 28 November did not go unnoticed and the conclusion that he deliberately kept away from army headquarters and London until the purge was over cannot be avoided. Just why he should have done so is open to speculation. Professor Underdown suggests "he balked at the use of force against constitutional authority", and this is very plausible. Despite the tough talk of the army, even at the Windsor prayer meeting earlier in the year, when the chips were down scruples and indecision were to plague many men's consciences, both army and non-army.<sup>(2)</sup>

Steps were taken immediately after the start of the purge to get the City to hand over their £40,000 assessment arrears to the Army Committee.<sup>(3)</sup> This in itself had been a pressing enough reason

- (1) E475(25), The Humble Proposals and Desires of His Excellency The Lord Fairfax, partly printed in Rushworth, VII, pp.1354-1355.
- (2) Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 148-150. A letter of Thomas Margett's to William Clarke on 2 December confirms that Cromwell had just left and that Lambert was in command, (N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 35.5.11, f.3.).
- (3) Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 154-155, 158; Clarke Papers, II, pp. 68-69.

for the army to march on London. The army, acting on the advice of its civilian advisors, continued purging the Commons over the next few days, so much so that the government of the country almost came to a stop. One notable arrest was that of Major General Richard Brown, the High Sheriff of London. He was arrested by none other than George Joyce. Joyce had been very busy in the previous few weeks in furthering army policy. He had been in the north in the middle of November drumming up support for the Remonstrance and a few days later had a hand in the wheeling and dealing at Portsmouth to get Robert Hammond to support the army line. When he arrested Brown he allegedly asked,

"do you think that I, who layd hands upon a King,  
feare to apprehend you but his Sheriffe?"

Tough words, but in keeping with the mood of the army. (1)

Evidence of this mood can be seen in the northern forces, now under Lambert. On 4 December there was a meeting of officers at Pontefract in response to a letter to Lambert from Rushworth. This letter was one of the many sent to commanders asking for concurrence in the Remonstrance. At the meeting Lambert referred to the Remonstrance as the "great work" and proposed that a letter be sent to headquarters expressing solidarity, but he left it up to his officers whether they would sign or not. Major John Cotterell (Cotterill), who had been governor of Pontefract Castle before its betrayal to the

---

(1) The Moderate Intelligencer, 16-23 November 1648, cited in Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 121; Clarke Papers, II, pp. 58, 63; Wor. C. AA.8.3(104), The Unparalleled Arrest on Major General Brown.



Royalists earlier in the year, Captain William Goodrick and Thomas Margetts, the judge advocate of the northern forces, were instructed to draw up a letter to be signed by the officers and sent to Fairfax least the General Council in the south "conceive slowness in their officers to join in this publique service".<sup>(1)</sup> The letter was signed by 30 officers including Lambert and Colonel Robert Lilburne. It said there would be a general meeting of officers soon at which they were very optimistic there would be a universal concurrence in the Remonstrance.<sup>(2)</sup> On 12 December a slightly fuller meeting of officers was held with 36 men present. This meeting accepted a Declaration drawn up the day before, possibly by Major John Sanderson, of Robert Lilburne's regiment, Major Rookby, of Lambert's, Major Smithson, also of Lilburne's, and Captain Adam Baynes, of Lambert's the financial entrepreneur of the 1650's.<sup>(3)</sup> The Declaration, which was to be taken to London by Captains Baynes and William Bradford gave full support to the Remonstrance declaring that Providence had called the army "to work in an extraordinary Way". Providence was to be used to

- 
- (1) Minster Library, York, B.B.53, Order Book of the Committee of the Northern Army, ff.30-31. This is a copy of an imperfect Ms. which was a fragment of the original order book. The original Ms. was lost and this copy is a 19th century transcript. I am grateful to my supervisor, Professor G. E. Aylmer, for this reference.
- (2) ibid., f.32.
- (3) Diary of Major John Sanderson, in, Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1919, p. 23. The Declaration itself was printed, E477(10), The Declaration of Lambert's Brigade, and summarised in Rushworth, VII, pp. 1366-1367.

justify much in the following decade. The northern forces urged their southern comrades to have a care for those who, although in agreement with the essence of the Remonstrance, could not support the means to be used to push it through.<sup>(1)</sup> This reflected a division in Lambert's forces but one which does not appear to have been very great. Colonel John Bright and Captain Henry Westby are recorded as dissenting from the Declaration on these very grounds, but despite their reservations it was decided to accept it, but those disagreeing with it were to have three days to lodge their reservations with the Judge Advocate.<sup>(2)</sup>

The 12 December meeting also decided to set up a standing Council to meet every Friday to consider and discuss with Lambert such matters as might be sent from Fairfax to the northern forces. The members were to be Col. Robert Lilburne, Colonel Bright, Lt. Colonel William Goodrick, Major Rookby, Major Smithson, Major Sanderson, Major Henry Pownall, Captain Goodricke and Major Cotterell or any Six. Any other commission officer was free to sit with the committee if he so wished.<sup>(3)</sup> The record of these proceedings is characterised by fairness attributable to Lambert. Perhaps it was this quality that was to make him a popular figure in the army. Bright's scruples can

- (1) E477(10), The Declaration of Lambert's Brigade.
- (2) Minster Library, York, B.B.53 f.33. For Westby q.v. Sheffield City Library, O (akes) D (eeds) 1406, 1420 which includes his will made in 1656. For details of Bright's subsequent career q.v. biographical appendix.
- (3) Minster Library, York, B.B.53 f.33; c.f. Diary of Major John Sanderson p. 23. Captain William Goodricke was the son of Lt. Colonel William Goodricke, a Yorkshire family. Captain Goodricke remained in the army and was suspected of being "much a new Royalist" by Robert Lilburne in 1657 (C. A. Goodricke, History of the Goodricke Family, London, 1885, pp. 44-48; Thurloe, VI, p. 292).

be contrasted with the views of Judge Advocate Margetts. He wrote to William Clarke giving an account of the meeting and remarking

"It is the greater feare of the well affected, that the Army, through some temptation or other may fall off, and not act vigourously ... and so they be brought into further mischief by being engaged with them."

He requested that if the Declaration were printed copies should be sent to him, presumably for distribution. <sup>(1)</sup>

The negotiations with the Levellers had of course been maintained, although during the preparations for the purge little had been done to further the Agreement, for obvious reasons. <sup>(2)</sup> Once the army was firmly in control of London the meetings with the Levellers were resumed with renewed vigour, occasionally lasting all night. At these meetings Ireton spoke in favour of some coercive power to the magistrate in religious matters. Finally, the revised Agreement was completed and John Lilburne thought it would be promoted at the Council of the Army for subscriptions, then amongst the regiments, and then to the nation without further ado. <sup>(3)</sup> It was presented to the Council of the Army on 11 December but Lilburne's hopes of a speedy dispatch were soon dashed because the Council embarked on a detailed revision of the Agreement. In retrospect, Lilburne saw this as an attempt to cheat and cozen the Levellers. He blamed Cromwell "and the

(1) Clarke Papers, II, p. 70.

(2) E560(14), The Legall Fundamentall Liberties, p. 34, repr. in Haller and Davies, Leveller Tracts, p. 421.

(3) ibid., pp. 422-423; Perfect Occurences (8-15 December 1648) confirms the late night sittings.

whole gang of creature Colonels" for this, yet Cromwell is reported to have left for Windsor on 14 December the day the Whitehall debates opened, and probably took no part in them.<sup>(1)</sup> Lilburne was also wrong in thinking that the army, especially the Colonels, spoke with a single, united voice at the debates. Indeed, there appears to have been a genuine attempt on the part of the officers to co-operate with the Levellers and to try to work out a settlement based on the revised Agreement. It must be remembered that we only have Lilburne's word that the Agreement, as produced by the committee of 16 was intended to stand as it was without any amendments. There was concern in the army that there should be no misunderstandings. In an obscure incident it was reported that a man was shot to death. The Army Councils' 'press release' said it was for mutinying not for promoting the Agreement.<sup>(2)</sup> Given the Leveller tendency to martyrology, and the fact that no such incident is mentioned by Lilburne, the official view seems plausible.

The genuineness of the Army's attempted bridge building to the Levellers can be seen from the proceedings of the first day at Whitehall which were taken up with the question of the magistrate's coercive power in religion. The Leveller view denied the magistrate any power in this area. Ireton took a different view and rejected Captain Clarke's (probably the Captain John Clarke of Waller's regiment who had been quite active politically the previous year) suggestion

---

(1) E560(14), The Legall Fundamentall Liberties, p. 35, repr. in Haller and Davies, Leveller Tracts, p. 423; Rushworth VII, pp. 1358, 1363.

(2) Perfect Occurences, 8-15 December 1648.

that the army had accepted lock, stock and barrel the demands of the 11 September petition which was against restrictions in matters of religion.<sup>(1)</sup> Whalley realised the controversial nature of the matter and wanted to leave it out of the Agreement for fear of forcing many to agree to something with which they basically disagreed.<sup>(2)</sup> Waller was afraid that the united front of army, Independents, and Levellers could collapse over this question and urged that since

"we cannott goe together in all thinges, I desire we may bee soe good natur'd as to goe as farre as wee can and I hope before that (time for parting) comes God will finde out a way to keepe us together."

He advocated dealing with purely civil matters before the religious ones.<sup>(3)</sup> One of the Levellers, possibly Wildman or Overton, saw the army as a potential revolutionary force but was afraid that in practice it might not turn out so :

"If you your owneselves cannott helpe us (to freedom) in matters of opinion wee doe nott looke for itt while wee breathe. The Lord hath bin pleas'd to informe you as (well as) any other men. If you cannot agree uppon itt, then I shall conclude for my parte, never to expect freedome whiles I live." (4)

Harrison, yet again the pragmatist, came up with a compromise suggestion calling for a committee to be set up to discuss the issue. This was accepted. The committee was to meet at Colonel Tichbourne's the following

(1) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 95-98.

(2) ibid., pp. 83-84.

(3) ibid., pp. 87-89, 103.

(4) ibid., p. 92.

day and its military members were originally Colonels Rich and Deane and Captain Clarke but Major Carter, Captain Hodden, Colonel Hewson, Major Barton, Colonel Okey, Major Coleman and Captain Spencer were added during the following days.<sup>(1)</sup> Harrison's suggestion was supported by Major Nathaniel Barton, of Scrope's horse regiment, one of the officers named by Lilburne as particularly hostile to the Levellers. His recorded remarks at Whitehall do not substantiate Lilburne's charge.<sup>(2)</sup> Rich offered a compromise formula giving a wider toleration to those "walking inoffensive to the Civill peace". Just who was to arbitrate on what was "inoffensive" was not elaborated upon.<sup>(3)</sup>

The first day's debates at Whitehall showed up differences in the army over the question of religious toleration which cut across the ranks. But it would be wrong to make too much of the obvious similarity of views of some officers with those of the Levellers, and one would certainly not go so far as to say, as does Brailsford, that Colonel Deane held "Leveller views".<sup>(4)</sup> Religious toleration was an issue dear to all who had fought in an army which because of its broad spectrum of religious opinions had been assailed by vicious propaganda denouncing it as no more than a gang of sectaries. Thus, it is not

(1) ibid., pp. 92-93, 72, 135, 136.

(2) ibid., pp. 103, 106 where he sharply criticises those present who would put the question before a full and satisfactory debate of it; E560(14), The Legall Fundamentall Liberties, p. 35 repr. in Haller and Davies, Leveller Tracts, p. 423.

(3) Clarke Papers, II, p. 105.

(4) Brailsford, Levellers, p. 384.

surprising that some officers, such as Waller and Rich, who had been content to follow Ireton's lead in political matters would hold more radical views than he over the question of religious toleration. The officers' Agreement as it finally stood made no reference to the magistrate having a coercive power and instead envisaged a wide spectrum of toleration but also an official State or established Church. (1)

Also on 14 December a committee was set up to meet at headquarters to sift through all the petitions and other business arriving in the army's 'in tray' to decide which were relevant and which not. (2)

Concurrent with steps to establish a new constitution, the dismantling of the old one got under way. On 15 December Lt. Colonels Venables (the future commander of the West Indies expedition), Goffe and Cooke and Majors Swallow, of Whalley's regiment, Barton, and Cambridge of Twisleton's, and Captain John Grove, of Whalley's, were appointed to sit as a committee to prepare the way for the King's trial. The debates on the Agreement must have been time consuming in themselves. Professor Underdown rightly points out that there was no officer above the rank of Lt. Colonel on this committee, but I disagree with his view that the hard liners were the lower ranking officers. There were hard liners among the senior officers as the attendance record of the trial and the signatories of the death warrant show. (3)

---

(1) E539(2), A Petition from ... the Army ... Concerning the Draught of An Agreement of the People repr. in Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, pp. 334-354, esp. pp. 348-349.

(2) Clarke Ms 114, f. 136, no names are given.

(3) Clarke Papers, II, p. 132; Underdown, Pride's Purge, p. 165 + n.66.

On 28 or 29 November Lt. Colonel Ralph Cobbett, of Barksted's regiment, and Captain John Merriman of Rich's regiment were ordered to remove Charles I from Hurst Castle to Windsor. They had already been instructed to move him to Hurst at the end of November where it was felt he would be more secure.<sup>(1)</sup>

At Whitehall the debates over the Agreement proceeded and were to continue until the middle of January. Unfortunately, we have no more than fragmentary knowledge of the debates and the votes. However, we do have reasonable attendance lists for the meetings in the second half of December. They are contained in the Clarke Mss. in Worcester College and reprinted by Firth with some omissions, in Appendix D of the second volume of the Clarke Papers.<sup>(2)</sup> The Mss. also give the votes of those attending the meetings of the 16th, 18th, 21st and 26th December which have not been used previously. It is impossible to interpret these votes with complete assurance because it is not always clear to which question the votes refer. But bearing this in mind an attempt can be made. The account of the proceedings on 16 December says two questions were voted on concerning the magistrate's power to impress people for military service. There were also two resolutions. Of the two questions one was passed in the affirmative and the other likewise by all, except Colonels Hewson and Scout Master Rowe. The attendance list for that day, which also includes the votes,

---

(1) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 133, 63. For their mission and the conflict their orders caused the three deputy governors, Major Rolph, Captain Boreman and Captain Hawes, q.v. Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 256-260.

(2) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 270-282.



gives only one vote for each person so there is some doubt as to which of the questions it refers. It records 21 Affirmatives and six Negatives, the latter being Lt. Colonel Richard Ashfield, Lt. Colonel George Cooke, Colonel Hewson, Ireton, Scout Master Rowe and Sir Hardress Waller. As both questions concerned impressment it seems fair to conclude that these six favoured more power to the magistrate in this matter.<sup>(1)</sup> On 18 December the debate was over the sixth reserve, that no future Representative

"may in any wise render up, or give or take away the Foundations of Common Right, Liberty and Safety, contained in this Agreement; nor levell mens Estates, destroying Propriety, or make all things common ...."

The question was whether to waive this or not. The votes were : Affirmatives 16, Negatives 18. This was the day that Wildman and Walwyn were present and the stigma of "levelling" was one that the Levellers were anxious to have removed. The attendance list votes tally with those of the record of the proceedings. Amongst those favouring a waiver were Ireton, Lt. General Thomas Hammond, Hewson, Rowe, Okey, Reynolds and Whalley.<sup>(2)</sup> There also appear to have been a number of abstentions. On 21 December the subject under debate was religion and two questions were voted on, the first was of minor importance "Whether the Morall shalbe in the paper now read or noe". The proceedings give the vote as Affirmatives 17, Negatives 27, the attendance lists as Affirmatives 17, Negatives 27 with what appear to

---

(1) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 133-135; Clarke Ms. 16 f.40.

(2) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 135-136; Clarke Ms. 16 f.42.

be 13 abstentions. The second question was whether to subjoin to the clause on the power of the Representative a reserve on religion, the question that had received so much attention on the first day. The vote, according to the account of the proceedings, was Affirmatives 12, Negatives 37, according to the attendance list, Affirmatives 12, Negatives 37. Those voting against a reserve included Rich, whose liberal views on toleration could presumably be accommodated in the broad formula of the ninth article of the final Agreement, Captain John Spencer, later to flirt with the Fifth Monarchists, and Lt. Edmund Chillenden, also a future Fifth Monarchist. Those voting for a reserve included Sir William Constable, Lt. Colonel Edward Salmon who as deputy governor of Hull in 1649 and 1650 aroused the hostility of the local Presbyterian clergy by encouraging Independent preachers, and Captain John Clarke of Waller's regiment who had firmly opposed the coercive power in a speech on 14 December.<sup>(1)</sup> The other votes we have are from 26 December when the 5th reserve of the officers Agreement was debated. This concerned the Representatives' judicial power in relation to persons and estates. The proceedings account gives four votes one of which was passed unopposed while the attendance list gives three votes. Again there are some discrepancies. The three votes in the proceedings record are : second question (whether the clause about the Representative not being able to give judgment where no law exists be included in the Reserve or not - the clause

---

(1) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 139-140; Clarke Ms. 16, ff. 44, 44v. For Spencer's change of view q.v. Clarke Papers, II, pp. 91, 174; for Salmon, Firth and Davies, pp. 531-532; for Clarke, Clarke Papers, II, pp. 93-95.

eventually became the whole reserve in the final Agreement) Affirmatives 22, Negatives 15; third question (whether the clause shall stand as it is as part of the reserve) Affirmatives 25, Negatives 13; fourth question (whether there shall be any addition to the sixth reserve) Affirmatives 12, Negatives 19. The attendance list records the three votes but is muddled as to which question they correspond. I give them in the order to which they correspond closest, numerically, to the proceedings' account : second question : Affirmatives 22, Negatives 14; third question Affirmatives 25, Negatives 14; fourth question Affirmatives 12, Negatives 19. This is very tentative but it does have some consistency to it. It shows that Ireton, Harrison, Hewson, Okey, Waller and Whalley opposed the clause in the two votes relating to it (questions 2 and 3). So that on certain issues the Grandees could be outvoted and were prepared to accept the outcome. In view of the large number of probable abstentions (12, 11, and 10 on the three votes) it would be hazardous to read too much into them. However, a comparison between the vote on 21 December over the reserve in religious matters and those of the 26th on the legislature's jurisdiction shows no consistent voting patterns and no signs of a Grandee/<sup>junior</sup> rank split. (1)

The removal of Charles I from Hurst to Windsor was to be commanded by Harrison, a clear indication that the army meant business

---

(1) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 147-149; Clarke Ms. 16, f.62; cf. ff.44, 44v.

in its plans to bring the King to justice. Harrison was accompanied by 12 troops selected from various regiments presumably on the grounds of their reliability and commitment. (1) The King was to be kept a close prisoner and no one was to speak with him except in the presence of an army officer. As well as Harrison, Merriman and Cobbett, Colonel Mathew Thomlinson and Captain Alexander Brayfield of Hewson's regiment were appointed guards. (2) The King was, and remained until his death, a prisoner of the army. (3) Events were moving inevitably towards the King's trial and execution.

Professor Underdown has suggested that with Cromwell back in London and re-asserting himself in politics "the clarity and directness of Army policy disappeared". He suggests that Ireton had given leadership to what he calls the more militant colonels and junior officers and worked in alliance with Ludlow and the radical M.P.s. He argues that in the days before Christmas Cromwell was working to try and secure the release of the most irreconcilable of the imprisoned members, to restore the remainder of the House of Commons and to make one last attempt to reach an agreement with Charles I. (4) Regarding Ireton this assessment is fair but it is very unlikely respecting Cromwell.

- 
- (1) Perfect Occurrences, 15-22 December 1648. For Charles's reception of Harrison q.v. Gardiner, Great Civil War, IV, pp. 279-280.
- (2) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 142-144; Clarke Ms. 114, f.150.
- (3) C.f. Rushworth, VII, p. 1376.
- (4) Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 166-167. Professor Underdown perhaps makes Cromwell too clever by half, q.v. esp. ibid., p. 169.

Cromwell must have been fully aware of feeling in the army at this time which was very much in favour of the King's trial. On 19 December a well-informed source wrote that the army was determined to proceed not just against the King but against "all those which hath or shall oppose us from the highest to the lowest". Power, he said, was now in the army's hands and the army

"being either through feare or love highly countenanced by the remaining parliamt, being most part of them our opinions for the altering of Monarchicall government; we will make use of it for the best advantage of us and our friends, to the totall extirpation of all those that shall be averse."

Monarchy,

"That grand and lofty Cedar so highly placed in Lebanon must be hewed down."

Perhaps the author was over-confident about the extent of support in the Parliament, even in the army, for such a revolutionary line. As we shall see, in early January some of the officers were to have scruples about the execution of the King. He was well aware of the army's unpopularity and that its involvement in politics was detested by many; and that thus "the giddy multitude" is not yet ready to countenance the abolition of kingship "until either force or farther pswasions mould into another stampe". He felt that a violent approach would be difficult at the moment "least thereby we should bring an odium upon the Army who now are indifferently beloved amongst the citizens'".<sup>(1)</sup>

---

(1) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, ff.2v-3.

The following week the author complained that some of "the late corrupted members" had retarded plans for the trial by distributing papers denouncing the purged Parliament as illegal and a puppet of the army. But despite this,

"clandestinely the designe is carried forward and the plot layed whereon to build a firm fabrique; having already found out a way to bring our desires to passe malgre all opposition."

If "mildnes" or "fayre meanes" cannot bring about change "force must".

There was no question of laying down the sword

"until we have accomplished our desires, not only in this business, but for a permanent settlement of a new government, which cannot be effected but by keeping a powerfull Army"

to keep down Royalists and "other factions, contrary to our opinions".<sup>(1)</sup>

This represented quite a shift from the time of Francis White's expulsion from the Army Council for saying that the sword was the only visible power in the kingdom. This view of the army as a sort of Bolshevik revolutionary vanguard was not the role which the army came to fill in the 1650's. As we shall see Cromwell was to be very successful in winning over the majority of the officers to support a more 'respectable' way towards settlement based on the policy of healing and settling political differences. The Bolshevik strain was to re-emerge after Cromwell's death and especially in 1659 when the army were to <sup>forcing</sup> contemplate/a settlement on the nation. However, then this feeling was confined largely to that part of the army in or

---

(1) ibid., ff. 3-4v.

around London, but it was not even supported completely by all of them.

In the same letter of 26 December the author looked forward to a time, in the not too distant future, when all those "listed in ye black list", men of the same character as William Waller, Clotworthy and Brown, that is Presbyterians, would be brought to "Condigne punishment". At the moment they were needed; they had to be exploited to bring about

"an alteration in State government, so as we are enforced to demeane our selves fairly toward them, least they should prove instruments whereby to poyson those whom now we are assured of." (1)

On 2 January he said that the people whom the army was assured of consisted of civilians from both City and country, common lawyers, Judges, some Lords and M.P.s. Once again he was probably exaggerating the strength of support for the army and the degree of support for its programme among these people. In fact he talks of some "grumblings which causes jealousies" in the same letter. (2)

If Cromwell was trying to make a last minute deal with the King in the light of such sentiment then he was being reckless and foolish. He would have found himself isolated in the army. What would seem to be a more plausible interpretation of events in these pre-Christmas days is that Cromwell, exerting his influence as an M.P.,

(1) ibid., loc. cit.; c.f. Perfect Occurences, 29 December-5 January 1649 which says that a committee of army officers and citizens was set up to decide which malignants were to be brought to trial.

(2) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, f. 4v.

and with the backing of his fellow officers, was seeking very hard to come up with a formula whereby as many as possible of the secluded members could be won over to support the King's trial and political change. In this way the odium that had accrued to the army because of Pride's Purge would be eradicated. (1)

On 29 December a committee made up of Ireton, Harrison, Rich, Waller, Colonel Deane, Salmon, Barton, Clarke, Captain Deane and Captain Hodden, or any six, was set up "to consider of a forme of conclusion and subscription to this Agreement as to the officers of the Army". (2) The committee roughly spanned the officer ranks, but if anything it was biased in favour of the Grandees, although there is no evidence to suggest that there was a split in the officer corps. The committee was established the day after the Levellers had finally abandoned their détente with the officers when they presented A Plea for common Right and Freedom in which they attacked the officers for dragging their feet during the Whitehall debates especially in that concerning the magistrate's coercive power

"wherein all cordial friends of the army are fully satisfied, as clearly appeareth by their adhering to our foresaid Petition of the eleventh of Septemb."

They demanded far-reaching reforms, not just of the Army Council, but also of army administration on such matters as promotion, martial law

---

(1) Whitelocke, Memorials, II, pp. 478-479. My interpretation is quite close to Dame Veronica Wedgwood's (C. V. Wedgwood, The Trial of Charles I, London, 1964, pp. 77-79).

(2) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 156-157.



and recruiting for which they advocated a political test. Their proposals for altering the Army Council spoke only of making it more representative of the commission officers with no mention of the soldiery which meant yet more watering down of their 1647 position. But despite this their suggestions were clearly unacceptable to the army leadership, even to those who had sympathised with their views on toleration. The Plea was signed by 16 Levellers. Immediately after its presentation Lilburne left London and went northwards thus weakening even more whatever chance the Levellers might have had in opposing the revolution.<sup>(1)</sup> The Levellers alleged that they had been cheated and cozened but it can also be argued that their intransigence played a part in ensuring that the search for a compromise Agreement failed. In the meantime the navy had also been placated. Following up the letter sent at the end of November asking for concurrence in the Remonstrance, a high powered delegation including Fairfax, Cromwell and Ireton went to the Earl of Warwick and managed to get an assurance from him that the navy would follow the army's lead.<sup>(2)</sup>

Pressure for and against the trial and execution of the King existed simultaneously in the army in January 1649. The first appearance of the prophetess Elizabeth Poole at the General Council on 29 December, at which she declared that God was with the army and

---

(1) E536(22), A Plea for Common Right and Freedom (not catalogued by Fortescue); Heads of a Diarie, 26 December 1648-2 January 1649; E560(14), The Legall Fundamentall Liberties, pp. 35-36, repr. in Haller and Davies, Leveller Tracts, pp. 423-424; Gregg, Freeborn John, p. 256; C. V. Wedgwood, The Trial of Charles I, London, 1964, pp. 73-75.

(2) The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 19-26 December 1648.

that it should stand up for the liberty of the people, was greeted enthusiastically by Colonel Rich.<sup>(1)</sup> However, at her next appearance on 5 January she presented a paper against the King's execution. This accorded well with Ireton's scruples, but it did not go down well with others. Rich asked if the King had abused his power should he not die, a question also posed by Whalley.<sup>(2)</sup> Yet, Whalley was considered by some to be a potential moderating force in the army.<sup>(3)</sup> Lt. Colonel Kelsey wanted proof that Poole's message came from God. Commissary Nicholas Cowling, who had supported the Agreement at Putney in 1647, gave a salutary warning

"Take heede how you stick unto that Constitution without (leaving) which you are not able to forme a way by which every man may enjoy his owne." <sup>(4)</sup>

The officers still continued to discuss their programme for a settlement even after the Levellers had broken with them. In early January they were reported to be putting the finishing touches to their proposals for a new Parliament and they also debated the executive they envisaged, a Council of State.<sup>(5)</sup> On 6 January there

(1) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 152-153.

(2) ibid., pp. 166, 168.

(3) E538(11), The Religious and Loyal Protestations of John Gauden. Gauden, the future Bishop of Winchester, sent his attack on the army's proceedings to Whalley, whom he describes as his friend, to be presented to the Council of War (sic.).

(4) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 169-170.

(5) Moderate Intelligencer, 28 December 1648-4 January 1649; The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 2-9 January 1649; Perfect Occurrences, 28 December-5 January 1649.

was an important debate over the setting of a date sometime before April for the dissolution of the Long Parliament. From the very fragmentary evidence that survives it appears that Cromwell would sooner have seen Parliament dissolve itself, and Ireton seemed to agree with this but felt that the adoption of the Agreement's provisions for ending the Parliament would clear the army from any charge that it intended to set itself up in power. The Agreement would ensure a peaceful transference of power, especially as he realised that the majority of the nation were opposed to the revolution and would "looke for a succession of new Parliaments in the old way and old form of a Kinge again".<sup>(1)</sup> The two leading men in the army were very concerned about legality and constitutional propriety.

The final meeting for which any record survives was that of 13 January. This meeting was intended to finalise the Agreement by securing the officers subscriptions to it, but it got bogged down. The official reason was because "other affairs" intervened, but the debates show there was a division in the Council as to whether the Agreement should be presented or not.<sup>(2)</sup> Ireton felt that the Agreement defined the limits of the Magistrate's power and also suggested how that power should be formalised in a constitution. He felt that the only grounds on which it could be criticised validly were that it

---

(1) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 170-171. C.f. N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, ff. 2v.-4v.

(2) Rushworth, VII, p. 1391; Clarke Papers, II, pp. 175-186.

did not go far enough in defining sharply the contours of the power of future governments. No doubt he hoped that the Parliament would remedy any such deficiency. The radical divine William Erbury who was not very enthusiastic about the Agreement, showed himself to be indifferent to forms of government. He wanted to see oppressions removed and grievances remedied. He did not appreciate that a sophisticated political framework was needed to achieve such change. He felt that a small group of 12 or 24 could do this as easily as a full scale Parliament. In a vague way he was anticipating the demands for a sort of dictatorship of the saints made in 1653 after the expulsion of the Rump. However he did get at the heart of the matter. For him the question at issue was one of power. In his eyes the army was as lawful a power as any Parliament that could be called by the Agreement. It was a point put very eloquently by George Joyce. He urged Fairfax :

"whom the Lord hath clearlie called unto the greatest work of righteousness that ever was amongst men, that your Excellencie and the Council goe nott to shifte off that (work) which the Lord hath called you to. For my parte I doe verily believe, that if there were nott a spiritt of feare uppon your Excellency and the Councill, that hee would make you instruments to the people of the thinges that hee hath sett before you. Itt is that confidence I have, and itt is uppon sufficient ground; because God hath said hee will doe thinges by his people, when they believe in him. They by belief (shall) remove Mountaines (and do) such thinges as were never yett done by men on earth, and certainly if I mistake nott the spiritt is now to break forth, soe if itt were nott feare in us, we should nott be disputing amonge ourselves."

Sir Hardress Waller was getting fed up with the indecisiveness. He argued that the Agreement should be passed and presented to Parliament. The army, he said, had promised some such document in its Remonstrance two month's previously :

"Wee are now gott into the midst of January.  
Whether every man does nott see that thousands  
and tens thousands of men are senseless?"

One other speaker on 13 January remains to be considered : Colonel Thomas Harrison, the man who had favoured a trial since 1647. In a long speech, in which he partly paraphrases the Declaration preceeding the Officer's Agreement, he claimed that even if, as was inevitable, the Agreement fell short of satisfying all the peoples of God, especially on religious questions, it would be a proof that the army did not intend to seize power for itself :

"For itt is nott a principle of man, when wee have brought downe such men that would have kept us under, to give them a libertie, butt itt is more of God, to putt them into such a condition especially as to thinges of civill concernement that wee neede nott seeke ourselves, that wee will trust God and give them uppe in a common current againe."

It was the sort of argument that could have easily fallen from the lips of Henry Ireton. Harrison was closer to him than to George Joyce; or, alternatively, Ireton was closer to Harrison. If anything had happened to the Commissary General at the height of the English Revolution there was an understudy at hand. Harrison, like Cromwell and Ireton wanted to make the revolution 'respectable', that is more limited so that too many people would not be alienated. This was a fundamentally different position from that which he came to hold by

the end of the Bump. A man like Joyce wanted to make the revolution more 'revolutionary'. He did not want the army "to give away a power that God hath called us unto". A difference of view certainly existed but it was qualitatively and quantitatively different from that which had led to Ware. There was a greater consensus in the army about ends; the programme outlined in the Remonstrance and encapsulated in the Agreement.<sup>(1)</sup> But the differences over means, with Ireton and Harrison in favour of working through Parliament, by constitutional means, and Joyce in favour of the army going it alone provides a clue to the eventual outcome of the English Revolution and to the army's political role in it, and, in a wider context, perhaps to the nature of military intervention in politics, so relevant to our own twentieth century.

The army was strong militarily but weak politically. By deciding to work with, rather than against civilians, it was running the risk of subverting the chances of seeing more thorough-going revolution implemented, <sup>even</sup> if this revolution was to be based on the Remonstrance or the officers' Agreement, both of which envisaged quite a radical settlement but were by no means the most radical alternatives around in late 1648. Civilians, especially those who as M.P.s conceived of themselves as men more traditionally responsible for politics and government, were bound to see things differently from army officers. They must have viewed army officers, subconsciously if

---

(1) For the proceedings at Whitehall on 13 January q.v. Clarke Papers, II, pp. 175-186, passim. My interpretation of Ireton's attitude at this time differs from Professor Underdown's which relies solely on royalist sources for the suggestion that Ireton wavered and would have been satisfied with Charles I's abdication (Pride's Purge, p. 183 + n. 24).

not consciously, as upstarts in these matters while the officers could easily come to see the civilians as not sufficiently committed to bringing about change. Here was a major source of conflict. The only way a more thorough-going revolution had any chance of being implemented was by circumventing civilians. Arguably the most senior officers realised that this was impossible without more bloodshed, hence their realisation of the need to work with civilians. But in so doing they were, in effect, throwing out of the window the opportunity of establishing the sort of revolution they wanted, unless of course they could mould a civilian Parliament in their own likeness. As we shall see, the various attempts made in this direction in the 1650's ended in failure.

On 15 January the declaration to proceed with the Agreement was decided upon. Four days later the draft of the Agreement was subscribed by the officers at Whitehall and it was resolved that Sir Hardress Waller and 16 others should present it to the Commons. In fact Lt. General Thomas Hammond, a more radical officer than his nephew Robert, presented the Agreement which the House said it would consider "with what possible speed the necessity of the present weighty and urgent Affairs will permit".<sup>(1)</sup> The question arises, was the Agreement a mere ruse to deceive the Levellers and the more radical officers like Joyce, a mere public relations exercise intended to be

---

(1) Rushworth, VII, pp. 1392, 1395; C.J., VII, p. 122.

laid aside and never discussed let alone implemented? This was the view that John Lilburne eventually held and one that modern historians have tended to follow. Professor Underdown comments :

"There is no need to revise the traditional conclusion that Ireton and his officers kept the Army Levellers talking while they went ahead with their own more limited revolutions."

But with the possible exception of Lt. Colonel Jubbes, who produced his own settlement proposals in late December, and Commissary Nicholas Cowling and even they are open to doubt, it is hard to see who can possibly be classified as "Army Levellers" at this time, even among the junior and non-commissioned officers.<sup>(1)</sup> Lilburne's view is unsatisfactory. What evidence we have of the debates shows that there was a full, passionate and genuine attempt to work out something that could be offered to Parliament as a basis for implementation. This is the crucial point. The Agreement was offered as a suggested settlement and it was left with Parliament to amend it if need be. This was emphasised in the petition accompanying it.<sup>(2)</sup> The letters in the National Library of Scotland show that there was much enthusiasm about the Agreement in the innermost circles of the army. On 16 January it was said that :

- 
- (1) E560(14), The Legall Fundamentall Liberties, p. 37, repr. in Haller and Davies, Leveller Tracts, pp. 425-426; Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 198-200. For Jubbes's proposals q.v. E477(18), Several Proposals for Peace and Freedom, By an Agreement of the People, repr. in Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, pp. 312-321; c.f. Brailsford, Levellers, pp. 472-473, and Worden, Rump, p. 76.
- (2) E539(2), A Petition from His Excellency ... and the General Council of Officers ... Together with the ... Agreement, repr. in Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, pp. 333-354.



"there was never a better foundation layd,  
that promises more happines, then that same  
modell contrived by us."

The author was not unduly upset or suspicious when the Rump postponed debating it because he realised that while the trial of the King was going ahead nothing could be done for the benefit of the people's other grievances. On 6 February what appears to be the same author wrote that he was glad "The Army in generall hath condiscended unto all the heads" of the Agreement and later in the month particularly glad that it was welcomed by his correspondent to whom he had sent copies for distribution. However, he was saddened that Parliament could not spend much time on the Agreement because of other pressing business and was somewhat amazed on 13 February when he reported that there had been some opposition to the Agreement despite the fact that it had been "soundly canvassed by the Council of Warre".<sup>(1)</sup> However, in March there were worries and complaints about the delays and the vast amount of private business being put before the House when it was felt that more attention ought to be paid to the general good.<sup>(2)</sup> The important thing about the officers' Agreement is that it united the army behind a comprehensive programme of reform which it expected, and continued to expect, the Rump to introduce.

In the north, in January 1649, support for a hard line continued. Thomas Margetts wrote to Captain Baynes, the representative of the northern forces at London, welcoming the news of the King's trial. He also resented the fact that none of the northern forces was represented among the army members on the High Court of Justice : "is it not a little disobligem<sup>t</sup>?" However, he suggested that more

---

(1) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, ff. 6, 7, 9v, 10.

(2) ibid., f. 13v.

time should be given over to considering the Agreement which arrived in the north around the 27th. <sup>(1)</sup> This second reference to the Agreement being distributed within the army gives further support to the argument advanced above that the army intended the Agreement to be taken seriously. The Declaration of the Officers of the Garrison of Hull, accompanied by a letter from the governor Colonel Robert Overton, also favoured a hard line. Overton argued that if Providence had called on the army to intervene in politics

"I trust it would better become us to stand like steadfast Rocks for the defence of Common Freedome."

The Declaration which bore Overton's imprint claimed that the army had made it possible for Parliament to restore liberty of person and goods and purity of profession, the ends for which the army had claimed to have fought. Parliament had not done this, therefore :

"When Magistracy degenerates into Tyranny, are we not disolbiged from our obedience, and put upon the freedome of naturall indeavours for preservation? ... Tyranny is tyranny in whomsoever, and wheresoever resistable."

The Declaration rejected perpetual Parliaments, called for a new one and for succeeding ones to be biennial and demanded law reform and justice on the King and other capital offenders. Future Kings would

---

(1) B.M.Add. Ms. 21,147, ff. 24, 28, 34; N. Drake, A Journal of the 1st and 2nd Seizes of Pontefract Castle, Surtees Society, 37, Appendix p. 103; Clarke Ms. 114, f. 163, newsletter from Tadcaster which cautions against proceeding too slowly; Rushworth, VII, p. 1400 for the official letter of support for the trial from the north. Margetts was of course speaking his own mind, not that of Lambert.

be elected and have no negative voice.<sup>(1)</sup> It was very individualistic, but, by and large, with the exception of kingship, was in keeping with the official army line. Further evidence of a hard line can be gleaned from William Lilly's autobiography. He reports that at the time of Charles I's execution he had doubts that Parliament would be able to find a man to execute the King. In reply to this Captain John Sydenham, brother of the more famous Colonel William Sydenham, told him

"Rather ... then they should want such a man, these arms of mine should do it." (2)

Leveller propaganda was still directed at the Army. One document called on the soldiers to mutiny. It claimed that the soldiery had not received any reward for their efforts :

"if we have gotten but a red cloak wch. is a fool's livery we have thought ourselves sufficiently rewarded and recompensed whilst our officers who are of as meane birth and breeding as ourselves and of less courage and gallantry then many of us must be richly clothed and bedaubed w<sup>th</sup> gold and silver lace."

The author called on the soldiery to alter the government of the army to make it conform with the thesis that power is in the people. He claimed that the soldiers represented the people, the officers the magistrates and that they could call their officers to account and cast them off if need be as the people were now doing with the civil government. (This argument was to be repeated by Richard Overton in

(1) E545(17), The Declaration of the Officers of the Garrison of Hull. The Declaration was reprinted in March 1649. Overton's regiment had been among the first to present petitions in November 1648 (The Moderate 14-21 November 1648.) At the end of December the garrison of Hull had also sent in a declaration of support for the Remonstrance, (B.M.Add. Ms. 37344, f.239).

(2) W. Lilly, History of his Life and Times, London, 1822 pp. 150-151; J. Hutchins, History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset, London, 1863, II, p. 763.

The Hunting of the Foxes, and parallels his view that Parliament also had a limited trust.) If they did not do this they would be unable to provide for their future subsistence and happiness.<sup>(1)</sup> The impact of such propaganda appears to have been minimal. During the sitting of the High Court there was also an address to Fairfax urging that the Court sentence the King to death. It was signed by Lt. John Raye, William Reynolds and George Jellis, later to be court martialled for Leveller agitation in the army.<sup>(2)</sup> The majority of the soldiery were reported to be in favour of the official army line. They received pay increases just to make sure and some trouble-makers were punished to set an example to the rest and to try to inspire confidence in the army on the part of the civilian population.<sup>(3)</sup>

The act setting up the High Court of Justice to try the King was passed on 6 January.<sup>(4)</sup> It named 135 commissioners of whom 29 were army officers.<sup>(5)</sup> My classification of 'army officer' applies

- 
- (1) E537(8), 'Pay, Provision and good Accomodation for ye Privat Soldiers' (in Ms., dated 4 January 1649); E548(7), The Hunting of the Foxes, repr. in Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, p. 362.
- (2) A Perfect Summary, 22-29 January 1649; A Perfect Weekly Account, 24-31 January 1649.
- (3) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, f.5v.
- (4) Firth and Rait, I, pp. 1253-1255. According to the correspondence in the National Library of Scotland Dorislaus was responsible for devising the High Court of Justice. The author of this letter's confusion of the High Court and Council of State is probably due to the fact that the officers were then discussing the Council of State envisaged as part of their plans for settlement (N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, f.5v; Moderate Intelligencer, 28 December 1648-4 January 1649).
- (5) The following paragraph is based on Abbott, Writings and Speeches, I, pp. 727-729, 742, although my definition of "army officer" differs fundamentally from Abbott's.

to those men who were either regimental or garrison commanders and therefore subject to the authority of the Lord General Fairfax supreme commander of all land forces. Thus, it excludes those who had served in the army or were still to do so, such as Colonel Robert Titchbourne, Edmund Ludlow as well as Robert Duckenfield and John Hutchinson. But it includes Haselrig, George Fenwick, Algernon Sydney, Valentine Walton and John Jones, who had fought in both Civil Wars and who appears to have still been in charge of a unit.<sup>(1)</sup> Qualitatively his position in the army was not the same as that of men like Okey, Scrope or Goffe, let alone Harrison or Lambert, but his subsequent behaviour, especially during his stay in Ireland in 1659, makes him a military rather than a civilian type, unlike Haselrig another figure who at times in the late 1640's and 1650's combined a military with a civilian career. The 29 were Fairfax, Cromwell, Ireton, Waller, Skippon, Walton, Harrison, Whalley, Pride, Ewer, Ingoldsby, Barksted, Thomlinson, Constable, Lambert, Haselrig, Robert Lilburne (who left the north on 13 January perhaps to provide the representation of the northern forces suggested by Margetts),<sup>(2)</sup> Scrope, Deane, Okey, Overton, Hewson, Disborowe, Goffe, Horton, Thomas Hammond, Algernon Sydney, George Fenwick and John Jones. Of these all except Fairfax, Skippon, Lambert, Overton, Sydney and Fenwick are recorded as regular attenders, that is at ten or more sittings. Thomlinson appeared three times, or possibly four, and Fairfax and Ingoldsby once. Of those who were nominated but did not attend or made negligible appearances Fairfax's position is well-known.<sup>(3)</sup> Lambert, Overton and Haselrig all

---

(1) S.P. 28/60, f.272; c.f. S.P. 28/51, f.78. For further details on Jones q.v. biographical appendix.

(2) B.M. Add. Ms. 21, 417, f.27.

(3) For a good analysis of his role q.v. Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 189-193; Wedgwood, Trial, pp. 89-91, 105-107.

held important positions in the north, Lambert as Commander-in-Chief, Overton as governor of Hull and Haselrig as governor of Newcastle, both of strategic importance. Fenwick, as governor of Berwick, can be accounted for in the same way. Thomlinson deliberately stayed away from the Court and avoided signing the warrant but he played an obvious role in the execution as the King's Guard accompanying him to the scaffold.<sup>(1)</sup> Ingoldsby signed the death warrant though he claimed under force from Cromwell. Sydney, governor of Dover, attended the preliminary meetings of the Court but spoke out against its legality and then withdrew to his father's house.<sup>(2)</sup> This leaves Skippon and Disborowe both of whom appear to have stayed away deliberately. Skippon was reported as unhappy with the plans to execute the King while Disborowe, who had favoured the securing of the King in November, an inevitable prelude to his trial, was governor of Great Yarmouth, of no importance strategically, and could presumably have attended the Court in London had he so wished.<sup>(3)</sup> Of the 59 individuals who signed the death warrant 18 were army officers : Cromwell, Whalley, Okey, Ireton, Waller, Goffe, Pride, Harrison, Hewson, Deane, Scrope, Constable, Ingoldsby, Barksted, Ewer, Walton, Horton and Robert Lilburne. In percentage terms the army members nominated to

---

(1) ibid., p. 189.

(2) Wedgwood, Trial, p. 99.

(3) Carte, I, p. 210; c.f. Wedgwood, Trial, p. 97 for a different view on Disborowe.

the High Court were 20%, those who were regicides 30%.

Charles I was sentenced on 27 January and publicly executed three days later. A new phase of the English Revolution began, and the army which had played such a major role in bringing it about was assured of remaining an important, if not the most important, variable in subsequent political developments.

**CHAPTER THREE**



I.

FEBRUARY 1649-SEPTEMBER 1649

With the execution of the King, the abolition of the monarchy and of the House of Lords, and the establishment of England as a Republic, or Commonwealth, with a government consisting of a unicameral legislature and Council of State, the new rulers were careful not to do too much that would alienate further a potentially hostile nation. In this they were helped by the army whose leadership was determined not to rock the boat.

The Council of State, which was set up on 15 February, had a maximum of eight army men on it : Fairfax, Cromwell, Skippon, Haselrig, Walton, Constable and Henry Marten whose regiment, raised voluntarily amidst controversy the previous summer, was incorporated into the army establishment at the beginning of February. This would make him a member of the army according to the definition given above, but in practice his military role and his personal association with the army were minimal unlike <sup>those of</sup> his fellow parliamentarian Haselrig, let alone Cromwell. (1) Ireton and Harrison were nominated as members of the Council of State but rejected by the House, a snub to these two military architects of the purge but one which the army accepted quiescently. It had no desire to force itself onto the government. Besides, Ireton's belief in a strong Council of State might well have worked against him. Both Ireton and Harrison were quite active in

---

(1) C.S.P.D. 1649-50, p. 6. For Marten's regiment q.v. Clarke Papers, II, pp. 56-57n.; C.J., VI, p. 129.

the Commons. Of those appointed to the Council Cromwell, Constable and Marten subscribed to the unrevised engagement while Skippon felt he could not and Haselrig accepted the essence but took exception to the clause concerning the High Court of Justice.<sup>(1)</sup> Only two army men, Pride and Hewson, were appointed commissioners to the High Court of Justice for the trial of Hamilton, Holland, Goring, Capel and Owen. The trial of these Royalists opened on 10 February and they were found guilty. Hamilton, Holland and Capel were executed on 9 March. On 7 March it was reported that some officers met about a petition on Holland's behalf from the Countess of Holland. They debated it, but resolved not to meddle in it and to leave it to Parliament. The question of whether the army should try to ensure that articles of war granted to Royalists by the army but not by Parliament should be honoured remained a controversial one. On 8 March there was a fierce debate on this matter in relation to the five Royalists during which it became apparent that this issue, relatively unimportant as it was to settling the nation was important as an issue of principle for the army and as a test of the Parliament's commitment to reform. It could also lead them onto a collision course with the civil authority. But the general consensus of the meeting, so far as can be judged from the fragmentary evidence, seems to have been for abiding by the

---

(1) Peck, Desiderata Curiosa, II, Lib. X, pp. 31-32. For a discussion of the formation of the Council of State and the engagement q.v. and c.f. Gardiner, History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, IV, Vols., London, 1903, I, pp. 5-7; Worden, Rump, pp. 177-183.

verdict of the High Court, a view supported by Disborowe, Goffe, Whalley, Barksted and Major Carter. Waller differed, but Cromwell and Ireton favoured a hard-line judging from their voting in Parliament.<sup>(1)</sup>

But the army could not remain inconspicuous, and it did not do so, even in 1649 when there was still considerable harmony in its relations with Parliament. In that year the army had three major and overlapping pre-occupations : its relations with the civilian government, a renewed challenge from the Levellers for control of the army, and the question of the Irish service which had been languishing since 1647. The need to do something about Ireland gave the opportunity for some re-thinking about the disposition of forces in the country. On 15 February Fairfax set up a committee of officers with a wide-ranging brief. Its members were Colonels Harrison, Waller, Horton, Hewson, Barksted, Robert Lilburne, Whalley and Rich, Lt. Colonels Goffe and Salmon and Captains John Clarke and John Baynes. They were to examine the ordering of field forces and garrisons, to reconsider officers where they were lacking or not to be trusted, to decide which supernumeraries were fit to be continued, which to be disbanded and which to be regimented. They were also to look at the state and condition of garrisons.<sup>(2)</sup> During the next few days this

---

(1) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, I, pp. 10-11; Abbott, Writings and Speeches, II, pp. 6-7; Perfect Occurrences, 2-9 March 1649; Clarke Papers, II, pp. 194-198; N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, ff. 8v-9, 11. For the way the issue of quarter remained a contentions issue between Parliament and army q.v. Worden, Rump, pp. 194, 284.

(2) Clarke Ms. 72 (unfoliated), sub 15 February 1648/49.

committee also got down to the task of proposing new regiments for Ireland. At this stage there was no suggestion of using lots to determine which regiments were to go. Instead, the idea appears to have been to try to tidy up the various loose companies and troops around the country by regimenting them largely under Colonels who had raised volunteer forces in the summer of 1648. They proposed that six regiments of horse and seven of foot should go. The horse were to serve under Colonel Edward Rossiter, Colonel Hugh Bethel, Colonel Henry Marten, Colonel Thomas Rookby, Lord Broghill and Colonel John Reynolds. The foot Colonels were to be Waller, Ewer, William Sydenham, Richard Deane, George Cooke, Thornton and Sir Michael Livesey.<sup>(1)</sup> Rossiter had left the army in the summer of 1647 at the time of the dispute with Parliament, but had been called back to military service the following year and was in charge of the Lincolnshire forces. His troop was disbanded in April 1649.<sup>(2)</sup> Bethell had served in the north in the first Civil War and in 1648 beseiged and took Scarborough. In 1649 he was very concerned about the repair of the garrison even to the point of thinking that people were deliberately trying to do him down.<sup>(3)</sup> Rookby was promoted to a Coloneley in January 1649, a move that was unpopular with Thomas Margetts and possibly with Adam Baynes.

---

(1) ibid., sub 16 February and 19 February.

(2) C.S.P.D. 1649-50, p. 86. For his coldness to the Protectorate and favourableness to the Restoration q.v. Firth and Davies, pp. 301-303.

(3) Firth and Davies, pp. 261-262; B.M. Add. Ms. 21,417, ff. 217, 269, 305.

He came from an established Yorkshire family and was concerned about the effect free quarter would have on his reputation in the north, especially in view of Parliament's condemnation of it. He expressed an interest in purchasing crown lands with Lambert and eventually bought the manor of Richmond in Surrey with William Goodricke, his Major, and Adam Baynes. He died at the battle of Dunbar in September 1650.<sup>(1)</sup> Lord Broghill eventually took command of a regiment of men already serving in Ireland.<sup>(2)</sup> Sydenham went on to become joint governor of the Isle of Wight with Disborowe and an important Cromwellian. Ewer's, Deane's and Cooke's regiments were finally selected by lot for Ireland and went there although Deane himself became one of the Generals-at-sea at the end of February. Thornton was a Lt. Colonel in Overton's regiment at the time. A letter was to be sent to him offering him a Colonelcy. Thornton was described as now

"but a lt. col. in a garrison (Hull) and that he (the General) conceives him to be a man fitter for and more desirous of field service." (3)

Clearly field service was more prestigious than a garrison position. Somewhat similar letters were sent to Bethell and Rookby. Sir Michael Livesey, the regicide, had commanded a Kentish regiment which Ireton

- 
- (1) Burke's Landed Gentry, sub Rokeby, late of Arthingworth; Surtees Society, Miscelanea, 1860, A Brief Memoir of Mr. Justice Rokeby; M.L., York, B.B. 53 ff. 1, 33; B.M. Add. Ms. 24, 417 ff. 34, 36, 193, 250, 272, 338 (which shows that the ill-feeling between Margetts and Rokeby was mutual); ibid., 24, 418, ff. 13, 24, 84, 96, 107, 149, 167, 180, 345; C.S.P.D. 1649-50, pp. 135, 148, 159, 197, 201; C.J., VI, p. 465; Firth and Davies, p. 255 which is somewhat misleading; I. Gentles, 'The Debentures and Military Purchases of Crown Land', London, Ph.D. thesis, 1969, p. 327.
- (2) Firth and Davies, p. 587.
- (3) Clarke Ms. 72 (unfoliated), sub 19 February 1648-49.

took over at the formation of the New Model. He was in charge of Kentish local forces in 1648 which eventually served in Ireland under Colonel Robert Phayre.<sup>(1)</sup> Reynolds' regiment also raised in Kent had come into conflict with the Committee at Derby House which considered it a part of Livesey's force. However, Reynolds had already offered his regiment for the Irish service the previous year.<sup>(2)</sup> There appear to have been no political motivations behind the committee's suggestions, although it was too much to expect Henry Marten to serve voluntarily in Ireland. Later in February a committee of the Council of State was set up comprising Cromwell, Vane, Marten, John Jones and Scott to liase with the army about the disposal of forces for Ireland and about those to be kept on in England for internal security.<sup>(3)</sup> According to one report, the soldiery were sounded out as to their willingness to serve in Ireland and they were said to be very much in favour of it.<sup>(4)</sup>

Discontent among the soldiery, egged on by civilian Levellers, soon began to reappear. About the latter part of February a petition was presented to the General from the soldiery claiming to be in further prosecution of their just desires. Just how representa-

- 
- (1) Firth and Davies, , pp. 155, 560, 655. Livesey, a republican, was primarily a parliamentarian q.v. Worden, Rump, pp. 51-52.
- (2) Firth and Davies, pp. 606-607; E552(10), The New-Made Colonel ... (30 April) 1649.
- (3) C.S.P.D. 1649-50, p. 22.
- (4) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, ff. 9v, 11.

tive it was, and what regiments it came from it is impossible to determine. The petitioners said they felt emboldened to present their document to Fairfax in view of the House's recent votes whereby it was declared <sup>itself</sup> supreme. They argued that their own, and the kingdom's (sic) grievances needed prompt attention without which "we cannot chuse but look upon our selves, as a dying and ruinated people". The grievances they had in mind were fairly comprehensive and were capable of appealing to non-Levellers as well. They included law reform, the removal of tithes, freedom of conscience, constant pay and the ending of free quarter, provision to be made for soldiers to be able to buy new horses as some, it was said, could not afford to buy new ones to replace those lost the previous summer because of the smallness of their pay, the ending of clipped money, and reform of the articles of war which it was argued had become inconsistent with "an Army of freeborn Englishmen". They also declared that the army should not be used to enforce civil laws especially that relating to the suppressing of the printing presses, a matter vital to the Leveller organisation. <sup>(1)</sup> In a post-script the petitioners said it was the desire of the people's friends in order to achieve their liberties that the soldiery would choose from every regiment, troop or company

---

(1) On 5 January the Rump requested Fairfax to instruct the Marshal General to enforce the ordinance of the House of 27 September 1647 against scandalous pamphlets (C.J., VI, p. 111); c.f. Perfect Occurences (30 March-6 April 1649) where it is reported that the Marshal General had asked to be discharged from the business about printing because he felt it was being used for private interests; Fairfax agreed to the request.

"the most active and faithful men both for the gathering hands to this petition, and for presenting the same to the Honourable House : And in case any shall oppose the proceedings hereof, you are to mark such as enemies of the People's Nature and Just Rights." (1)

The petition with its implicit desire to see the agitators re-introduced was designed to out-manoeuvre the General Council of Officers. This body, which was meeting at this time, was debating the removal of free quarter, partly in response to a petition from Fairfax's horse, but also because it was felt to be, and indeed was, genuinely oppressive to the country and contributed towards making the army unpopular. It also discussed the calling of public servants to account and the Irish service. A committee was appointed to draft a petition for the next meeting on these matters which would then be presented to Parliament. The members were Waller, the Comptroller of the Ordnance (probably Richard Deane the future Admiral), Hewson, Cooke, Robert Lilburne, Goffe, Majors Coleman, Barton, Creed, and Abbott and Captains Packer, Sanchy, Brown and Gladman, a fair cross-section of the more senior and junior ranks.

The Council was well aware of troublemakers trying to stir up the army in the City and were determined to stop them. A

---

(1) Wor. Co. B.B. 8.7.(181), ... The Humble petition of divers well affected Officers and Soldiers of the Army. The tract, which appears to be unique, is signed by Jerome Whitfield; The Moderate Intelligencer, 15-22 February 1649; The Moderate, 20-27 February 1649 which says the petition was presented to the House on 24 February, a misprint for the 26th when it was presented along with John Lilburne's The Serious Apprehensions of a part of People (i.e. Englands' New Chains Discovered); C.J., VI, pp. 151-152.



printed petition was reported to have been dispersed amongst the regiments, probably the one presented to Parliament on the 26th. This provoked the Council to respond with a proclamation, drawn up by Cooke, Goffe, Captain Browne and Rushworth, forbidding the private meetings of officers and soldiers for the promotion of petitions. It blamed the recent stirrings on cashiered individuals, but gave assurance that the right to petition by members of the army, one of the issues which had politicised the army in the first place, would continue but that petitions would have to be authorised first by the Captain of a company or troop, then by the chief officer of the regiment and finally by the General, who, if he thought fit, would present them to Parliament. The Council also resolved to look at ways for punishing civilians endeavouring to breed discontent in the army. Some officers advocated drastic and unconstitutional action to stop such activities once and for all. In The Hunting of the Foxes Richard Overton alleges that Hewson said "we have had trial enough of Civil Courts, we can hang 20 before they will hang one". Lilburne in his Legall Fundamentall Liberties said that Whalley and Barton also favoured a hard line against civilians. Those who had subscribed to the petition presented to the House on the 26th were reported to have been cashiered by their respective colonels.<sup>(1)</sup> It seems that Royalist

---

(1) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 190-193; The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 20-27 February 1649; A Perfect Weekly Account, 21-28 February 1649; A Moderate Intelligencer, 22 February-1 March 1649; Perfect Occurrences, 16-23 February 1649; Whitelocke, Memorials, II, p. 539; E548(7), The Hunting of the Foxes, repr. in Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, pp. 359-383, esp. p. 368; E560(14), The Legall Fundamentall Liberties, p. 74, repr. in Haller and Davies, Leveller Tracts, p. 447; q.v. also Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, I, pp. 30-31; Brailsford, Levellers, pp. 471-474.

troublemakers were considered as dangerous as Leveller ones. (1)

On 1 March the General Council, at which 66 officers, ranging from Fairfax himself to the non-commissioned ranks of Quarter Master, were present (the absence of those officers who were also M.P.s such as Cromwell, Ireton, Harrison, Constable and Rich, who took up his seat for Cirencester in February, was noticeable) passed the petition to be tendered to the House. (2) On the same day the famous letter from the eight troopers, Richard Rumball, Simon Grant, George Jellis, John Benger, Thomas Harvey, Thomas Watson, Robert Ward and William Sawyer was presented to the Council. The letter, probably written by Richard Overton, called for the carrying out of the Solemn Engagement of 5 June 1647, which meant, of course, the re-establishment of the agitators. It re-asserted the soldiers' right to petition without the consent of their officers :

"For what is or what can the Officer do without the Souldier? If nothing, why are they not ashamed to deny us our right to petition?" (3)

The officers present at the General Council were called on individually to condemn the letter as tending to divide the army. Captain William Bray, who had been in trouble before over Ware, was the only officer who did not disown it and according to the newsbooks it was discovered that he had not yet received his commission and was accordingly put

- (1) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, f. 12.
- (2) E545(30), The Petition of the General Council of Officers.
- (3) The letter is printed in E548(7), The Hunting of the Foxes, repr. in Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, pp. 372-375. For the full list of signatories q.v. Clarke Papers, II, pp. 193-194n; Perfect Occurences, 2-9 March 1649, where Robert Ward is named as Robert Howard.

out of the Council. He was cashiered but protested against this in  
... An Appeal, in the humble Claim of Justice against Thomas, Lord  
 Fairfax, which he presented to the Commons on 19 March.<sup>(1)</sup> The House  
 queried him about his commission and he answered that he had served  
 in Robert Lilburne's regiment in 1647 but that in 1648 he had joined  
 Reynolds's regiment. He said he had

"not the Punctilio of a Commission in the last  
 business : But his Engagement with Col. Reynolds  
 for Maintenance of Truth and Righteousness, (was) far  
 above any Punctilio of a Commission according to  
 Reason, Justice and Righteousness."

The House voted the paper scandalous and seditious and ordered Bray  
 to be committed to prison at Windsor, out of harm's way.<sup>(2)</sup> The  
 Council ordered that five of the eight signatories, of the letter  
 to Fairfax, were to be committed to trial (i.e. Ward, Watson, Grant,  
 Jellis and Sawyer). Rumball was ordered to acknowledge his fault at  
 the head of the regiment. He remained in the army rising to the rank  
 of Lt. in Packer's regiment in 1659 and played a prominent part in

(1) E546(30), To the Supreme Authority the Commons in  
 Parliament, An Appeal, in the humble Claim of Justice  
 against Thomas, Lord Fairfax. He issued a second  
 appeal at the beginning of April (E549(6), To the  
 Supreme Authority of the Nation, the Commons assembled  
 in Parliament. A Second Appeal on behalf of the  
 Sovereignty of Justice over all Persons against Thomas,  
 Lord Fairfax).

(2) A Perfect Diurnal, 26 February-2 March 1649; A Perfect  
 Summary, 26 February-5 March 1649; C.J., VI, p. 168.  
 For the reaction of his troop including the arrest of  
 his cornet, Christopher Cheeseman q.v. Firth and Davies,  
 p. 608; E532(10) John Naylier The New Made Colonel ....  
 a savage attack on Reynolds; E563(10) Christopher Cheese-  
 man (Chisman), The Lion Contending with the Lamb.  
 Cheeseman became one of the Levellers' heroes q.v. The  
 Legall Fundamentall Liberties, p. 27, repr. in Haller  
 and Davies, Leveller Tracts, p. 413; E565(2), Richard  
 Overton, The Baiting of the Great Bull of Bascham,  
 repr. in A. L. Morton, Freedom in Arms, London, 1975,  
 pp. 283-292, esp. p. 290. For Bray q.v. also Cary,  
Memorials, II, pp. 141-148. The Commons had requested  
 Fairfax to commission the officers of Reynolds' regiment  
 on 20 February, C.J., VI, p. 147, but there appears to  
 have been some delay in implementing this request.

the Rye House Plot. Benger and Harvey could not be found in time for the court martial and were presumably dealt with later. The five who were cashiered were defiant throughout the proceedings. One of them was reported in the newsbooks as saying

"That he had continued long in the Parliament's service, and fought for liberty, and now perceived what the present liberty was, and that the sufferings of Bastwick, Pryne and Barton, was the fall of the Bishops."

After the sentence of riding the wooden horse had been carried out the five went into the City where they were welcomed by their Leveller friends. (1)

On 2 March the officers' petition was presented to the House by Whalley and other officers. The petition dealt with "some things (comparatively) more remote, yet of much concernment". It limited itself to material grievances most of which had been contained in the suppressed Leveller petition. It was very respectful in its tone and was welcomed by the Speaker who praised it as "modest and discreet". He said

"it shows your Moderation, so all those whose Mouths are open to Malice and Destruction will see, that both the Army and Parliament are so unanimous in promoting the publick good." (2)

---

(1) Perfect Occurences, 2-9 March 1649; The Kingdom's Faithful and Impartial Scout, 2-9 March 1649; Brailsford, Levellers, p. 475; Whitelocke, Memorials, II, pp. 543-544. My account differs from both Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, I, pp. 31-33, and Brailsford, Levellers, pp. 474-475. C.f. Worden, Rump, pp. 186-187.

(2) E545(30), The Petition of the General Council of Officers; C.J., VI, p. 153; Whitelocke, Memorials, II, p. 544; c.f. Worden, Rump, pp. 186-187.

Both Parliament and army wanted to be seen to be playing the same game and on the same side. Indeed there is evidence to suggest that they felt they were playing the same game and that the army was satisfied with the response it was getting from Parliament. One source close to the army spoke of the close harmony existing between army and Parliament at this time. The writer was probably being over optimistic about the extent of this harmony. On 6 March it was reported that since Hamilton, Holland and Capel had been sentenced to death some of the demands in the officers' Agreement were being taken up again. The author of this letter saw the establishment of the Council of State, envisaged in the Agreement, and abolition of monarchy as important steps towards satisfying the army's demands. Which once again reminds us that the army did not intend the Agreement to be forgotten about once it had been presented to Parliament. He said Parliament was resolved

"to live and dy with us, and for the better expediting of busines divers of the chiefe of us are linkt in amongst them, both in the high councill and parliament."

The chief concern of the moment, he felt, was to settle the peace of the nation and the altering of the great seal was "but a prologue to what is intended". Given the fact that the men responsible for nominating members of the Council of State went out of their way to create a broad based and moderate body and the fact that the army was so determined that reform should be instigated by civilians it is not surprising that when the pressing problems of national security and the threat to army unity had been dealt with the failure of the Rump, in

the eyes of the army, to fulfil its side of the bargain and produce the long sought after reform should turn such great expectations, based as they were on somewhat naive illusions as to the radical nature of the new government of the Commonwealth, so easily into profound disillusionment.<sup>(1)</sup>

But not all of the army, particularly the Leveller elements, wanted to play ball. They sought to change the rules and in alliance with the London Levellers they continued to try to whip up discontent in the army. Some felt that in Henry Marten and Lord Grey of Groby they had an alternative leadership to Fairfax and Cromwell.<sup>(2)</sup> In the middle of March it was reported that some troops had been fly posting John Lilburne's papers at St. Albans and exhorting people not to pay the excise or give free quarter but to join with them. As we have seen such civil disobedience had been advocated in November 1648. However, as in the past, there was another side to the coin. Colonel Deane's regiment sent in a petition complaining of "the industry of some to obstruct this good work" and called on non-army provocateurs to be treated as mutineers or spies. They declared their support for Fairfax.<sup>(3)</sup>

- 
- (1) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15., ff. 12-12v, 13. For the setting up of the Council of State q.v. Underdown, Pride's Purge, pp. 205-208; Worden, Rump, pp. 177-181.
- (2) Carte, I, pp. 224, 229, the reference suggesting support for Marten among the "meaner officers" must be treated cautiously. As was mentioned above, the General Council on 1 March had a fair sprinkling of N.C.O.s as well as Colonels in attendance and very few officers sided with the Levellers in the May revolt. Nevertheless the popularity of Marten must have been viewed somewhat apprehensively by Cromwell. For a different view c.f. Worden, Rump, p. 187.
- (3) The Kingdom's Faithful Scout, 9-14 March 1649; A Perfect Diurnal, 12-19 March 1649; c.f. The Moderate Intelligencer, 8-15 March 1649, which gives the fly posting venue as Hitchin which version Brailsford follows (Levellers, p. 475.).

Towards the end of March the London Leveller leaders had followed up England's New Chains Discovered, in which they had attacked the high command, by urging Parliament to consider how dangerous it was

"for one and the same persons to be continued long in the highest commands of a Military power, especially acting so long distinct, and of themselves, as those now in being have done."

with other offensives against the leadership such as The Hunting of the Foxes and The Second Part of England's New Chains Discovered which set out to show the duplicity of the officers since 1647.<sup>(1)</sup> These tracts provided the government with an excuse to arrest the four leading Levellers, John Lilburne, William Walwyn, Thomas Prince and Richard Overton.<sup>(2)</sup> The story of their appearance before the Council of State and of Cromwell's thumping on the table urging that the Levellers be broken before "they will break you" and Ludlow's recommendation that they be given bail has been told often enough not to need repeating here.<sup>(3)</sup> The Leveller leaders were put in the Tower. The House, in an effort to encourage the army, discussed its eventual dissolution; and it was agreed that, when the situation in the country allowed such a move, then it would dissolve itself.<sup>(4)</sup>

---

(1) E545(27), England's New Chains Discovered, repr. in Haller and Davies, Leveller Tracts, pp. 157-170; E548(7), The Hunting of the Foxes, repr. in Wolfe, Leveller Manifestoes, pp. 359-383, this tract is also of interest because it gives the first hint of Cromwell's estrangement from George Joyce (*ibid.*, p. 370); E548(16), The Second Part of England's New Chains Discovered, repr. in Haller and Davies, Leveller Tracts, pp. 172-189.

(2) They were arrested on a commission addressed to Adj. Gen. Stubber, and made out by Waller and Whalley on orders of the Council of State. Overton was arrested by Lt. Colonel Axtell whom he attacked for his brutality (E550(14), The Picture of the Council of State, repr. in Haller and Davies Leveller Tracts, pp. 191-245; C.S.P.D. 1649-50, pp. 57, 58, 59).

(3) Q.v. Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, pp. 34-36; but c.f. Worden, Rump, p. 190 especially for doubts on Lilburne's remarks about Ludlow.

(4) Whitelocke, Memorials, II, p. 555.

There is evidence to suggest that the attacks made by the Leveller leaders on the new government came as a complete surprise. One bitterly disappointed army source commented on 27 March that

"a party of our owne Army and friends combined together, are become great disturbers and hinderers to our more urgent occasions framing their demands upon spetions pretences of Religion morall honesty and grounded Lawes. I confes all of them once in our greatest streight stood gallantly for us, and were the only ("cause", crossed out) men by whom in so small a compasse of time, we brought much busines to maturity."

This spontaneous disappointment is further evidence that the officers were genuine in their attempts to work out a settlement favourable to the Levellers in late 1648 and early 1649. The author was very afraid lest this renewed discontent would be exploited by malignants.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the meantime the question of the Irish service had been receiving attention. As in 1647 the army was concerned to find out who was to command the expedition. They were also keen to have favourable terms of service, and these matters were taken up by the Council of State with a view to being laid before the House.<sup>(2)</sup> On 15 March Cromwell was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the forces for Ireland but asked for some days to consider the appointment. Possibly he was worried about how it would go down with the army, which might consider that his departure for Ireland would weaken pressure in Parliament for reform. Waller and Whalley, who liased between the Council of State and the Army Council about the Irish service, were officially informed of

(1) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, ff. 14v, 17.

(2) The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 13-20 March 1649; C.S.P.D. 1649-50, p. 39. N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, f.13.



the appointment on 22 March. The following day Cromwell addressed the General Council. In a long speech he spoke of God using the army as an instrument and spoke of disunion in the army as being the greatest danger to the prosperity of the work, greater than anything that could be expected from the common enemy, and considered it unimportant who commanded the expedition so long as it was sent. For himself, he said he would give his answer the following Tuesday but urged the Council to get down to the business of deciding which regiments were to go and what conditions they would ask from the State. It was decided to form a committee of two officers from every regiment and various garrisons to meet the following day to seek the Lord and advise the General on the Irish expedition and to report to the General Council the following Monday (the 26th).<sup>(1)</sup> On 24 March the Council held "A great debate in relation to lotts". Waller suggested they be used only in cases under dispute, but the final outcome of the meeting was in favour of lots, and not to rely on nomination as had been planned earlier in the year.<sup>(2)</sup> On 30 March Cromwell was confirmed as Commander-in-Chief for Ireland by the House. Fairfax was made military supremo of all the Parliament's forces in England and Ireland. In the hands of a more ambitious man this would have been a formidable position.<sup>(3)</sup> The drawing of lots was to be limited to

---

(1) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 200-207; Abbott, Writings and Speeches, II, pp. 36-40; Whitelocke, Memorials, II, p. 559; The Moderate, 20-27 March 1649 which also prints the recommendation of the committee; c.f. Bodl. Tanner Ms.56, f.50, (undated considerations from Fairfax and the officers for speeding up the Irish service).

(2) Clarke Papers, II, pp. 208-209.

(3) C.S.P.D., 1649-50, p. 62; C.J., VI, p. 176.

New Model regiments. It was still intended to send some of the newer regiments based on the forces raised in the second Civil War. Of these regiments there was some disorder in those of Sir Michael Livesey, Robert Tothill and John Reynolds. The trouble was not just limited to such things as affrays with local people over free quarter. There seem to have been many men who were disaffected to the Commonwealth probably because they were former Royalists. On 3 April Tothill and Reynolds were ordered to purge their regiments of such men by imposing a test, most likely an oath of loyalty to the Commonwealth.<sup>(1)</sup> But in the case of Reynolds' regiment the so-called troublemakers were not just Royalists but also Levellers, which, given the regiment's pedigree, is not surprising.<sup>(2)</sup>

Despite the arrest and detention of their leaders, the Levellers were able to sustain their campaign of political agitation with mixed success. The Moderate reported that some soldiers refused a financial reward if they would read the House's declaration against The Second Part of England's New Chains Discovered. The gathering of subscriptions to a petition on behalf of John Lilburne was prevented by a Captain of horse intervening. Towards the end of April, when several hundred women presented a petition to the House on behalf of the imprisoned Levellers, the soldiers were reported to have been "most uncivill and unhumane" to them, intimidating them and firing squibs amongst them. But this did not daunt the women.<sup>(3)</sup> More serious

---

(1) C.S.P.D. 1649-50, pp. 66, 68; c.f. ibid., p. 111.

(2) ibid., pp. 125, 130; q.v. also previous section for Reynolds' regiment.

(3) The Moderate, 27 March-3 April 1649; The Moderate Intelligencer, 29 March-5 April 1649; Mercurius Militaris, 17-24 April 1649.

was the call to the soldiery to re-establish the agitators. The pro-Leveller Mercurius Militaris, making a brief re-appearance in April and May 1649, charged the officers with trying

"to reduce the Army to a meer mercenary and servile temper, that shall obey all their commands, without so much as asking a question for conscience sake."

Hewson was singled out as the arch-villan in all this. It was alleged that the officers wanted to purge the regiments and were using the Irish service as a convenient excuse or pretext. The author condemned this attempt to rid the army of those who

"desire to be satisfied in their consciences of the justice of the Cause, before they engage in the killing and slaying of men any more, or before they see some fruits answerable to the blood that hath been spilt."

He condemned the Grandees, particularly Hewson, of filling the regiments "with such ignorant needy, or servile men as these miserable times, through loss of Trade hath begotten". The solution lay in calling a Council of Agitators without which there would be no new Parliament or freedom from oppression.<sup>(1)</sup> There had indeed been some purging of the regiments but this was said to have been of suspected Royalists.<sup>(2)</sup>

The call for new agitators and most of the other points made in Mercurius Militaris had already been advanced most succinctly in The English Souldiers Standard, possibly written by Walwyn, which had appeared at the beginning of April. It charged the present Council of the Army with

(1) Mercurius Militaris, 17-24 April 1649. The polemic was also scattered about the streets as a broadside on 25 April (E551(21)).

(2) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15., f.12.

being "usurpers" in much the same way as Cromwell as Lord Protector was to be charged with usurpation.<sup>(1)</sup> The tract also urged the soldiers

"to preserve the love of the people toward you, and upon all occasions make it evident that it is for their good you continue in arms"

and to set an example by being courteous and gentle, refraining from excessive noise or lavish expense or ostentation and always to give

"pre-eminence to the Master and Mistress of the Family, whether rich or poor." (2)

But it was for this very reason, the failure to make common cause with any significant number of the people, no matter how loosely this is defined, that the Leveller attempted rising by means of the army was destined to fail. At a time of severe economic recession and outbursts of disorder and oppression in the localities, especially from those regiments destined for Ireland, and <sup>with</sup> the general unpopularity of the military, this appears in retrospect inevitable.<sup>(3)</sup>

Throughout April the government expected trouble from the Levellers. They were even said to have had spies in government circles. The main fear was of a Leveller-Royalist alliance.<sup>(4)</sup> The execution of Robert Lockyer for mutinous behaviour brought things to a head. The cause of the trouble, in Whalley's regiment, was pay arrears and six

- (1) E550(1), The English Souldiers Standard, repr. in Morton, Freedom in Arms, pp. 231-243, esp. pp. 234, 236-238.
- (2) ibid., p. 240.
- (3) In the older established regiments discipline was maintained very firmly; q.v., for example, Perfect Summary, 9-16 April 1649; Perfect Occurences, 20-27 April 1649.
- (4) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15., ff. 16-17v, 17v-18.

men were arrested. Five were pardoned but Lockyer was executed. The execution and funeral was turned into an impressive propaganda display by the Levellers. The officers supervising the execution were Colonel Okey and Major Carter. They appear to have been slightly apprehensive, lest Lockyer's last minute appeal to his comrades not to 'murder' him would affect the men. But the soldiers replied "we are ready, we are ready, we will soon dispatch him".<sup>(1)</sup> If a story from Mercurius Militaris (a single issue which appeared in early May) can be relied upon, the officers were quite active in trying to discover and break army contacts with the London Levellers. According to the newsbook this was done in conjunction with London religious Independents, including Lavender, John Goodwin and John Price, as well as Sir Arthur Haselrig. The latter is quoted as saying

"that unlesse Lilburn and Walwyn were taken off, they could not bring about their Designe; for (said he) they are great Politicians, and if they live we cannot carry on our Designe ... But ... if they were taken off we should carry on our Designe."

The plan was for one William Blankes to infiltrate the Leveller organisation in London and find out as much as possible about it in an attempt to prove Leveller-Royalist collusion.<sup>(2)</sup> In view of the suggestion that the Levellers had their spies in government circles this provides

(1) For a full account of the affair q.v. Brailsford, Levellers, pp. 506-507; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, I, pp. 46-47; Firth and Davies, pp. 219-220 and sources therein cited; Perfect Occurences, 27 April-4 May 1649; A Perfect Diurnal, 30 April-7 May 1649. The other five soldiers were George Ash, Robert Osborn, Mathew Repworth, James Hackly, and Thomas Goodwin (E552(18), A True Narrative of the Late Mutiny).

(2) C.f. N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, ff. 16-17v, 17v-18.

an interesting insight into seventeenth century espionage. Blankes, probably an apprentice barber (he appears to have been a barber in Hewson's regiment, but that bête noire of the Levellers, Hewson, kept putting off Blankes' 14/- per week pay) had been approached by an old school friend, William May serving in the General's regiment, and was offered rewards, including the payment of a debt owing to his father by his master. Blankes and one William Hill of Pride's regiment refused to take the oath to discover delinquents. Nevertheless, he was introduced to Ireton who wanted to use him as a witness against six men, possibly soldiers, who were considered dangerous. The news-book account suggests elements of a frame-up in Ireton's plan. The idea was for Blankes to be arrested with the men and then to speak against them when they appeared before a court martial consisting of Ireton, Haselrig, Pride, Captain Henry Pretty and Lt. Colonel Mason. When the men appeared before the officers Blankes refused to play his part, claiming he had no knowledge of them. He alleged that he was committed and forced to run the gauntlet on 27 April for his non-compliance. (1)

The showdown between the Levellers and the army finally took place in May. It is not intended to go over the events sparked off by Scrope's regiment's declaration on 1 May, in which they declared they would not fight for another cause (i.e. Ireland; the regiment was

---

(1) E554(13), Mercurius Militaris, 8 May 1649. The same story appeared in Mercurius Pragmaticus (E555(14)).

one of those chosen by lot) until the fruits of the first were seen, and culminating in the defeat of the mutineers at Burford. Full accounts exist in Brailsford and Gardiner.<sup>(1)</sup> The attempted rising in the army was put down principally because the expected support from civilians was not forthcoming. They also failed to make a big enough impression on their comrades in the army. Morgan's troop in Ireton's regiment refused to rendezvous with Scrope's and Harrison's without the consent of their officers. It was also said that many country-men were drawn into the ranks of the mutineers "deluded through specious shews of riches and plenty".<sup>(2)</sup> Some of the soldiery took advantage of the trouble to desert and go home. The army leadership obviously did not dare to underestimate the dangers of the situation, even if at first they would have liked to believe that only "the lower sort" of Reynolds' and Marten's regiments supported Thompson from the army.<sup>(3)</sup> Cromwell, when addressing his own and Fairfax's regiments in Hyde Park on 9 May, went to great pains to emphasise that Parliament had not shelved its reform plans, including provision for a new Parliament. He also said that steps were being taken to pay arrears and that those who thought martial law too severe were at liberty to leave the army and receive tickets for payment of their arrears which they would get at the same time as those staying on. It was one way

---

(1) The Moderate, 1-8 May 1649; Brailsford, Levellers, p. 511 ff.; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, I, pp. 48-54; q.v. also R. H. Gretton, The Burford Records, Oxford, 1920, pp. 237-256.

(2) A Modest Narrative, 5-12 May 1649; The Moderate Intelligencer, 17-24 May 1649.

(3) Clarke Ms. 16, f.96.

to get rid of possible discontented persons. How many men took up the offer cannot be determined. The newsbook report says that one trooper denounced the proposals and was seized upon but at the request of his comrades was released.<sup>(1)</sup> The main points of the speech were made a few days later on 12 May in a Declaration from Fairfax and his Council of War, which Gardiner rightly says bears the imprint of Cromwell. The Declaration listed the achievements of the Parliament: "that great act of justice"; the removal of the House of Lords; the putting of a fleet to sea to secure trade; the removal of free quarter; a start made for the relief of Ireland and for the provision of arrears especially from crown lands. Other matters in the Agreement (the officers' one) were also being dealt with, especially that relating to a new representative. The Declaration reminded the mutineers that, if they persisted, they would give the common enemy the chance to say

"their cause hath been good all along, and that now this division amongst us is a Judgement of God upon us for opposing them."

Even Romans 13 was dragged in to justify the stance of the army leadership. The mutineers were told to return to their obedience or face the consequences. It was pretty strong stuff with little in the way of concessions.<sup>(2)</sup> With the renewed Leveller threat the Commons had indeed responded by taking action on some of the more outstanding grievances to placate the army, such as free quarter and provision for widows, but this zeal proved in the end to be very transient and fell into abeyance with news of the Burford victory.<sup>(3)</sup>

- 
- (1) The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 8-15 May 1649; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, I, p. 50.
- (2) E555(6), A Declaration from His Excellencie with the Advice of his Council of Warre (sic), Alton, 12 May; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, I, p. 52.
- (3) For a full discussion of this q.v. Worden, Rump, pp.193-194.



The Leveller mutineers were defeated on 14 May. One  
<sup>s</sup>  
 newbook reported

"There was confidence in the Souldiers, and fears in the Commanders that one party would not ingage against the other, which was little made triall of in regard of the way taken by the Generall" (i.e. a surprise attack). (1)

Estimates of the number of men taken prisoner vary between 300 and 900. The former figure is probably closer to the true total. Even during the military campaign some in the army had advocated a conciliatory line towards the mutineers. In the Worcester College collections there is a tract consisting of letters to and from Fairfax at this time. One of them is most likely from Major Francis White, who had been sent to negotiate with the mutineers. If so, it would tend to disprove the charge of betrayal made against him by the Levellers in The Levellers (falsely so-called) Vindicated. The letter printed there is totally different from the Worcester College one which is more in keeping with an officer's assessment of a situation and his recommendations thereon to his superiors. It does not have the tone of trying to dictate to them as in the other tract. Nevertheless, the Worcester College letter shows some degree of sympathy for the views of the mutineers, saying that there were many honest men amongst them and that conciliation could possibly patch up the differences. (2)

---

(1) The Moderate Intelligencer, 10-17 May 1649.

(2) Wor. Co. AA.2.4(53); E571(11) The Levellers (Falsely so-called) Vindicated, repr. in Norton, Freedom in Arms, pp. 304-306.

Some army figures felt that the Leveller rising could be attributed in part to the lack of progress in bringing about reform. On 13 May Thomas Margetts wrote to Adam Baynes saying that those in the north had heard of the Leveller risings. He said he always expected the Irish "designe" would "goe neare to break the army in pieces and raise the common enemies expectations very high againe". Margetts considered that unless all injustice was removed and a righteous government established without self-interest or private advantage, there could be no peace or quiet in the nation. If the agitators were to re-appear there would be a great change as God had made them instrumental to much good before but he would rather that those now at the helms would act and steer the ship without resort to the agitators. (1)

In the end it was decided to punish only four of the leaders : Cornets Joseph Thompson and Henry Denne, and corporals Church and Perkins. Denne was reprieved and preached against the mutineers from the pulpit of Burford church. Humphrey Marston, who had probably been a member of Scrope's regiment in 1649 (he signed a letter from the agents of Ireton's and Scrope's regiments to Fairfax on 12 May, and signed The Levellers (Falsely so-called) Vindicated on 20 August) was finally arrested in 1650 after having murdered two servants of the Council of State and wounding a third. A post

---

(1) B.M. Add. Ms. 21,417, f. 134.

Restoration document described him as a "notable Agitator" who escaped after Burford, while contemporary Royalist newsbooks labelled him a Leveller. He was hanged after a trial at the Old Bailey and it seems Scrope was responsible for his arrest, perhaps settling the score from 1649. (1) Colonel William Eyres, <sup>who was</sup> no longer in the army but had been involved with Marten in raising a regiment in 1648, was sent a prisoner to Oxford to be dealt with by the civilian authorities. There were other repercussions in the wake of Burford. According to The Moderate Intelligencer, Major John Cobbett of Skippon's regiment (the regiment had in fact been taken over by Sydenham in February 1649) then stationed in Bristol near enough to where the mutiny had occurred in Scrope's regiment, was cashiered for being unwilling to engage against the mutineers. (2)

With the defeat of the Levellers the authority of the army leadership was strengthened. It also became quite clear that the pressure on Parliament to press on with reform was not going to lapse. On the very day of the Leveller defeat Ingoldsby's regiment sent a declaration to Fairfax in which they deplored the mutiny but called for something to be done to stop the suspicions

- 
- (1) Clarke Ms. 181 (unbound box 1); Morton, Freedom in Arms, p. 318; B. M. Harleim Ms. 4716, f.12 (this source says that one Tomkins was also executed at Burford but this is not confirmed by the other sources); Mercurius Pragmaticus, 19-26 February 1650; C.S.P.D. 1649-50, pp. 210, 211, 569.
- (2) The Moderate Intelligencer, 17-24 May 1649. According to The Moderate (12-19 June 1649) Cobbett was not cashiered until the middle of June along with Captain Rogers and other officers of the garrison; q.v. also Firth and Davies, p. 434. The reference to C.S.P.D. 1649-50, cited there refers to Major Robert Cobbett not John.

"of such honest men as are persuaded that your Excellency nor the Army will not endeavour the settlement of this Commonwealth according to what your Excellency and the Army have often declared, but especially in the Remonstrance made at St. Albans."

They urged a limit should be set on the present Parliament's sitting and that the Commonwealth should be settled by an agreement made amongst the faithful people of the nation with provision for the certainty of future Parliaments. Such moves would be good for both the nation and the army. They offered these suggestions so that they would be able to keep the regiment quiet, peaceable and under good discipline.<sup>(1)</sup> The officers were clearly uneasy about feeling in the regiment which in fact mutinied in September. Other petitions were not so forthright as Ingoldsby's. On the same day Whalley's regiment signed a declaration and resolution very much in keeping with the official line against the mutineers. They listed the Parliament's achievements and the necessary work it was doing and wanted to see all the scandalous and dangerous papers, designed to divide the army, suppressed. The leadership of Fairfax and Cromwell, now included along with the General, was eulogised and the regiment resolved to stand and fall with them.<sup>(2)</sup> It was not the last time that this phrase or some similar one was to be used. Shortly afterwards Fairfax is said to have written to the House urging them to make good use

---

(1) Wor. Co. AA.2.4.(53).

(2) E555(31), The Declaration and Unanimous Resolution of Col. Whalley and all the officers and soldiers of his regiment.

of the victory at Burford to settle the nation on foundations of Justice and Righteousness.<sup>(1)</sup> On 1 June Cromwell's regiment presented a petition subscribed at a rendezvous at Aldermaston in which they dissociated themselves from the mutineers and declared that they would hazard their lives for the Parliament and would cheerfully submit to Cromwell's authority. The petition was presented by Lt. John Byfield.<sup>(2)</sup> There were also petitions in much the same vein from Horton's and Reynolds' regiment.<sup>(3)</sup> A few days before Fairfax had held a rendezvous of Ireton's mutinous regiment at Guilford and had spoken to every troop individually, warning them of the dangers that had arisen by allowing themselves to be manipulated by subversives. He had also told them

"there could be no greater honour for soldiers then to be obedient to the commands of their superior ones, and how the malignant party would rejoice at their divisions."

The pendulum had swung very far the other way from <sup>where</sup> it had been in March 1647. The speech was reported to have been "well resented" (i.e. received with joy) by the regiment who then went to their several quarters.<sup>(4)</sup>

- 
- (1) The Moderate Intelligencer, 17-24 May 1649.
- (2) E557(10), The Humble Representation and Resolution of the Officers and Soldiers of Lt. General Cromwell's Regiment.
- (3) A Perfect Weekly Account, 30 May-6 June 1649; A Modest Narrative, 2-9 June 1649.
- (4) Clarke Ms. 181 (Unbound, Box 1), newsletter, 29 May; The Moderate Intelligencer, 24-31 May 1649.

The army, of course, published an official account of its proceedings very soon after Burford. It was issued at Oxford on 21 May and republished in London two days later. As well as being an account of the events surrounding Burford it also gives a retrospective official version of the aims and ends of the army in its negotiations with the Levellers over the Agreement at the end of 1648.<sup>(1)</sup> It alleges that these goals can now be seen to be different. The Levellers wanted a compulsory test applied to the people and authorities of the land, while the Army Council wanted a humble representation made of such things as were likely to give satisfaction and unite the nation, but to be owned or disowned according to men's consciences

"that soe it might not be only called an Agreement, but through the freedome of it, be one indeed, and receive its stamp of Approbation from the Parliament to whom it was humbly submitted."

But the Levellers distributed their own Agreement and attacked the army as a prop of a tyrannical Parliament and thus the seeds of disaffection were sown. The tract suggests the Levellers had to resort to deception to get men to side with them sending agents around pretending that each regiment had declared for them, and assuring the forces in Wales that those in London would revolt and vice versa, and doing the same regarding the north and the south. Harrison, Scrope and Okey were authorised to take a representation from the Council of Officers to the prisoners, numbering between 300 and 400 saying there would be a pardon if they repented. Some 340 signed a petition in response to this.

---

(1) Wor. Co. A.8.3.(119), A Narrative of the Proceedings of his Excellency in reducing of the Revolted Troops. The title of the London version is slightly different E556(1), A Declaration of the Proceedings...

There do indeed appear to have been disorders in other places. At the end of May The Moderate wrote that there was a Leveller plot to seize Lancaster Castle and that the ringleaders were Lt. William Wrench, Ensign George Smith, Mr. Charles Barker and William Booker. A couple of weeks later the garrison sent in an address condemning recent attempts to divide the army and pledging loyalty to both Parliament and the Lord General. Colonel John Morris and Cornet Michael Blackborne, who had held Pontefract for the Royalists, were both prisoners in Lancaster at this time. Wrench was ordered to be tried in June.<sup>(1)</sup> More dangerous appears to have been a rising on the Isle of Wight and at Portsmouth. The royalist newsbook Mercurius Elencticus went so far as to suggest that Joyce and Rolph had taken possession of Southsea and Carisbrooke castles, and were holding them. This was patently nonsensical. After the trouble had been put down Fairfax visited the island, a place of strategic importance, and was well entertained by the two officers.<sup>(2)</sup> There was also a report of

---

(1) The Moderate, 22-29 May 1649; A Perfect Weekly Account, 13-20 June 1649; Clarke Papers, II, p. 25; C.S.P.D. 1649-50, pp. 78, 153, 206, 247; B.M. Add. Ms. 21, 417, f.189. Both Morris and Blackborne were executed in August (ibid., f.322). Perhaps the troubles were due less to Leveller agitation as such and more to general disorder in the aftermath of disbanding. About a month before, Lambert had disbanded some three troops in the county (Perfect Occurences, 27 April-4 May 1649). C.f. the trouble in York over want of pay in mid-June (The Moderate Mercury, 14-21 June, 1649).

(2) Mercurius Elencticus, 21-28 May 1649; The Moderate Intelligencer, 17-24 May 1649; A Modest Narrative 26 May-2 June 1649; Whitelocke, Memorials, III, p. 41, 42. Mercurius Britannicus (22-29 May 1649) reported that Cromwell informed the House on 26 May that the disorder on the Isle of Wight had been quietened. Fairfax must have felt his presence urgent because he was taking his honorary degree at Oxford on 20 and 21 May along with his fellow officers Cromwell, Waller, Ingoldsby, Harrison, Sedmere, Rowe, Okey and Hewson (Mercurius Pragmaticus 22-29 May 1649) and was at Guilford around 29 May.

Leveller activity in Devon, but one suspects that there was a tendency to classify all troubles at this time with the blanket term 'Leveller'.<sup>(1)</sup>

Many of the mutineers involved in the rising escaped. Immediately after the defeat at Burford Fairfax issued an order to all sheriffs, J.P.s, high and petty constables that there should be a "hue and cry" made after them. On 21 May Parliament issued a similar order to the City authorities. But the escapees don't appear to have been rounded up. Towards the end of June it was reported from Newcastle that

"Many of the forces that are dismissed the Army (as to Burford business) came into these parts, declaring the hard usage they have lately received from some, which occasions much pity, and great heart burnings amongst the people."

There were also deserters. A report in The Moderate from Chester on 26 May said that many soldiers who had left the army rather than fight against the Levellers had passed through the city and spoken with many including members of the garrison. They attacked the backsliding from the Solemn Engagement and the Agreement presented in January, especially on such questions as the dissolution of Parliament and the removal of tithes. They felt they could not "in judgement and conscience" engage any longer. Their "civil, judicious and conscientious" behaviour was remarked on. For some the constant

---

(1) The Moderate Intelligencer, 17-24 May 1649.



delay in implementing reforms had led to disillusionment, and they opted out of the fight rather than resort to mutiny. It is a pity we cannot quantify this, but it provides a counterweight to the official line which emphasised <sup>the unity</sup> prevailing amongst that part of the army which remained loyal. As the editor of The Moderate put it :

"Methinks thinges look with an uncertain countenance,  
it is neither day nor night with poor England."

Deliverance was not yet ripe, or rather England was not yet ripe for deliverance. He wished

"that both parties might go hand in hand against the common enemy, and proceed to a settlement of this nation, upon Foundations of impartial Justice and common Freedom." (1)

If meant seriously, it was wishful thinking.

Ireton's regiment held an official enquiry into the extent of the mutiny and there was an investigation into the officers and soldiers who did not join in the revolt. (2) The Clarke Ms. Collection also has a

"List of passes granted to officers who engaged nott at Burford but since went off."

It is dated sometime in June and the names are Captain James Kirkby, Lt. Jervoy's Jeffrey, Cornet William Bush, Quarter Master Wolford Quarter Master to Captain Margery, Cornet William Raunce and Henry Johnson,

(1) Wor. Co. A.A.2.4.(53); C.J., VI, p. 213; C.S.P.D. 1649-50, p. 151; A Perfect Weekly Account, 20-28 June 1649; The Moderate, 22-29 May 1649.

(2) Clarke Ms. 16, f. 103 ff. Some of the soldiers were reported to be in London, some in Wales, and two were said to have left the revolt after three days. One name on the list of officers was Thomas Shepherd, one of the original agitators in 1647, now cornet to Captain George Hutchinson.

Lt. to Major Gibbons. The reasons why they left are not given. It could have been disillusionment or personal matters or even business affairs. In early August The Perfect Summary reported that a Lt. Meredith was cashiered from Wallingford Castle by Adjutant General Arthur Evelyn, the governor, for supporting the mutiny at Burford. After his dismissal he put in articles against Evelyn but refused to make them good and went off to Wales. The newsbook commented :

"What a miserable thing it is, that amongst men professing Godliness, joyn in one cause, some should as the Lt. did, bespatter men of honour and worth." (1)

On 7 June there was an official celebration in London of the Burford victory. Goodwin and Owen preached before the Parliament, Army and City in thanksgiving for the successful outcome. There was also a dinner in the City attended by the speaker, M.P.s, army officers and the Council of State at which Fairfax was presented with a basin and ewer of gold and Cromwell with £300 worth of plate and a purse with £200 in gold. The Moderate reported that on the way to the City one of the wheels fell off the Lt. General's coach and that some abuse was thrown at the procession. At the dinner, the officers, including Lambert now back in London after his successful spell in the north, sat at a table in the middle of the hall as if to symbolise their position in the state. (2)

---

(1) ibid., f. 113; A Perfect Summary, 30 July-6 August 1649.

(2) A Modest Narrative, 2-9 June 1649; The Moderate, 5-12 June 1649; Whitelocke, Memorials, III, p. 46-47.

After Burford there was concern that there should be no repetition of such events. On 24 May the Council of State wrote to Fairfax saying there were still elements trying to disaffect the army, not just Levellers, but also Royalists, sent from abroad, who had enlisted with the regiments. The General was asked to order all his officers to their charges to keep a close eye on them. On 28 May he was asked, in the interests of security, to ensure that all garrisons were in the hands of men with only one command. The request for officers to repair to their charges was repeated. Rumours also circulated about Robert Overton "who is not so sure to us as is supposed". Lt. Colonel Salmon was to be sent to keep a watch on him. This was probably an unfair slander against an individualistic man who as we have seen basically adhered to the official army line. On 5 June Fairfax was again asked to order his officers to their commands.<sup>(1)</sup> It probably had only a temporary effect, if any at all. Such orders had been issued by Fairfax in the past and were to be made often enough in the future. However, the order coincided with a sort of military terror imposed on London. On 5 June it was reported that soldiers had been quartered in London and Westminster

"that they might pry into ye affections of the people; where there is a desperate disease, there must be as desperate a cure for remedy."

A fear of trouble from Royalists seems to have provoked this action.<sup>(2)</sup>

---

(1) C.S.P.D. 1649-50, pp. 156-157, 159-160, 174.

(2) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, f.24v.

But disorder lingered in the regiments, particularly Stubber's and Reynolds', both designed for Ireland. There was also trouble in Rich's regiment, although he seems to have been over-reacting and exaggerating when he suggested that what appear to have been outrages on the civilian population were orchestrated by radicals sent from London.<sup>(1)</sup> In July Fairfax ordered that no soldier was to be enlisted without a certificate saying that he had not been cashiered. The practicality and effectiveness of such a measure must be open to doubt.<sup>(2)</sup>

There is evidence to suggest that the Leveller rising caused quite a shock in both government and army circles. One observer felt that Royalist elements were behind much of the trouble. He thought that too much leniency towards domestic enemies had helped weaken the new government and strongly favoured a policy of liquidating such enemies. However, attempts to win over Sir William Waller and Richard Browne, both prisoners, to support the new government were welcomed in army circles.<sup>(3)</sup> In the aftermath of the Leveller rising there was also a re-think about the way the revolution was proceeding. There was talk of a dissolution of Parliament. There was also an atmosphere of paranoia. On 26 June it was reported that there were many Judases at work and much confidential information was being passed on to enemies. It was alleged that one of the chief traitors was Cromwell's

(1) ibid., pp. 162-163, 174, 233, 238.

(2) The Modest Messenger, 23-30 July 1649.

(3) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, f. 25, 25v, 26v-27. C.f. Worden, Rump, pp. 196-197 for other evidence of attempts to reconcile Independents and Presbyterians, although Dr. Worden concentrates more on attempts to breach religious differences.

secretary Robert Spavin. The author felt that this confirmed the need to liquidate more homebred enemies. The English Revolution was not without its advocates of a reign of terror. He commented

"we are resolved to fight it out to the last man, against any enemy that shall oppose us whether at home or abroad."

He said the army were faithful and were receiving additional pay.<sup>(1)</sup>

Burford also cleared the way for the Irish expedition to proceed. Four horse regiments (Ireton's, Scrope's, Horton's and Lambert's), four foot (Hewson's, Ewer's, Deane's and Cooke's) and five troops of Okey's dragoons had been chosen to go to Ireland by lot on 20 April. In the end only Ireton's and Horton's went from the horse, together with Reynolds's and a new double regiment for Cromwell which was split into two when it reached Ireland. All the foot went as well as six regiments under Venables, Tothill, Huncks, Ireton, Stubber and Phayre.<sup>(2)</sup> Of the two horse regiments, <sup>which were</sup> nominated but did not go, Scrope's (whose members were the instigators of the mutiny) was disbanded. Scrope, an Oxfordshire man, remained as governor of Bristol from October 1649 until 1655. He was executed in 1660 as a regicide, a cruel end for a pathetic man who had been one of the featherweights of the English Revolution.<sup>(3)</sup> There appears

- (1) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15, ff. 27, 27v-28v. Q.v. Worden, Rump, pp. 200-201 for evidence that at least an adjournment was discussed seriously at this time. For Spavin q.v. also Aylmer (State's Servants, p. 155). The evidence referred to above suggests that there was more to Spavin's case than just counterfeiting Cromwell's signature.
- (2) Firth and Davies, pp. XXI-XXII. For Ireton's foot regiment, probably raised in the summer of 1649, q.v. ibid., p. 647 ff.
- (3) Q.v. D.N.B.

to have been controversy surrounding the selection of Lambert's regiment which perhaps gives us an insight into future political alliances. Just over a week after the lots had been drawn, Margetts wrote to Adam Daynes that he was sorry the lot had fallen on Lambert's but he implied that Lambert intended to go. On 6 May, however, Margetts smelt a rat :

"I wonder they should put him (Lambert) out of the north where he is so useful, I feare it is a designe of Cr: rather to advance Sir Art."

On 16 June he wrote even more forcefully that Lambert's selection was displeasing to all parties, especially with the report that Haselrig, then governor of Newcastle, was to be his successor, "for they say he will sett the north all on a fire". Margetts was afraid that Lambert's departure was designed to satisfy and advance interests other than the public service.<sup>(1)</sup> Clearly, Sir Arthur's unpopularity was not just limited to the Lilburne family. Eventually, on 18 July, it was decided that Lambert's regiment would not go.<sup>(2)</sup> No reason was given. Firth and Davies suggest that it was because both he and his regiment could not be spared from the north of England.<sup>(3)</sup> It could also be that Margetts's warnings were taken seriously.

The Irish service was never really popular with most of the men nor with many of the officers, hence Cromwell's long exhortatory speech to the Army Council in March. The unpopularity probably arose

---

(1) B.M. Add. Ms. 21, 417, ff. 122, 129, 134, 9.

(2) C.S.P.D. 1649-50, p. 238.

(3) Firth and Davies, p. XXII.

from a mixture of general dislike and of genuine concern for what would happen to the reform programme, and at a more materialistic level to their pay arrears, with a large part of the army and its two leading figures far from Westminster. Just after lots had been drawn it was rumoured that Hewson and Scrope

"murmer, knowing how ill their fellows fare  
that are gone over for Dublin." (1)

Parliament tried to make the service more attractive and also to allow a way out for those not wishing to go, for there was no point in having the regiments cluttered up with unwilling men. I differ from Dr. Christopher Hill the most recent exponent of the view that radical regiments and men were consciously removed from the centre of political activity. He argues that "repeated efforts" were made to "rid the Army of its radical elements by packing them off to Ireland, Scotland, the navy, Jamaica". From the purely military point of view this would have been an unwise policy. Moreover, deciding who was 'radical' and by whom would also have raised huge difficulties. Dr. Hill does not answer these questions.<sup>(2)</sup> Those not going to Ireland were to have the same proportion of arrears paid them as those engaging, should they wish to leave the army. On 19 June Fairfax issued an order to all regiments that were to remain in England that any officer or soldier in those regiments willing to serve in Ireland could do so. Replacements for such volunteers were not to be made until orders were received from Fairfax, and then no one who had left a regiment designed for Ireland

---

(1) Carte, I, p. 282.

(2) Hill, God's Englishman, p. 183.

was to be re-admitted to the army. This was not surprising in view of the riotous behaviour of some regiments. Stubber's said they would not go to Ireland "unless over a golden Bridg " and "that the wood is not yet planted that shall carry them over to Ireland". A large part of Horton's regiment was disbanded for refusing to go to Ireland and Major Walter Bethell and Captains Samuel Gardiner and Benjamin Burgess also refused to go hoping for some better command in England. The whole expedition in its early days had a very makeshift, disorganised character.<sup>(1)</sup> Cromwell had to assure his troops there would be no embarkation until money came for their support. Eventually, on 13 August, a month after his departure from London in great state, he sailed for Ireland.<sup>(2)</sup>

The departure of the regiments for service in Ireland was to have important repercussions on the subsequent political evolution of the army. It meant that for the first time there existed an important physical division within the army. This undermined the close contacts between the regiments which had been possible between 1647 and 1649 and which had enabled the army to become such a decisive political force. The splitting up of the army, which was not done for political reasons but for military ones, first to Ireland and then to Scotland,

---

(1) C.J., VI, p. 234; The Moderate Mercury, 21-28 June 1649 for the resolutions of the Council of War for billet money and additional pay; A Perfect Weekly Account, 13-20 June 1649; The Moderate, 26 June-3 July, 31 July-7 August, 7-14 August, 1649; The Modest Messenger, 23-30 July 1649.

(2) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, I, pp. 96, 105.



with other forces serving abroad later on, meant that the officers and regiments in and around London came to assume the leading position in army politics. For most of the 1650's the forces distant from London tended to follow the lead of their colleagues in London. However, the physical divisions of the regiments ultimately decreased army unity and led to political divisions within it so much so that by late 1659 the possibility of the army in Scotland and the part of the army in England adhering to the Lambert/Disborowe/Fleetwood faction taking to the field against each other became a real one.

However, even with some of the regiments setting off somewhat reluctantly for Ireland, the army was not going to cease pursuing its demands for reform. The official army line remained that of <sup>a</sup>working co-operation with the Rump. It was only later on that the army became disillusioned with the House. It was the line favoured by Cromwell, who in April had been making moves towards reconciliation with the Presbyterians. He said in Parliament that he would play his part in seeing that Presbyterian church government was established. <sup>(1)</sup> These overtures to the Presbyterians were as we have seen supported in army circles. <sup>(2)</sup> Perhaps this policy seemed attractive at this time as the Engagement and war against Scotland had not yet come decisively between the Presbyterians

---

(1) For a fuller discussion of this episode q.v. Worden, Rump, pp. 191-192, 196-197; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, I, p. 64.

(2) N.L.S. Adv. Ms. 33.7.15., f. 27.

and the supporters of the Commonwealth. But even without these issues the execution of the King still remained a serious impediment to the chances of the policy succeeding. In the army there were efforts to ensure that the army's professed commitment to reform did not suffer as a result of these overtures.

In July various letters were sent from an unofficial committee at Whitehall to various garrisons and congregations written in godly language urging a mutual correspondence. One such letter, dated 3 July, was signed by 30 individuals who appear to have been associated with the army either as officers or preachers.<sup>(1)</sup> The signatories were : Colonel John Barksted, Abraham Cox, Issac Knight, Lt. Colonel William Goffe, Major John Pearson, Richard Strongham, Cornet Henry Denne, Captain Arthur Young, Lt. Colonel Robert Barrow, Zacharias Shepherd, John Lovell, Edward Mathew, Colonel Alban Cox, Colonel Robert Phyre, Captain John Savage, Edward Sexby, Henry Darus, Major George Seda scu Josua Ward, Ralph Prenks, Major Francis White, Captain Thomas Rawlins, William Allen, Henry Pater, John Spittlehouse, Colonel John Okey, Captain Richard Sankey, Captain John Spencer, Lt. Edmund Chillenden, and Thomas Whighte. It is an interesting list, including such radical figures from 1647 as Sexby, White and Allen, future Fifth Monarchists like Spittlehouse, Spencer and Chillenden, and Okey one of the Three Colonels. The sort of answer they were

---

(1) Clarke Ms. 18, f.8 ff.

getting can be judged from that of the congregated Church at Sandwich, dated the 3rd day of the 4th month. This declared that the army had been the Lord's chosen instrument to destroy those who fought for that "abominable interest" in the Civil Wars and that they were persuaded

"that God will make the Army further Instrumentall to carry on God's work in these nations (if not elsewhere) to destroy and bring downe any whoever that shall engage for that late tyrants' interest." (1)

Clearly there could be no backsliding from the basic programme of reform outlined in the Remonstrance and Agreement so far, at least, as this important section of the army was concerned. Thus, petitions of support and loyalty to the Rump from some regiments did not amount to support of the move towards conservatism in the Parliament as Dr. Worden implies.<sup>(2)</sup> The army remained intent on seeing reforms carried out but at this stage was prepared to defer them until the threat of external and internal enemies had been abated.

On 7 July the officers who were to lead the Irish expedition petitioned Parliament. They urged the House to use its authority to stamp out ungodliness, such as swearing, drunkenness and abuse of the Lord's day. They wanted all legal proceedings to be in English, justice to be speedy and cheap, and for local men to arbitrate at hundred level in disputes gratis. Only if they could

---

(1) ibid., f. 42 ff; c.f. f7, a letter from Goffe, Lawrence and Pearson from Whitehall to Evelyn, governor of Wallingford and Captain Wagstaffe enclosing some papers and hoping they will be willing to further the good work.

(2) Worden, Rump, p. 197.

not agree were cases to go to a higher court. All property including incumbrances and alienations should be registered to help commutative justice. Tithes were to be abolished and replaced by a local tax of 2/- per pound on land and 1/6 on homes. This tax was to be used for poor relief as well. All public debts should be paid before gratuities to particular friends were bestowed, a criticism of the sometimes lavish rewards given to individuals for state service; this included, of course, figures such as Fairfax and Cromwell. The public finances were to be audited and misdemeanours in this respect punished. Finally, those imprisoned for debt were to have their cases dealt with more quickly. The petitioners made very specific demands with most of which the Levellers would have agreed, but the assumption behind the petition was that both army and Parliament were working together in a common cause. Such contentions issues as the dissolution of Parliament were avoided. The petitioners said that if these things were granted

"we shall depart with joy, resolving in the strength of God, to own and stand by you in all just things against any opposition whatsoever."

There was no ultimatum, merely a request. The petition was signed by Colonel George Cooke, Richard Le Hunt, at that time in Cromwell's Life Guard, Richard Lawrence, Marshal General of horse, Lt. Colonel Daniel Axtell, Colonels Issac Ewer, John Hewson and Peter Stubber, Thomas Goddard, Captain Peter Wallis, Colonel Robert Phayre, Thomas Beecher, William Throgmorton and John Murdman. The petitioners were

thanked and the contents were ordered to be dealt with by the committee in charge of business to be done before the proposed adjournment. It was to report before the House adjourned. With an eye to public relations, the House ordered the petition to be printed along with its votes on it.<sup>(1)</sup> The petition was probably intended to speak for all those going to Ireland.

At about the same time Captain Jubbs of Hewson's regiment presented a petition to Fairfax which included many of the grievances in the officers petition but in language a little less temperate. It was felt the petition should not have been given to Fairfax but to the Lord Governor of Ireland as the regiment was intended for Ireland and was therefore under his responsibility.<sup>(2)</sup> In the middle of August an important petition was presented to Parliament in favour of greater religious toleration and law reform. The petition, approved by Fairfax and the Council of Officers, bears the date 15 June, most probably a mistake for 15 August, and was presented on 16 August by Pride, Goffe and others. The petitioners were thanked and told that the House had the particulars in the petition under consideration and had ordered this to be speeded up.<sup>(3)</sup> Thus, the attempts at bridge

- (1) E563(13), The Humble Petition of the Officers Engaged for Ireland to the Supreme Authority of England; C.J., VI, p. 254; Whitelocke, Memorials, III, pp. 66-67. For the background to the committee to which the petition was referred and the importance of Marten on it q.v. Worden, Rump, pp. 200-202.
- (2) The Kingdom's Faithful and Impartial Scout, 6-13 July 1649.
- (3) E569(22), The Petition of His Excellency ... and the Council of Officers for the Recalling of all Penal Laws made against Private Meetings, the punishing of prophaneness, as swearing, etc...; C.J., VI, p. 280; Whitelocke, Memorials, III, pp. 87-88. Pride and Goffe had co-operated before when along with Colonel Edward Whalley, Okey, Waldine Lagoe and Henry Whalley, the Judge Advocate, they signed a testimonial on behalf of John Canne for service to the state (S.P.46/95, f.156).

building between Independents and Presbyterians were unlikely to succeed. The Presbyterians would have had to give more concessions than they were willing to in order to satisfy the army. Cromwell despite his overtures in April seems to have realised this. He wrote to the House supporting the army's call for religious toleration.<sup>(1)</sup>

Throughout the summer fears of renewed Leveller activity in the army persisted. On 25 July the Council of State ordered Thomas Scott, then in charge of intelligence, to acquaint the Lord General with information that the Levellers intended to seize Oxford. Fairfax was to be requested to have a care for the place and to have the prisoners of war, especially Colonel Eyres, still in detention after Burford who was strongly suspected of inciting the garrison to mutiny, removed.<sup>(2)</sup> The Moderate reported that Eyres and his fellow prisoners were still denouncing the Rump as a mock Parliament or private juncto. As for themselves, they claimed they had only been promoting what had been declared to be the people's cause. They saw themselves as the inheritors and guardians of the revolutionary ardour of 1647.<sup>(3)</sup> Eyres was in fact removed from Oxford to Warwick Castle, whose governor was Captain Joseph Hawksworth.<sup>(4)</sup> By the end of August a newsletter, alarmed at the supposed increase in Leveller influence over the

- 
- (1) Abbott, Writings and Speeches, II, p. 204; Worden, Rump, p. 208.
- (2) C.S.P.D. 1649-50, p. 248; Clarke Ms. 181 (unbound box 1), order of Council of State 25 July 1649.
- (3) The Moderate, 7-14 August 1649.
- (4) C.S.P.D. 1649-50, pp. 251, 254, 365, 542; A Complete Collection of State Trials, London, 1776, II, p. 51.

soldiery, reported rumours that "the remaining parts of the army (are to be drawn off) to a further distance" and supplied "by an auxilliary of persons chosen, whose arms are to be provided by the abler sort and carried by those as the more confiding".<sup>(1)</sup> There had also been a petition from South Wales, asking for Marten to be appointed military commander in Wales and for officers to be appointed as the petitioners thought fit and maintained at their charge. Fairfax rejected this on the grounds that Marten was an M.P. and member of the Council of State and that he did not have the necessary regiment of horse. The petitioners were said to have found this unsatisfactory, as well they might. Fairfax's reply was pretty transparent given the fact that a few of his officers Constable, Harrison, Ireton, Rich, Cromwell and Haselrig were both officers and M.P.s. The real reason was more likely that Fairfax did not want to give Marten a possible power base, especially in view of his past association with radicals. In the end Harrison was appointed to this important position which had become vacant because of Horton's selection for Ireland. Harrison built up some close links with the saints in South Wales during the next few years.<sup>(2)</sup>

The expected outbreak of trouble came in September. In fact, it amounted to very little, but at the time it appeared greater than it was. The trouble was confined to Oxford. The regiment stationed

---

(1) Bell, Fairfax Correspondence, II, p. 98, Thomas White to — 27 August, 1649.

(2) The Moderate, 10-17 July, 1649; The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 17-24 July, 1649; Mercurius Pragmaticus, 24-31 July 1649; c.f. A Perfect Diurnal, 6-13 August 1649 which reported the need for more forces in the area. as Parliament's enemies were "very high heere" especially after the departure of Horton's regiment.

there was Ingoldsby's, and as with previous Leveller stirrings, London Leveller publications were distributed amongst the soldiery. We have evidence of this from John Lilburne's trial, held later in the year. Lilburne had met with three soldiers of Rich's regiment (the regiment was then on what was termed 'guard duty' in London and the South East) John Tooke, John Skinner and Thomas Lewis, the last of whom he was already familiar with. Lilburne gave Lewis a copy of his An Outcry of the Young Men and Apprentices of London which was addressed to the soldiery and called on them to remove

"those Iron Bonds and Yokes of Oppression that have thus enforced us to complain and address ourselves thus to your Consideration."

Not that Lewis really needed to be given a copy as, according to his own testimony he intended to buy one anyway. There was also an attempt to send An Impeachment of High Treason against Oliver Cromwell and his son-in-law Henry Ireton, which appeared on 16 August, to Eyres at Warwick. It was given to the governor who forwarded it not to headquarters but to William Purefoy the M.P., and it was used in evidence against Lilburne. Further evidence of Leveller propaganda can be found in the Worcester College collection. A Letter or an Epistle to all well-minded men in England, Wales and Ireland, and more particularly to the Lord General and my fellow soldiers in or out of the Army, which cannot be dated precisely but from internal evidence would appear to date from this time, attacked Cromwell's "kingly interest". It suggested that the Lt. General was laying snares to destroy Cornet (sic) Joyce and Robert Spavin who had been Cromwell's secretary. It



contrasted the way that those who try to make good the army's engagements were treated, usually with the death sentence, with a "great one" or favourite of a faction like Robert Hammond who had been rewarded by Parliament despite his disobeying the General's orders in 1648 when in command of the Isle of Wight. The author felt Cromwell, with a broken Parliament, remodelled Council of State, compliant General, an army in Ireland and England, and many reformed Churches in the City and elsewhere supporting him, was now more powerful than even the Kings of England had been. (1)

However, it was the Apprentice's Outcry which seems to have had the most effect on the mutineers at Oxford. Their aims were a mixture of general and specific, in line with Leveller demands, and included the re-establishment of the Army Council with agitators (one of the ringleaders of the Oxford mutiny was John Radman, one of the regiments' agitators in 1647, who still kept up contacts with the London Levellers), the fulfilment of the engagements of June 1647, the enforcement of the Agreement of the People (the Leveller one of 1 May), the removal of tithes and excise, and law reform. It emerged that some of them also favoured a restoration of the Stuarts. (2) As

---

(1) E572(13), An Outcry of the Youngmen and Apprentices ...; E508(20), An Impeachment of Treason ...; A Complete Collection of State Trials, II, pp. 47-51; Gregg, Freeborn John, p. 287 where the three soldiers are wrongly said to have been of Ingoldsby's regiment. Merriman was their captain and he was in Rich's regiment; Wor. Co. AA.2.4(21), A Letter or an Epistle ...; for Spavin q.v. above.

(2) Bodl. Tanner Ms. 56, f.99; The Moderate, 18-25 September 1649.

we have seen Leveller-Royalist links had been suspected earlier in the year. The mutineers were very confident that they would have a field army within a week made up of forces from other garrisons and from countrymen in Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire, the west and Kent. They set up their own agents and Council which according to one report consisted mostly of private soldiers but also included some "head peeces lately come from London".<sup>(1)</sup> The role of the London Levellers remains unclear but there are serious doubts as to whether they unanimously supported the rising. Lilburne's two pamphlets and his talk with the three soldiers suggest he favoured it, although another report hinted at doubts and said that efforts were being made

"to sweeten Lilborne and he begins to hearken which is more than half the conquest." (2)

The other principal leaders, Walwyn, Prince and Overton, were still in the Tower. One newsbook refers to "the moderate party of those called Levellers" and names Major (Robert Cobbett) and Major Petty, probably Maximilian Petty, although, he was never made a Major. These two were said to have gone to Oxford to inform the mutineers

"that things are come in a good way of composure, and that this action of theirs will not be owned by them; and that if they persist they will joyne against them, and by fair meanes they try for the diswading of them." (3)

---

(1) An Impartiall Intelligencer, 5-12 September 1649.

(2) Bell, Fairfax Correspondence, II, p. 102.

(3) Perfect Occurences, 7-14 September 1649.

This story ties in with other reports that there were meetings between M.P.s, army officers, and Levellers about the Agreement and the petition of 11 September and other matters

"for the better understanding of each Interest, the better to prevent a speedy ruine with (which) threatens all if the common enemy should take advantage of the great breach between, and for the better carrying on of this business."

The meeting decided to move the House to give Walwyn, Overton and Prince the liberty of the Tower, ending their close confinement. This decision was reported to the Council of State which ordered Scott to report it to the House. <sup>(1)</sup> There is no reason to doubt the serious intent of these meetings and that it was hoped some positive results would emerge.

A large force, consisting of <sup>six</sup> / companies of Fairfax's foot, six companies of Pride's regiment, five companies of Okey's dragoons, and Cox's regiment, was sent to suppress the mutiny, but in the end they were not needed as the mutineers were defeated by the action of Captain Wagstaffe and his fellow officers. <sup>(2)</sup> The ringleaders were court martialled by a court of 16 senior officers including Lambert, as president, Okey, Pride, Robert Lilburne, Ingoldsby, Barksted and the governor of Wallingford. <sup>(3)</sup> Three men were condemned

- (1) A Perfect Duirnal, 3-10 September 1649; Whitelocke, Memorials, III, p. 100; C.S.P.D. 1649-50, p. 299, this gives the date of the Council's order concerning the three men as 4 September, that is prior to the mutiny and thus in keeping with Cobbett's and Petty's words to the mutineers; c.f. Worden, Rump, p. 213. Gregg ( Freeborn John, p. 239) overestimates the chances of the mutiny's success.
- (2) The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 4-11 September 1649; The Moderate, 11-18 September 1649; A Modest Narrative, 8-15 September 1649.
- (3) Perfect Occurences, 7-14 September 1649, 14-21 September 1649; The Moderate, 18-25 September 1649; A Modest Narrative, 8-15 September 1649.

to be shot, Biggs, Piggen and Hayden, but the latter was reprieved. The others were apparently shot by their comrades which was said to have been a chastening experience for the regiment. Some men were forced to run the gauntlet, and Captain John Shrimpton and Ensign Scott were cashiered for not helping Ingoldsby to reduce the mutiny when called upon to do so. Radman managed to get away. However, some of the newsbooks said that sergeant Radman and two soldiers arrived in Poole garrison speaking freely and openly about their part in the mutiny and that they were arrested. Perfect Occurences said the sergeant was not Radman but one Saith, sergeant to Lt. Colonel Kelsey. Lambert is described as having acted "with much discretion and moderation", and was afterwards entertained by the Vice-Chancellor and other University figures and given a pair of gloves. Similar presents were made to the other officers. Some civilians were ordered to be tried by oyer and terminer, but there numbers were minimal. (1)

The authorities had certainly taken the mutiny very seriously. On 8 September the Council of State wrote to Fairfax saying that the Commonwealth's enemies had been too successful in

---

(1) The Moderate, 18-25 September 1649; A Perfect Weekly Account, 19-26 September 1649; The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 18-25 September 1649; Mercurius Pragmaticus, 17-24 September 1649; The Kingdom's Faithful Scout, 14-21 September 1649. The sources dealing with the mutiny itself, including Wagstaffe's account, are mostly reprinted in C. H. Firth, 'The Mutiny of Col. Ingoldsby's Regiment at Oxford in September 1649', in, The Proceedings of the Oxford Archaeological and Historical Society, N.S., IV, 1884; Shrimpton was reinstated in 1659 (Firth and Davies, p. 383); The Moderate, 11-18 September 1649; The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 18-25 September 1649; Perfect Occurences, 21-28 September 1649.

reducing the army.

"Their design is laid throughout the nation, and although it only appears as yet at Oxford, they are active in other places."

Fairfax was asked to urge his officers to keep a watchful eye on their men, to prevent them from succumbing to radical propoganda and that the army should be ready to go on duty when called upon. Despite earlier orders about officers being with their regiments, both Ingoldsby and his Lt. Colonel, Kelsey, had been absent from Oxford when the mutiny started.<sup>(1)</sup> The situation appeared graver than it was, because of a rising led by the lead miners in Derbyshire in which local Levellers were involved.<sup>(2)</sup> On 8 September Lambert wrote to Colonels Charles Fairfax, Bright and Manleverer in the north that military force should be used to prevent meetings of ex-soldiers. There had been trouble in Yorkshire earlier in the year over pay arrears.<sup>(3)</sup> There were other reports of Leveller outbursts or attempted risings in Staffordshire, Windsor and Carlisle, where there was a protest over the Oxford executions, but they do not appear to have been of any great magnitude.<sup>(4)</sup> The Oxford mutiny was not as great a threat to army

- 
- (1) C.S.P.D. 1649-50, pp. 303-304; Bodl. Tanner Ms. 56, f. 99.
- (2) Brailsford, Levellers, pp. 565-567.
- (3) B.M. Add. Ms. 36, 996, f. 100; c.f. ibid., f. 94, same to Colonel Fairfax mentioning the Oxford mutiny.
- (4) The Man in the Moon, 26 September-10 October 1649; C.S.P.D. 1649-50, p. 312; The Moderate, 18-25 September 1649.

unity as the May rising had been. By way of a post-script to the rising, Ingoldsby's regiment sent a Declaration of loyalty from Bristol on 29 September. They pledged obedience to Parliament, to the General and to others in authority over them, and said they would stand or fall with them in the cause of peace. They urged their fellow soldiers to be careful lest they became ensnared as they had been. (1)

Oxford marked the final fling of the Levellers on any appreciable scale. It also marked the end of the particular type of radicalism that had characterised the army since early 1647, that is one based on Leveller aims and aspirations and largely taking the form of an officer/soldier split with some of the officers sympathising with or even supporting the men. With the decisive defeat of the Levellers in the autumn of 1649 this brand of radicalism was transformed. Energies that would have been released in political activity between 1647 and 1649 sought different outlets, notably religious ones. This does not mean that radical politics - and radical is here defined as anything to the left of the official army line - came to an end;

---

(1) Clarke Ms. 181 (unbound box 1); Mercurious Pragmaticus (30 October-6 November 1649) printed the declaration, but said it had been contrived later than the 29 September and only represented the views of one tenth of the soldiers and that it was designed as a precedent for the other regiments to follow. The Clarke Mss. prove the first part of this assertion to be wrong. The second part is more plausible although one cannot be as precise as Pragmaticus on numbers. C.f. The Moderate (11-18 September 1649) which reports the transfer of Cromwell's horse regiment to Disborowe. At the rendezvous, prior to the regiment's marching to the west country, it was said "much love and affection was shewed on both sides, when the Colonel appeared in the Head of them".

far from it. Cromwell always had to be careful that he had the support of the army during the political twists and turns of the next few years. Besides, the official army line, as laid out in the Remonstrance and officers' Agreement, was quite radical in itself in relation to preceeding constitutional thought and practice and to previous policies. It was also radical by the standards of many of the traditional ruling class, who still remained to be won over to the Revolution, even by those of many in the Rump itself. But what makes the autumn of 1649 such a turning point is that it marks the virtual liquidation of rank and file radicalism. The radicalism of the 1650's is much more closely associated with the officers, by 1659 almost exclusively so.

## II.

SEPTEMBER 1649-APRIL 1653

The Levellers in September 1649 were small fry compared with the much greater threat of a foreign backed attempt to restore the Stuarts. Ireland was dealt with pretty thoroughly in 1649, but this still left Scotland in many ways possibly a better base than Ireland to launch such an attempt.<sup>(1)</sup> The problem was not to be finally solved until two years after the Oxford mutiny with the battle of Worcester in September 1651. Until then it is no exaggeration to say that the young Commonwealth had to struggle hard for survival. Contemporaries saw it that way as well. Colonel John Jones, one of the Irish commissioners and confidant of Harrison, wrote after the "crowning mercy" of Worcester

"let the Commonwealth have some time to take roote in the interests of men, before it be transplanted on another stocke." (2)

Thus, until Worcester the relations between army and Parliament were governed by a strong mutual desire to keep things on as even a keel as possible. The army didn't mind manning the ship of state while Parliament kept its hand on the rudder, but it was still determined that a start should be made to introduce the long-awaited reforms once

(1) The army in Ireland will be dealt with in subsequent sections.

(2) J. Mayer (ed.), 'Inedited Letters of Cromwell, Colonel Jones, Bradshaw and other regicides', in Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, New Series, I, 1860-62, p. 191.



the storm had passed and the seas had become calm. During the crisis years, 1649-1651, there were plenty of reminders of this.

One of the immediate results of the Oxford mutiny and related Leveller agitation was the imposition of press censorship. It was aimed at both Levellers and Royalists who had taken advantage of the considerable press freedom that had existed during the 1640's. At first the government was quite successful in enforcing the act, but gradually it relaxed its tight control and attacks on the authorities appeared in the press once more. (1)

Another consequence of the mutiny was the re-arrest of John Lilburne, on 27 September, and his trial at Guildhall the following month. Just before his trial his brother Robert was instrumental in proposing a deal between John and the Council of State. He presented an offer from John to leave England and become a colonist in the West Indies, following in the footsteps of earlier radicals who had sought freedom in the New World. Anyone wanting to go with him was to be allowed to do so and, assuming they were soldiers or ex-soldiers, they were to have their arrears or monies owing them paid, while those who were impoverished were to be given an allowance from the Council of State. Robert was called before the Council, presumably to put forward the case for the proposals, but they were not taken up, perhaps unfortunately, from the government's point of view, as it might have

---

(1) A.N.B. Cotton, 'London Newsbooks in the Civil War', Oxford D.Phil., 1972, pp. 321, 324; Worden, Rump, pp. 403-404; J. Frank, The Beginnings of the English Newspaper, Cambridge, Massachuetts, 1961, pp. 197-198.

saved them from the embarrassing outcome of the trial which showed that the seventeenth century had much to learn about 'show' trials. Robert's motives for coming to his brother's aid, so openly and apparently for the first time, are open to speculation. Perhaps he felt that John's exile would provide the best way out for both the government and his brother. Robert ran the risk of tarnishing his own reputation and standing with the government, and his career prospects in the army, by appearing with John and his solicitor at the bar in Guildhall on the second day of the trial.<sup>(1)</sup> John Lilburne lived to fight another day in the courts, but his importance in politics was from now on minimal, as indeed was that of the Levellers as a whole.

Three of the most important men in the army, Cromwell, Ireton and Harrison, were out of London; the Lt. General and the Commissary General in Ireland, and Harrison for part of the time in Wales where he was now in command. At the beginning of October he received a delegation from the well-affected in South Wales at Cardiff to discuss the problems of the area. He made a favourable impression

---

(1) Clarke Ms 16, f. 120; B.M. 669 f.14 (85), The Innocent Man's Second Proffer made unto his present Adversaries, October 22 1649. And Communicated unto them by his loving brother Colonel Robert Lilburne; C.S.P.D. 1649-50, p. 356; A Complete Collection of State Trials, II, p. 39. News of John's offer to go into exile reached the north quickly (B.M. Add. Ms. 21,418, ff.97, 99.) Accounts of the trial exist in Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, I, pp. 164-169; Gregg, Freeborn John, pp. 293-302; Brailsford, Levellers, pp. 582-604.

on them and they were said to be

"very sensible of God's mercy in sending him amongst them, and it is like to produce good effect." (1)

But there were still important army figures in London such as Fairfax, Lambert and Pride, who was elected to the City's Common Council in December, at the same time as John Lilburne.<sup>(2)</sup> According to one Royalist newsbook, Lambert had been left behind when Cromwell and Ireton went to Ireland "to supervise and instruct the Generall" which was patently untrue as Lambert was only one of several leading officers at this time, but it is an indication of how he was beginning to catch the public eye.<sup>(3)</sup> There were rumours from as early as August that Fairfax was under pressure from his wife to declare against the present and past proceedings of the new government.<sup>(4)</sup> The other important army figures were men like Whalley, Barksted, Fleetwood, Staines, Grosvenor, Goffe and White, all of whom were quite busy in army administrative matters during late 1649 and early 1650.<sup>(5)</sup> No doubt they also kept an eye upon what was happening in Parliament and received first hand information about this from those officers who were also M.P.s.

---

(1) Perfect Occurences, 5-12 October 1649.

(2) Whitelocke, Memorials, III, p. 131.

(3) Mercurius Elencticus, 10-17 September 1649.

(4) Mercurius Pragmaticus, 14-21 August 1649.

(5) For the administrative activity of these officers q.v. Clarke Ms. 69 (Fairfax's Order Book), unfoliated, under the relevant months. They dealt with all aspects of army affairs.

The army did not remain isolated from external pressure. On 11 October the Army Council held a meeting at which some 20 letters from various parts of the country were discussed. They were written after several days of humiliation and seeking the Lord by the well-affected, in conjunction with garrison commanders and regimental Colonels. There had also been a day of humiliation in the army at Whitehall at the end of September, a sort of post-mortem into the Oxford affair, at which the continuance of divine blessing was sought and atheism and prophaneness condemned. It was felt that licence had increased too much amongst both officers and men. This was not the way that the official government newsbook Several Proceedings chose to view the army. One editorial commenting on the fact that seven private soldiers had been punished for obstructing J.P.s in Middlesex said :

"It hath beene observed, that in the world there was never knowne so civilised an Army, but no wonder, since the care of the Generall, and his Officers are such to punish the Souldiers according to the merit of their Offences, without the least partiality." (1)

The letters presented on 11 October asked for law reform, the auditing of public accounts and the abolition of tithes, and were debated for two hours. There was also a discussion about keeping the army constantly recruited and in a fighting posture to prevent foreign invasion and for the suppression of domestic disorder. Mercurius Elencticus claimed

---

(1) The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, 25 September-2 October 1649; Several Proceedings, 19-26 October 1649.

that this amounted to demands for the preservation of the power of the sword. Perhaps indirectly it did. One of the chief participants at the meeting was Pride, a champion of law reform, who said

"It was wonderfull to think how the Spiritt of God moved in the hearts of these People, and how it met every where to finish the worke of the Lord."

Fine words, but were they capable of being transformed into something concrete? The seeming reluctance of the Rump to proceed with reform measures continuously dogged relations between army and Parliament. The officers resolved to meet every Thursday to try to satisfy the demands of the well-affected.<sup>(1)</sup> The letters were probably welcomed

---

(1) Perfect Occurences, 5-12 October 1649; Mercurius Elencticus, 8-15 October 1649; Mercurius Pragmaticus, 9-16 October 1649; Worden, Rump, 215. It is difficult to see what Dr. Worden means when he says "the efforts of both army officers and M.P's to stamp out Leveller agitation were unsuccessful", so far as the army is concerned especially if, as appears to be the case, he equates law reform and demands for the abolition of tithes with Leveller agitation. Many of the Leveller demands and the official army ones overlapped, especially these two. What divided the Levellers from the official army line was more the means than the ends. In terms of the Rump Pride was a radical, in terms of the army a Grandee, but he was no Leveller. But to be fair to Dr. Worden, the army leadership probably remained anxious for a while, lest there was a recurrence of discontent. The evidence of Pyne must be used cautiously. He probably refers to generalised discontent rather than to a clear alignment of some of the soldiery with the London Levellers along the lines of 1647 (Worden, Rump, p. 215; H.M.C. Leyborne-Popham, p. 51). The following year Captain Thomas Lilburne was tried on suspicion of stirring up the soldiery against the officers, a charge he refuted successfully, (ibid., pp. 56-57). Thomas was a cousin of John and Robert and became an enthusiastic supporter of the Protectorate. For further details q.v. biographical appendix.

at headquarters and were designed to be part of a regular correspondence between the officers and military and civilian opinion makers in the localities we have seen, such a correspondence had in fact been in progress since earlier in the year.

An important step in trying to secure the Commonwealth was the imposition of the Engagement, which was first imposed upon M.P.s, then on officers both civil and military, and then on the nation as a whole. It was subscribed to by the army without too much difficulty. By early November most of the officers in London had engaged and letters were being sent to the chief officers in all regiments and garrisons for subscriptions. When the returns came in they were reported fully in the Perfect Diurnal.<sup>(1)</sup> However, there were exceptions. The most notable was Fairfax whose determination not to subscribe became obvious in January 1650. Mercurius Pragmaticus thought it immaterial whether he signed or not "for truly hee is Rebell faithfull enough", but other Royalist newsbooks seized on the affair, exaggerating its importance. They even suggested that Cromwell was being sent for to get Fairfax to give up his commission which was the last thing anyone wanted. But it was hinted at that Cromwell was to be recalled on the pretext of advising about Ireland, but also to help solve the minor crisis caused by Fairfax's decision. Fairfax's

---

(1) Perfect Diurnal, 5-12 March 1649 and ibid., December 1649- March 1650 passim.

scruples about the Engagement were also entwined with scruples about plans for a preventive strike against Scotland, which was then being discussed seriously. The crisis proved intractable and was only solved ultimately by Fairfax's retirement which took place in July.<sup>(1)</sup> But the fact that Cromwell was looked upon as the man to turn to in a moment of crisis was in itself significant.

In the north there were mixed reactions to the Engagement. It was reported from Halifax in December that some of the clergy had tried to influence the soldiery not to subscribe to the Engagement but they met with little success. Also in the north Colonel John Bright, who had already had doubts about the King's trial and execution felt he could not subscribe to the Engagement unless he could take it "with more latitude". From Hull the deputy governor, Edward Salmon, said that the garrison were subscribing freely to the Engagement, but that they were unwilling to do anything that would perpetuate the present government. Margetts wrote from York in early December that so far as Lambert's regiment were concerned the business of finding 20 men from each troop for Ireland was felt to be more pressing. In February John Baynes wrote that he had not signed the Engagement before then because it hadn't been tendered him and he couldn't thrust himself into an Engagement.<sup>(2)</sup> In May Fairfax was asked by the Council

---

(1) Whitelocke, Memorials, III, p. 139; Mercurius Pragmaticus, 1-8 January 1650; The Man in the Moon, 9-16 January 1650; The Royall Diurnall, 25 February-4 March 1650; H.M.C. De Lisle-Dudley, VI, pp. 467-468. Fairfax's refusal to take the Engagement in January and the rumours about Cromwell being recalled, even of his replacing Fairfax, were reported by the French ambassador (P.R.O. 31/3/90, f.31).

(2) Perfect Diurnal 24-31 December 1649; B.M. Add. Ms. 21, 418, ff.100, 145, 177, 185, 334. For a discussion of the parliamentary background to the Engagement q.v. Worden, Rump, pp. 219-220, 226-232.

of State to replace Captain Stone as governor of Stafford as he had not taken the Engagement.<sup>(1)</sup> Henry Danvers, a future Fifth Monarchist, became the new governor.

We have little evidence for army activity in late 1649 and early 1650. Fairfax's Order Book gives us some idea about the administrative concerns but nothing about the political ones. The Council of Officers continued to meet. On 12 December at its regular Thursday session the question of recruiting for Ireland was dealt with. In pursuance of an order of the Council of State it was decided to reduce all troops to 60 per regiment and that those reduced were to be appointed for Ireland. Those refusing were to be disbanded and their places filled by recruits known to have been well-affected to Parliament.<sup>(2)</sup> This met with a mixed success. In the north the officers of Lambert's regiment decided that the Major would appoint the men to go and not use lots as had Robert Lilburne's regiment. The men from Lilburne's regiment who were to go to Ireland had a rendezvous early in December. The Perfect Diurnal described them as

"about a hundred old blades, gallant, stout men and well horst, and are very free, and ready for the service, and fear the work will be done before they get there."

---

(1) C.S.P.D. 1650, pp. 159, 162.

(2) Perfect Diurnal, 10-17 December 1649.



But willingness to go, and one must allow for exaggeration in the newsbook report, was not universal. The same newsbook reported that Captain Evans's troop in Okey's regiment presented a petition to Fairfax about the Irish service to which the General replied that if the troop did not engage it would be disbanded. However, by the beginning of 1650 with six weeks pay and one months pay by way of loan in their pockets the troop was reported to be ready to go to Ireland.<sup>(1)</sup> The Council of State's order appears to have been implemented quite successfully and, unlike previous attempts, with no hostility from the ranks and the officers very firmly in control. If there were any incidents, they were not reported. The transfer of manpower into active service in Ireland was a pragmatic move not a devious one engineered by the government to get rid of possible or actual troublemakers. The use of lots in some regiments and their consideration in others supports this view.

Another concern of the army was its wish to have its pay arrears satisfied. These were to be met by selling the crown lands, the act for which had passed Parliament on 16 July 1649. It is not intended to discuss this important and intricate question in detail

---

(1) B.M. Add. Ms. 21, 418, ff.177, 185; Perfect Diurnal, 17-24 December 1649, 24-31 December 1649, 7-14 January 1650, 14-21 January 1650.

but to comment on some aspects of it.<sup>(1)</sup> Firstly, in late 1649 and early 1650 the problems involved in implementing the act took up a lot of the army's time, but on no occasion was there any danger of a conflict between army and Parliament despite some differences of interpretation. Secondly, there was concern to include the part of the army serving in Ireland in the provisions of the act. Captain John Vernon was sent across to the Lord Lieutenant, to convey to him the votes of the Army Council on the establishment of attorneys and contractors to represent the regiments. Thirdly, the abuse of debentures led to the soldiery being cheated, often selling their debentures to speculators at rates varying between 1/6 and 12/- in the pound. Fourthly, a large number of forged debentures came onto

---

(1) For an account of the implementation of the act. q.v. I. J. Gentles 'The Debentures Market and Military Purchasens of Crown Lands, 1649-1660', London Ph.D., 1969, esp. Chaps. II and III; I. J. Gentles, 'The Sale of Crown Lands during the English Revolution', Economic History Review, 2nd Series, XXVI, 1973, pp. 614-635. One must take issue with Dr. Gentles' assertion, based on his thesis, that "What is ... remarkable is the large numbers of officers who came from London and Middlesex. One third of the officers in our sample stated that their home was in or near the metropolis. If we take the New Model by itself the proportion is even higher." (Gentles, Economic History Review, p. 632). Place of residence is quite a different matter from place of origin. Dr. Gentles confuses the two. The most notable case is Thomas Harrison who is given as "of Westminster, Middlesex" (Gentles, Ph.D. p. 292) whereas Harrison was born in Newcastle-under-Lyme. Thus, Gentles' conclusion that "Militarily at least, it appears that the English Revolution may have been a more strongly metropolitan phenomenon than has been generally thought" (Economic History Review, loc. cit.) is extremely dubious. More recently Dr. Gentles' views have been criticised, not wholly convincingly, by Dr. M. Kishlansky ('The Sales of Crown Lands and the Spirit of the Revolution', Economic History Review, 2nd Series, XXIX, 1976, pp. 125-130) to which Dr. Gentles has replied (ibid., pp. 131-135). In connexion with this q.v. the seminal, but cautious, article by H. J. Habakkuk ('The Parliamentary Army and the Crown Lands', Welsh Historical Review, 1967, pp. 403-426). The last word on the question of regimental land purchases has not yet been said.

the market, and in some cases officers, including Joyce and Stubbers, bought them, although, most likely, unknowingly. Fifthly, and surprisingly in view of the fact that satisfaction of pay arrears was perhaps the major grievance of most men in 1647, there was little or no reaction, let alone opposition, from the soldiery to the way they were treated. Finally, after the Restoration there was an allegation that the government had been defrauded by both civilian and military purchasers of crown lands, but the evidence for this is far from conclusive; the names mentioned included Constable, Bright and Hawksworth.<sup>(1)</sup>

In May 1650 there was a further letter from headquarters to the regiments and garrisons in England and Wales, urging them to pray for them

"that we may not want that Pillar of fire before us, and the Cloud behind us, and that we may be found faithfull servants waiting only upon our Lord's good pleasure ... And that we may be Active and constant in the worke of the Lord ... That we may not seek our selves, nor great things for our selves, but the glory of God and honor of Jesus Christ."

A day of humiliation was proposed and prophaneness and drunkenness were to be punished. For the next month the Perfect Diurnal reported the favourable acceptance of the letter and the success of these days of humiliation, especially in promoting good feeling between "honest hearts ... though of different judgments", a sort of religious and

---

(1) Perfect Diurnal, 10-17 December 1649; Gentles, Ph.D., pp. 83, 86, 94, 97, 98-99; B.M. Egerton Ms. 1048, f.107; The Man in the Moon, 16-23 January 1650.

spiritual détente. The officers of Fairfax's foot wrote "This is a time of Jacob's troubles and yet we have Esai's<sup>1</sup> Garments"; the letter was signed by Jonathan Wells. One letter from Portsmouth was pleased to note the move away from backsliding on the part of the army, that self-seeking would be abandoned and that there would be a reformation of

"those grosse offences that are against both God and man ... and attend on God where we see him leading us, especially such of you that have the management of publique affaires" (1)

Those who were glad to see that the army was not backsliding could take heart from the military presence on the commissions for the propagation of the gospel. On the Welsh one the most important figure was Harrison, other army men were Philip Jones, John Jones (who by this time had a troop in Harrison's regiment) William Packer, William Boteler, Rowland Dawkins, Wroth Rogers, Stephen Winthrop and Humphrey Mackworth as well as eight others who commanded local garrisons. (2) On the commission for the northern counties the military members were Haselrig, George Fenwick, Francis Hacker, Robert Lilburne, Thomas Fitch and Paul Hobson. Politics and religion went hand in hand and the Rump's special concern for the north and Wales was motivated by the fact that these two areas were still pro Royalist. (3) It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the two commissions included the most important military figures of the army and garrisons in the respective areas.

---

(1) Perfect Diurnal, 20-27 May 1650, 3-10 June 1650, 10-17 June 1650, 24-30 June 1650.

(2) C.J., VI, p. 369; Firth and Rait, II, p. 343.

(3) C.J., VI, p. 374; Severall Proceedings, 28 February-7 March 1650; Whitelocke, Memorials, III, pp. 203, 204. Q.v. also C. Hill, Continuity and Change in the Seventeenth Century, London, 1974, pp. 24-44; Worden, Rump, pp. 232-234.

Cromwell returned from Ireland to a triumphant welcome. He was hailed in the government press as "one of the wisest and most accomplished Leaders, among the present and past Generations". On 1 June he was met on Hounslow Heath by Fairfax, various M.P.s and members of the Council of State, several troops and companies and large numbers of people. Without wasting much time he endeavoured to get the much discussed Scottish invasion underway. He visited Fairfax the following Monday presumably to try to talk him round to leading the invasion, or, if he would not, then to make a dignified and peaceful resignation. The General's reluctance to lead the expedition was common knowledge, and commenting on the visit the government newsbook Mercurius Politicus was at pains to point out the friendly atmosphere in which the meeting took place "sufficient to check the false Tongues and wishes of the enemies of the Nation".<sup>(1)</sup> But Fairfax would not budge. The more an invasion of Scotland appeared on the cards, the more stubborn he became. On 24 June a committee was appointed to speak with him in a last bid to get him to change his mind. The delegation was made up of Cromwell, Lambert, Harrison, St. John and Whitelocke, a nice mixture of military and civilian men, but it had no effect and Fairfax resigned his commission without fuss.<sup>(2)</sup> The government were sensitive to the possibility of repercussions from the resignation and Fairfax was apparently asked to delay his return to Yorkshire so as not to give support to rumours that his resignation was out of discontent. Security in London

---

(1) Mercurius Politicus, 6-13 June 1650; P.R.O. 31/3/90, f. 218; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, I, pp. 253-257; Abbott, Writings and Speeches, II, p. 261.

(2) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, I, pp. 257-260; Whitelocke, Memorials, III, pp. 206-211; Abbott, Writings and Speeches, II, pp. 263-265, 267-272; Ludlow, Memoirs, I, pp. 242-244.

was tightened.<sup>(1)</sup> His resignation had been expected and people had had time enough to think about a successor. In terms of army politics Fairfax had outlived his usefulness. Cromwell was the logical choice to succeed.

The Scottish campaign meant that another sizeable part of the army became involved in active warfare. It also created a further physical division in the army. Cromwell took with him 16,354 officers and men. At a rendezvous at Berwick prior to the march into Scotland the soldiers cried out that they would live and die with Cromwell to the last man in defence of the purity of the gospel.<sup>(2)</sup> Thus, it was not surprising that the unexpected victory at Dunbar should have been interpreted as evidence of God being on the army's side. The victory gave a great boost to hopes that Parliament would push on with the work of reformation.<sup>(3)</sup> Cromwell wrote to the Speaker pointing out that God's hand in the victory could not allow the nations' rulers to sit back complacently :

"Sir, it is in your hands, and by these eminent mercies God puts it more into your hands, to give Glory to him; to improve your Power, and His Blessings, to his Praise ... relieve the oppressed, hear the groans of poor prisoners in England; be pleased to reform the abuses of all professions; and if there be any one that makes many poor to make a few rich, that suits not a Commonwealth." <sup>(4)</sup>

- 
- (1) P.R.O. 31/3/90, ff. 265, 269.
- (2) Perfect Diurnal, 22-29 July 1650; Impartial Scout, 26 July-2 August 1650; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, I, pp. 269-270.
- (3) Worden, Rump, p. 237; q.v. also Nicholls, Original Letters, pp. 19. 25.
- (4) Abbott, Writings and Speeches, II, p. 325.

On 16 September there was a celebration dinner at Guildhall attended by Colonels Skippon, Harrison, Barksted and Blundell (an obscure figure about whom little is known. His regiment was disbanded in late 1651)<sup>(1)</sup> and various M.P.s and other V.I.P.s.<sup>(2)</sup> Harrison's power and prestige had been increasing steadily since Cromwell's departure for Scotland when he was appointed Commander-in-Chief in the new General's absence. On 30 August Bradshawe wrote to Cromwell commenting on Harrison's "indefatigable industry". Perhaps he had in mind Harrison's work in co-ordinating propositions put forward by the congregated churches for raising some forces. The Council of State approved the propositions and issued Harrison with 12 blank commissions which he was given authority to issue. He was also very conscientious in attending to matters concerning army administration and in carrying out orders of the Council of State. From this time too can be dated his closer association with the Fifth Monarchy Men. Noah Banks dedicated his tract God's Prerogative Power to Harrison

"knowing that you are one that wait for the appearing of the Lord Christ in his Kingly Glory."

And of course he still maintained his links with South Wales. In July 1651 Mercurius Politicus printed two letters to the northern brigade under Harrison, one from the Church at Wrexham in Denbighshire acknowledging receipt of a letter from the brigade and rejoicing that

"we see our king hath girt on his sword, and goeth out Conquering and to Conquer",

---

(1) Firth and Davies, p. xxv.

(2) Perfect Passages, 13-20 September 1650; The Moderate Intelligencer, 18-25 September 1650.

the other from the Churches and saints in Radnor and Montgomeryshire also acknowledging receipt of a letter in a similar tone. And in February 1651 he became a member of the third Council of State.<sup>(1)</sup> All this gave Harrison a strong position which might be exploited given the right circumstances.

Isolated outbreaks of discontent occurred occasionally in the army; but they were very isolated and very occasional. In September it was reported from Rye that three Levellers had been sentenced to death at a court martial. One was reprieved but the others in characteristic Leveller style said they had fought for liberty and freedom and doubted not but Jehovah would avenge them.<sup>(2)</sup> The belief that the wrong would be righted in the next life was perhaps indicative of the theoretical weakness and decline of the movement. There were other reports of Leveller designs to secure Windsor Castle and of trouble in Litchfield which was put down by Major Creed.<sup>(3)</sup> The Levellers had continued, and were to continue, to present mass petitions which found their way into army hands. In April two soldiers or ex-soldiers, one in Robert Lilburne's and

---

(1) C.J., VI, p. 428; C.S.P.D. 1650, pp. 222, 280 and passim for his activity; B. M. Lansdowne Ms. 1236 f.103; E615(17), God's Prerogative Power (November 8) 1650. (Perhaps Noah Banks is the same man as the unidentified Fifth Monarchist preacher examined by Cromwell in February 1655, B. S. Capp, The Fifth Monarchy Men, London, 1972, p. 107; L. F. Brown, Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men, Washington, 1912, p. 82); Mercurious Politicus, 10-17 July 1650; C.J., VI, p. 532; q.v. also Harrison's letter to Cromwell of 3 July 1650 (Nickolls, Original Letters, p. 10) urging him to encourage the spirit of faith and supplication in his forces, "There is more to be had in this poore simple waie, then even most saints expect."

(2) The Moderate Messenger, 17-29 September 1650.

(3) ibid.



the other in Scrope's regiment had signed The Humble Petition of divers Free-Born People of England, inhabiting ... London ... Westminster ... Southwark, Hamlets and Places adjacent, which the House voted scandalous.<sup>(1)</sup>

The following year the governor of Poole, John Read (Rede) was charged with disaffection to the present government by, amongst other things, welcoming and advancing Levellers. Read was to answer charges at a court martial under Disborowe and was removed from his governorship.<sup>(2)</sup>

But despite all this the high noon of the Leveller movement had now become transformed into a dim twilight. In the press the strict discipline which the Levellers had attacked in the past, received coverage as did the army's part in enforcing law and order, especially against extreme religious sects such as the Ranters.<sup>(3)</sup> All this perhaps helped improve the image of the army in the eyes of more conservative religious persons. The anti-government press publicised Pride's attempts to tighten up law enforcement in London and to suppress disorderly ale houses.<sup>(4)</sup>

- 
- (1) C.J., VI, p. 399.
- (2) B.M. Stowe Ms. 189, ff.52, 53; C.S.P.D. 1651, pp. 149, 171, 195.
- (3) Q.v. for example Perfect Diurnal, 3-10 June 1650, 12-19 August 1650, 19-26 August 1650; Several Proceedings, 20-27 June 1650; Mercurious Politicus, 21-28 November 1650. There are numerous other references. Concern about infringement of discipline was not just limited to that of the soldiery. The Council of State thought it "a very dangerous precedent" that Colonel Alban Coxe should have returned without leave from Guernsey to England. Fairfax was asked to deal with the matter (C.S.P.D. 1649-50, pp. 51-52; C.S.P.D. 1650, p. 69). For the Ranters q.v. Perfect Diurnal, 4-11 February 1650; H.M.C. Leyborne-Popham, p. 57, Worden, Rump, pp. 232-233. For Ranters in the army q.v. H.M.C. Leyborne-Popham, p. 78; Clarke Ms. 181 (unbound box 1). One of the charges against Read was that he also favoured Ranters (B.M. Stowe Ms. 189, ff. 52, 53).
- (4) The Royall Diurnall, 28 February-4 March 1650, 1-8 April 1650; The Man in the Moon, 20-27 February 1650.

In November 1650 there was much talk in the capital about law reform, a cause central to the army's reform programme. Margetts wrote to William Clarke, then in Edinburgh, that there was even a suggestion of replacing the names of the months with numerical figures, thus anticipating the French Revolution.<sup>(1)</sup> Clearly the commitment to a more thorough revolution persisted and not just among relatively unimportant figures like Margetts. Pride was reported to have said that there would need to be another purge of Parliament before the Rump would carry out any measures of reform especially on the question of new elections. He had also been outspoken on the need for law reform and remarked in Westminster Hall that

"he hoped ere long to see all the Lawyers gownes hanging up among the Scottish colours."

After this outburst Whitelocke and others were said to have become keen to promote law reform so that they could have the credit for it.<sup>(2)</sup> The House made an important concession to the army on the question of law reform. On 22 November it passed a bill for the laws to be in English. Whitelocke was one of the speakers in favour of the measure. His speech is recorded in his Memorials, but the unpublished manuscript version adds

"None of the soldiers, or any other relyed to me, but seemed the more satisfied with my compliance to the passing of the Act." <sup>(3)</sup>

- 
- (1) H.M.C. Leyborne-Popham, pp. 77-78.
- (2) P.R.O. 31/3/90, f.343; Clarke Ms. 181 (unbound box I), newsletter of 29 October 1650.
- (3) C.J., VI, p. 500; Whitelocke, Memorials, III, pp. 260-273; B.M. Add. Ms. 37345, f.116v.

It was a gesture in response to the expectations roused by Dunbar, but it was not much more, and barely more than a squeak in reply to Cromwell's loud rhetoric.

In military terms the Dunbar victory merely provided a breathing space. There was still some way to go before the Royalist threat could be neutralised. The safety of the Commonwealth came to be more and more identified with military success and consequently with the army thereby enhancing the army's view of itself as guardian of the revolution. At the beginning of October a new regiment of volunteers was mustered at Moorfields. The men numbered about 1,700. Harrison reviewed them and encouraged them with a gallant speech. Later in the month exercises were held in Hyde Park involving about 3,000 men. They were reviewed by the Speaker and then by members of the Council of State who rode among the regiments behind Harrison. At the end of the display Harrison rode through the men once more and there were acclamations. The regiments then marched through the City. The procession was said to have been watched by 20,000 spectators.<sup>(1)</sup> Recruiting for Ireland also continued, but it is likely that impressment was more important in this respect than spontaneous volunteering.<sup>(2)</sup> At the end of the year Mercurius Politicus, reflecting the views of its editor rather than those of the government, came out with a bold editorial :

---

(1) Weekly Intelligencer, 1-8 October 1650; Clarke Ms 181 (unbound box I); Perfect Diurnal, 21-28 October 1650.

(2) S.P.46/102, f.134 ff.

"It's impossible there should be Peace among the Community of any Nation, without the intervening power of the Sword to keep all in awe. This must of necessity be the foundation of all Government, and not the Chimera which they call Universall consent of the People; For it were so easie to reconcile the Four winds as to reduce the minds of the Vulgar (more uncertain then the wind) in one and the same opinion; so that to defer a Settlement in expectation of that unanimity that never was, nor ever will be, may be reckoned one of the prime principles of Anarchy ..." (1)

In the context of 1651 it was both an accurate assessment of the situation and prophetic about developments over the next few years, when the sword came to be displayed more and more openly and the assumptions underlying the limited revolution of 1649 proved unworkable.

As the new year progressed there was fresh concern for the security of the republic. In March the Council of State decided to send Harrison to the north to reinforce that area. Fleetwood took over as commander in the south in his absence.<sup>(2)</sup> One of the first problems he faced was the ever-recurring one of officers and men absent from their units and, under the direction of the Council of State; Fleetwood warned all officers and soldiers in London or Westminster absent from their duties to report to their units or face a court martial.<sup>(3)</sup> But in spite, or possibly because of these military

(1) Mercurius Politicus, 26 December 1650-2 January 1651.

(2) C.S.P.D. 1651, pp. 92, 102-103.

(3) C.S.P.D. 1651, p. 93; Weekly Intelligencer 22-29 April 1651. In October 1650 Cromwell and his officers had discussed the question of leave for officers to return to England on private business. To prevent, or reduce, this it was resolved that Cromwell write to the Council of State requesting that officers should not be prejudiced in their estates while they remained in Scotland (Several Proceedings, 3-10 October 1650).

preparations, time was still found to try to assess how the army stood in the eyes of the Lord. In May another circular was sent around the regiments and garrisons. It called for prayers, especially as Christ was calling the army into the field again, and to try to forge unity amongst all God fearing men in England and Scotland

"That there may not be found any of the generation of the Just, joyning issue with those that support the Beast, oppose the Advancement of the Kingdome of our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Saints."

Harrison was not alone in his millenarian language. 30 May was to be set apart as a day to seek the Lord "a cleansing day" so that

"our hearts being purged from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, our holy conversation may declare us to be the people of the Lord, yea, the army of the Lamb."

As with previous letters prophaneness was to be punished. Returns were to be made, care of Colonel Barksted, to be communicated by him to the Army Council. It was signed by 33 officers and divines including Sir William Constable, Rich, Whalley, Goffe, Joyce, Pride, Okey and Fleetwood.<sup>(1)</sup>

One of the signatories of the letter, Joyce (who was now governor of Portland in succession to Edward Sexby and Lt. Colonel in Heane's newly established regiment)<sup>(2)</sup> went into print on his own a couple of months later. He complained of the design of "a mighty

(1) Wor . Co. AA.8.3.(127) address of the officers at Whitehall "To all our dear Friends and fellow Soldiers that fear the Lord in -". The address was reprinted in 1659 by the Fifth Monarchists as evidence of backsliding by the army (E993(31), The Fifth Monarchy of Christ in opposition to the Beasts Asserted).

(2) C.S.P.D. 1650, pp. 206, 293.

man in the west", possibly Disborowe who was Commander-in-Chief in the west at this time, and charged him with removing faithful and well-affected public servants from their posts and replacing them with malignants. He cites the examples of Read, governor of Poole, who, he said, had not had a legal trial as yet, the removal of Heane's regiment from Poole, the appointment of Colonel Bingham as governor of Guernsey, who he claims was dissatisfied with the King's execution, as well as some other appointments and evictions. Surprisingly, he also includes himself amongst those removed from their commands, but there is no independent evidence to support this. In June the Council of State had ordered Disborowe to speak with Joyce about the embezzlement of some ordnance from Portland where he was governor, but Joyce remained as governor and in September took part in the expedition against Jersey. Whether or not Disborowe threatened him or he was suspended briefly pending an enquiry cannot be determined. Joyce also commented on the army's dealings with the King in 1647 and drew a parallel between Presbyterian agitation in 1647 and the sort of campaigning going on on behalf of Love, then under sentence of death, with whom Joyce showed no sympathy. Joyce's accusations are very personal and tell us more about his own personal disillusionment than about any thing else. They do not reflect any general discontent. No action was taken against him for publishing the letter.<sup>(1)</sup> Joyce

---

(1) E637(3), G. Joyce, A Letter or Epistle to all well minded People, 7 July 1653; C.S.P.D., 1651, pp. 180, 236, 386, 456.

was correct that governors and officers were being removed from office, but in different parts of the country and for different reasons. Colonel Christopher Whitchcott, governor of Windsor was court martialled in July for oppressing the county. He was found guilty of misdemeanour and ordered to make reparations to the county. However, he was back in favour by December 1653 at the latest. In that month Cromwell wrote to him asking him to raise 100 foot soldiers and officers to guard Windsor Castle. Whitchcott was to command them.<sup>(1)</sup> His case was one of several scandals involving officers at this time. The others involved Captain Harrison, governor of Upnor, Captain Scrope, governor of Harwich, one Lt. Fay a cavalry officer and Alernon Sydney, governor of Dover, who was finally removed after a dispute between Parliament and army over jurisdiction in the case. For some reason Lambert disapproved of Adam Baynes's part in the dispute. He wrote to Baynes emphasising the need to preserve the discipline of the army. In Scotland there was also the court martial of the ex-Leveller, Colonel Edward Sexby whose regiment had been raised in June 1650 originally for the Irish service. He was found guilty of detaining the pay of seven or eight men, but, as Professor Aylmer points out, there is nothing to suggest that the court martial was a frame-up or that Sexby was a Leveller then despite his return to that camp after a

---

(1) C.S.P.D. 1653-54, p. 296.

brief spell in the Council of State's foreign service. William Clarke felt all this amounted to "a climacktericall yeare with our army officers."<sup>(1)</sup> Support for Love's execution was widespread in the army, but the officers were determined not to become involved in it. They were requested to consider the affair but declined to meddle in it

"and that it will be their joy of hear that Justice may run in an uncorrupted Channell."

However, there were dissenters from this view. Fleetwood favoured banishment rather than execution.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Love affair according to Dr. Worden reflected "a growing bitterness in Rump politics" evident between Dunbar and Worcester.<sup>(3)</sup> An air of pessimism was certainly prevalent in London over the summer, and a newsletter to the army in Scotland of 19 July captured this feeling :

"I could wish the pillers of this Commonwealth were stronger than they are but if God give ye good successe in Scotland I shall hope for better things." <sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Clarke Ms 19, ff. 45v, 52, 53, 73v; ibid., ff. 26-27; B.M. Add. Ms. 21, 426, f.189; Weekly Intelligencer, 28 July-5 August 1650; Aylmer, State's Servants, pp. 155-156, 159-160, 388; Worden, Rump, p. 249. It is surprising in view of 1647 that Joyce does not refer to Sexby's court martial. Perhaps this supports the view that Sexby's trial was no frame-up.

(2) Perfect Passages, 1-8 August 1651. For a full account of the Love affair q.v. Worden, Rump, pp. 243-248; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, pp. 15-21.

(3) Worden, Rump, pp. 248-249 ff.

(4) Clarke Ms. 19, f.64.



This sort of pessimism was not just related to political developments. The Scottish campaign was not as successful as might have been hoped for, and Cromwell's decision to give the Scottish army a clear road to England caused apprehension.<sup>(1)</sup> But things were moving towards the final showdown with the Royalists which finally came about at Worcester on 3 September. With the Commonwealth reasonably secure against its enemies, there could no longer be any excuses for delays in pressing on with reform. Mercurius Politicus with characteristic boldness declared freedom to be

"an inestimable Jewel, of more worth than your Estates, or your lives. It consists not in a licence to do what ye list, nor in an exception from such Taxes as are necessary for your safety."

The editor listed what he considered the constituent parts of freedom to be : "wholesome lawes suited to every man state and condition", accessible, cheap and speedy administration of justice, the power of altering the government and governors upon every occasion, an uninterrupted course of successive Parliaments and free election to Parliament once the rules governing elections had been determined. Once all these had been attained then a people could be said to be in a condition of safety and freedom. But as the editor was well aware

"it was hardly ever attained or long preserved in the World by any past Generation." (2)

- 
- (1) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, pp. 29-31; Worden, Rump, p. 262.
- (2) Mercurius Politicus, 25 September-2 October 1651; q.v. also the editorial of the 9-16 October edition.

In other words, now that the Commonwealth appeared to be more secure with the victory at Worcester, the government should try to ensure that its authority was not merely accepted passively by the population but that the citizens began to participate fully in the nation's political life so that their interests and those of the government became more closely linked. It was the point Cromwell had made just after Worcester in his letter to the Speaker, describing the battle as "a crowning mercy", a step towards establishing the nation

"and the change of government, by making the people so willing to the defence thereof." (1)

There were few, if any, in the army who could have articulated the argument as persuasively as Mercurius Politicus, but it was the sort of argument that expressed what was expected from Parliament. Harrison too wrote to the Speaker after Worcester, hoping that Parliament would "improve this mercy" and according to the will of God establish

"the ways of righteousness and justice, yet more relieving the oppressed, and opening a wide door to the publishing the everlasting Gospel of our only Lord and Saviour." (2)

Initially Parliament reacted favourably to the army's overtures. It re-opened the discussions on fresh elections and the act of oblivion, but this burst of activity proved short-lived and the army soon became disillusioned.<sup>(3)</sup> During the period late 1651

(1) Abbott, Writings and Speeches, II, p. 463.

(2) Cary, Memorials, II, pp. 375-376.

(3) Worden, Rump, pp. 265-267.

clearly he had made quite an impact in the north during his earlier tour of duty there. Mrs. Hutchinson went so far as to say that he deliberately built up a following amongst the northern commanders and gentry procuring preferments for them. She says many of them followed him to London "and made him up there a very proud train".<sup>(1)</sup> But this charge is malicious and untrue, although it does suggest that Lambert, like Harrison, could have developed a local power base had he so desired. On 28 January 1652 The Onely Right Rule for Regulating the Lawes and Liberties of the People of England was presented to Cromwell and the Council of Officers by way of advice. It was a rather confused and naive document, saying that there must be a new Parliament, but that the existing one was not to be forced to dissolve and that, if Parliament would not restore the people's birth rights, the army must urge them to do so.<sup>(2)</sup> In February the Faithful Scout said that the Commonwealth's army was like John the Baptist, levelling the mountains to the valleys and freeing the oppressed so as to enable peace and freedom to rule and inherit the earth. It cautioned the army that what the enemy had lost in the field it may win "by policy in Council, if you do not stick close to see Common Freedom established".<sup>(3)</sup> Whether or not the press campaign was organised, the army began to push more openly for action, especially on the question of law reform.

---

(1) Firth, Hutchinson, II, p. 188.

(2) E684(33). The tract also recalled the Solemn Engagement of June 1647.

(3) The Faithful Scout, 20-27 February 1652. These fears had been expressed, as we have seen, in 1647.

and early 1652 there was what Dr. Worden calls "an organised press campaign", designed to bolster Cromwell's standing with radical reformers.<sup>(1)</sup> However, it was not just Cromwell's image that was being projected but that of the army as a whole, as symbolised by its most famous officer. From Nottingham, where two troops of Whalley's regiment were quartered, it was reported the soldiers were behaving "very civilly" and manifesting "a great deale of religion". Both officers and soldiers, at separate meetings, prayed and preached. The Presbyterians denounced them as sectaries for this, but at a time when it was hoped to extend religious toleration within a legalistic framework such attacks sounded rather dated.<sup>(2)</sup> The army remained under pressure to do something about reform. In December a petition from the husbandmen, free-holders and tenants in the east riding of Yorkshire was presented to Cromwell and Lambert and the rest of the "renowned" officers. It called for the removal of tithes, and for law reform, and complained about the burden of the excise and assessment and the lack of public accountability. The petitioners felt confident "that God hath not put the Sword into your hand in vain" and requested "that you will mediate for us to the Parliament" so that their grievances would be righted and the nation settled in freedom.<sup>(3)</sup> The naming of Lambert, who was in Scotland at the time,<sup>(4)</sup> is interesting,

---

(1) ibid., pp. 273-275.

(2) Perfect Diurnal, 8-15 December; q.v. also ibid., 5-12 January 1652; Whitelocke, Memorials, III, p. 372.

(3) Mercurius Politicus, 4-11 December 1651.

(4) Weekly Intelligencer, 2-9 December 1651.

**PAGE  
MISSING  
IN  
ORIGINAL**

The regular Thursday meetings of the Council of Officers continued. In December it was reported that "There are many good things intended by the army" for the good of the Commonwealth. Direct pressure was brought to bear on Parliament to deal with law reform. Pride who had been very outspoken if not threatening in the autumn of 1650 on the issue of law reform was prominent in this. He waited outside the door of the Commons while Parliament debated the best way to set about law reform. By the end of the month the Council of Officers were said to "fly high in their debates" and Cromwell was to be asked to attend. The same source adds that Cromwell was also beginning to be called an apostate by some of the private Churches.<sup>(1)</sup> Perhaps they felt he was not doing enough about religious reform.<sup>(2)</sup> The officers continued to meet throughout January. On the 24th the meeting decided upon nothing except that Cromwell and the rest of the officers who were M.P.s were to be asked to attend the Thursday session. This did not necessarily have anything to do with the question of law reform as on the 27th the officers petitioned Parliament for more land to be assigned them for pay arrears. The petition was presented by Whalley and the House resolved to deal with it the following week which it did.<sup>(3)</sup> However, on 31 January a deputation of officers went

---

(1) Clarke Ms. 20, ff. 73v. 79 and v.; Worden, Rump, p. 271.

(2) For a discussion of how attempts to promote religious reform, especially a bill for the propagation of the gospel at national level, were frustrated q.v. Worden, Rump, pp. 270-271.

(3) Clarke Ms. 22, ff. 14, 16; C.J., VII, pp. 77, 80.

along to the first meeting of the Hale Commission to remind them of the necessity of removing the legal obstructions in the way of tender consciences. A sub-committee was appointed.<sup>(1)</sup> The Hale Commission had been set up by act of Parliament and its members were chosen by a group of M.P.s whose military members were Cromwell, Fleetwood, Harrison, Jones, Robert Bennet (a garrison commander in Cornwall), Haselrig and Rich. They eventually chose 21 men of whom three were officers, Colonels Disborowe and Thomlinson and Major William Packer. Colonel Robert Overton had been recommended by Sir John Danvers because he felt that Overton had been held in high esteem by the Levellers and that he might moderate "any remaining party of the Levellers". This suggestion was not taken up. The Commission sat between January and July 1652 but its proposals, which anticipated the reforms of the nineteenth century, were not implemented.<sup>(2)</sup>

The year 1652 was a critical one for relations between army and Parliament. In January these were soured because of the treatment of John Lilburne and Josiah Primate in a dispute with Sir Arthur Haselrig over a colliery in County Durham. Haselrig was technically a member of the army but his political behaviour and outlook were those of a civilian. Primate was fined and imprisoned and

---

(1) Clarke Ms 22, f.19; Worden, Rump, pp. 272-273.

(2) C.J., VII, pp. 58, 73, 74; Whitelocke Letters (Longleat) XI, f.159 + v., quoted in Worden, Rump, p. 272. There is no evidence to suggest any formal links between Overton and the Levellers earlier on. They probably had hopes that he could be won over to their side. For modern accounts of the Hale Commission q.v. D. Veall, The Popular Movement for Law Reform, Oxford, 1970, pp. 79-84 and M. Cotterell, 'Interregnum Law Reform, the Hale Commission of 1652', E.H.R., LXXXIII, 1968, pp. 689-704. Ms. Cotterell includes Charles George Cocke and Blount as army officers (ibid., p. 691) but their titles were courtesy ones.

Lilburne was fined and exiled. The House had dealt with the case itself rather than submitting it to the law courts, as some of the army, the congregations and City wanted. The affair, occurring at a time when law reform was very much in the public eye, was debated by a session of the Army Council at which there was a division between those who were determined to stand by "so great and faithful an assertor of England's liberties" and others who were determined to remain loyal to the Rump, declaring

"That they will leave no meanes nor dangers unattempted to establish the People in the fulness of their Liberties and Freedomes."

This was a clear commitment that there would be no more backsliding. Some army figures may well have had a hand in The Humble Petition of Officers and Soldiers, Citizens and Countrymen, poor and rich and all the distressed and oppressed People of England<sup>(1)</sup> which called on a wide degree of state intervention to stimulate the economy by exploiting unused commons, forests, chases and mines. Land reclamation was also recommended as well as the setting up of a public bank such as existed in Amsterdam and Venice to encourage trade. All this, it was argued, would contribute towards settlement. But the House was not moved by the stirrings in the army. Haselrig was made President of the Council of State and on 26 January Lilburne was banished.<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) The petition is printed in Faithful Scout, 23-30 January 1652.

(2) The French Intelligencer, 20-27 January 1652; E654(11), A Declaration of the Army; Faithful Scout, 23-30 January 1652. For a fuller discussion of the affair q.v. Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, pp. 79-81; Worden, Rump, pp. 282-283; Gregg, Freeborn John, pp. 309-311; T. C. Pease, The Leveller Movement, repr. Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1965, pp. 328-329.



In March The Faithful Scout reported that Lilburne had sent a letter to his friends in the army, urging them to stand firm to their principles, walk steadfast in their ways, beat down tyranny, and restore the people to their liberties and birth rights according to their engagements.<sup>(1)</sup> As in the past, differences about the way to achieve this persisted but not on the same scale. The stirrings in the army prompted the House to write to Cromwell to take action, to order the officers belonging to the forces in Scotland to return to their charges. The request was complied with the following day, 7 February.<sup>(2)</sup> Another important incident which marred relations between army and Parliament was Lambert's failure to obtain the post Lord of/Deputy of Ireland, a post for which he had been nominated in January. Whatever the background to the abolition of the post Lambert, who had spent a considerable sum of money on preparing for the office, must have felt piqued and resentful against the Rump, but this in itself is no explanation for his subsequent opposition to the Parliament.<sup>(3)</sup> However, it came as a shock to the army. An army writer commenting on the House's vote to abolish the Lord Lieutenancy, and thus the Lord Deputyship, said it "was suddaine and unexpected ...".<sup>(4)</sup>

---

(1) The Faithful Scout, 5-12 March 1652.

(2) C.J., VII, p. 85; Clarke Ms. 22, f.22.

(3) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, pp. 221-223, esp. p. 223n; D.N.B. C.f. W. H. Dawson, Cromwell's Understudy, London, 1938, pp. 148-152 who unconvincingly argues that Cromwell orchestrated the whole affair.

(4) Clarke Ms 22, f.95v., newsletter of 22 May 1652.

Throughout the first part of 1652 the army was not allowed to forget the need to press ahead with the reform programme. At the beginning of February a letter from several Churches to Cromwell bade him recall that both he and the army were instruments of God and that now that they were no longer in the field they were called upon to do higher things.<sup>(1)</sup> William Siddall, a correspondent of Captain Adam Baynes, wrote from the north rather despondently

"I doubt all good things are at a stand with the Army. The Lord Councill them to and directe them what to doe : That they may be faithful to their principles they have so often declared." (2)

During this time the Rump seemed bent on action against religious radicals, an emotive issue with the army. One writer wrote to Cromwell that there was a growing Presbyterian influence over the army and feared the consequences of an engagement said to be intended on all persons living in garrisons.<sup>(3)</sup> Garrisons with their permanent military presence could have important influences on adjacent towns, especially if the governor was a man of strong personality. All this had a cumulative effect on the army. It roused it into action once more on behalf of the reform programme. In July the Council of Officers were reported to have concluded several points for a petition to be presented to Parliament.<sup>(4)</sup> In fact the petition was not presented until the following month and not until after Cromwell had been successful in

(1) Nicholls, Original Letters, pp. 82-83.

(2) B.M. Add. Ms. 21, 421, f.93; q.v. ibid., f. 40.

(3) Nicholls, Original Letters, pp. 82-83. For a discussion of the religious question at this time q.v. Worden, Rump, pp. 294-298.

(4) Clarke Ms 22, f.164, newsletter of 10 July 1652.

having some of the demands toned down after they had been presented to him. These unrevised demands were the product of intensive discussions in the Council of Officers. In some ways all this recalled the sort of activity of the crisis year 1647. They wanted redress of the people's grievances according to the past engagements and protestations of the officers and soldiers and the establishment of the freedom which had been purchased with the expense of so much blood. Reaffirming their faith in a republican form of government, they boldly declared that God had made all men equal and that a kingdom, in which some were greater than others, was servitude. They made it obvious that they meant business :

"When time requires recourse to daring there ought no recourse be had to patience ..."

They demanded that the ancient and sovereign Law, Salus Populi , "shall be for ever kept unviolable" and above all other laws, and that there should be a thorough audit of public accounts. A new representative was to be "forthwith" elected. Oppressions on the people were to be removed,

"that so the poor may no longer be insulted over by the rich, but rather that truth, equity, and justice may abound amongst them."

They also called for law reform. Other particulars were said to be "agitating". The address closed by denying, rather limply, that there was any thought of forcing this on the Parliament especially by way of revenge :

"Too much haste is as much before time as too much delay is out of time."

The army, it concluded, could justifiably be called

"the Academy of Europe, or an Army of Saints, by reason that their Discipline is compos'd both in a spiritual and temporal Warfare." (1)

Here was a clear and well thought out answer to all those who had feared the army's enthusiasm for reform was at a standstill. The document, incorporating many of what had become standard demands for reform, albeit in quite radical language, was designed to show that the spirit of '47, that is the army in the vanguard of the people's cause, was far from extinguished. The Declaration was published for all to see. Unfortunately, we have no record of the discussions that preceeded the drafting of the Declaration and we have no idea of who were the guiding hands behind it. The Declaration says it was presented to Cromwell "with the subscriptions of most of the officers of the army". It was largely as a result of Cromwell's anxiety about it that the Declaration was altered before it was presented to Parliament. At a meeting of the Army Council on 12 August it was decided that Whalley, Hacker, Barksted, Okey, Goffe and Worsley should present the petition which they did the following day. But even in its revised form the petition was still far-reaching, with demands for the propagation of the gospel, the removal of scandalous ministers, the abolition of tithes, law reform, public accountability and for consideration of ending the present Parliament and the settling of future ones. (2) Cromwell was successful, to a

---

(1) E673(13), A Declaration of the Armie to his Excellency the Lord General Cromwell for the dissolving of this present Parliament (10 August).

(2) B.M. 669f.16(62), To the Supreme Authority the Parliament of England, The Humble Petition of the Officers of the Army.

point, in controlling emotions in the army. But he was in no position to heed Whitelocke's advice to stop the officers from "this way of petitioning ... with their swords in their hands". In fact Cromwell's views on settlement were in danger of becoming at variance with those of the army. At the conference with some M.P.s and army officers after Worcester, Cromwell expressed himself in favour of a settlement "of somewhat with monarchical power in it". This was opposed by Disborowe and Whalley. He took up the matter with Whitelocke again in November 1652, implying that he felt kingship would be the best means of preventing the squabbling and divisions afflicting the nation.<sup>(1)</sup> We have only Whitelocke's account of this incident. The officers' petition was referred to a committee on which a number of officers sat (Cromwell, Bennet, Ingoldsby, Harrison and Rich) and for the rest of the summer relations between army and Parliament became more settled and cordial.<sup>(2)</sup>

There was still optimism amongst some members of the army that Parliament would see the light and set about the task of reform. In September Perfect Passages reported from Bristol that some of Fleetwood's life guard had told some of the honest citizens of the city

"that the Parliament are in agitation of many things in relation to the satisfying the desires of the Armyes last Petition, which we exceedingly long to heare of, the desires therein being generally approved to be grounded on excellent foundations of Godlynes and Liberty."

---

(1) Whitelocke, Memorials, III, pp. 445-446, 373-374, 468-474.

(2) C.J., VII, p. 164. For the above q.v. also Worden, Rump, pp. 306-310; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, pp. 222-227; Abbott, Writings and Speeches, II, pp. 571-572.

But the writer from Bristol realised that there were many "rubs in the way", especially the removal of tithes and of the vested interests of lawyers and even of local government officials. (1)

The group of officers who signed The Beacons Quenched, a tract attacking the ease with which Presbyterians could spread their anti-government views and the proliferation of popish books, referred to the Parliament as

"the happy instruments of our Freedom, and powerful labourers in the work of Christ"

The signatories included Colonel Pride, Lt. Colonel Goffe, Major Tobias Bridge and Adj. General Richard Merest. (2) At the end of September at an Army Council meeting in Sion House

"the commanders declared their resolution to establish this Commonwealth even from the very shadow of oppression and to take off taxes." (3)

The following month there were several meetings, "at least ten or twelve" according to Cromwell, between officers and M.P.s to try and smooth over the differences between them. According to Cromwell, the officers hoped

"that by their own means they (the M.P.s) would bring forth those good things that had been promised and expected, that so it might appear they did not do them by any suggestion from the army, but from their own ingenuity; so tender were we to preserve them in the reputation and opinion of the people to the uttermost ..." (4)

- (1) Perfect Passages, 18-24 September 1652.
- (2) E678(3), The Beacons Quenched. It was written in reply to E675(14), A Beacon set on Fire and E675(29), A Second Beacon fired by Scintilla. In December the officers' tract was answered (E683(30) The Beacons Flameing).
- (3) The Dutch Intelligencer, 22-29 September 1652; Worden, Rump, p. 312.
- (4) Abbott, Writings and Speeches, III, pp. 55-56.

Cromwell's remarks delivered in a speech to the Barebones Assembly on 4 July 1653 are a perfect formulation of the paradox of the army's role in the Rump period. They were advocates of reform and guardians of the state, seeking to bring about change, but hoping to retain some form of constitutional propriety. Yet how could they achieve this in the face of an increasingly intransigent Parliament, one that at every turn was showing itself reluctant to deliver the goods the army expected from it? So in late 1652 the policy of adhering to the respectable revolution was wearing thin, down but not quite out.

In September and early October the army had good reason to believe that the Rump was at last attending to the question of reform. The House made a number of important concessions likely to pacify the army, on such questions as the relief of prisoners for debt and relief for prisoners on articles of war. There were also debates about what qualifications were to be imposed on members of the new representative and on ways of excluding disaffected persons from holding office under the Commonwealth.<sup>(1)</sup> The army for its part showed itself willing to stand by the Parliament and Commonwealth during the setback after the naval defeat off Dungeness. At the end of November, the officers met to consider naval affairs and were said to favour providing ships from their own pay to help defend the

---

(1) For this q.v. Worden, Rump, pp. 309-312. The officers appointed as commissioners for the act for relief of persons on articles of war were Barksted, Whalley, Disborowe, Nathaniel Whetham (governor of Portsmouth) and Thomlinson (C.J., VII, p. 186; Firth and Rait, II, pp. 618-620).

Commonwealth. One report even said they were willing to man them themselves. (1) The sending of soldiers to sea was nothing new. Earlier in the year men from Cromwell's, Ingoldsby's and Goffe's regiments had performed naval service. In 1653 this continued and again men from Ingoldsby's and Cromwell's regiments together with men from Barksted's, Constable's and Pride's served at sea. The regiments appear to have been ordered to replace those men who went to sea, but it also appears that once they had completed their spell at sea the men were received back into their respective regiments. Thus it seems unlikely that there was any political motivation behind the move least of all a desire to get rid of troublesome men by shipping them off. The evidence we have for the Rump period shows that political activity amongst the rank and file became virtually non-existent after September 1649. But just why soldiers should be considered suitable for naval service remains unclear. The decision seems to have originated with the Council of State, at the request of the Admiralty Commissioners, who perhaps felt it was better to have trained and experienced fighting men in service than unpredictable impressed men, especially as the military situation was somewhat critical. An overlap of personnel between army and navy was in itself nothing new. It had already existed at the most senior level since late 1647 when Rainborowe had been appointed Vice-Admiral

---

(1) A Perfect Account, 8-13 December 1652; Weekly Intelligencer, 7-14 December 1652; Several Proceedings, 2-9 December 1652.



and continued throughout the 1650's. On 23 February 1649 Warwick's appointment as Lord High Admiral was revoked and power to order naval affairs was given to the Council of State. Colonels Robert Blake, Edward Popham and Richard Deane were appointed "Generals at Sea", as if to emphasise that there was no sharp distinction between the two services, although only Deane was a member of the army at this time (Blake and Popham had fought in the Civil War; both were also Rumpers). In the 1650's Monck and Edward Montagu served in both army and navy commands. Navy involvement in politics will only be discussed in so far as it impinges upon army politics.<sup>(1)</sup>

Lt. Colonel Kelsey wrote to the Admiralty Commissioners suggesting that the 270 men ordered to be sent to sea from his regiment (Ingoldsby's) should be shipped at Dover. He feared that as they were new recruits many would run away if transported overland to Portsmouth. However, the army wanted to have their say as well. On 15 January 1653 some officers attended the Admiralty Commissioners and requested that Godly able persons should be given naval commands and that the army should nominate some of them. This was "well resented" by the commissioners who promised to look into it.<sup>(2)</sup>

However, relations between army and Parliament soon took another turn for the worse, and with the new year army impatience

(1) C.J., VI, p. 149; C.S.P.D. 1649-50, pp. 13, 15, 17.

(2) C.S.P.D. 1651-52, pp. 318, 319, 321, 324, 377, 423, 424, 430; C.S.P.D. 1652-53, pp. 2, 137, 140-141, 145, 156, 164, 191-192, 202, 256, 266, 275; B.M. Add. Ms. 22, 546, ff.101-105; Clarke Ms 24, f.104v; c.f. ibid., f.100v where a mutiny of some seamen at Chatham is reported. Blake helped suppress it.

began to manifest itself once more. Impatience was transformed into outright hostility within the space of four months. Intensive meetings and discussions took place in the Army Council in January. Accounts of events between January and April 1653 already exist in the work of Firth, Gardiner and most recently by Dr. Worden and it is not intended to cover ground where it is adequately treated by them.<sup>(1)</sup> In the crescendo of conflict between army and Parliament during these months it must be emphasised that it is the members of the army in London that lead the way. The officers and units elsewhere follow them. On 8 January after an intensive debate the officers referred the drafting of a paper which would set out their views on government and reform to a committee. This was very much in the manner of the late 1640's. The paper was intended to emphasise that law reform and religious matters, presumably liberty of conscience, would be attended to. Parliament had already made important concessions to the army. On 6 January it had ordered the bringing in of a bill for a new representative "with speed". The man who was to be responsible for managing this was Harrison.<sup>(2)</sup> The House also seems to have begun to take law reform and religious toleration more seriously once again. But on the latter question it soon became clear that

---

(1) C. H. Firth, 'Cromwell and the Expulsion of the Long Parliament in 1653', E.H.R., VIII, 1893, pp. 526-534 (useful for the source material it prints); Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, pp. 232-264; Worden, Rump, pp. 317-341. Nevertheless, I differ from both Gardiner and Dr. Worden on points of interpretation.

(2) Firth, 'Cromwell and the Expulsion of the Long Parliament in 1653', p. 527; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, p. 233; Worden, Rump, p. 319.

the House did not favour as broad a toleration as the army.<sup>(1)</sup> The officers continued to meet and there is evidence to suggest that the forces around London held similar meetings to discuss public affairs. However, throughout the months leading up to the dissolution of the Rump, and indeed after, the officers remained firmly in control. There was no question of 1647 style rank and file radicalism re-emerging.<sup>(2)</sup> There appear to have been some divisions among the officers themselves, but these should not be exaggerated. They were said to be unanimous about wanting a new Parliament. What most probably divided them was how this was to be achieved; whether by a forcible dissolution or not. Many officers must have felt that a dissolution was desirable emotionally, some that it was a logical development, but the prevailing part felt that the time was not yet ripe for such a move. In the end it was decided to send a letter to the various regiments and garrisons outlining their views and asking for their comments. This helped heal the divisions of opinion among the officers.<sup>(3)</sup> There was, of course, nothing new in this procedure but the tone of this one distinguished it from its predecessors.

- 
- (1) Firth, 'Cromwell and the Expulsion of the Long Parliament in 1653', p. 527; P.R.O. 31/3/90, f. 573; Worden, Rump, pp. 320-328.
- (2) P.R.O. 31/3/90, ff. 559v., 570; c.f. Worden, Rump, p. 318.
- (3) P.R.O. 31/3/90, ff. 573, 598, 600; Firth, 'Cromwell and the Expulsion of the Rump in 1653', p. 527; c.f. Gardiner (Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, p. 236) who exaggerates a supposed Lambert/Harrison split in the army at this time.

The letter was completed by the 28th. Its contents and aims mark a return to the feelings of the previous August, that is just before the phoney autumnal peace. It was designed to be further proof to those far from London that the army was not asleep. It was also designed to get the army to rally behind a course of action, which if necessary would involve the dissolution of the Rump. Moreover, it was directed solely at the officers. "Army" had a much more limited meaning in 1653 than in 1647. The letter claimed that God had owned the army in its late great victories, but that the good things hoped for in this "unexpected peaceable condition" have not come forth. The Lord's work has appeared to stand still "like a woman in travail ready to faint for want of strength to bring forth". The recent naval defeat at Dungeness was a sign of God's displeasure and had prompted a period of introspection after which it became clear that the army has been more interested in wordly and private affairs than in those of Jesus Christ and his people, that it had become slothful and weary of God's work, that God fearing men within and without the army had been prone to weakness, that the people were still subject to grievous oppressions and obstruction of justice, and that men of conscience were suffering because of the corruption of men in places of authority. The lessons were obvious. The army was resolved by all lawful means, it was stressed, to procure successive Parliaments of men faithful to the Commonwealth, fearing God and hating covetousness, and to promote law reform, liberty of conscience and

the propagation of the gospel. Prayers and replies were requested.<sup>(1)</sup> The army was girding its loins for decisive action. The implied criticism of the Rump was obvious. The letter was printed in the press. The Moderate Messenger called it "A Work of great excellency" which would "cause a most glorious and magnificent Light to shine forth throughout all the corners of the Nations".<sup>(2)</sup> However, even with the despatch of the letter, the army remained resolute in its desire for a new Parliament which was said to cause alarm in some circles.<sup>(3)</sup>

On 8 February Colonel Robert Lilburne, acting Commander-in-Chief in Scotland in the absence of Deane, wrote to his fellow officer Colonel John Okey that he had received copies of the circular letter and would ensure their distribution.<sup>(4)</sup> Replies to the circular came in over the next months. From Montrose, where part of Lilburne's and Anthony Morgan's regiments were stationed, the letter was said to have been received "with abundance of joy and gladness", and it was hoped it would stir the army from its "drowsiness" so that

"they may not draw away their shoulders, but be up and doing every one in their place, in carrying forward the great Work of the most High, which surely he will have brought about." <sup>(5)</sup>

- 
- (1) B.M. 669 f.16(83), A Letter from the General Meeting of the Officers of the Army, and Directed to the Officers of the several Garrisons and Regiments of Soldiers in Ireland, Scotland and England.
- (2) Moderate Messenger, 31 January-7 February 1653.
- (3) P.R.O. 31/3/90, f.600; c.f. Worden, Rump, pp. 319-320.
- (4) Clarke Ms. 86 (Colonel Robert Lilburne's Letter Book), f.18v.
- (5) E689(1), Another Great Victorie obtained by Vice Admiral Penn against the Hollanders. The address from Montrose was thought important enough to be included in this; Weekly Intelligencer, 20 February-1 March 1653. Both sources take the reply as the sense of the army in Scotland.

The artillery at Edinburgh were likewise enthusiastic about the circular. They felt that the letter encompassed their very thoughts and they were sure that the recent naval victory at Portland was a sign God was with them again. They felt that

"the Saints that have been the terror of the world, in punishing injustice and oppression, shall have a time to become the praise, and joy of the earth, when they become instrumental to raise of the tabernacle of righteousness, and cause judgement to run down like a stream, and justice to be a river to sweep away prophaneness, superstition, cruelty, and whatever is contrary to the Glory of Christ, liberty and peace of the Saints and well-being of mankind."

They concurred with the ends the army outlined in the letter and aimed to realise and would pray for their comrades.<sup>(1)</sup> Thus a providential justification for action, used in the past, was merging albeit briefly, with a millenarian one.

This coincided with vigorous activity amongst Fifth Monarchist congregations in London with whom some of the army, not the least of whom was Harrison, sympathised. Other sympathisers included Packer, Captain John Spencer, Adjutant General Allen, Captain John Vernon (both of whom were serving in Ireland), Chillenden and Danvers. The Fifth Monarchy Men were to become opponents of the Protectorate, but not all who sympathised with them at this time went

---

(1) Clarke Ms. 24, f.124; Weekly Intelligencer 29 March-5 April 1653. The reply is dated from Edinburgh 19 March.

on to oppose the Protector, nor did they enjoy an ideological ascendancy in the army at this time.<sup>(1)</sup> The army was determined to maintain its independence from such pressure and in January refused to receive a paper from several of the London Churches addressed to the Army Council. It was not just Cromwell whose hair stood on end at the thought of dissolving the Rump. Army officers, including Harrison, could not be prevented from taking part in meetings of the congregations which some of them had been attending since the end of 1652, even if these meetings included denunciations of the Rump.<sup>(2)</sup>

Throughout early 1653 the army stood firm in its commitment to seeing a new representative. On 7 March a committee of officers was appointed by the Council of Officers

"to attend and advise with his Excellency concerning a new Representative (the subject matter of their then debate)." (3)

Sooner or later there was bound to be a clash with the Rump; the question was, when? The views of individual officers are hard to ascertain. Cromwell was reluctant to use force. Royalist observers felt that he "sticks close to the House" although his absence from Parliament

- (1). Capp, Fifth Monarchy Men, p. 60. Dr. Capp's valuable study fails to make a clear distinction between the Fifth Monarchy Movement proper, which he defines as "a political and religious sect expecting the imminent Kingdom of Christ on earth, a theocratic regime in which the saints would establish a godly discipline over the unregenerate masses and prepare for the Second Coming", (ibid., p. 14), and those who subscribed to the prevailing millenarianism of the time, a distinction of which he is well aware, (ibid., loc. cit.). Thus, there is a tendency in his work to see Fifth Monarchy Men under the bed. By way of illustration, the millenarian zeal of the artillery officers at Edinburgh was not Fifth Monarchist.
- (2) Firth, 'Cromwell and the Expulsion of the Rump', p. 528; E684(26), W. Erbery, The Bishop of London; J. Heath, Flagellum, London, 1679, pp. 124-125.
- (3) Firth 'Cromwell and the Expulsion of the Rump in 1653', pp. 527-528

and the Council of State during most of March and early April tends to disprove this.<sup>(1)</sup> Right up to the eleventh hour he hoped for a compromise between army and Parliament that would avoid a dissolution by force.

Harrison's growing strength has already been commented on. By early 1653, in addition to a firm conviction that the Rump were not capable enough to carry on God's work, he had a personal axe to grind against them. He had never been personally popular with the House. He was thought to be too much a parvenu. No doubt he was also feared and his motives held suspect. After Cromwell he was the most important man in the army, with a potential power base in Wales. His own high principles and moral rectitude regarding public service, manifested over the expulsion from the Rump of Lord Howard of Escrick for bribery, the proceedings for which were instigated by Harrison, were called into doubt over his association with the Commission for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales of which he was a member.<sup>(2)</sup> Allegations of corruption against the commissioners had been banded about since late 1651 when it was even rumoured that charges would be brought against Harrison himself. This would have been an act of suicidal folly on the part of the Rump, as nothing could have been guaranteed to rouse the army as much as a vague charge against

---

(1) ibid., pp. 528-529. The retrospective accounts of Ludlow (Memoirs, I, pp. 347, 350) and Mrs. Hutchinson (Firth (ed.), Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson, , pp. 190-191) must be considered very doubtful; both were absent from London.

(2) For the Howard affair q.v. Ludlow, Memoirs, I, pp. 258-259; Aylmer, State's Servants, pp. 150-151; Worden, Rump, p. 243.



one of its leading officers. Harrison was not charged by the House but he was dropped from the Council of State.<sup>(1)</sup> The following March further allegations were made against Harrison and his fellow commissioners in a petition presented to Parliament. A committee was appointed but, despite its report that the petition was part of a Royalist plot, the Commission for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales was not renewed in April 1653, a slap in the face for Harrison. Cromwell gave his backing to Harrison a few days after the dissolution by telling the commissioners to return to their work as if the act were still in operation.<sup>(2)</sup> Harrison had fewer scruples than Cromwell about using force to dissolve the Rump. The Royalists even went so far as to say he was enlisting 4,000 men in Wales, a patently fanciful charge.<sup>(3)</sup> But Harrison was very close to Cromwell and influential especially around the time of the dissolution. With Cromwell he was the most conspicuous actor in the actual dissolution, and it was probably he who pressed hard for an interim government of 40 or so God-fearing men of integrity to try to repair the country's wounds, perhaps not so much to prepare the way for government by successive Parliaments as to prepare the way for the rule of King Jesus.

---

(1) Worden, Rump, pp. 281-282.

(2) This account is based on C. H. Firth, Thomas Harrison, American Antiquarian Society, April 1893, p. 418, Worden, Rump, p. 328. For a discussion of the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales q.v. T. Rees, A History of Protestant Nonconformity in Wales, 1883; T. A. Richards, A History of the Puritan Movement in Wales, 1639-1653; London, 1920; Hill, Continuity and Change, pp. 24-44.

(3) Abbott, Writings and Speeches, II, p. 627.

But Harrison, despite some indications to the contrary in late 1648 and early 1649, was not an adept politician. This was to become increasingly apparent over the next few months. He failed to exploit the opportunity given to him earlier in the year to manage the bill for a new representative.<sup>(1)</sup> Revolutionary fervour and a strong and sincere idealism were no substitute for ruthless political acumen.

As for Lambert, who was soon to shoot to the forefront of army politics, he too, like Harrison, had a personal grudge against the Rump after the fiasco of his appointment as Lord Deputy. But his role in the events leading up to the dissolution is very obscure. Contemporary Royalist newsletters make wild and fanciful assertions as to his role. He is at various times said to be a member of Harrison's supposed faction in the army and to have been a leading figure in a move to have Cromwell replaced as Lord General.<sup>(2)</sup> However, there are hints that Lambert was politically active. On 1 April a Royalist newsletter reported that when discussing the bill for a new representative the Rump accepted a qualification of £200 for members "to please the army". As Gardiner suggests the reappearance of this qualification in The Instrument of Government, largely the work of Lambert, suggests his influence at this time.<sup>(3)</sup> More certain is that on 14 April the Council of State requested the Lord

(1) Worden, Rump, p. 331.

(2) Firth, 'Cromwell and the Expulsion of the Rump in 1653', p. 530; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, p. 246.

(3) ibid., p. 237n.

General to commission Lambert as Commander-in-Chief in Scotland to replace Deane, still nominally in command there but serving at sea.<sup>(1)</sup> There was no political manipulation involved in this. Robert Lilburne, Deane's deputy, was not up to the job, a fact he recognised himself and made known to the Council of State and to Cromwell.<sup>(2)</sup> Lambert had already proved himself an able commander and administrator in the north in 1647-1649 and during the campaign in Scotland in 1650, and in view of the deteriorating military situation in Scotland his appointment to the Scottish command was a sound move. However, with the political crisis and dissolution of the Rump and his growing importance after this, the Council of State's request was not put into effect and Lilburne was not relieved of his duties until April 1654 when Monck took over, an ironical twist in view of subsequent developments.<sup>(3)</sup>

We have very little evidence of the views of other individual officers. Health's Flagellum records that the demand for a dissolution was not shared by all the officers. He alleges that Colonel Venables, Scout Master Downing and John Streater opposed a dissolution. He claims they came from Ireland, Scotland in the case of Downing, with other officers to make known their views. Venables was soon won over as was Downing. Only Streater spoke out against it

---

(1) C.S.P.D. 1652-53, p. 279.

(2) Clarke Ms 86, ff.19, 19v.

(3) After the dissolution of the Rump Disborowe appears to have been offered the Scottish command but refused it. Whalley was also considered (Clarke Papers, III, pp. 2-3).

"and being slamm'd by Harrison with Christ's personal Raign, and that he was assured the Lord General sought not himself, but that King Jesus might take the Scepter; He presently replied that Christ must come before Christmas, or else he would come too late." (1)

Some persons felt that, in disposing of the Rump and taking what was effectively a leap in the dark, they were being called upon to place too much trust in the power of the sword for carrying out reformation and bringing about freedom, and that there were insufficient guarantees that such power would not be abused. In trusting the sword they were by implication asked to have faith in the man who controlled it, Cromwell. But throughout early April there was a widespread feeling that decisive action was imminent. (2)

The immediate cause of the dissolution of the Rump was a fundamental disagreement between army and Parliament over the timing and probably the contents of the bill for a new representative. The traditional view is that Cromwell and the officers dissolved the House because the Parliament ignored an informal agreement reached the night before after discussion between themselves and some of the most influential M.P.s not to proceed with the bill, and instead attempted to pass a bill which included provisions for the House to recruit itself and thus perpetuate itself. (3) Recently this view has been challenged by Dr. Blair Worden, building upon the work of

- 
- (1) Heath, Flagellum, pp. 124-125. For more on Streater and the Republicanism which his attitude reflects q.v. below.
- (2) Firth, 'Cromwell and the Expulsion of the Rump in 1653', pp. 528-529.
- (3) Gardiner (Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, pp. 251-265) provides a classic example of this view.

Professor C. M. Williams. Dr. Worden agrees that the cause of dissolution was the House's resolution to proceed with the bill for a new representative on 20 April despite the agreement of the previous night. However, he argues that the Rump did not intend to recruit itself but that it intended to hold fresh elections. Dr. Worden believes that the army dissolved the Rump because it feared that their bill would open the way for an influx of Presbyterians and neuters thus undermining the revolution :

"What the Rump was plotting on 20 April was not the perpetuation of its authority : it was revenge for Pride's Purge." (1)

This argument is open to criticism. Dr. Worden places considerable emphasis on a document in the Marten-Loder Mss in the Brotherton Library of Leeds University which he, following Professor Williams, concludes to be a letter most probably written by Henry Marten to Oliver Cromwell. The document denies that the Rump sought to recruit itself and that Cromwell could verify this for himself if he cared to consult the bill itself.<sup>(2)</sup> Unfortunately the bill has not survived to enable us to do this. In my view, this document has more of the character and style of a draft manuscript of a polemic, intended for publication, than of a personal letter to Cromwell and is therefore more open to doubt about its reliability and the authenticity of its contents. Dr. Worden is aware of this possibility but dismisses it.<sup>(3)</sup> His interpretation of the contents of the bill the Rump was attempting

(1) Worden, Rump, pp. 337, 373, 377.

(2) ibid., pp. 364-365.

(3) ibid., pp. 365-366.

to pass on 20 April is also open to dispute. According to his view, this bill would have brought about a 'free Parliament' and that the man responsible for the decision to ignore the informal agreement of the night before was Haselrig.<sup>(1)</sup> In 1659 the restored Rump, in which Haselrig was the leading figure, was determined not to permit a 'free Parliament' realising then, as many of its members must have done in 1653, that to do so would open the way to a reaction against the revolution of late 1648 and early 1649 and even to a return of the Stuarts and thus to their being held accountable for the trial and execution of Charles I. Despite all its alleged conservatism there were even more conservative elements outside the Rump and many of the Rumpers must have been fully aware of the dangers a free Parliament might spell for them, if not on ideological grounds then at least in terms of their own self-interest.

In the absence of the bill the Rump was discussing on 20 April there can be no definitive answer to the question of what its contents were. What seems reasonable to suggest is that on the night of April 19th and 20th there was a dramatic and decisive change in the relations between the Rump and the officers and that the latter, and Cromwell in particular, felt that the reneging on the agreement of the previous night was yet another manifestation of the Rump's bad faith. This was the last straw. Their patience was exhausted and they decided it was time to put an end to the Rump. Some of them

---

(1) ibid., p. 338.

especially Harrison, must have been confident that the introduction of rule by the saints could and would provide a satisfactory alternative to the Rump. Some, as we shall see, were soon to have their doubts about the wisdom of the dissolution. But for many officers the dissolution of the Rump was an end in itself.

The army went ahead and dissolved the Rump without really knowing what it was going to replace it with. Cromwell and Disborowe were aware of this when they spoke to the Army Council in March, when they asked what the army would call themselves if they dissolved Parliament :

"a state they could not be; They answered that they would call a new Parliament; Then sayes the Generall, the Parliament is not the supreme power, but that is the supreme power that calls it." (1)

This was exactly the point. If the army dismissed the Rump, then it was showing to the world that it, the army, was the supreme power and calling the tune. But this went contrary to the army line that had been laid down in 1647 and followed since then. In 1647 Major White had been expelled from the General Council for saying that there was a no visible power but the sword. He had, of course, been correct. But this was a reality the army had been reluctant to accept, and it had done everything possible to camouflage this from public view. Hence, the limited respectable revolution of 1648-1649. In April 1653 with the dissolution of the Rump that policy was in ruins, destroyed

---

(1) Firth, 'Expulsion of the Long Parliament in 1653', p. 528; P.R.O. 31/3/90, f. 655.

by the army itself, but not solely by it. The army and Parliament had become locked in a fearful struggle. The outcome had to be the demise of one or other, and in the 1653 context it was obvious which one would go. The debate about the contents of the bill the Rump was debating on 20 April should not allow us to be distracted from what actually happened, namely that the Rump was dissolved by the army and that this was the outcome of a conflict between the two bodies that was already of long standing. If the ultimate clash had not been over this bill then it most probably would have been over something else. But this did not mean that the army was aiming at military rule, far from it. To that extent there was some continuity with the policy of 1649. Indeed, as we shall see, at no stage in the 1650's did the army ever seek to govern by itself. It always sought to establish some form of civilian government to provide a legal and constitutional foundation to government.

However, in April 1653 perhaps the most important result of the dissolution was the establishment of Oliver Cromwell as the leading figure in both civilian and military politics. There was much truth in his alleged remarks when he returned to the Council of Officers after the dissolution and said

"that now they must go hand in hand with him, and justify what was done to the hazard of their lives and Fortunes, as being advised and concurred in it." (1)

For better or for worse, consciously or unconsciously, the vast majority of officers were binding their fate with that of the Lord General, Oliver Cromwell.

---

(1) Heath, Flagellum, p. 123; Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 356n; P.R.O. 31/3/90, ff.654, 656v.



CHAPTER FOUR

I.

APRIL 1653-DECEMBER 1653

The dissolution of the Rump on 20 April was, as we have said, a spontaneous act done without any clear idea of what was going to replace it as a form of government. Supporters of the army remained critical of the dissolution saying that it had been done rashly with little thought of what was to succeed it.<sup>(1)</sup> It has been emphasised that the army did not intend to become the sole power and, from its first pronouncement, the army was at pains to justify its action and to persuade some of the leading civilian politicians to step into the breach and help rule the country. The period from the dissolution of the Rump to the establishment of the Protectorate falls into three phases. The first was from April to July, when the government was in the hands of Cromwell, as Captain General of the armed forces, and an interim Council of State consisting of military and civilian personnel - an attempt to blur the appearance of naked military rule. The second phase covers most of the Barebones assembly down to about October, by which time Cromwell had become disillusioned with it as a governing body. The third phase covers November and December, during which time Cromwell was won over to an alternative form of government based on a written constitution, The Instrument of Government, largely Lambert's work, and ends with Cromwell's installation as Lord Protector.

---

(1) P.R.O. 31/3/90, f. 666.

The exact timing of the abrupt dissolution was unexpected and, although troops were moved up to London to prevent any possible trouble, they don't seem to have been needed. The coup was carried out very peacefully and accepted passively by the population. But to counteract any possible trouble, and despite the need for manpower in Scotland in face of the Royalist rising there and to fight in the Dutch war, a strong military presence was kept in London over the next few months.<sup>(1)</sup> However, even with the dissolution there was no letting up on any of the intense political activity that had been going on since before 20 April.<sup>(2)</sup> One thing that had to be done quickly was to ensure the unity of the army. On the day after the dissolution Cromwell issued an order appointing a committee of 18 senior officers to handle army affairs. There was to be a quorum of five among whom one of the following had to be present : Commissary General Whalley, Colonel Disborowe, Quarter Master General Grosvenor or Colonel Rich. The committee's brief was to manage, regulate and order everything relating to the army and to receive addresses from, and issue forth orders to all the regiments in the army. They were to meet at Whitehall. One of their first acts was to issue a proclamation to all the regiments forbidding them to disturb any religious services under pain of court martial.<sup>(3)</sup>

- 
- (1) Firth, 'The Expulsion of the Long Parliament in 1653', p. 533; C.S.P.V. 1653-54, pp. 64, 132-133, 135; C.S.P.D. 1652-53, p. 298; Weekly Intelligencer, 19-26 April 1653; P.R.O. 31/3/90, ff. 654, 656v.
- (2) Weekly Intelligencer, 19-26 April 1653; Clarke Papers, III, p. 1-2.
- (3) Clarke Ms. 43, f.30v; Clarke Papers, III, p. 2; Moderate Occurrences, 19-26 April 1653. Q.v. also C.S.P.D. 1652-53, p. 349. The proclamation against military personnel interfering with religious services was in contrast to the growing conservatism of the Rump in religious matters during its last month; on this q.v. Worden, Rump, pp. 322-327.

Copies of the army's declaration of 22 April justifying the coup to the world were sent to all the regiments outside London. Copies reached Scotland by 28 April and were distributed swiftly to the various regiments on duty there.<sup>(1)</sup> At the beginning of May an Army Council was held at headquarters in Dalkeith attended by 28 officers. The meeting approved of a remonstrance concurring in the dissolution and condemning the Rump for intending to perpetuate itself. The army in Scotland hoped "an happy Reformation" would be produced "in a greater measure and shorter time" than under the Rump. They urged their comrades to go forward and reform in the strength of the Lord "and we trust our vows and promises shall be no more forgotten" nor that there would be any return to the Egyptian bondage either in spiritual or in temporal kingly powers. During the next few days in response to Robert Lilburne's "desire and direction" of 4 May, the regiments sent in their replies to the English army's declaration. Okey's regiment saw it as a chance to improve the work of reformation. William Daniels' hoped the dissolution would be the foundation

"of a just liberty as the fruites of those many  
publique deliverances that God hath vouchsafed  
to us"

but reminded Cromwell and the officers in England of the need to fulfil the promises to remove oppressions such as tithes, and to reform the

---

(1) Clarke Papers, III, p. 2. Clarke Ms 86 (Robert Lilburne's letter book), ff. 48, 53. The Declaration of 22 April is reprinted in Abbott, Writings and Speeches, III, pp. 5-8.

law. The artillery officers at Edinburgh, who had welcomed the English army's circular in January, did not need to wait to be told to write to the army in England. In a letter of 29 April they pledged to stand and fall with them assured that God who made them instruments to "purge the Parliament will now owne their dissolution of it".<sup>(1)</sup> There must have been similar returns from regiments serving in England which have not survived. Over the next few weeks reactions from Ireland, where the dissolution came as a complete surprise, reached London. On 29 April the Commissioners for Irish affairs in Dublin, appointees of the Rump and all members of it, with Fleetwood and Ludlow members of the army as well, issued a declaration to the various regiments saying that it was their duty to publish the army's declaration of 22 April and that all must perform their trusts as before and maintain order. May 11 was to be set aside as a day to seek the Lord.<sup>(2)</sup> Odd declarations of support for the dissolution continued to reach headquarters at least into June.<sup>(3)</sup>

The officers in London were not lacking in energy or ideas about doing something to fill the vacuum caused by their expulsion of the Rump. Despite unfounded rumours that the army did not intend to call another Parliament, the officers were soon

- 
- (1) Clarke Ms 25, ff. 36v, 38, 40, 42v, 43, 44v, 48, C. II. Firth, 'Scotland and the Commonwealth', Scottish History Society, XVIII, 1895, pp. 129-130; A Perfect Diurnal, 9-16 May 1653; J. G. Ackerman (ed.), Letters from Roundhead Officers written from Edinburgh and Chiefly addressed to Captain Adam Baynes, Edinburgh, 1856, p. 54; B.M. Add Ms. 21, 422 f. 51. The declaration of the army in Scotland supporting the dissolution of the Rump was printed separately (E697(1), The Humble Remonstrance of the General Council of Officers met at Dalkeith in behalf of the Forces of Scotland shewing their hearty Concurrence with his Excellency's dissolving the late Parliament.)
- (2) The Moderate Publisher, 29 April-13 May 1653, repr. in Ludlow, Memoirs, I, pp. 537-538; q.v. ibid., pp. 356-357 for Ludlow's retrospective comments; A Perfect Diurnal, 27 June-4 July 1653.
- (3) Several Proceedings, 2-9 June 1653.

engaged in discussions with some former members of the Rump in an attempt to implement their intention, which preceded the dissolution and which was re-iterated in the Declaration of 22 April, to devolve the supreme authority upon persons of approved honesty and integrity.<sup>(1)</sup>

All the evidence suggests there was a difference of opinion in the army as to the exact way this pledge should be honoured. Ludlow has made famous the alleged gulf between Harrison, who favoured a large assembly, on the lines of a Jewish Sanhedrin, and Lambert who advocated a small group of ten or twelve to rule the nation. But given the fact that this is evidence dating from after the event, and that Ludlow was in Ireland at the time, it must be treated cautiously. It is probably inaccurate to interpret this difference in terms of a Lambert/Harrison split and of the two men having rival followings in the army. A split only emerged later. However, the outcome of the discussions is beyond dispute, an interim Council of State was to be created as a kind of caretaker government until an assembly, chosen with the help of suggestions from the saints in their gathered Churches, met.<sup>(2)</sup>

A Declaration was issued on 30 April in Cromwell's name, as Captain General, announcing the establishment of the interim Council of State.

---

(1) Clarke Papers, III, p. 2; Ludlow, Memoirs, I, pp. 357-358.

(2) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 358; E728(5), A True State of the Case of the Commonwealth ... relevant passages of which are repr. in Ludlow, Memoirs, I, pp. 358-359n; Clarke Papers, III, p. 2; C.S.P.D. 1652-53, p. 339. My interpretation differs from both Gardiner and the most recent account by Professor Woolrych. Gardiner (Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, p. 272n.), speculates far beyond what the evidence will support and allows the Instrument of Government to become a red herring. The idea of a written constitution most likely only materialised later in the year and Lambert's views were not as firm as Gardiner suggests in April. Professor Woolrych ('The Calling of Barebones Parliament', E.H.R., LXXX, 1965, pp. 494-495) follows Ludlow.

The Declaration itself and its style of issue showed unequivocally where real power lay, in the army.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Council met for the first time on 29 April, and probably agreed to the Declaration. On the 30th Lambert was made president for the ensuing week thus showing a willingness to play a full part in the new government. It can also be interpreted as a gesture towards him for not getting his way with his select Council. Initially, the Council was made up of ten men but it was soon expanded to 13. The military members, as Professor Woolrych has rightly pointed out, were not so many as previous scholars have supposed, but they are not as few as he suggests.<sup>(2)</sup> Of the original members there is no doubt about Cromwell, Lambert, Harrison and Disborowe, they were primarily army officers. But Bennet and Sydenham, although they were garrison commanders, should also be included as military men. Of the three additions, Thomlinson was an army officer and Philip Jones whose regiment had been disbanded in October 1651 was still governor of Swansea.<sup>(3)</sup>

Once things had settled down, the army in England wrote more fully to their comrades in Scotland. Their letter, written on 3 May, called the dissolution of the Rump a "revolution" and hoped that unity between the two forces would be preserved so that they could be further instrumental in carrying on God's work. The events leading up to 20 April were recounted and it was emphasised that

(1) Abbott, Writings and Speeches, III, pp. 16-17.

(2) Woolrych, 'The Calling of Barebones Parliament', p. 495n.

(3) C.S.P.D. 1652-53, p. 339; H.M.C. Portland, III, p. 201; Firth and Davies, p. xxvi.

dissolution had been a last resort. Referring to the interim Council of State, they assured their comrades that steps were being taken to govern the country until the assembly of men of approved fidelity and honesty could meet. The army in England said it would not pursue selfish ends but would seek to advance the affairs and kingdom of Jesus Christ for which thousands had died, valuing the cause more than their lives. Until then the army's work had been destructive, but now men expected them to be creative. The commitment to put power into the hands of a Parliament of 'saints' was re-affirmed as the cornerstone of their current policy. The letter, signed by 27 officers including Lambert and Harrison, concluded by urging their comrades to pray for them.<sup>(1)</sup> On 11 May the officers in London wrote a similar letter to their comrades in Ireland.<sup>(2)</sup> Six days later the army in Scotland replied to the original letter to them. It was addressed to Lambert to be communicated by him "to our deare and Christian friends of the army in England". The English army's letter was felt to have expressed

"youre zeale for the advancement of the Kingdom  
of Christ and his People in the World, and  
particularly in these nations."

Their reply to the 22 April Declaration had demonstrated that "there is no distance, but onely of place betwixt us". They felt obliged "to endeavour still to keep these things warm" and briefly, and proudly, reviewed the role which the army, with the help of the Lord

(1) Clarke Ms. 25, f. 48ff.

(2) The letter is printed in E993(31), The Fifth Monarchy or Kingdom of Christ.



had played since 1647. The tyranny of regal and episcopal powers should be contrasted with the present freedom

"wrought out of their destruction by instruments not onely condemned by them, but such as the then builders would have laid aside, as unfit for their end and purpose",

probably a reference to the Presbyterian attempt to disband the army in 1647. They felt gratified with this achievement but cannot rest until Jesus's banner of holiness is set up in the hearts and lives of those who profess his name. This was classified as spiritual work but the Lord was stirring the English army even then to choose suitable instruments to further this work. They promised to live and die with them and to pray for them and were sure they would stick to their promises and not sit back

"nor leave off till the Lord be fruitfull in good workes, and that every one may sit under his own Vine and under his own Figtree, blessing the Lord for those gracious dispensations wherein he made you instrumentall." (1)

The letter was both keen and enthusiastic. It was also politically naive, offering no more than generalised ideals as solutions to pressing practical problems. It brushed over, if not altogether ignored, the difficulties that obstructed the way to settlement, any settlement, even the idealistic and vague one they appeared to be committed to. But at least the officers in London could take heart that the coup had been approved of and supported by their comrades and that they were willing to acquiesce in their leadership and to

---

(1) A Perfect Diurnal, 23-30 May 1653. Both letters were printed but without the signatures in the case of the English army's one (Wor. Co. AA.8.3. (133)).

follow it. The letter emphasises how out of touch those members of the army serving at a distance from London could become. Far removed from London, often on active service and with poor communications, it was not really surprising that what they had to offer tended to be inferior and less sophisticated than those who were close to the centre of the nation's political life in London. This helps explain why the forces outside the capital tended to follow the initiative taken by those located in it. Individual officers, taking advantage of leave in England, proved the exception to this principle, as the activity surrounding the Three Colonels' petition and Overton's 'plot' was to show. But it is only in the general chaos of 1659 that the tables were turned and the officers in London or, as we shall argue a part of them, lost their supremacy in this respect.

During the weeks until the first meeting of Barebones the officers were busy considering the members of the future assembly and participating in government administration. Professor Woolrych has argued convincingly that Cromwell and the officers chose the members of the new Assembly and that they were not nominated directly and solely by the saints.<sup>(1)</sup> But this was no smooth process and it took over a month, with much heated discussion, before the final list was compiled.<sup>(2)</sup> There were plenty of addresses from the saints throughout the country putting forward their own suggestions.<sup>(3)</sup> Some

- 
- (1) Woolrych, 'The Calling of Barebones Parliament', passim. For a different view. q.v. T. Liu, 'The Calling of Barebones Parliament reconsidered', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, XXII, 1971, pp. 223-236.
- (2) C. Clark S.P., III, pp. 204, 205-206, 211, 213; C.S.P.V. 1653-54, pp. 71, 84.
- (3) Nicholls, Original Letters, pp. 90-97, 121-122.

of the addresses included army officers or men close to the army. The Durham address was signed by Paul Hobson who had played an active part in army politics in 1647 in the regiment then Robert Lilburne's but now technically still Haselrig's. Another of the signatures was George Bateman possibly the same man as the Captain of Fitch's regiment serving in Scotland.<sup>(1)</sup> The signatories of the address from the gathered Church at Chequer "without Aldgate" who advocated that the members of the future Parliament be chosen from lists compiled by the Independent Churches and then selected by lot included John Mason of Pride's regiment, Edmund Chillenden of Whalley's, and Samuel Oates chaplain to Pride's.<sup>(2)</sup> Chillenden was cashiered later in the year but despite being a Fifth Monarchist he did not actively oppose the Protectorate. Mason remained in the army and played a leading part in the opposition to Cromwell's becoming King in 1656-1657, and Oates was involved in Overton's 'plot'. Cromwell recalled the freedom the officers had had in nominating members in his speech to the officers in February 1657. He said

"not an officer of the degree of a captain but named more than he himself did." <sup>(3)</sup>

Professor Woolrych says he was probably exaggerating,<sup>(4)</sup> but in the nomination process the officers views were doubtless taken seriously.

(1) ibid., p. 91.

(2) ibid., p. 122.

(3) Abbott, Writings and Speeches, IV, p. 418.

(4) Woolrych, 'The Calling of Barebones Parliament', pp. 503-504.

During the weeks when the members were being chosen there was clearly much activity on the part of various officers to influence the outcome. Harrison used his Welsh connection to secure the return of Hugh Courtney, John Browne, and Richard Price all of whom formed part of the Fifth Monarchist nucleus in the Parliament.<sup>(1)</sup> In 1659 it was alleged that Cromwell, in co-operation with Lambert, Disborowe, Whalley, Goffe, Pickering and John Owen, tried to pack the Assembly with men to counterbalance the saints. They were said to have conspired with Henry Lawrence, Walter Strickland, Robert Titchbourne and Colonels Hewson and Clarke in Ireland. All of them were to be 'conservatives' in Barebones and all were to serve under the Protectorate. As Professor Woolrych says, this assertion written in 1659 by a Fifth Monarchist pamphleteer must be handled with care but it is still plausible.<sup>(2)</sup> If other officers were trying to influence the membership of the Parliament why should Cromwell not do the same too? Pragmatism was at least as much a factor in determining the composition of Barebones as idealism.

There are indications of tremors of unease in the army about the course of events. John Streater's qualms about the dissolution of the Rump have been mentioned above. Even before its dissolution he had taken to print. At the end of March his tract A Glimpse of that Jewell, Judiciall, Just, Preserving Libertie appeared.<sup>(3)</sup> In it he

- (1) Mayer, 'Inedited Letters', p. 227 (Harrison to John Jones, 13 May 1653); Capp, Fifth Monarchy Men, p. 66.
- (2) E774(1), A Faithfull Searching Home Word ... (13 December) 1659, quoted in Woolrych, 'The Calling of Barebones Parliament', p. 500. Colonel Clarke seems to have been in England, not Ireland, by mid-May (C.S.P.D. 1652-53, p. 341).
- (3) E690(11).

rejected the view that affairs of state were matters "too high for common capacities". He said

"every member of the Commonwealth, of right and in duty, ought to watch to their liberty, and prevent Absolutism in persons of great Trust."

He warned against any one man having too much power and felt no one could stand by and let the magistrate do anything destructive to the collective or particular good.<sup>(1)</sup> Professor J. G. A. Pocock has called the tract "an early document of the Good Old Cause".<sup>(2)</sup> In April two more tracts appeared from Streater's pen. The first, a polemic, '10 Queries by a friend of ye new dissolved parlement' warned of the dangers of military rule. He asked if making an army supreme was not equivalent to putting authority into the hands of one person in so far as an army is under the same discipline and whether this was not "next doore to monarchy". He did not believe that much could be expected from a Parliament of saints as the saints comprised men of different religious shades all professing to be judges of their own cause, an argument that was to be impressed upon Cromwell to urge him to become Protector, although it emanated from a different source then.<sup>(3)</sup> Streater developed his fears about entrusting military power to one person in The Grand Politick Informer. The tracts were circulated in the army. For the first he was cashiered and for the second he was imprisoned by the Council of State, but despite an extremely well-argued case over habeas corpus in November he was re-committed and only discharged in February 1654.<sup>(4)</sup>

---

(1) ibid., preface, pp. 5, 12.

(2) J. G. A. Pocock, 'James Harrington and the Good Old Cause', Journal of British Studies, X, 1970, pp. 33-34.

(3) E693(5), '10 Queries', (25 April), manuscript in Thomason's hand.

(4) C.S.P.D. 1653-54, p. 143; D.N.B.; A Complete Collection of State Trials, London, 1776, II, pp. 195-211.

Streater's premonitions about the abuse of uncontrolled power and control of the army were quite opposite in the context of 1653, and his views influenced the Three Colonels' Petition and other declarations at that time. Perhaps significantly, one of the signatories of that petition, Okey, is reported to have been unhappy with events. According to Ludlow, Okey and some other officers, whom he does not specify, went to Cromwell after the dissolution

"to desire satisfaction in that proceeding, conceiving that the way they were now going tended to ruin and confusion."

Cromwell could not be positive himself as he too was uncertain of the future, but he urged them to wait

"for a further discovery of his design before they would proceed to a breach and division from him."

Okey was not satisfied with this and asked Disborowe

"what his (Cromwell's) meaning was to give such high commendations to the Parliament when he endeavoured to persuade the officers of the army from petitioning them for a dissolution, and so short a time after to eject them with so much scorn and contempt."

Disborowe, Ludlow says, had no reply

"but that if ever he drolled in his life, he had drolled then." (1)

Obviously, Ludlow, who sympathised with the Three Colonels' Petition, exaggerates, but Okey's uneasiness coming from a sincere man who remained loyal to the Rump in 1659, can be seen as reflecting a feeling amongst at least some of the officers who were genuinely puzzled and confused with the 'u' turns the army had performed in recent years although they did not as yet consider moving into opposition to army

---

(1) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 356.

policy. There was not really anything to oppose at that time anyway, and despite the adulation accorded the restored Rump in 1659 by the army there is no doubt that the vast majority of officers were deeply disillusioned with what they saw as the Rump's lack of commitment to the reforms desired and urged on them by the army so often between 1649 and 1653. An opposition could only develop within the army when there appeared to be some significant retreat from the achievements and expectations raised by the revolution of late 1648 and early 1649, and that is how some officers were to interpret developments under the Protectorate. They saw it as backsliding. Ludlow's story about Okey is confirmed from another source. On 21 May Thomas Harley wrote to Sir Robert Harley that there had been three additional appointments to the Council of State. Harley implies that Thomlinson, one of the additions, was being bought off with office as he was on the point of registering his discontent with current developments as Okey and some other officers had done.<sup>(1)</sup> Okey himself was also given a taste of office. One of the first orders of the interim Council of State was to set up a committee of four officers (Rich, Okey, Hezekiah Haynes, and Thomas Kelsey) to enquire into the state of the inland post and to report their findings and suggestions. On 11 May their brief was extended to cover the foreign post as well. Okey played his part on this committee.<sup>(2)</sup>

---

(1) H.M.C. Portland, III, p. 201. Thomlinson became a member of the Irish Council under the Protectorate but was distrusted by Henry Cromwell, q.v. below.

(2) C.S.P.D. 1652-53, p. 299, 320. For their reports q.v. B.M. Add. Ms. 22, 546, ff. 109-112, 123; H. G. Tibbutt, 'Colonel John Okey', Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, XXXV, 1954, pp. 71-73.

Indeed, during the whole period of the interim Council army officers were very active in government administration, much more than they had ever been before. For example, on 30 April Colonels Thomlinson and Grosvenor, Lt. Colonels Francis White and Salmon together with Maximillian Beard, Sir John Wollaston and John Greensmith were instructed by the Council of State to consider a committee to examine the whole question of public accountability for the nation's finances, a long-standing grievance of both army and Levellers. On 11 May Colonel Lt. Colonel Goffe and/Kelsey, Major Haynes, Captains Blackwell and Deane, Richard Hutchinson and John Jackson were appointed to report on public finance. Colonel John Reynolds, (a politically active figure in 1647-1648) and Colonel John Clarke were requested to advise Lambert and other Council members about Ireland. Other officers had already been appointed to the committee for Irish and Scottish affairs. The administrative activity of the officers during these months covered a wide spectrum of government business, ranging from such important matters as public finance and questions of law and order to such relatively minor matters as the transporting of Deane's body to London, a task entrusted to the hands of Rich, Salmon and Kelsey. Deane was killed on 2 June in a sea battle against the Dutch. However the key step, of securing the financial future of the army, was not left to the Council of State but was made by an order in the name of the Captain General and his Council of Officers for the continuance of the monthly assessment, a case of the piper calling the tune. The army may have found itself landed with a hot potato on 20 April, one which it was anxious to pass on to some other authority as quickly as possible, but the officers showed no reluctance



to play a full and diligent part in government between May and July.<sup>(1)</sup> Such administrative activity besides helping to give an appearance that the army was actually doing something about reforms, in contrast with the Rump, could prove a chastening experience. It could illustrate to the officers the practical difficulties in the way of introducing reform, as opposed to the luxury of just sitting back and demanding them. It could also keep them busy with less time to think only about politics.<sup>(2)</sup>

The efforts to work out a final list of M.P.s to sit in the new assembly proceeded throughout May. According to one newsbook they were taking longer than had previously been thought.<sup>(3)</sup> The uncertainty this gave rise to was reflected in the Council of State which although acting as a sovereign body had doubts about its status. There was a debate in Council on the subject of where supreme power lay; some felt it was in the general, some in the army and some felt it still lay dormant. Another report said they were "at a nonplus, for they know not what to do".<sup>(4)</sup> But after a week of prolonged discussion at the end of May the army completed its selection, and on 6 June the summonses were despatched, in Cromwell's name as Captain General and commander-in-chief.<sup>(5)</sup> Barebones was intended to be a sovereign body, a solution to the problems raised by the dissolution of the Rump, but it was a

- (1) C.S.P.D. 1652-53, pp. 301, 304, 319, 341, 350, 395, and ibid. May-June passim; Mercurius Politicus, 9-11 June, 1653; Clarke Ms. 25, f. 63v; P.R.O. 31/3/90, f. 671v.
- (2) For an account of administration during these months q.v. Aylmer, State's Servants, pp. 42-43.
- (3) A Perfect Diurnal, 23-31 May 1653.
- (4) H.M.C. Portland, III, p. 201; Thurloe, I, p. 249.
- (5) A Perfect Diurnal, 23-31 May 1653; Abbott, Writings and Speeches, III, p. 34.

body that was there on suffrance, the army's suffrance as the issuing of the writs demonstrated.

This did not mean that the army sought to play a conspicuous part in affairs of state. The Declaration of 22 April made much of the fact that it did not, and the persistent commitment to the establishment of a non-military successor government to the Rump testifies to this. It was also decided as early as 30 April that any army officer nominated to the Parliament would have to lay down his commission.<sup>(1)</sup> The Assembly was to be seen to be a civilian body. In the end, however, the number of military members of the Barebones Assembly was greater than originally intended. Besides the five officers co-opted at the start of the session (Cromwell, Lambert, Harrison, Disborowe and Thomlinson), the two Generals at sea (Blake and Monck), a few other officers found their way into the Assembly. Robert Bennet, M.P. for Cornwall, William Sydenham, and John Bingham, both M.P.s for Dorset, Henry Danvers, M.P. for Leicester, and Philip Jones, M.P. for Monmouth, were all garrison commanders and Charles Howard, M.P. for the four northern counties, was commander of the Life Guards. Of the Irish members Hewson, Henry Cromwell and John Clarke were officers.<sup>(2)</sup> In the new Council of State army officers were not very numerous in relation to the civilians. Of the initial members eight were army men, Cromwell, Harrison, Thomlinson, Sydenham, Bennet, Lambert, Disborowe and Philip Jones. Of the 16 additions on 14 July

---

(1) Clarke Papers, III, pp. 4, 7.

(2) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, pp. 303-310; c.f. Woolrych, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Saints' in R. H. Parry (ed.) The English Civil War and After, London, 1970, pp. 70-71.

Fleetwood, Hewson and Howard were officers.<sup>(1)</sup> However, if the army intended to give as civilian an appearance as possible to the new regime its role as guarantor of that regime meant it had no option but to remain prominent in the public eye. Hence the armed guard on the Parliament and the presence of three regiments around St. James during John Lilburne's trial.<sup>(2)</sup>

One of the most important aspects of the Barebones Assembly in terms of army politics is that it discredited Harrison and enhanced the standing of Lambert. Just how correct it is to speak of the two officers as having 'factions' in the army is a difficult question to answer. Doubtlessly they had sympathisers, but it is questionable if one can speak of them as having 'factions' which imply a degree of organisation and consistent commitment on the part of the individuals adhering to them. Thus, Professor Woolrych's assertion that Harrison's 'faction' in the Council of Officers included Rich, Thomas Saunders, John Mason, William Packer, John Wigan and Edmund Chillenden is contentious.<sup>(3)</sup> They may well have sympathised with the Major General. Chillenden and Rich were indeed Fifth Monarchists and Chillenden and Mason had signed the address from the gathered Church at Chequer "without Aldgate" in April. But as a group they were disparate. Chillenden was cashiered in the autumn of 1653 for some unknown cause. Later he was expelled from his Church in St. Paul's for immorality. Perhaps the two events are not unconnected and his

---

(1) C.S.P.D. 1653-54, pp. 16, 28.

(2) C.S.P.V. 1653-54, pp. 101, 112; Thurloe, I, p. 367.

(3) Woolrych, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Saints', p. 68.

expulsion from the army had nothing to do with political matters.<sup>(1)</sup> Wigan, like Harrison, gave up his commission rather than serve under the Protectorate.<sup>(2)</sup> Rich, who had been accused by the Levellers in 1647 of being one of Cromwell's 'kitchen cabinet', was removed from the army in 1654, and despite his Fifth Monarchist contacts during the Protectorate he did not become other worldly, like Harrison, and returned to the army in 1659. Saunders's opposition to the Protectorate, as one of the Three Colonels had a republican basis to it rather than a Fifth Monarchist one like Harrison's.<sup>(3)</sup> Mason accepted the Protectorate but opposed the moves to make Cromwell King in 1656-1657. Chillenden singles out Mason, and Goffe, as especially scrupulous to give him a fair hearing at his court martial.<sup>(4)</sup> Packer also remained in the army during the Protectorate but along with some of his fellow officers in Cromwell's horse regiment was cashiered because of discontent with the growing conservatism of the Protectorate in 1653.<sup>(5)</sup> Thus, it would be stretching things too far to suggest these officers were part of a 'faction' around Harrison. The radicals in Barebones may also have hoped to count on Colonel Thomas Fitch, considered a reliable Republican in 1659, who was serving in Scotland in 1653 but

- 
- (1) Firth and Davies, pp. 226-227; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, p. 304n; Bodl. Rawlinson Ms. A8, f. 127.
- (2) Firth and Davies, pp. 484-485.
- (3) q.v. below.
- (4) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, p. 304n.; for the kingship crisis q.v. below (Chapter Five, Section I).
- (5) q.v. below.

who was absent in England, a fact about which Robert Lilburne complained. His wife and mother-in-law became members of Chillenden's chapel sometime in the autumn. Fitch also secured lands in Scotland for his arrears on the recommendation of the Council of State, which probably explains his absence from duty in Scotland. But he never actually opposed the Protectorate and there is no evidence to incriminate him in Overton's 'plot'.<sup>(1)</sup>

Lambert is said to have been more popular with the army and even in the nation as a whole. In the army his popularity is understandable. His fairness during his spell in the north from 1647 has already been commented on and his military achievements in 1650 were noteworthy. But an attempt to quantify any following in the army would be impossible. His probable resentment because his proposal for a small Council of State was rejected did not prevent him from playing a full part in the interim government. He was a regular attender at the Council of State during May and June and was appointed to various committees.<sup>(2)</sup> But once Barebones began to sit he withdrew from the Council of State and by the beginning of August he was reported to have retired to Wimbledon.<sup>(3)</sup> However, his withdrawal was not perhaps as complete as has been thought up to now. Professor Woolrych says that Lambert went from Wimbledon northwards to sulk over the

---

(1) Firth, 'Scotland and the Commonwealth', pp. 148, 154, 203; Bodl. Rawlinson Ms. A8, f. 127; C.J., VII, p 329.

(2) C.S.P.D. 1652-53, pp. XLI, 332, 341, 342, 377, 387, 395, 410, 421, 451. For suggestions of his popularity in the army q.v. C. Clar. S.P., II, pp. 205-206.

(3) C.S.P.D. 1652-53, p. XLI, Thurloe, I, p. 393.

summer.<sup>(1)</sup> This seems unlikely. He may have been disillusioned with political developments but he did not resign his commission and burn his bridges with the army. As Major-General he continued to hold an important rank in it. By at least October he was still playing a part commensurable with his rank in the army's administration. Robert Lilburne wrote to Cromwell on 3 October about an order for troop movements he had received "from M. G. Lambert (I suppose by your Lordship's appointment)".<sup>(2)</sup> At one stage during the summer there seems to have been talk of sending him to Scotland to command reinforcements to be sent there in response to Glencairn's rising. One newsletter says he refused to go, another, at the beginning of September, speculates there was reluctance to let him go and thus be so far out of the way, probably because of his important work and role in the army's command structure.<sup>(3)</sup>

Lambert's return to prominence in national politics and his rise to a commanding position in army politics only occurred when Cromwell became dissatisfied with Barebones shortly after the time he was said to have remarked about the Parliament "that he is more troubled with the fool than with the knave".<sup>(4)</sup> It also occurred because

- 
- (1) Woolrych, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Saints', p. 71.  
 (2) C. H. Firth, 'Scotland and the Commonwealth', p. 238.  
 (3) C. Clar. S.P., II, p. 246; C.S.P.V. 1653-54, pp. 124-125.  
 (4) C. Clar. S.P., II, p. 250. The remark was made about the beginning of September.

Harrison himself grew disillusioned with his dream child. He attended the Council of State 17 times in July, not at all in August, three times in September, four times in October and not at all in November and December. He fared badly in the elections for the Council of State on 1 November getting less votes than future Cromwellians like Pickering, 110 votes, Disborowe, 74 votes, Strickland, 72 votes, Lawrence, 68 votes, Sydenham, 67 votes, Philip Jones, 65 votes, Tichbourne, 62 votes, and Anthony Ashley Cooper, 60 votes. Harrison got 58 votes.<sup>(1)</sup> The saints had a poor ally in the army leadership in the person of Harrison. As a leader of the left he was not equal in stature to what Colonel Thomas Rainborowe had been in 1647. Harrison was no political fighter, he gave up far too easily. His withdrawal, unlike Lambert's, was no shrewd move, an occasion to bide time, a tactical retreat to enable a future advance and to prepare himself for that future. Lambert's withdrawal recalls that of Ireton in October 1648 to draw up the Remonstrance, Harrison's, on the other hand, probably out of the genuine dispiritedness of the idealist was political suicide, a resignation from the political struggle. His disillusionment with the political in-fighting, at which he had displayed some adeptness in 1647-1649, was a burden that weighed heavily upon him until the day he died. "Where is your good old cause" someone is reported to have jibbed at him on his way to his execution. "Here it is" he is said to have replied, putting his hand on his heart, "and I am going to seal it with my blood".<sup>(2)</sup> He is one of the few figures in the English

---

(1) C.S.P.D. 1652-53, p. XLI, C.S.P.D. 1653-54, p. XL; C.J., VII, pp. 343-344.

(2) E1053(1), The Speeches and Prayers of Major General Harrison (etc.) ... at the times of their Deaths, 13 October, 1660.

Revolution who could have said that with honesty. At least he had remained consistent, true to his beliefs. Harrison's decline marked Lambert's rise.

A systematic analysis of the Barebones Parliament will have to wait until Professor Woolrych has completed his study.<sup>(1)</sup> One thing is clear, the labelling of members under 'moderate' or 'radical', as with any Interregnum Parliament, can create more difficulties than it resolves.<sup>(2)</sup> Of the officers in the standing army and in charge of garrisons all, with the exception of Harrison and Danvers can safely be classified as 'moderates'. Of the dozen or so Fifth Monarchists who can be identified, and who met to coordinate policy at the home of Arthur Squibb, only Danvers and Harrison were officers.<sup>(3)</sup> Cromwell's retrospective statement that Harrison attended these meetings does not square with Harrison's withdrawal from the Parliament.<sup>(4)</sup> If it were the case it seems to indicate poor tactics not to participate in the Parliament but to try and remain active behind the scenes. In Barebones there was a growing mutual disappointment, distrust and dissatisfaction between Cromwell

- (1) In the meantime there are accounts in Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, pp. 236-328; H.V. Glass, The Barebones Parliament, London, 1899; Woolrych, 'Oliver Cromwell as the Rule of the Saints', pp. 71-77. For a conflicting interpretation q.v. H. R. Trevor Roper, 'Oliver Cromwell and his Parliaments', in Religion the Reformation and Social Change, London, 1967, pp. 362-371. Q.v. also Aylmer, State's Servants, pp. 44-45.
- (2) For Gardiner's division into 'moderates' and 'radicals', based on a contemporary pamphlet, q.v. Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, pp. 308-310; for Glass's amendments q.v. Glass, op.cit., p. 64. Trevor Roper, ('Oliver Cromwell and his Parliaments' pp. 368-369n) has some criticism of both Gardiner and Glass. Woolrych ('Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Saints', pp. 72-73) argues that there was a radical caucus of some 40 members.
- (3) Woolrych, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Saints', pp. 73-74; Capp, Fifth Monarchy Men, pp. 68-69. Capp gives an account of Fifth Monarchist activity inside and outside the House (pp. 68-75).
- (4) Abbott, Writings and Speeches, IV, p. 489, speech of 20 April 1657.



and the radical members of that body. The more it seemed to the General that the Parliament was likely to subvert property and remove tithes without providing an alternative source of maintenance for the preaching ministry, the more the saints correspondingly grew outspoken in their bitter condemnations of Cromwell. By early December they were denouncing him as "the man of sin, the old Dragon".<sup>(1)</sup>

Coupled with Cromwell's disenchantment with Barebones there were moves to tighten up control of the army. During John Lilburne's trial some tracts recalled the army declarations of June 1647 and tried to re-awaken what was termed the Leveller-army alliance of 1648-1649.<sup>(2)</sup> The government took no chances and it was said that the Council of State ordered the distribution of tracts in the army claiming that John Lilburne was in favour of Charles Stuart in an attempt to discredit him.<sup>(3)</sup> But despite a Royalist newsletter which said that soldiers beat their drums and sounded their trumpets regardless of their officers on the news of Lilburne's acquittal on 20 August, a pretty questionable assertion, his trial seems to have gone unnoticed by the army.<sup>(4)</sup> However, there were developments involving officers, some of which appear to have had political overtones.

(1) Thurloe, I, p. 621.

(2) E705(5), The Fundamental Lawes and Liberties of England Claimed, Asserted and Agreed unto ... (9 July); Faithful Scout, 22-29 July 1653.

(3) ibid., 15-22 July 1653.

(4) C. Clar. S.P., II, p. 245. For an account of Lilburne's arrest and trial q.v. Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, pp. 292-300; Gregg, Freeborn John, pp. 324-337.

Streater's and Chillenden's cases have already been mentioned. Lt. Colonel George Joyce was also arrested and cashiered. He was taken into custody in early September and tried at the end of October.<sup>(1)</sup> In 1659 after the restoration of the Rump an account of the events surrounding his court-martial was published.<sup>(2)</sup> The pamphlet tried to portray Joyce as a radical activist in 1647-1648 and as a champion of the Rump. He is said to have suspected that Cromwell intended to make himself King and to have told the General he should not dissolve the Rump until it had reformed government as it said it would. There was also a dispute involving Richard Cromwell and Joyce over Finchley Park, Hampshire, which the tract alleges caused Oliver and Richard "to wax hot" against Joyce. Joyce was arrested, the tract continues, on the framed evidence of his Lt., John Rix, for remarking that he wished Lockyer, presumably Robert Lockyer the Leveller martyr, had pistolled Oliver. A Royalist newsletter of 1653 confirms that this was the charge for which Joyce was arrested and adds that Pride received a "check" for offering to bail Joyce.<sup>(3)</sup> Joyce was tried by Colonels Goffe, Grosvenor, and Whalley, and Lt. Colonels Worsley and Francis White who the pamphlet says was implicated in Cromwell's plot to undo Joyce.<sup>(4)</sup> Lt. Rix published a personal vindication from Joyce's charges

- (1) C. Clar. S.P., II, p. 254; Several Proceedings, 25 October-1 November, 1653; P.R.O. 31/3/91, ff. 99, 101.
- (2) B.M. 669/21(50), A True Narrative of Cromwell's anger at Lt. Colonel Joyce's Seizure of the King at Holmby, (15 June) 1659.
- (3) C. Clar. S.P., II, p. 254 which claims that the pistolling incident occurred at Triploc Heath in 1647.
- (4) B.M. 669 f. 21(50), A True Narrative ..., Goffe and Worsley had also tried Chillenden who commended them for their fairness and sympathy towards him.

at the end of June 1659. He denied being involved in a frame-up and claimed Joyce's remarks about Lockyer had been backed up by other witnesses.<sup>(1)</sup> The pro-Joyce tract was written in the context of 1659 when it was fashionable to knock the Protectorate and to attempt to display a consistent Republican pedigree, so the charges of a frame-up are suspect. The tract also says that Joyce denounced the army's apostasy for wanting to see Cromwell established as Protector in the Army Council, but he could not have attended the relevant Council of Officers meetings once he had been cashiered and was in prison. However, there are earlier hints of differences of view between Cromwell and Joyce, mentioned above, and it seems beyond dispute that he was genuinely concerned at the dissolution of the Rump, and, like Streater, could foresee the drift of events regarding Cromwell. He had already shown his boldness in 1647 when he seized the King, and displayed this quality again by speaking out, although, as governor of Portland, and far removed from the limelight, it is unlikely his views could make any impact in the army.

There had also been some trouble in Hacker's regiment. Captain Clement Needham, Hacker's son-in-law, was tried at a court-martial upon 19 articles including detaining pay from soldiers and false musters, charges Sexby had also faced. He was found guilty on one count of false muster and fined £20. Needham published a vindication asserting that the charge had been maliciously brought against

---

(1) E988(17), Innocencie Vindicated or a briefe Answer to ... A True Narrative ... (28 June) 1659.

him by Edward Leak who had been transferred to his troop from Major Grove's. Needham had refused to accept Leak on the grounds he was immoral and Leak conspired with others to bring the charges against Needham. The regiment was purged of what was called ranting tendencies.<sup>(1)</sup> These cases were isolated. There are no indications of a general or organised opposition in the army. The only person capable of sufficient status who could have provided the leadership for any opposition was Harrison and temperamentally he was unsuited for such a role. But Joyce's arrest and trial with Pride's rap across the knuckles and the opportunity to purge Hacker's regiment show that a strict watch was being kept on the army and its officers to prevent any trouble from fomenting.

Harrison too fell under suspicion, albeit indirectly, in a letter to Cromwell written on 30 November by Colonel John Reynolds, Commissary General of the Irish horse. The letter which was primarily about one Nathaniel Rockwell, designed to be Reynolds Lieutenant, has been commented on before because of its relevance to 1647 when it alleges that Harrison was in sympathy with the revolting soldiers at Ware.<sup>(2)</sup> However, in the 1653 situation Reynolds says that Rockwell, who had been a Leveller sympathiser at Ware, believed Cromwell to favour the company of Royalists and to be furthering his own self aggrandisement. Rockwell had discovered this by close observation of

---

(1) Several Proceedings, 7-14 July 1653, Mercurius Politicus, 7-14 July 1653; E707(8), The Deep Sighs and Sad Complaints of some late soldiers in Captain Needham's troop ... (26 July); E710(1), A Brief Narrative of the Tryall of Captain Needham ... This was intended as a reply to the former; q.v. also Firth and Davies, pp. 233-234.

(2) Q.v. above (Chapter One, Section II).

Cromwell's household and Reynolds suggests that he might have done this at Harrison's prompting. Rockwell also attacked Stapleton, Cromwell's chaplain, as "more lyke a stage player" and felt Lambert "was too much a Courtier to bee Imploy'd in this worke". Rockwell was not examined until January 1654. The only connection with Harrison mentioned in the examination was that Rockwell was in Harrison's regiment. As for Lambert he said he "was a wise man and had ye name of a Courtier".<sup>(1)</sup> There was nothing in the allegations that could stick on Harrison. They were more in the nature of hearsay and innuendo. But the fact that they were made at a time when Lambert was pushing hard for the acceptance of a written constitution, when Harrison was supposed to have left town and when the air was thick with rumours about a change of government is significant.<sup>(2)</sup> They could also arouse unpleasant memories for Cromwell about Harrison's behaviour at Ware. It seems reasonable to assume that Reynolds' letter was a conscious attempt to reduce still further Harrison's esteem in Cromwell's eyes. With both Harrison and the form of government he had advocated earlier in the year discredited the way was open for an alternative. But there remained some obstructions in the way of this. Cromwell and the army had to be won over and the Barebones Assembly had to be terminated.

The genesis of The Instrument of Government, who helped Lambert draft it, whether they were military or civilian or both and

---

(1) S.P. 46/97, ff. 71v, 77.

(2) Thurloe, I, p. 589; H.M.C. Portland, III, p. 204; C. Clar. S.P., II, pp. 278, 280, 281; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, p. 318n.

the process whereby Cromwell was converted to it are unclear because of the lack of evidence.<sup>(1)</sup> What is clear is that Lambert, responding to the General's request, came to London by at least 26 November.<sup>(2)</sup> But, on 23 November the Council of State appointed seven of its members, including Cromwell, to meet with Lambert and other officers if need be to discuss Scottish affairs and to report back. This is consistent with the view that Lambert remained around London over the summer keeping firmly in touch with army opinion because of his administrative duties.<sup>(3)</sup> In November, sensing an air of crisis and taking advantage of what must have been a growing feeling of discontent with Barebones and a desire for change, Lambert set to work to win over Cromwell to the idea of a written constitution which he, who had had a hand in drafting The Heads of the Proposals in 1647, must have been turning over in his mind during the summer. Oliver Cromwell was under non-army pressure as well to establish some sort of written constitution which would guarantee "fundamentals" particularly in property and religion from what 'conservatives' saw as the iconoclasm of 'radicals' in the Barebones Assembly. The point was well put in a letter of intelligence to Cromwell dated 16 November. The letter alleges that the Preachers at Blackfriars are denouncing anything more conservative than themselves in religion, including the moderate congregationalism Cromwell favoured.

- 
- (1) The article by G. D. Heath, ('Making the Instrument of Government', Journal of British Studies, 6, 1967, pp. 15-34) does not match up to the promise of its title in this respect.
- (2) Thurloe, I, p. 610; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, p. 318n.
- (3) C.S.P.D. 1653-54, p. 267; q.v. also Firth, 'Scotland and the Commonwealth', pp. 273-274 for a letter from Robert Lilburne to Lambert on administrative matters. It is dated 21 November.

They were openly attacking the Parliament, the army, and the Council of State "and all now in power". This, it was felt, could only weaken England in foreign eyes especially given that the Dutch war was still in progress, and would help the Stuart cause. The author reminded Cromwell that all the sects, including Anabaptists and Quakers were

"labouring to promote their owne wayes and parties into power, scarce allowing so much as common civility or air to such as differ from them in judgment"

and felt there was a way out of this confusion :

"I cannot but congratulate your happiness in the present opportunity, that you have an occasion (if you please) to oblige all men of true piety, learning, parts and fortune, the most substantial men of every rank and profession, if you please to fasten those fundamentals, which some have been a razeing. This being done, the most generous part of our world will be interested in the very point of self preservation to adhere unto your excellency, and if you once have these (as you may now make them) your owne, the rest are not considerable, but will like worms, flies and other insects or imperfect animals, humm and buzz about a while, and then die of themselves, when they have lived out their season." (1)

Although this letter was basically about religion it had plenty of political implications as well. As to the authorship of this letter the natural science simile tempts one to speculate that it was Lambert, but the general style has much in common with Marchmont Needham's. However, what is important about it is that it represents the voice of those who sought to get the Revolution back on the lines intended in 1649, the lines of respectable change. They had had their fill of

---

(1) Thurloe, I, pp. 591-592.

the left wing excesses of Barebones. Obviously for the majority of these people there could be no return to the Rump as it was genuinely felt to have failed, so why not go back one step before that, to the original plan, that of a limited monarchy. As far as the officers were concerned the attempt to achieve a settlement along the lines of The Heads of the Proposals in 1647, which had sought to limit the monarchy of Charles I, only failed and caused a rift among the Grandees because of the attitude of Charles I himself. How different it would be if the man at the head of the government were the army's man, the General himself, this could surely make the new written constitution attractive to many in the army. (1)

Gardiner, arguing from the French ambassador's report, says that Lambert left London at the beginning of December after Cromwell had rejected an outline of The Instrument, and that Harrison "returned triumphantly to his post in Parliament and Council". (2) However, there is every reason to suppose that Lambert did not leave London but remained in the capital and with the help of associates within, and probably without, the army lobbied vigorously on behalf of The Instrument. If he had left at such a crucial time there would have been no one around capable of winning over Cromwell and significant

- 
- (1) The officers who were instructed to perfect Ireton's draft of the Heads were Ireton, Fleetwood, Rich, Horton, Disborowe, Rainborowe, Robert Hammond, Waller, Cowell, Lambert and Deane along with the 12 agitators, a good cross-section of the then political spectrum in the army (Clarke Papers, I, pp. 216-217). For the 1647 context q.v. above (Chapter One, Section I).
- (2) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, pp. 319-320+n; P.R.O. 31/3/99, f.62.



numbers of officers to The Instrument. A civilian most certainly could not have done it and the way The Instrument was so quickly introduced after Barebones's dissolution is only in keeping with patient and successful persuasion and argument over the previous few weeks. Harrison did not attend any Council meetings in November and it's clear that by this time his influence in the army was minimal. One newsletter of 2 December felt there would be trouble from the "Anabaptists" in the Parliament rather than from the army,

"their power is nothing so great in the army as in the house, they having none above a captain of their party besides Harrison, who is thought will betray all the rest." (1)

The last part of this observation was of course an unfair slander on Harrison.

We cannot be sure who Lambert's associates were in drawing up and promoting The Instrument. In his speech to the first Protectorate Parliament on 12 September 1654, Cromwell said that The Instrument had been designed by some gentlemen who met daily and presented him with a reasonably finalised draft which he refused to accept. Interestingly enough, the argument they used, according to Cromwell, was remarkably similar to that of the letter quoted above :

"They told me that except I would undertake the government they thought things would hardly come to a composure or settlement, but blood and confusion would break in upon us." (2)

- 
- (1) C.S.P.D. 1653-54, p. XL; Thurloe, I, p. 621; P.R.O. 31/3/99, f. 48.
- (2) Abbott, Writings and Speeches, III, p. 455.

It was an argument for a strong man, an argument that could find acceptance in an army that prided itself on its discipline. The group of gentlemen might have included Sydenham and Worseley, both of whom moved for the dissolution of Barebones on 12 December and both of whom went on to serve under the Protectorate.<sup>(1)</sup> Sydenham was also to become an opponent of Kingship and later on an adherent of the Lambert/Disborowe/Fleetwood faction. Retrospective accounts alleged that Berry and Kelsey played important parts in bringing about the change from Barebones to the Protectorate. Berry was said to have helped draw up The Instrument and with Lambert and Kelsey to have persuaded many of the Barebones Assembly to give up their power.<sup>(2)</sup> Both men's subsequent careers are interesting.<sup>(3)</sup> The anti-Protectorate, Fifth Monarchist tract of late 1655, The Protector (so-called) in part unveiled by a late Member of the Army, claims that The Instrument was contrived by five or six individuals headed by Lambert and foisted on the army as a fait accompli. As we shall see, the tract also alleges that Whalley, Goffe and Thomlinson helped Lambert formulate a letter to all the regiments and garrisons asking them to sign a declaration of support of the Protectorate. However, in its discussion of events preceeding the establishment of the Protectorate the tract says some officers were invited along, supposedly to give their views, but

---

(1) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 366.

(2) Reliquiae Baxterianae, London, 1696, p. 72; E993(8), Articles of High Crimes and Grand Misdemeanors exhibited against Lt. Col Thomas Kelsey ... (28 July) 1659.

(3) Q.v. biographical appendix.

"they did little else but walk to and fro in the rooms without, whilst the business was carried on by a few within."

It also suggests that some of the officers did *not* know why they were present on 16 December until Cromwell was actually proclaimed Lord Protector, an obvious exaggeration.<sup>(1)</sup> But the view that Lambert presented a sizeable number of officers with a fait accompli is strengthened by Ludlow's account, although he heard it second hand, and by a royalist newsletter of 14 December. This says that Lambert came into the Council chamber at Whitehall "with many officers of the army" and "ordered" all non army persons to withdraw, whereupon he produced the letter of resignation of the Barebones Assembly and outlined the necessity of placing power in the hands of the Lord General. He then went over the proposed clauses of The Instrument.<sup>(2)</sup> It was probably at this point that Lambert was faced with the task of selling The Instrument to those of his fellow officers who had not heard about it beforehand, although he must have been confident of winning them over after sounding out opinion in advance. According to the newsletter "That which Lambert ayed att, he hath effected".<sup>(3)</sup> But as will be seen this was not achieved without some arm twisting and some opposition.<sup>(4)</sup> Lambert's associates most probably included civilians.

---

(1) E357(1), The Protector (so called) ...; Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 370n.

(2) Thurloe, I, p. 632; Ludlow, Memoirs, II, pp. 369-370.

(3) ibid.

(4) Q.v. below.

The wish to see Cromwell as head of government was by no means only confined to Lambert, and not purely military initiative. It is only with civilian co-operation and support for a written constitution that the dissolution of Barebones could have occurred the way it did, that is with the appearance of legality, unlike the fate of its parliamentary predecessor. The intention was for this to be as non-military a show as possible, but as it turned out, this backfired somewhat. The majority of members resigned their power to Cromwell, thus raising the question of whether they had considered themselves a Parliament and sovereign body in the first place. However, the sword had to be used to remove the intransigent minority who were put out by Colonel Goffe, the man who had said at Putney

"let us tremble at the thought that we should be standing in a direct opposition against Jesus Christ in the work he is about"

and Lt. Colonel Francis White, the man expelled from the Army Council in 1647 for his remarks about the sword being the only visible power in the land. (1)

There is one other question that has to be dealt with in relation to the genesis of The Instrument. Did it originally offer Cromwell the headship of government as King? In his remarks to the officers in February 1657, when there was a lot of frank talking and the resentments of years poured out, Cromwell asserted it did. The two accounts we have of this speech agree on this. (2) However, this

(1) Clarke Papers, I, p. 283; for White <sup>see</sup> also biographical appendix.

(2) Abbott, Writings and Speeches, IV, pp. 417, 418.

is the only evidence we have to suggest that in an earlier draft The Instrument envisaged Cromwell as King. The collection of specimens referred to by Gardiner is not necessarily proof that in its draft form The Instrument offered Cromwell the crown. These specimens bear more the character of a guide to the issuing of warrants in a constitution with a single person as head of government. The use of the term "King", and of "Charles R", in them can be accounted for on the grounds that this was a most obvious and familiar example to use by way of illustration.<sup>(1)</sup> If we accept Cromwell's remarks in 1657 then probably on account of the sensibilities, even opposition, of some of the officers discovered during the sounding out process the kingship proposed was dropped before it was presented to the officers as a whole.

The Instrument as presented to the officers was not the final one. On 27 December Thurloe, to whom it had been committed was instructed by the Council of State

"to take speedy course for perfecting what is further to be done to fit for the press"

The Instrument of Government.<sup>(2)</sup> It was not completed and engrossed until February 1654.<sup>(3)</sup>

Most of the officers accepted the change, appeared to favour it and were quick to participate in implementing its provisions.

- (1) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, p. 320n. (The reference there to Thurloe, I, should be p. 632 not 362.) The collection of specimens is printed in Aylmer, State's Servants, pp. 436-437.
- (2) C.S.P.D. 1653-54, pp. 301, 309, 314.
- (3) I. Roots, 'Cromwell's Ordinances : The early Legislation of the Protectorate', in Aylmer (ed.), Interregnum, p. 144.

On 14 December it was reported that

"the officers with the generall sate close at it  
(choosing a new Council of State) at the Cockpit  
at Whytehall."

They were also conspicuous at the Protector's installation on 16 December when Cromwell dressed in "a plain black suit and cloak", not his military uniform, in an attempt to emphasise the non-military character of the new government, was admitted to office.<sup>(1)</sup>

The English Revolution had reached another turning point. There was going to be a further attempt to settle the nation along the lines of respectability. Cromwell's plain black suit was indeed symbolic of what the army was hoping to achieve with The Instrument. It was, as Gardiner says, imposing limitations on itself, although it is inaccurate to call the army at this juncture "a military despotism" when so much power in the localities still lay in the hands of civilians.<sup>(2)</sup> But The Instrument of Government did not resolve the problem that had existed at least since December 1648 when the army had purged Parliament, the problem that White had touched on in 1647 with his remark about the power of the sword, the problem that faces any military body when it intervenes in politics : when and how to withdraw from politics confident that a satisfactory civilian framework has been established whereby reform, or reaction, as the case

---

(1) Thurloe, I, p. 632; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, p. 1. This sort of symbolic gesture to emphasise the civilian character of a new regime is a lesson that has not been lost on modern military regimes.

(2) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, p. 329.

may be, can flourish. No plain black suit can solve that problem. In the context of the 1650's The Instrument probably had more chance of solving the problem than had Barebones, but ultimately it failed. In fact the army never managed to solve this particular problem and in this failure lies one of the main reasons for the failure of the Revolution as a whole.

## II.

DECEMBER 1653-MARCH 1655

Despite Cromwell's elevation to the Lord Protectorship much diplomacy was still needed to justify the move especially to those units of the army not located in or near the capital. It has been suggested above that some arm twisting was necessary in order to achieve this. To the public the establishment of the Protectorate was presented as an act universally popular with and acceptable to the army. The Moderate Publisher played this up saying that the officers of the army agreed "unanimously" with it and had declared

"that they will adventure their lives, all that is dear unto them in defence of His Highness, the Lord Protector, and the government now established in England."

At the end of December the Protector, his Council, and the army officers held a day of fast and humiliation.<sup>(1)</sup> On the surface, at least, there appeared to be harmony. This officially inspired impression was maintained into the new year. The regiments and garrisons were requested to sign an engagement of loyalty to the new government and the newsbooks reported that this was carried out cheerfully and without dissent.<sup>(2)</sup> However, behind the scenes the story was somewhat different. According to the anti-Protectorate tract The Protector

(1) The Moderate Publisher, 23-30 December 1653; q.v. also Weekly Intelligencer, 13-20 December 1653; Perfect Account, 14-21 December 1653; Mercurius Politicus, 16-22 December 1653; Weekly Intelligencer, 27 December 1653-3 January 1654; Several Proceedings, 29 December 1653-5 January 1654.

(2) Faithful Scout, 30 December 1653-6 January 1654, 6-13 January 1654; Several Proceedings, 12-19 January 1654.



(so-called) in Part Unveiled the letter sent to all the regiments and garrisons asking them to sign a declaration of support of the new government was contrived by Lambert, Whalley, Goffe, Thomlinson and other "Courtiers" who lied about the extent of unity in the army. The signing of the declaration of support, it claims, was compulsory and those who were hesitant were threatened with losing their commissions.<sup>(1)</sup> The declaration itself was a rhetorical document in which the army said

"We are persuaded, that the liberties of the people both as men and Christians (the true ends whereupon the great controversie hath bin stated) will through the mercy of God be assured"

by Cromwell's assumption of the Protectorship. It also pledged loyalty, obedience and diligence in the Protector's service.<sup>(2)</sup> In 1659 a fuller version of what was alleged to have taken place over this declaration was published.<sup>(3)</sup> The author of this tract said that the letter sent from London to the other forces was signed by 15 officers : Reynolds, Hacker, Constable, Ingoldsby, Worsley, Twisleton, Hewson, Waldine Lagoe, Lambert, Whalley, Barksted, Goffe, Grosvenor, Haines and Downing, but that it was opposed by Harrison, Rich, Saunders, Okey, Alured and Overton. This list of signatories

- (1) E857(1), The Protector (so-called) ...
- (2) C. H. Firth, 'Scotland and the Protectorate', Scottish History Society, XXXI, 1899, pp. 10-11.
- (3) E999(12), A True Catalogue or an Account of the Several Places ... Richard Cromwell was proclaimed Lord Protector (28 September) 1659.

contains no surprises, all served under the Protectorate. However, the list of opponents has a very contrived appearance, embracing all those officers considered by 1659 to have been adherents of the 'good old cause' under the Protectorate and who were (with the exception of Harrison) rehabilitated during that year with the downfall of the Protectorate. It is also unlikely that Harrison attended the Council of Officers after the dissolution of Barebones despite rumours of attempts at reconciliation between Cromwell and himself.<sup>(1)</sup> There was some difficulty in getting the officers of Cromwell's own foot regiment to sign the declaration. The account of the incident is imprecise and full of implausibilities. Cromwell and Lambert are said to have negotiated with the officers and to have offered to make some alterations to The Instrument to ease the officers' consciences but then to have called them together, read The Instrument and announced that it should be

"their Magna Carta, and promising that he and his council would do all the good things that had been desired by the good people; and in particular that that ugly maintenance by tythes (for those were his very words) should be taken away before the third of September following;"

These and other "specious promises" were enough to satisfy most of the officers with the exception of the Major, John Wigan, and some other, unnamed, officers.<sup>(2)</sup> Wigan left the army, of that there is no doubt,

---

(1) P.R.O. 31/3/99, f.74.

(2) E999(12), A True Catalogue ...; for Wigan q.v. also Firth and Davies, pp. 484-485, 488.

but it seems very far-fetched to suggest that Cromwell and Lambert gave a definite commitment to remove tithes within a fixed time. It was something they knew they could not guarantee and the stance of Barebones over tithes was one of the reasons why it had been disapproved of by Cromwell. It would also have been foolish and totally uncharacteristic of them to have done so. Lambert, more credibly, is reported to have told the officers critical of the new form of government

"That those that were dissatisfied ... might leave their commands then : Do you think that we are such children, having begun a business, not to go throughwith it." (1)

Cornet Caithness of Cromwell's life guard also resigned.<sup>(2)</sup> But the evidence suggests that every effort was made to win over as many officers as possible to the new government. Attempts were even made to settle differences with Harrison, an impossible task. By 22 December he had given up his commission after refusing an offer whereby he could have stayed on if he pledged loyalty to the government.<sup>(3)</sup> Other sources exaggerate the extent of discontent in the army. A Royalist newsletter claimed that the whole of Pride's regiment, which it said was ordered to Scotland, refused the oath of loyalty to the Protectorate. In fact, the regiment did not go to Scotland until

---

(1) E999,(12), A True Catalogue ...

(2) Thurloe, II, p. 215.

(3) ibid., I, p. 641; P.R.O. 31/3/99, f.74.

April. Slightly better informed, but probably not much more accurate, were the Venetian ambassador's comments. He wrote that some of the chief officers of the army had refused the oath of loyalty but that Cromwell was trying to win them over by "art and flattery".<sup>(1)</sup>

As for the army in Scotland, the newsbooks said it did "well approve" of the change of government and most of the officers were said to have signed addresses of loyalty to Cromwell with the exception of a few in Harrison's late regiment mostly of the Welsh troop. The Quarter Master, chaplain, and some soldiers were said to have left for England.<sup>(2)</sup> On 20 December Robert Lilburne wrote to Cromwell, before he knew of Cromwell's elevation, commenting that the news of the dissolution of Barebones had provoked no hostile reaction

"by all the observation I can make I finde nothing but union amongst us hear, and a resolution to stand with your Lordshippe in the management of these weighty affaires that providence hath cast upon you, and to pray to the Lord to direct and guide you and those that are in Counsell with you." <sup>(3)</sup>

Two days later after hearing of Cromwell's new position Lilburne, in a somewhat routine letter, declared that the news was "acceptable" and wished Cromwell "much joy" and hoped that the Lord would direct him in

(1) C. Clar. S.P., II, p. 304; C.S.P.V. 1653-54, pp. 172, 175.

(2) Several Proceedings, 26 January-2 February 1655.

(3) Firth, 'Scotland and the Commonwealth', pp. 301-302. The reference (ibid., p. 301n3) to an intercepted letter from Westminster dated 17 October 1653 (Thurloe, I, p. 546) does not prove Firth's point that there was some disappointment in the army in Scotland at the ineffective proceedings of the Barebones assembly.

"the managing these great affaires before you for the glory of his name and the satisfaction of all good people under your lordshippes protection." (1)

At the beginning of January Lilburne, who later opposed kingship, ordered the distribution of the declaration supporting the Protector to all the regiments to be returned with signatures.<sup>(2)</sup> Lilburne would also have proclaimed the Protectorate officially as soon as possible but could not because of a delay in receiving the proclamations from London. The proclamation was not made until May with the arrival of Monck as the new Commander-in-Chief when with the Union it was proclaimed simultateously.<sup>(3)</sup> The situation in Ireland is more complicated and will be treated more fully below. Ludlow was able to hold up the proclamation for two weeks, and there were many rumours that the army was divided in its response to Cromwell's new station.

Thus, it is fair to say that Lambert was indeed successful in achieving what he aimed at. The Protectorate was accepted with the minimum of discontent in the army. Some of the reasons as to why this was so have already been given : the ineffectiveness of Harrison as a politician, the tendency of the forces outside London to follow rather than impose their will on their comrades in the capital, and the feeling that reform was more likely to be achieved with the army's own man in

- (1) Firth, 'Scotland and the Commonwealth', p. 303.
- (2) Firth, 'Scotland and the Protectorate', pp. 10, 18; Clarke Ms. 50, f.2v.
- (3) Firth, 'Scotland and the Protectorate', pp. 15-16, 17; Thurloe, II, p. 18; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, p. 103.

charge. There was no obvious or viable alternative. Both the Rump and the rule of the saints had failed. Cromwell and the written constitution must have appeared to most officers the best chance of ensuring the necessary legislative framework for reform to proceed, and, at a more mundane level,<sup>of</sup> safeguarding their material benefits, particularly in land purchases not to mention their own future employment. Downright self-interest probably played an important part in determining adherence to the Protectorate on the part of many officers, at least as much as ideological commitment.

The new Council of State, the composition of which Cromwell and his fellow officers had begun work on immediately after the dissolution of Barebones, held its first meeting on 16 December, the same day as Cromwell was installed as Lord Protector. Of the 15 members, apart from Cromwell himself, Lambert, Philip Jones, Disborowe and Sydenham were officers with Skippon as a respected veteran straddling the division between military and civilian.<sup>(1)</sup> The army officers played a full part in the Councils' activities, and as with the previous months some of the officers who were not members were engaged, nevertheless, in aspects of public administration, and, of course, in matters relating to army administration.<sup>(2)</sup> Superficially, it seemed as if the Protectorate was going to be accepted with no more trouble from the army. Its committed supporters could congratulate themselves on the

---

(1) C.S.P.D. 1653-54, pp. 297-298.

(2) q.v., for example, C.S.P.D. 1653-54, pp. 317, 401; ibid., 1654, pp. 89, 106, 187, 212, 303; Several Proceedings, 12-19 January 1655.

fact that the transition had been affected so smoothly. On 8 February Cromwell was entertained by the City government at a banquet. His reception provided an opportunity to mount an impressive display to bolster the image of the new regime and its public acceptance. As with his installation as Protector Cromwell, dressed in a magnificent suit, emphasised his civilian character. His appearance and bearing caused the Venetian ambassador to remark that he only lacked the name of King. The army was prominent in the procession. Lambert sat with Cromwell in his coach, probably not so much because he was assumed to be the heir apparent but more likely to help reinforce the impression that the army and government were quite separate but in harmony. Whalley led the field officers and Reynolds brought up the rear. At the dinner Cromwell sat on a high table with his son Henry on one side and the Lord Mayor on the other with members of the Council of State and army officers including Monck, Whalley, Pride and Hewson on either side. By way of contrast, after describing the event, one newsbook added that Harrison and his Church spent the day in prayer.<sup>(1)</sup> However, in the course of the year the government got wind of disaffection in the army. In fact, it involved only a few officers, and none of the soldiery, but it was given an extra dimension because former Levellers including Wildman and Sexby were also involved. The trouble was not on the scale of the late 1640's yet to the army leadership and

---

(1) Perfect Account, 8-15 February 1655; Certain Passages, 3-10 February 1655; The Grand Politique Post, 7-15 February 1655; C.S.P.V. 1653-54, p. 184; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, pp. 11-12.

government it seemed the greatest threat to army unity since those years.

It is difficult to be precise as to when organised discontent first began to manifest itself in the army. In February 1657 Samuel Dyer, a former servant of Sexby's said that soon after the establishment of the Protectorate meetings of men unhappy with the new government began to be held. He named Sexby and Wildman as well as Captain George Bishop, who had sympathised with the Levellers at Putney and who between 1650 and 1653 had been Secretary of the Council of State's Committee for Examinations, and thus in charge of domestic intelligence which would have made him a useful source of information, George Cockayne, a minister who had been associated with the Fifth Monarchists in 1652 and 1653 but not thereafter, Captain Lawson, possibly the Vice Admiral, and Lt. Breman, or Braman, who had been an agitator in Rich's regiment in 1647 and who was to figure in the subsequent 'plots' of 1654 and 1655.<sup>(1)</sup> However, we can be certain that by the spring of 1654 determined efforts were being made to stir up emotions against the Protectorate in the army.

In April 1654 Colonel Matthew Alured was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the forces designed for the islands of Mull and Skye and was ordered to go across to Ireland to raise the necessary troops there for use under his command in the western isles.<sup>(2)</sup> He had served as governor

---

(1) Thurloe, II, p. 829; for Bishop q.v. and c.f. Aylmer, State's Servants, pp. 272-274; for Cockayne q.v. Capp, Fifth Monarchy Men, p. 246; for Bremen q.v. biographical appendix.

(2) B.M. Add. Ms. 25,347 (Papers relating to Colonel Matthew Alured), f.11, instructions from Oliver, Protector, to Colonel Alured, Whitehall, 24 April, 1654; q.v. also C.S.P.D. 1654, pp. 112, 146, 150, 187, 208, 260.



of Ayr and had succeeded Robert Overton as commander of all the forces in the west of Scotland.<sup>(1)</sup> Alured was a Yorkshire man, a native of Walkington, and brother of John Alured the regicide M.P. He had been given command of a regiment of foot in August 1650 originally raised by Colonel George Gill (Gell) after the latter was accused of defrauding the state. Alured commanded it in Scotland.<sup>(2)</sup> However, during his mission to Ireland in 1654 Alured emerged as an outspoken critic of the Protectorate. Two years later when he was under arrest a second time he confessed that before going to Ireland he met and discussed current affairs with other disaffected persons, including his future accomplices in the petition Okey and Saunders, as well as Sexby, Wildman and Robert Overton. Alured specifically named the last two as the men "that endeavoured first to dissatisfie hym". Overton and Alured were known to each other from their respective service in Scotland.<sup>(3)</sup> Overton told him to contact Captain Kingdom "an onest man" and either Overton or Wildman recommended Adjutant General Allen and Quarter Master General Vernon to whom he could speak openly of his disaffection.<sup>(4)</sup> Neither man seems to have mentioned Ludlow, but Alured, as we shall see, spoke with him. Allen had been one of the original agitators in 1647 but in early 1654 he was no opponent of the Protectorate. He was surprised at Cromwell's new position but chided Caithness, late of the life guard, for laying down his commission asking him

- 
- (1) Clarke Ms. 24, f.107v; Firth, 'Scotland and the Commonwealth', p. 86.
- (2) Firth and Davies, pp. 462-463; M. F. Keeler, The Members of the Long Parliament, Philadelphia, 1954, pp. 85-86.
- (3) Clarke Ms. 22, f.104.
- (4) Bodl. Rawlinson Ms. A41, f.561 (Examination of Colonel Matthew Alured, 16 August 1656).

if he could not have served God better by remaining in the army. For Allen, Cromwell's elevation was the work of God and he remained confident Cromwell would continue to serve God.<sup>(1)</sup> In this respect Allen's view was quite a common one in the army at this time. Despite his arrest in January 1655 he was allowed to return to his commission in Ireland as Adjutant General where along with Vernon and other Anabaptists he was looked upon by Henry Cromwell as a thorn in his side.<sup>(2)</sup>

It emerged from Alured's court martial on 7 December 1654, that he had discussed the Protectorate with Captain Robert Preston and Captain James Hutchinson of Lawrence's regiment while he was in Ireland.<sup>(3)</sup> He was accused of encouraging in the two Captains

"an odious disgrace or at least an evil opinion upon the said present government"

of the Lord Protector and his Council and also upon Henry Cromwell and Commissary General Reynolds.<sup>(4)</sup> Alured was said to have attacked, amongst other things, the Protector's policy of allowing the Dutch free trade in England contrary to a recent act of Parliament and the ostentation of his court. The language he is alleged to have used

(1) Thurloe, II, pp. 214, 215.

(2) Clarke Papers, I, pp. 432-433; q.v. also below.

(3) E983(25), The Case of Colonel Matthew Alured, (23 May) 1659.

(4) ibid. The Ms. version (B.M. Add Ms. 25, 347 f.21 ff) adds "and upon the Lord Lambert one of his highnesses Counsellors and major general", but this is crossed out and does not appear in the printed version, no doubt because by May 1659 Lambert had been reinstated.

suggests petty jealousy more than high principle. Cromwell's advisors were attacked as Presbyterians and cavaliers and the Council of State was said to include delinquents, although he did not name whom he had in mind. Alured said the "honest old Independents" did not have a look in and that the "old army that had been instrumental in the work" had only limited access to Cromwell while the Presbyterians used to go to him if they could not get anything passed in Parliament (the Barebones Assembly). Reynolds who had been denounced by the Levellers in the past was dismissed by Alured as a mere flatterer. Alured suggested the army would be dispersed to remote parts of the country, if not abroad, so that the government could tighten its control "so fast that there would be no removing it". He had no faith in the Parliament that was to be called under The Instrument, because he said it would be purged by Cromwell and his Council of unreliable members at its first meeting. This together with the money assured to Cromwell in The Instrument would mean that the Protector could not be called to account "for he had got all the power into his own hands".<sup>(1)</sup>

Alured's accusations were a rag-bag. Some were trivial and petty, others showed great naivety and a general lack of understanding of affairs of State and the constraints within which Cromwell

---

(1) E933(25), The Case of Colonel Matthew Alured. The Ms. version accuses Lambert of being "the chiefest in modelizing the whole business" of purging the Parliament because of his ambition to succeed Cromwell. Again, this is crossed out and does not appear in the printed version.

had to work. They are in keeping with what we know of Alured's character at this time. In 1649 he had been made receiver for Yorkshire after a spell as sequestration commissioner for York and Hull. He was accused of misusing his position as a committee man by farming a sequestered estate. In 1654 John Baynes suspected Alured of withholding arrears from his own major. Baynes called Alured "a very strange tempered man".<sup>(1)</sup> In 1658 when Alured had retired to his estate a correspondent of Cromwell's reported that he was living very quietly

"which makes me thinke his discontent was not soe much att your Highnes taking that Tytle of the Government as by missing some honour or Preferment which he expected or aimed att." <sup>(2)</sup>

His outbursts in Ireland tend to confirm this view.

Alured's remarks were quickly reported back to Fleetwood and from him to London by the intermediary of Captain Kingdom, probably the same man as the agitator of Cromwell's horse regiment in 1647 and one of the persons Overton had recommended him to contact in the first place. Fleetwood thought very highly of Kingdom.<sup>(3)</sup> This fact coupled with Adjutant General Allen's loyalty to the Protectorate suggest that the 'plotters' in London were really unsure of whom they could rely on

(1) C.C.C., pp. 2155-56; Ackerman, Letters from Roundhead Officers, pp. 79, 82, 84, 92, 100-104, 109, 114; B.M. Add. Ms. 21, 422, f.685.

(2) B.M. Add. Ms. 4159, f.105; Firth, 'Two letters addressed to Cromwell', E.H.R., XXII, 1907, p. 308.

(3) Thurloe, III, p. 183. For Kingdom q.v. biographical appendix.

and tended to be shooting in the dark, or, at least, working on the assumption that some of their former associates from 1647 would be willing to stand by them once more. On 16 May Cromwell wrote to Fleetwood ordering him to revoke Alured's commission for raising troops. Cromwell said he was doing this not just on the basis of Fleetwood's information and that delivered by Kingdom but also

"by some considerations amongst ourselves, tending to the makeinge up a just suspicion." (1)

On 18 May Fleetwood wrote that since Alured's departure

"I understand thos two good men, whom he thought dissatisfied, have heard such strange discontented discourses from him that ... I cannott thinke he is a person to be trusted with the party (of soldiers for Scotland) except his inward principles be better then I know."

Fleetwood also reported that Alured had said that "some of your army meet with Wildman etc.", but he refused to elaborate, for fear of the letter being intercepted and falling into the wrong hands. (2)

Despite Cromwell's order to return to London "with all speed" Alured seems to have stayed on in Ireland, possibly involuntarily. On 1 June 1654 it was certified from Belfast that Alured had been very active since coming to Ireland to carry out Cromwell's instructions and would have been at sea before then had a ship been available. (3)

(1) Thurloe, II, pp. 285, 294, 185.

(2) Thurloe, II, p. 295.

(3) B.M. Add. Ms. 25, 347, f.13. Judging by Fleetwood's letters there is no reason to doubt Alured's diligence in his assignment (Thurloe, II, pp. 295, 357). Q.v. also Firth 'Scotland and the Protectorate', pp. 138-139.

Alured's original orders were completed by Lt. Colonel William Brayne who later took part in the West Indian expedition.<sup>(1)</sup>

Once back in England Alured was not seized until after the Three Colonels' Petition came to light. It could be that the government hoped that Alured would lead them to discover who exactly the disaffected army officers were. The meetings that led to the drawing up of the petition took place at the beginning of September in the City at Mr. Allen's house, a merchant in Birchen Lane and involved Colonels Alured, John Okey, Thomas Saunders, Francis Hacker, Overton, Vice Admiral Lawson and Wildman and Sexby.<sup>(2)</sup> Overton had been serving in Scotland until February 1653 when he returned to Hull on personal business and with what he claimed was an authorised unlimited pass. When he heard of Glencairn's rising he offered to return to Scotland and wrote to Cromwell to ask if he would be required to serve there. He received no reply and instead came up to London after "the parliament being dissolved" (most probably Barebones) to set his mind at rest "as to the one and the other". He gave Cromwell an account of his reasons for staying in England and the latter was satisfied with them. Overton returned to Hull.<sup>(3)</sup> In May 1654 Milton included Overton

- 
- (1) Firth and Davies, p. 591.
- (2) Bodl. Rawlinson Ms. A41, ff.560, 561; Thurloe, III, p. 147, repr. more fully in Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, p. 228n. Okey must have joined in the meetings somewhat later as he was serving in Scotland over the summer and did not leave for England until 6 September (Ackerman, Letters from Roundhead Officers, p. 96.)
- (3) Firth, 'Scotland and the Commonwealth', p. 86; Thurloe, III, p. 110. Glencairn's rising took place over the summer of 1653. Overton and his fellow officers in Hull supported the dissolution of the Rump and sent letters to their comrades in London indicating this (E699(7), More Hearts and Hands appearing for the Work).

"who have been connected with me for these many years in a more than brotherly union, by similitude of studies, and by the sweetness of your manners"

among the dozen men whom he recommended Cromwell to seek as advisers in order to advance reform. The other officers were Fleetwood, "the mildest of conquerors", Lambert, Disborowe and Whalley.<sup>(1)</sup> A little later in the same year Cromwell wanted Overton to return to Scotland. He was summoned to London where the Protector, unsure of the extent of his loyalty, made him promise fidelity. Overton replied saying that he would not continue to serve him if Cromwell began to advance his own interest and not that of the nation. Cromwell is supposed to have responded that he would be a "knave" if he did not. The Protector's doubts, as we have seen were well-founded. Before Overton returned to Scotland in mid-September he was again attending meetings at which the Three Colonels' petition was drawn up.<sup>(2)</sup>

At these meetings it was said that the Protector

"invaded all freedome and liberty and that wee were the most inslaved people in the world and much to this purpose."

There seems to have been some reluctance to contemplate more bloodshed to end this situation and Alured, whose evidence we rely on, had scruples about what Wildman had to say, namely, that

"if we must have one 'twere better to have him of the right line."

Alured felt that this

---

(1) J. Milton, Defencio Secunda, May 1654, repr. in The Works of John Milton, Columbia edition, New York, 1933, VIII, pp. 233, 235.

(2) Thurloe, III, p. 110; Mercurius Politicus, 14-21 September 1654; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, pp. 227-228.

"savoured of the malignant party ... which I could not bare; and told Col. Overton, and Okey that I liked not that meeting and I could have nothinge to doe with the Cavaleirs. They sayd I was jealous without a cause, but was I (I was) not satisfied."

In the meantime Sexby visited Alured's and Saunders', regiments and reported optimistically that there were many disaffected men there. As for the petition itself Colonel Hacker was said to have joined in the discussions about it, but it was chiefly drawn up by Wildman.<sup>(1)</sup> There were other meetings in the City attended by Henry Marten, Lord Grey of Groby, Captain George Bishop, all of whom had sympathised with the Levellers in the late 1640's, Alexander Popham, who had been one of the more conservative members of the Rump, and Anthony Pearson. It was hoped to build on the support of a nucleus of Republican politicians such as Bradshaw, Haselrig, his relation Colonel George Fenwick, still a member of the army, John Birch, Herbert Morley, Thomas Scott and Francis Allen. Sexby had already visited Lord Grey and Haselrig. The former was quite enthusiastic but Haselrig, wisely, was unwilling to commit himself until he saw that their efforts had a chance of success. A petition was to be organised in the City and this was said to involve Colonel William Eyres who had been arrested after Ware, although he was not a member of the army now, Haselrig, Scott, John Weaver and Colonel Jerome Sankey, who was serving in Ireland but

---

(1) Bodl. Rawlinson Ms. A41, ff.560, 561. For Sexby's other travels at this time q.v. also Thurloe, VI, pp. 829-831.



was also a member of the first Protectorate Parliament and therefore in England at this time, although why he should have been considered hostile to the Protectorate remains unclear.<sup>(1)</sup>

All of these meetings were taking place at the same time as the first Protectorate Parliament was in session and hotly disputing The Instrument in an attempt to revise it in the Parliament's own favour. The army officers had been conspicuous at the Parliament's opening and were again so when Cromwell summoned its members to the Painted Chamber on 12 September. He lectured them on how The Instrument had been nationally approved and laid down the four fundamentals over which there could be no haggling and also imposed the 'recognition' on them. Soldiers blocked the way to the House that day and the mace had been removed by Whalley. There were plenty of soldiers in the building and Cromwell made his speech attended by his officers and Life Guard.<sup>(2)</sup> It was a time of crisis, with rumours of dissolution circulating. Harrison was taken into preventive detention for fear that he might stir up the Fifth Monarchists against the government, but he was released shortly afterwards.<sup>(3)</sup> Despite the good representation of army officers in the Parliament, Cromwell's advice to set about the task of healing and settling was ignored and instead the Parliament began to scrutinise and revise The Instrument in a way unacceptable

- (1) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, p. 228n.; Thurloe, VI, p. 829.
- (2) Mercurius Politicus, 31 August-7 September 1655; J. T. Rutt (ed.), Diary of Thomas Burton, IV Vols., London, 1828, (hereafter cited as Burton), I, p. XXXIII; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, pp. 178-194.
- (3) Burton, I, p. XXIII; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, pp. 187, 195.

to the government which ultimately led to its dissolution.<sup>(1)</sup> In view of this background of instability it was clear that the government would not tolerate anything bordering on discontent in the army. Possibly working on the information of a spy the government struck. Alured's quarters were searched and the Three Colonels' petition was found, allegedly before others had had the opportunity to sign it.<sup>(2)</sup>

The petition was, however, printed and appeared on 18 October.<sup>(3)</sup> It certainly bears Wildman's imprint. Implicit in the petition is the view that the government, as established by The Instrument, was not legitimate :

"the government not being clearly settled either upon the bottom of the people's consent, trust, or contract, nor (upon) a right of conquest ... nor upon an immediate divine designation."

There was alarm at the amount of power given to the single person, especially with his attendant control over the armed forces and the money allowed for their upkeep which was free of Parliamentary sanction. The Solemn Declaration of June 1647 was recalled, especially the point about the army not being mercenary. The solution put forward was a free and unbound Parliament as outlined in the officers'

- (1) For an account of proceedings in Parliament q.v. ibid., pp. 195-255, passim.
- (2) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, p. 211; M. Ashley, John Wildman, London, 1947, p. 86. Ashley says that the spy was Colonel Francis Hacker, q.v. biographical appendix. Hacker attended the preliminary meetings (Bodl. Rawlinson A41, f.360). In 1655 he arrested Lord Grey of Groby (Thurloe, III, p. 168) but in the late 1650's he was said to have been a member of Wildman's Republican club whose other members included Marten, Okey and Haselrig (J. Walker, 'The Secret Service under Charles I and James II', T.R.H.S., 4th Series, XV, 1932, p. 235). In 1659 he remained loyal to the Rump.
- (3) B.M. 669 f.19(21); C.S.P.D. 1653-54, pp. 302-304 where it is wrongly calendared under 20 December 1653.

Agreement of January 1649. There was no reference to the alternative one put forward by the Leveller leaders in May 1649. A free Parliament would guarantee

"those fundamental rights and freedoms of the Commonwealth that are the first subject of this great contest."

If Cromwell would further this end then they would be prepared to "hazard their lives and estates in your just defence".<sup>(1)</sup> Gardiner is correct to consider the call for a free Parliament "astonishingly naive", although he is unfair to describe the Colonels, and, by implication, their backers, as "simple souls".<sup>(2)</sup> The petition itself was too simplistic and idealistic and showed a great deal of unawareness of the political facts of life. "Free Parliament" reads more like a slogan. There was no discussion of how it was to be implemented. The impression the petition gives is that once a free Parliament had been conjured up, it would somehow magically produce a settlement. Free elections in the context of 1654 could easily have resulted in the return of Royalists and neuters on the one hand and uncompromising Republicans on the other with anarchy as the outcome. The call was hopelessly out-of-step with Cromwell's policy of reconciliation, of healing and settling, and thus with the return to the respectable revolution envisaged with The Instrument, a policy supported by the majority of the army at this time. No doubt it was hoped that the petition would strike a welcome and responsive chord in the Parliament, many of whose members could sympathise with some of the grievances

---

(1) B.M. 669 f.19(21).

(2) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, pp. 213-214.

outlined in the petition, but this did not happen. Instead the Three Colonels' were arrested and proceedings against them were started at the end of November.<sup>(1)</sup> Okey, whose doubts about Cromwell's policy dated back to the dissolution of the Rump, and Alured seem to have been held more responsible than Saunders for the petition. We know little of Saunders political views in 1647. There is nothing to suggest that he dissented from the Grandee line then. The following year he took over Thornhaugh's regiment which Mrs. Hutchinson felt should have gone to her husband. She described Saunders as a "very godly, honest country gentleman" who "had not many things requisite to a great soldier".<sup>(2)</sup> Why he should suddenly speak out against the Protectorate remains unknown.<sup>(3)</sup> Alured and Okey seemed likely to be tried for their lives. In Alured's case Fleetwood wrote to Thurloe that he thought if mercy were shown to the Colonel it would enhance the government's reputation. He was also afraid lest Alured's execution would "weaken my hands in my worke".<sup>(4)</sup> But Alured put up quite a skilful defence to the charges against him. These were inciting mutiny in Ireland earlier in the year and of participating in writing, publishing and distributing the petition. He argued that some of the allegations as to what he had said in Ireland were either untrue or else distorted

- 
- (1) E983(25), The Case of Colonel Matthew Alured; R. Vaughan, The Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, London, 1839, I, p. 88.
- (2) L. Hutchinson, Memoirs, II, p. 134.
- (3) For biographical details of the Three Colonels . q.v. biographical appendix.
- (4) Thurloe, II, pp. 728, 733.

by being taken out of context. The crux of his argument was that he had spoken about civilian affairs and that the petition referred to civilian affairs and not military ones and that, therefore, the rules of war did not apply.<sup>(1)</sup> It was, in fact, an old Leveller argument. This was of course rejected by the court martial which had been summoned for his trial and Alured was cashiered, although he was kept in custody.<sup>(2)</sup> Okey was also hauled before a court martial of between 30 and 40 of his fellow officers. He denied the charges vehemently and said he would "seale it with his blood" if need be, demanding a copy of the articles against him and a chance to answer them. It was decided not to try him for treason by the narrow margin of only two votes. He was allowed to go free on surrendering his commission and giving the Protector an assurance that he would live quietly. One commentator said the authorities were glad of his resignation.<sup>(3)</sup> Saunders does not appear to have been tried. He declared his dissatisfaction to the Protector who told him that the trust he formerly reposed in him could no longer be continued, whereupon Saunders said he would hand in his commission.<sup>(4)</sup> Thomas Talbot succeeded to Alured's regiment.<sup>(5)</sup> Tobias Bridge, the Major of Okey's

---

(1) E983(25), The Case of Colonel Matthew Alured.

(2) Clarke Papers, III, p. 17.

(3) Clarke Papers, III, pp. 11, 13; Bodl. Rawlinson Ms. A21, f.325, repr. in Clarke Papers, II, pp. XXIV-XXVII.

(4) Clarke Papers, III, p. 12.

(5) Firth and Davies, p. 465.

regiment became its Colonel. It probably returned to England with its new Colonel when he became Major General of Cheshire, Lancashire and Staffordshire in succession to Worsley.<sup>(1)</sup> Saunders' regiment eventually became Goffe's who still retained his foot regiment.<sup>(2)</sup> As the colonelcy of a horse regiment was more prestigious than that of a foot one it can be seen as promotion.

At the same time as the Three Colonels' Petition there was some discontent in the navy. A petition was drawn up recalling the seamen's loyalty to the Long Parliament and the sacrifices that had been made for liberty. It asked for the fruits of all the bloodshed to be realised, complaining that impressment was inconsistent with the principles of freedom and liberty and caused great suffering amongst seamen's families. It also pointed out that there were still considerable pay arrears and urged that the navy should be paid on a regular basis and that provision should be made for the payment of benefits to widows. The grievances were more material than political but they had political overtones and, perhaps mindful of the way such things could get out of hand, as in 1647 in the army and 1648 in the navy, the government sent Disborowe to Portsmouth to look into the matter. By 6 November Penn reported that all was quiet

---

(1) Mercurius Politicus, 4-11 January 1655; H. G. Tibbutt 'Colonel John Okey 1606-1662', Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, XXXV, 1955, p. 70. Firth and Davies do not mention this in their discussion of the regiment (pp. 299-300).

(2) Firth and Davies, p. 285.

in the fleet.<sup>(1)</sup> There is every reason to suppose, as does Gardiner, that Lawson drafted the petition. If so, he probably had help, and encouragement, from Sexby who met the Vice-Admiral at Deal on his travels about the country.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Three Colonels' petition was not the only anti-government tract circulating at the time. Streater's tracts, A Glimpse of that Jewell ...; 10 Queries and The Grand Politick Informer, which denounced government in a single person and which were distributed in the army have already been commented on. At the same time as the petition Some Momentos for the Officers of the Army from some sober Christians also appeared.<sup>(3)</sup> It contained similar arguments to the petition, but at much greater length. The main argument was that a Protector with a negative voice was more of a threat to the "cause" than perpetual Parliaments. The author alleges that the threat of perpetual Parliaments was a deliberate bogey anyway and that the Long Parliament did not intend to perpetuate itself but was passing an act to dissolve itself and settle successive Parliaments when it was forcibly dissolved, a view which supports Dr. Worden's thesis. The engagements of 1647 were mentioned with references to the Book of Army Declarations. The army were said to be "trustees" of the

- 
- (1) This account is based on Perfect Account, 1-8 November 1654; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, p. 214 ff.; B.M. 669f.19(32), Swiftsure. At a Counsel of War held aboard; B.M. 669f.19(33), To his Highness the Lord Protector. The Petition of the Seamen belonging to the Ships of the Commonwealth.
- (2) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, p. 214; Thurloe, VI, pp. 829-830.
- (3) E813(20). Thomason dates it 19 October.

country and defenders of the "cause" of right and freedom which was defined as consisting of freely elected successive Parliaments ruling according to laws which guaranteed religion and property and prevented oppression and to which all would be subject. It was even suggested that there might have been more security from the King without all the bloodshed of his execution, a remark in keeping with Wildman's alleged comments at the meetings preceding the drafting of the Three Colonels' petition, but one with which few, if any, officers would have concurred. Cromwell was alleged to claim that supreme power lay in him which, it was felt, posed the question who could stand up to him "and say to him, what dost thou?". This was, of course, a deliberate misreading of article I of The Instrument and an unfair attack on Cromwell. He had indeed been left with supreme power both at the dissolution of the Rump and at the dissolution of Barebones but he had not sought to maintain and consolidate that power. Even if he had he would soon have found his position untenable as he would have been likely to alienate his power base, the army. It was because the officers saw that Cromwell was not aiming at a personal dictatorship but was instead trying to institutionalise power by creating a workable constitutional framework, acceptable to the nation, which would enable the reform programme to proceed on a legitimate basis, that the majority of them adhered to and remained faithful to the Protector and did not show any sympathy with the 'plots' of late 1654 and early 1655. These 'plots' were seen as undermining that whole policy. This explains why it was such a close vote on whether Okey, probably



the most capable and politically aware of the Three Colonels , was to be tried for treason or not, and why Overton's imprisonment in the Tower and later in Jersey, without court martial, was accepted. On the other hand, it could be argued that it was self-interest, a belief that their material concerns were tied up with Cromwell's fate and likely to be best realised by him, that made the officers follow their General. No doubt elements of both helped them make up their minds. In 1654 Cromwell and the officers were closely bound together, but within three years it was to become obvious whose pull was the stronger. During the kingship crisis the officers successfully pressurised Cromwell into following them.

The points made in the Three Colonels' petition and Some Momentos were repeated in other anti-government attacks. One declaration echoes the language of The Case of the Army Truly Stated. It said that Cromwell had

"fac'd about, turned his Batteries against his owne cause and Forces and hath seated himselfe in the Throne of oppressing Powers unto which we feared the late King was clymeing."

Free successive Parliaments were held out as the way to end this state of affairs. Parliaments were also urged to have control of the armed forces because only in this way could they truly be masters of their own laws, a view unacceptable to the Protector as his first Parliament's dissolution showed. <sup>(1)</sup> This issue came to the fore again

---

(1) Bodl. Rawlinson Ms. A21, f.390ff, endorsed by Thurloe "A Declaration of the Levelling Partie, etc." December 1654; c.f. ibid., A24, f.17ff, and f.34ff.

and again. In 1659 the restored Rump tried to exert control over commissions and this helped cause its second interruption and the fatal split within the army.

In print the government did not go without a reply. The two issues of The Observator, written by Marchmont Needham, were devoted to criticising the Three Colonels' petition and the arguments of their sympathisers. (1) The editor dismissed the petition as a plot

"a mere Trick to scandlise them (the colonels) and infect the soldiery, and bring the little agitators to town again, and make the wheels of time and the World run a madding back to the year 1647."

In very sarcastic prose he put the petition into perspective. There is gunpowder in it, he said,

"enough perhaps for a small Plot or Potgun, but will hardly serve to furnish one single File of a company much less three Colonels."

They did not have to tell Cromwell that they had engaged for the just liberties of the country, he already knew this. On the question of tampering with Parliaments, Needham says that until then the officers had been satisfied in their consciences about mastering Parliaments, so why should they oppose the recent recognition imposed on M.P.s? Is it not reasonable

"That we should have some Fundamentals to stick to, and not be always tottering in endless disputes about it."

---

(1) The Observator, 24-31 October 1654, 30 October-7 November 1654.

The officers would have been better off spending their time trying to preserve and unite the army for a present safety not speculating about some chimera or future possibility. Needham concluded, as had Cromwell on 12 September, that the numerous petitions in favour of the Protectorate were evidence that people accepted it.

Copies of the Three Colonels' petition along with other papers were circulated in Scotland and Ireland. In Ireland Ludlow says three hundred copies of the petition were sent with Some Momentos, all addressed to himself.<sup>(1)</sup> Alured under cross-examination intimated that on his mission to Ireland he had spoken with Ludlow "who shewed himself dissatisfied".<sup>(2)</sup> Ludlow found the papers contained

"such truths as were very proper to prepare the minds of men to imbrace the first opportunity of rescuing themselves from the present oppression"

and felt obliged to ensure they were distributed as widely as possible. In this he sought the help of others including Captain Thomas Walcott, Lt. Colonel Alexander Brayfield and Major Davis. Ludlow was not discreet enough in these discussions, and Brayfield and Davis when examined by Fleetwood, reported Ludlow's involvement in distributing the subversive literature.<sup>(3)</sup> Ultimately this led to Ludlow's recall to England. There is no evidence of any formal links between Ludlow and the 'plotters' in England or that the Three Colonels' petition had more of an impact in Ireland than Ludlow says. Fleetwood felt the whole business was nipped in the bud.<sup>(4)</sup>

---

(1) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 406; Thurloe, III, p. 70.

(2) Bodl. Rawlinson Ms. A41, f.561.

(3) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 407. For Walcott and Brayfield q.v. biographical appendix.

(4) Thurloe, III, p. 70. For the Irish context q.v. below.

In Scotland things were different. Cromwell's uncertainty about Overton's loyalty has already been mentioned and Monck must have been informed of these suspicions before Overton arrived in Scotland. At the end of September Monck, in his characteristic blunt style, wrote to the Protector that if there were "any troublesome spirrits in Scotland" he would inform him of them, but for the moment, he said, he was unaware of any discontent in the army in Scotland. As for Overton

"I finde upon discourse with him, that his resolution was that when he saw a settlement of government under your Highnes and could not with a good conscience submitt to it he would deliver upp his commission." (1)

However, Overton is reported to have written from Scotland after his arrival

"that there was a party that would stand right for a Commonwealth." (2)

A month later copies of the Three Colonels' petition arrived north of the border transported by Lt. Breman who had been involved in the preliminary meetings.<sup>(3)</sup> In November Monck wrote to Cromwell enclosing various papers which had been sent to Captain Henry Cleare of Okey's regiment. The papers probably included the petition and Some Momentos. They were sent with an anonymous covering letter, addressed "deare friend", which said that they were to be distributed amongst the officers and soldiers.<sup>(4)</sup> Later in the month Monck wrote again saying that more copies of the petition and letters had been sent to

- (1) Firth, 'Scotland and the Protectorate', pp. 192-193; c.f. Thurloe, III, p. 110.
- (2) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, p. 228n.
- (3) Ackerman, Original Letters, p. 104; Thurloe, IV, pp. 829, 830, 832; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, p. 228n.
- (4) Firth, 'Scotland and the Protectorate', p. 213+n; Clarke Ms. 26, f.165v.

Captain William Griffen, collector for Ayrshire, from one Thomas Read, a tradesman in London and member of Feake's Church. This coupled with a letter from Captain Chamberlain of Whalley's regiment made Monck suspect that "there are some ill spirits working" but he did not elaborate on this. (1)

In December a letter signed by various officers at Aberdeen and addressed to Major Holmes of Monck's regiment was discovered. The signatories called for a self-examination if in the present state of affairs we may

"with a good conscience look the king of terrours in the face, as having faithfully served our generation, or whether except wee doe somewhat more, the guilt of blood of soe many thousands, the miscrys of a wasted Commonwealth, the breache of vowes and trust, the prayers and cryes of saints, and the hypocrisy of our professions, will not lye heavy upon our consciences, bodies and estates, till we returne to our duty."

There was a call for a conference at Edinburgh to discuss this state of affairs. (2) The letter was signed by Captain Henry Hedworth of Constables' regiment and Lt. Breman, Cornet John Toomes, Lt. Francis Rawson, Quarter Masters John Watrage, William Barford and John Gregory all of Rich's regiment, and Samuel Oates, chaplain to Pride's regiment. (3)

- 
- (1) Firth, 'Scotland and the Protectorate', p. 213+n; Clarke Ms. 26, f.165v.
- (2) Thurloe, III, pp. 29-30.
- (3) Some companies of Constable's regiment were stationed near Aberdeen in December 1654 (Firth, 'Scotland and the Protectorate', pp. 224, 225-226). The regiment had been ordered to Scotland in April to help suppress Glencairn's rising (Firth and Davies, p. 401). Rich's regiment had also been sent to Scotland in October 1653 with this end in mind (ibid., pp. 149-150), as had Pride's, likewise in April (ibid., p. 368).

Similar letters were sent to other regiments. After a full examination conducted by the Judge Advocate, Henry Whalley, sent up from London, the men were cashiered; although there is no record of Hedworth, who drew up the letter and was one of its chief promoters, being cashiered, it seems likely he was.<sup>(1)</sup> Overton's involvement in this letter and his tacit approval of the idea of a conference, his subsequent arrest and the discovery of an alleged plot to seize Monck and march into England are well covered by Gardiner. But it should be emphasised that it was the government newsbook Mercurius Politicus which printed the story of the 'plot' thereby making Overton's detention appear more acceptable in the public eye. Monck also played a part in this. On 10 March he wrote to Cromwell suggesting Overton had been promoting the Royalist cause. Although Royalist agents had contemplated making approaches to Overton in April 1654, there is no evidence to support Monck's insinuation.<sup>(2)</sup>

We can learn something of the nature of the discontent with the Protectorate from the record Oates has left of the reasoning process whereby he decided to speak out against it. Oates had been a member of the Bell Alley General Baptist congregation in London and an itinerant preacher. In 1653 his religious activities brought him into contact with the Fifth Monarchists Chillenden and Danvers, but he was no hard and fast Fifth Monarchist himself.<sup>(3)</sup> The papers in which he

---

(1) Thurloe, III, pp. 29-30, 160, 206; Firth 'Scotland and the Protectorate', pp. 250, 251.

(2) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, pp. 230-232; Mercurius Politicus, 11-18 January 1654; Thurloe, III, p. 217; C. Clar. S.P., II, p. 344; D. Underdown, Royalist Conspiracy in England, Yale U.P., 1960, p. 94.

(3) D. A. Kirby, 'The Parish of St. Stephens, Coleman St., London : a study in radicalism c 1624-1654', Oxford B. Litt thesis, 1968, p. 245; A. Macfarlane (ed.), The Diary of Ralph Josselin, London, 1976, p. 63; Bodl. Rawlinson Ms. A8, f.127.

worked out his stance were found during a search of his quarters at Leith and were written in his own hand.<sup>(1)</sup> His views were influenced by the other contemporary anti-government literature circulating. Oates asked if the Protector was guilty of those things for which the army fought for, prayed for, cut off the King's head for and dissolved the Rump for; whether it was more a crime for a Parliament to endeavour to perpetuate itself than for a Lord Protector, especially as the Parliament was the representative of the people and he was not. From scripture it was clear what evils were to be expected if the army followed such a Lord Protector, and he proceeded to outline them. However, in Church matters, especially regarding freedom of conscience, things were better now than they had been under the King. God's people were no longer punished for doing his service but were now encouraged unlike in the past. Many people were now punished for wronging the people of God and laws of a persecuting nature had been removed. However, Oates appears to have been very wide of the mark when he says that there was now a satisfactory provision for the ministry. Tithes, still extremely unpopular with those seeking reforms, continued in existence. In secular matters Oates felt men were also better off now than under the King. Wicked men had been replaced by good ones and law reform had been started and was proceeding. The excesses of the 11 years of personal government had been removed. These included Star Chamber, the Court of Wards, Ship Money, compulsory knighthood

---

(1) Bodl. Rawlinson Ms. A34, f.49ff.; Clarke Ms. 27, f.10ff., which does not ascribe them to Oates.

and bishops' pardons. But Oates was again mistaken if he really believed, as he says, that taxes were now lower than in the 1630's. But in viewing Cromwell in a favourable light as the successor to the reforming spirit and legislation of the Long Parliament and by implying that more was to be expected from him, he realised it would be difficult for the people of God to oppose him. He was considered to have been the instrument of many things for their good and by risking opposition they might open the way to new civil wars. But despite all this Oates still felt the need to speak out, to register his unease. He wanted to see some form of compromise that would remove the danger of a fresh civil war, yet one which would not appear ungrateful for what Cromwell had achieved. The essence of Oates's difference with the present government, the cause of his unease and the reason why he was prepared to risk speaking out was that the King had believed in divine right, whereas, in fact, he had come in by election. According to Oates, this right of election was something the people had, must keep and not lose, or else they would lose the great argument they had had with the King, namely,

"that we chose him, and not hee us, wee were his  
and hee o(u)rs by compact."

The electors are greater than the elected. No one can come along and claim to rule by conquest, the people must defend this basic right against a King, Protector, or any other person. Thus, in Oates's eyes, it was the feeling that too much power was concentrated in the hands of the Protector, that there was not a sufficient check on that power,



that caused him to consider opposing the Protectorate. He realised that Cromwell intended further reforms but he was afraid that the people were being asked to give up too much of their intrinsic power, their birthrights the Levellers would have said, in the process. Oates felt it was no good waiting on future developments to expose the dangers to the peoples' rights encompassed in rule by a single person. One ought to try to do something about it now. In some ways Oates could support the line being pursued by the first Protectorate Parliament, especially in so far as they were seeking to enhance the power of Parliament in relation to the Protector. But he could not support the sort of position they were taking on other questions, notably religion, over which the Parliament favoured greater limitations to toleration than did Cromwell.

The contrivers of the letter from Aberdeen attempted to stimulate discussion within the army. Major Holmes, to whom the letter was addressed, had been one of the elected officers for Robert Lilburne's regiment in 1647 and had signed the agitators' letter to Wales in that year, but despite the suspicion he fell under because of the letter, Monck was keen to keep him on and wrote to the Protector about this. Holmes satisfied Cromwell of his loyalty and retained his commission.<sup>(1)</sup> Another figure who it was felt could be relied on was Major John Bramston of Morgan's regiment. Bramston was arrested along with Overton and some of his papers were seized. At his court martial it transpired that Bramston knew about the letter sent to Holmes and that Overton asked him to go to Edinburgh to moderate feelings if they should get too high. He was reluctant but Overton pressed him.<sup>(2)</sup> Among the papers found in

---

(1) Clarke Papers, I, pp. 161, 436; Firth, 'Scotland and the Protectorate', p. 247. There is a life of Holmes in the D.N.B.

(2) Firth, 'Scotland and the Protectorate', pp. 241-242.

Bramston's possession was a letter to the Church at the Glass House in London in which he denounced their fawning and flattering of Cromwell's court when they had resolved that they would have no King but Jesus.<sup>(1)</sup>

Another paper was

"The Reasons to Prove ye signeinge of the late  
Addresses by ye people of God to be sinful and  
they under that Guilt to be Incommunicable."

In this he condemned the breaking of the oaths and engagements made in June 1647. The question of oaths and engagements had taken up much time at Putney. Bramston considered the Protectorate as sinful and tantamount to slavery.<sup>(2)</sup> He was cashiered but soon won favour with the government once more. In 1656 he was made Lt. Colonel of a regiment made up of reduced soldiers from regiments serving in Scotland intended for the West Indies. He died on his way there.<sup>(3)</sup>

The contrast between Bramston's treatment and Overton's was remarkable. Overton was of course a much bigger fish. His complicity in the discontent in Scotland, despite the fact that it must have been obvious to the government that he was not involved in any plots for an armed rebellion, provided an ideal opportunity for the government to put an end to the doubts about his loyalty by removing him from the army and imprisoning him well out of the way. His garrison in Hull was ordered to be manned by men of Constable's regiment and the companies

(1) B.M. Add. Ms. 4459, f.145 ff.

(2) Clarke Ms. 27, f.5; ibid., 50, f.91v. ff; c.f. B.M. Add. Ms. 4159, f.195 ff.

(3) Firth and Davies, p. 311; Firth 'Scotland and the Protectorate', p. 251; Thurloe, V, pp. 86, 558.

previously serving there were ordered to London.<sup>(1)</sup> By March 1655 Overton's successor as governor of Hull, Colonel John Bright who had left the army in 1650, wrote to Thurloe that for the most part the garrison was quiet and that the few discontented persons took inspiration from John Canne, a preacher who had been unpopular with local Presbyterian ministers in 1650. Bright urged his removal and suggested that Cromwell had hinted at this anyway.<sup>(2)</sup>

Overton in his customary fashion went to great lengths to vindicate himself, especially from the charges of being a Leveller and from the malicious rumour that he had defrauded the state. He claimed he could be called a Leveller if this were taken to mean adherence to the engagements of 1647

"for the settling of a well-grounded government, redress of grievances, civil, ecclesiastical, or military, or inflicting condign punishment upon capital offenders."

He said that many letters had been sent anonymously to various people in Scotland and vigorously denied that he was involved in a plan to march into England, claiming that this would have led to "division and destruction" and would have been impracticable anyway.<sup>(3)</sup> Overton remained a prisoner for five years without trial, a fate out of all proportion to what he is alleged to have done. Just why he was so

- (1) Clarke Ms. 26, f.18v; ibid., 181, (unbound box 3).
- (2) Thurloe, III, pp. 239-240. For details of Bright's earlier career q.v. biographical appendix.
- (3) Thurloe, III, pp. 110-112, 66-67, 68; Clarke Ms. 27, ff.28, 29v; Wor. Co. AA.e.5(13), Two Letters from Major General Overton; B.M. Add. Ms. 4156, ff.149, 150, 161.

victimised remains a mystery. Undoubtedly, he was a more substantial political animal than any of the Three Colonels' and the government may have been genuinely afraid of him. Judging from a casual remark in Richard Cromwell's Parliament when his release was being debated it seems as if Lambert might have been as heavily involved in Overton's treatment as Oliver himself.<sup>(1)</sup> The Judge Advocate continued to collect evidence against Overton until at least March 1655. Overton's treatment became a weapon in the hands of the opposition in Richard Cromwell's Parliament. Adjutant General Henry Whalley, the Judge Advocate in 1654, was called on to account for Overton's long imprisonment without trial. Whalley said that Overton had approved the letter to Major Holmes and said that another letter found in Overton's possession proved there was a plan to murder Cromwell, Lambert and six others. No mention of such a letter had been made at the time, and Whalley's statement merely provoked a smile from Lambert who was present in the House.<sup>(2)</sup> If there had been such a letter at the time, it is amazing that it was not used as evidence against Overton.

The question of what was happening among those units around London at this time still remains to be considered. Royalist observers noticed stirrings of discontent in the army during the summer

---

(1) Burton, IV, p. 153.

(2) ibid., pp. 156, 159-161.

of 1654. One writer went so far as to say that they were

"discontented with Cromwell's usurpation, and say that they did not fight to make him a monarch." (1)

This was wishful thinking. However, feelings certainly ran high in the autumn. Gardiner attributes this to suspicion of the Parliament.

He suggests the officers were unhappy with its tampering with The Instrument. (2) The officers in London kept a close eye on things.

Days of humiliation were held at St. James's on 27 October, 1 November, and again a few days later. (3) A petition to Cromwell was fomenting.

The Weekly Intelligencer hinted that the officers would declare in it

"their advice for the better settlement of the Commonwealth wherein consists the people's safety, for peace (not war) is the only way to Liberty." (4)

The meetings continued until the end of the month and Certain Passages was confident that the eventual petition would affirm the army's desire to see heavy burdens removed and the oppressed liberated. (5)

It was not just the newsbooks that expected great things from the army. An intercepted letter to Scotland called the army "a travailing wombe still many throwes towards a birth", though its author's reasons were perhaps different from the newsbooks. (6) The

(1) C. Clar. S.P., II, pp. 366-67; c.f. ibid., p. 378; Thurloe, II, pp. 413-415.

(2) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, pp. 217-218; c.f. Vaughan, Protectorate, I, p. 85.

(3) Mercurius Politicus, 26 October-2 November 1654; Perfect Account, 1-8 November 1654.

(4) Weekly Intelligencer, 21-28 November 1654; Vaughan, Protectorate, I, p. 80.

(5) Certain Passages, 24 November-1 December 1654.

(6) Clarke Papers, III, p. 12.

proposals were finally presented at the beginning of December by Colonels Ashfield and Cooper, Lt. Colonels Francis White, Mason and Mills, Majors Packer, Blackmore, Winthrop, Creed and Boteler, and Captains Spencer and Empson. They called for liberty of conscience in public worship, but not for papists, the removal of tithes, law reform, including a law providing a remedy for people wronged in matters of conscience, compulsory payment of debts by those who could afford to pay them, setting the poor to work, recognition of the amnesty granted to people by articles of war, and the satisfaction of all public debts. There was nothing new about all this. An official newsletter of 30 November described the proposals as relating to law reform and satisfaction of the public debts, adding "with severall such others formerly insisted upon". An unofficial letter sent to Scotland gave fuller details of the proposals and commented

"An ould lesson nott yett learnt, repetitions are good." (1)

The petition went down well with the government. Thurloe saw it as representing a unanimous desire to live and die with Cromwell

"both as their (the army's) general in military matters, and as their protector in civil." (2)

The fact that it was presented to Cromwell implying that he was the source of the expected reforms, and not to Parliament as in the past was also significant. Oliver himself received the petition

"with much respect, assuring them of his assistance for the accomplishment thereof." (3)

(1) ibid., pp. 11, 13.

(2) Vaughan, Protectorate, I, pp. 87-88.

(3) Clarke Papers, III, p. 11.

The petition is to be seen more in relation to developments in Parliament than in relation to the discontent in the army. It was not meant to outbid the Three Colonels' petition for support in the army; indeed it made no direct reference to it. The officers supporting it were worried by the Parliament's attitude to such issues as religious toleration and of course on the future role of the army. If there was to be a dissolution of the Parliament then Cromwell could be certain of the backing of the vast majority of his officers. In terms of their previous and future activities the officers had little or nothing to distinguish them from the sort of officers who joined in the discontent of late 1654 and early 1655 or else were thought of by the 'plotters' as potentially sympathetic. Francis White who had been an elected officer for Fairfax's foot regiment in 1647 is already familiar.<sup>(1)</sup> Mason became one of the chief promoters of the army petition to Parliament urging them not to press kingship on Cromwell. Both Packer and Spencer had flirted with the Fifth Monarchists and both had been granted preaching rights in July 1653. Packer was himself dismissed for disaffection in 1658 although even in 1654 his loyalty was questioned by Major Tobias Bridge who wrote to Thurloe that Packer "is not so firm as is pretended".<sup>(2)</sup> Mills adhered to Richard Cromwell in 1659 and lost his commission in the summer and Boteler was the future Major General who came close to impeachment in Richard Cromwell's Parliament. Empson was the subject of Cromwell's famous remark "he that prays and preaches best will fight best".<sup>(3)</sup>

---

(1) Q.v. biographical appendix.

(2) C.S.P.D. 1653-54, p. 13; C. Clar. S.P., III, p. 4.

(3) Abbott, Writings and Speeches, II, p. 378.

In Scotland enquiries into the plot and the observation of suspects continued into the new year. At the end of December 1654 Lt. Christopher Keamer of Thomlinson's regiment was arrested on the grounds that he was not "well affected" to the government and cashiered although he was restored to the army in 1659.<sup>(1)</sup> An intercepted letter sent to Overton at Aberdeen mentioned that Captain Northend was coming up from London. He most probably brought social news with him. It is unlikely he was involved in any plotting. In 1658 he was governor of Scarborough Castle and the following year was made a Captain in Overton's regiment.<sup>(2)</sup> A copy of a letter by Captain Richard Moss of Pride's regiment, dated Aberdeen 30 December 1654, was found with John Ramsey, Overton's secretary.<sup>(3)</sup> Ludlow considered Moss a good Republican in 1659 when as Colonel, his regiment defended the Rump against Lambert.<sup>(4)</sup>

In his letter Moss said he wanted to know

"what progress is made in order to that government, the which so many men's lives (were) lost for, and we from time to time have been put to engage for, to bring about, and to maintain, but cannot see any such visible satisfaction in that particular, as I have long expected."

He hoped that the sword would be sheathed

"but upon such glorious terms as will make all men sit down in peace, without being tyrannised over at the wills of any persons whatsoever, and all men being one, equall, subject to one law."

- 
- (1) Thurloe, III, p. 46; Firth and Davies, p. 137.  
 (2) Thurloe, III, p. 56.  
 (3) Thurloe, III, p. 56.  
 (4) C.S.P.D. 1658-59, p. 378; Ludlow, Memoirs, II, pp. 61, 137, 139, 148, 242.



No proceedings were started against Moss, but his letter shows the same kind of unease and aspirations as the circular letter from Aberdeen and suggests that the contrivers of that letter were correct to assume that that unease was fairly widespread. On 8 March 1655 Adjutant General Whalley examined Daniel Davis a trooper in Major Azariah Husbards' late troop. Davis testified that he had been ordered by his Quarter Master, John Gregory, to attend him at a house in Aberdeen where some of the other authors of the letter to Holmes were present. On the table were some letters which were to be delivered by Davis to Major Dorney of Ashfield's regiment, Captain Spilman of Lambert's regiment, Captain William Yardley of Read's regiment at Stirling and Ensign Snow at Glasgow. The letters urged the drafting of a petition about tithes and other things to the General. It was said, correctly, that similar things were being done in London.<sup>(1)</sup>

Early in 1655 government investigations in England produced knowledge of what has come to be known as Wildman's plot. The 'plot', supposedly for an armed rising, involved Wildman and Sexby and implicated William Prior, agitator for Fleetwood's regiment in 1647, and William Eyres who had taken part in the mutinies at Ware and Burford. Prior and Eyres met sometime in late November 1654 and discussed their respective attitudes towards the Protectorate. They talked about the engagements of June 1647 saying that if they

"did not do their utmost endeavour to make good what they had engaged, and elsewhere fought for, they could not clear themselves of king murderers."

---

(1) Thurloe, III, p. 206.

Eyres said that they had fought against the King to remove the arbitrary power exercised over the people by his will

"and that they were bound to do their endeavour to hold forth a foundation of wholesome laws established by a legal representative for preservation of themselves and their posterity for the future."

He added

"that for his part he loved the Lord Protector's person, and honoured him, and that if power must be in one single person, rather he than another."

This was not really conspiratorial talk. Eyres's views have much in common with Oates's. He was possibly the Eyres who attended the meetings preceeding the Three Colonels' petition. By his own admission he passed on a copy of the petition to Prior.<sup>(1)</sup> Eyres was arrested in Ireland where he said he had gone on personal business and denied conspiring against the government. In January 1660 he was given Lambert's foot regiment but Monck was suspicious of him and replaced him with Colonel Thomas Birch.<sup>(2)</sup>

Thurloe's notes on Wildman's plot give the names of the regiments and officers it was felt could be relied on to join in.<sup>(3)</sup> They appear a very mixed bag. Some were canvassed. Major Richard Creed was spoken to twice by Sexby, "at the first he had almost engaged him" but then he refused. Creed was one of the officers who presented Cromwell with the army petition at the beginning of December. Two troops of Berry's also seemed assured, Unton Croke's and Robert Hutton's. The two captains were probably not considered. Croke helped

---

(1) Thurloe, III, pp. 126; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, p. 229n.

(2) Thurloe, III, pp. 124, 126; Firth and Davies, pp. 528-529.

(3) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, p. 229n.

suppress Penruddock's rising, arrested Sexby, and tried to arrest Adjutant General Allen, for all of which he was recommended for promotion.<sup>(1)</sup> Croke's Lieutenant came under suspicion and was cashiered. Croke said he did not know the man well but he was assured by others who did

"that he is of a dangerous temper, and neither well-inclined to the good old way of God, nor to the government of your highnesse." (2)

As we have seen not everyone was prepared to join in any kind of protest especially if it savoured<sup>of</sup> opposition. The same had been true in 1647 and in April and December 1653. For most officers the unity of the army had mattered most and continued to matter most in their concerns. This had been the case in 1647 among those officers who had sympathised with some of the Levellers' aspirations and again in 1653 among those officers who sympathised with the more radical of the saints. By late 1654 the desire to preserve army unity also implied loyalty to and support of the Protectorate. In early 1655 the army remained committed to Cromwell's programme of "healing and settling", of reconciling the right and the left especially in religious matters. This point is illustrated in the address of the officers, soldiers and others of the rebaptised Churches at Edinburgh, Leith and St. Johnston's. The address was intended to vindicate the Churches from having had any part in the recent 'plots'. It claimed that providence had led them into the army and through the difficulties and dangers of the last 12 years of war

---

(1) Firth and Davies, pp. 244, 250-252.

(2) Thurloe, III, p. 193.

"unto a blessed hope and expectation of reapyinge  
a harvest of rest and peace."

They make the point that

"There was never more subtleties of Satan under  
specious pretences of Religion and Conscience  
both in Ecclesiasticks and Politicks then this  
age hath produced."

This was a view that was being increasingly held in the aftermath of  
Barebones. They suggest that the recent discontent was Royalist  
inspired. They claim their enemies want the chance to say that  
they (i.e. the Baptists) are seeking "to turne the world upside  
downe" and set up themselves. Lest their silence be considered  
equivalent to guilt they have decided to speak out. They dissociate  
themselves from the recent 'plots' and own the "present magistracy  
set over us by God's Providence" and reject the charge that they were  
aiming to set up their own interest. They

"count it a mercy that there is a curb upon each  
interest, and yet all have their Libertie; As for  
our parts we lay no other Claime to State Affairs,  
or great places than our Nationall (natural?)  
Birthright, in a peaceable subjection to the power  
set over us, our greatest expected freedom being  
quietly to worship God"

which they feel will be the fruit of all the recent wars. As for  
other reforms, they express themselves willing to wait patiently  
until the right sort of political climate can be achieved for their  
implementation. They end by pleading for unity between the Protector,  
Parliament, the people and the army. The address was presented by  
Major Robert Read of Fenwick's regiment with others to Monck and was  
said to have been well received by him. (1)

---

(1) Clarke Ms 27, f.33 ff. It was signed by 15 persons. The  
address was printed in Mercurius Politicus, 25 January-  
1 February 1655; q.v. also ibid., 18-25 January 1655;  
Firth 'Scotland and the Protectorate', p. 242n.

The address provides a good contrast with Oates's reasons for speaking out against the Protectorate. Both the adherents of the address and Oates could see the positive aspects of the Protectorate especially in religious matters, both were benefitting from the wider toleration. Both saw that Cromwell was building on the foundations laid by the Long Parliament, and both respected Cromwell personally for this. But Oates's arguments were more sophisticated and farsighted and showed a higher level of political awareness, the sort shared by men like Okey and Overton in their own way. He was more concerned with the vaguer aspects of The Instrument, in particular what would happen when Cromwell died and if he were to be succeeded by somebody far less scrupulous. Hence, his concern for some sort of balance to check the power of the single person. Oates was no extremist. He, and others like him, were in a dilemma, a painful one as his writings show, and one that could not be easily resolved. There was no simple choice as there had appeared to be in January 1649 between 'freedom' and 'reaction'. The dividing line between those who saw in Cromwell and his policy of healing and settling a guarantee of further reform, and those who saw it as opening the way to a retreat into the oppressions of the past was not rigid and clear but erratic and hazy. It was to become even hazier over the next few years. Officers tended to be on one side or the other depending on how they assessed developments at particular times, that is in accordance with how they felt Cromwell was genuinely trying to adhere to the aims of the reform programme, or the "cause" as it came to be known as, and how far they felt he was trying to advance himself and his family. In 1654

Republicanism among the officers as articulated by someone like Streater was a negligible factor. 'Free Parliament' was chanted like a slogan and held up as the multi-purpose solution to all the problems in the way of settlement. Possibly men like Okey, Overton and Oates, might have been aware of the wider implications and the philosophy behind the notion of a 'free Parliament', but the majority of those who joined in the discontent did so simply because they were worried that the Protectorate represented a step backwards, a view which subsequent developments seemed to bear out. They did not really have anything to offer in place of the Protectorate. As we have seen, Ireton had already expressed this criticism of the 'left' during the Reading debates in July 1647.<sup>(1)</sup>

By January 1655 relations between Parliament and Protector had deteriorated very badly. On 20 January, the Parliament voted that control of the militia should be in the hands of the Protector and Parliament, which was a step on the road towards saying that it should be in the hands of the Parliament alone, something Cromwell would not allow.<sup>(2)</sup> At the end of December the military presence around Westminster was intensified as a precaution against plots said to be hatching.<sup>(3)</sup> Once again, there was an atmosphere of crisis and uncertainty. Finally, on 22 January, after five lunar months, Cromwell dismissed the Parliament, confident of the backing of his army. Four days later the

---

(1) Clarke Papers, I, p. 213 and above.

(2) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, p. 234-255, esp. p. 245.

(3) Clarke Papers, III, pp. 16-17.

Lord Protector, Council of State and army officers kept a day of fast and humiliation for a blessing on what they had done and what they were about to do.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the unsettling atmosphere of early 1655, brought about not just by the dissolution of the Parliament but also by the Royalist rising, there was a tendency for the government to overreact on security questions but given the coincidence of so much disaffection this is not surprising. In February Harrison, Rich, Carew, and Courtney were rounded up and imprisoned. The high water mark of the Fifth Monarchists had already passed but this was not obvious to the government. Harrison and Courtney were charged with encouraging armed rebellion against the government and Rich with opposing the raising of the assessment. It is not clear if Courtney was still technically a member of the army at this stage. His behaviour would seem to indicate that he was not. Rich was out of the army by the end of December 1654 and his regiment passed to Charles Howard in January. The reason why he left the army, or was dismissed, is unclear, but it is unlikely to have been a result of implication in the Three Colonels' Petition. He had not opposed the expulsion of the Rump and had been active in administration during Barebones. His increasing sympathy for Fifth Monarchist views must have led him to feel genuinely that the Protectorate was a manifestation of anti-Christ. The attacks on the Protectorate made by Harrison and his associates and their alleged call for rebellion, were quite

---

(1) Weekly Intelligencer, 23-30 January 1655.

different in kind from the activity surrounding the Three Colonels' Petition and Overton's 'plot', although as we shall see, there was to be an attempt in 1656 to reconcile the Republicanism manifested by the Three Colonels' Petition and the Fifth Monarchist opposition to the Protectorate. At the beginning of March Harrison wrote to various Churches in London urging them to humble themselves for the sins of the nation and to seek the Lord and wait on him with a spirit of weakness until it pleased him to send a change.<sup>(1)</sup> This confirms the view that so far as the former Major General was concerned the active earthly political struggle was over. Rich, unlike Harrison was to return to the army in 1659. Wildman was also arrested but Sexby managed to escape to the continent.<sup>(2)</sup> Lord Grey of Groby was arrested by Colonel Hacker. Hacker helped further the tendency to suspect plots and plotters under the bed. He wrote to Cromwell that a surgeon in Lambert's regiment had written to one Smith in Newark, saying that the junior officers had a design in hand which if it came off would bring about glorious times. Hacker added that the surgeon was a Quaker sympathiser, if not in fact one himself, an indication of the notoriety that sect was beginning to achieve.<sup>(3)</sup> The junior officers were of course to become quite important politically in the

- 
- (1) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, pp. 267-268; Thurloe, III, p. 55; Faithful Scout, 3-10 March 1655; Capp, Fifth Monarchy Men, pp. 107-108 (I disagree with Dr. Capp about the reason for Rich's departure from the army, ibid., p. 106); Clarke Papers, II, pp. 242-246; ibid., III, p. 23; Firth and Davies, pp. 249, 151 (Firth and Davies are muddled on Rich at this time and the date of the dissolution of Parliament); c.f. Weekly Post, 24 April-1 May 1655. For Courtney q.v. also biographical appendix.
- (2) Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, pp. 269-270.
- (3) Thurloe, III, p. 148.



army later on. In Scotland the army had settled down after the arrest of the 'plotters' although there had been some discontent among some of the soldiery with the removal of their officers, who were supposedly their favourites. But lack of pay also played a part in the grumbling. Monck exhorted them to unity and by the end of February he could write to Thurloe that the officers were glad of the way Harrison had been dealt with and reminding the Protector to be "very severe with those that are disturbers of the peace" or else "we should never have any certaine settlement".<sup>(1)</sup> Stability had no sooner been restored within the army before Penruddock's rising in March gave the army a renewed taste of action. The rising was easily suppressed.<sup>(2)</sup> One important outcome of the rising was that it paved the way for the introduction of the Major Generals, and the decimation tax both of which were to intensify the army's unpopularity in such a way as had not been witnessed since the days of free quarter in 1647.

---

(1) Certain Passages, 12-19 January 1655; Faithful Scout, 12-19 January 1655; Perfect Account, 24-31 January 1655; Thurloe, III, p. 179.

(2) For accounts of the rising q.v. Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, III, pp. 274-295; Underdown, Royalist Conspiracy, pp. 127-158; A. Woolrych, Penruddock's Rising 1655, Hist. Assoc. General Series G.29., London, 1955.

## III.

IRELAND MAY 1650-SEPTEMBER 1655.

It is necessary to interrupt the main part of the narrative at this point in order to take a much closer look at developments in Ireland.

Cromwell had left Ireland in May 1650 after successfully destroying Irish resistance. He retained his positions as Lord Lieutenant and Commander-in-Chief but responsibility fell onto the shoulders of Henry Ireton, as Lord Deputy and acting Commander-in-Chief. With the consolidation of English control the need for a more permanent solution to government, both civil and military, was recognised. The Council of State appointed commissioners, approved by Parliament, to assist the Lord Deputy in settling the government of Ireland. At first there were only two commissioners, Ludlow and John Jones, but in October 1650 Richard Salway and John Weaver were added. However, in November Salway resigned and was replaced by Miles Corbet. Ludlow was also appointed Lt. General. Jones was still technically a member of the army. He commanded a troop in Harrison's regiment, the "Welsh troop", members of which were reported to have left Scotland, where they were serving, in January 1654 rather than submit to the Protectorate.<sup>(1)</sup> The civil government of Ireland remained in the hands of

---

(1) Q.v. above, <sup>pp 193,349.</sup> Despite the ambiguity in Firth and Davies (p. 189) over the identity of John Jones, the commander of the troop in Harrison's regiment, and the regicide and Irish commissioner were one and the same person (q.v. biographical appendix).

the commissioners despite the abolition of the title of Lord Lieutenant, and consequently of Lord Deputy, which Lambert had had his sights on, in May 1652. In July 1652 Fleetwood was made Commander-in-Chief in Ireland and in August he was added to the commissioners, thus retaining the overlap between the civilian and military aspects of government. He arrived in Ireland in September. Under the Protectorate, with the revival of the office of Lord Deputy, he became Lord Deputy. In this position he was assisted by a Council of six including two former army officers, Robert Hammond, the former governor of the Isle of Wight, and Mathew Thomlinson. With the establishment of the Protectorate Ludlow stood down as a commissioner, but he retained his military office, an anomaly which Henry Cromwell put down to pecuniary reasons.<sup>(1)</sup> In August 1654 Henry Cromwell was appointed Major General of the Irish forces and the following December he became one of the commissioners although he did not actually arrive in Ireland to fill these posts until July 1655. He replaced Fleetwood as Lord Deputy when the latter's term of office came to an end in 1657, although Henry had been de facto head of government in Ireland from September 1655 when Fleetwood left Dublin. In November 1658 Henry was appointed Lord Lieutenant but the following June he surrendered his office and returned to England. The government of Ireland fell once again into the custody of parliamentary commissioners.<sup>(2)</sup>

---

(1) Thurloe, II, p. 149.

(2) The above is mainly based on T. C. Barnard, Cromwellian Ireland, Oxford, 1975, pp. 16-25. Barnard (op. cit., p. 20) is wrong to describe Henry Cromwell as commander of the forces in Ireland in 1654. Fleetwood remained Commander-in-Chief. The ranks of Lt. General and Major General were subordinate to that of General, as they were in England and Scotland.

Ireton had gone over to Ireland with Cromwell in August 1649 and once there he involved himself with near manic intensity in quelling the Irish and later in his job as Lord Deputy. Why he should do this and never return to England, unlike Cromwell, to an active political life remains a matter for speculation.<sup>(1)</sup> But it seems likely that a man of Ireton's standing and influence both in and out of the army could have returned to England had he wanted. The conclusion that his 'exile' in Ireland was to some degree self-imposed seems inescapable. Ireton died on 7 November 1651 and his funeral in England was carried out with the pomp and splendour befitting a hero of the young Republic. But such a show aroused the anger of those who felt it to be inconsistent with the values they expected the new Commonwealth to uphold in contrast with those of the old monarchy. His death deprived the army of one of its most original thinkers and most competent politicians.

Shortly after Ireton's death Ludlow was appointed as provisional Commander-in-Chief. On 7 February 1652 John Jones wrote to Thomas Scott about the jockeying for position that went on at the time of the Lord Deputy's death. According to Jones, Colonel George Cooke, who had succeeded to Thomas Rainborowe's regiment in 1648 and whose regiment had been selected by lot for the Irish service, made allegations to the commissioners that various Baptist officers were

---

(1) For an account of the last stages of his life q.v. R. W. Ramsey, Henry Ireton, London, 1949, pp. 160-208; Gardiner, Commonwealth and Protectorate, II, pp. 125-126.

strengthening their hold over the army. He named them as Sir Hardress Waller, Sankey, Cromwell (probably Henry whose regiment was serving in Ireland at this time), Hewson, Allen, Axtell and Richard Lawrence, a plausible list with the obvious exception of Henry Cromwell and Waller. The allegations were treated seriously but found to be untrue. Later Jones wrote to Thomas Harrison saying that those suspected were found to be

"the most godly, most praying, and most self-denying men, that ever served any state in their capacity."

Jones said he wrote this to counteract the reports finding their way to England of their alleged disloyalty.<sup>(1)</sup> The episode is significant in that it contains the main ingredients of the future problems of the army in Ireland. The first of these was personality clashes. They tended to outweigh any issue of principle, although they were always made out to be of that nature. Secondly, the Baptists, and these officers in particular, were looked upon as intrinsically discontented, and thirdly, and perhaps most important, it showed up the communications gap between Ireland and London which provided an excellent breeding ground for misunderstanding, most of the time with very little foundations. Jones in his letter to Scott also drew attention to other problems. He suggested that Broghill, who had considered joining the Royalists at Charles I's execution and who later on became an important Cromwellian official, was a Royalist at heart and therefore not to be trusted with more power than he had had when Ireton was alive. Even at that time Broghill had felt badly treated and that his merit was

---

(1) N.L.W. Ms. 11,440 D, f.36v.; Mayer, 'Inedited Letters', p. 207.

not being adequately rewarded. As a gesture to appease him he was made Lt. General of the Ordnance in Ireland in early 1651.<sup>(1)</sup> Jones also said that there was considerable ill-feeling between Sir Charles Coote and Commissary General Reynolds. Coote's forces were said to be full of native Irish and cavaliers and were not paid equally with the other forces. This caused a flare up between Coote and Reynolds, including the refusal of their respective regiments to receive commands from the other commander in the absence of their own Colonel. To quell all this the commissioners appointed Ludlow as Commander-in-Chief, and Coote's forces were better provided with money.<sup>(2)</sup> Coote and Broghill were of course to be instrumental in bringing about the downfall of the 'good old cause' in 1659-1660. Reynolds's regiment had arrived in Ireland in 1649. He had been made Commissary General of the horse in 1651.

Fleetwood's appointment as Commander-in-Chief and commissioner coincided with a period of relative peace in Ireland. To all intents and purposes the war against the Irish had been won and all that remained to be done was to mop up. The fact that the army had been engaged in active service until then meant it had had little time left to involve itself in political matters. However, at the beginning of 1653 the army had been successful in preventing the renewal of John Weaver's post as commissioner. Sir Hardress Waller and 30 other officers drew up a paper in which they condemned Weaver for trying

---

(1) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, pp. 263-264.

(2) N.L.W. Ms. 11,440D, f.37+v.

to persuade his fellow commissioners at Ireton's death that control of the army should be left in their hands. The officers suggested that Weaver had helped spread the stories about the alleged discontent among the Baptist officers including a rumour that they wanted to see a Baptist as Commander-in-Chief. They requested that Weaver should make good specific charges against individuals and that he should be replaced as a commissioner by someone else.<sup>(1)</sup> Weaver had been opposed to Lambert's appointment as Lord Deputy the previous year which must have aggravated the army both in Ireland and in England.<sup>(2)</sup> Weaver's enthusiasm for a civilian ascendancy in government was shared by John Jones who felt that a civilian government would be the best solution for the settlement of Ireland, although he did not go as far as Weaver and advocate civilian control over the army.<sup>(3)</sup> In the context of the early 1650's such a view was bound to incur the anger of the army.

The dissolution of the Rump was accepted with no opposition from the army in Ireland. Ludlow says that those in Ireland had no alternative but to fall in line thinking

"that the principles of some good men who joined in this attempt were directed to the good of the nation."

But some of the officers sent in an address of support for the dissolution and no doubt others did so as well.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) H.M.C. Portland, I, pp. 671-672.

(2) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 319; Worden, Rump, p. 309.

(3) N.L.W. Ms. 11,440D, f.85.

(4) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, pp. 537-538; A Perfect Diurnal, 27 June-4 July 1653.

Fleetwood's stay in Ireland has been equated with the rise of the Baptists, but although they grew quite strong under his toleration, it has already been pointed out that they were considered a bête noire even before he arrived. There is no evidence to suggest that he actively encouraged them. Seymour concedes that the Baptists were strong in the army and civil administration but adds that they enjoyed no special privileges and that there is nothing to suggest they endeavoured to supplant other religious groups.<sup>(1)</sup> Moreover, it seems likely that the supposed political threat posed by the Baptists was greatly exaggerated by contemporaries and also by subsequent historians. The most recent study of Cromwellian Ireland goes so far as to say that the sect "attracted political radicals" and therefore became politically important with the Baptist Churches in Ireland serving

"the same political function as the Fifth Monarchist congregations in England."

This has led to the suggestion that Fleetwood failed to see that the Baptist Churches were being used

"as a cover for opposition which aimed at the overthrow of his father-in-law's Protectorate."

Seymour even suggested that the Baptists were synonymous with Republicans.<sup>(2)</sup> But there is no evidence to support these views.

---

(1) St. John D. Seymour, The Puritans in Ireland 1647-1661, Oxford, repr. 1969, p. 108.

(2) Barnard, Cromwellian Ireland, pp. 104-105; Seymour, Puritans in Ireland, p. 83.



The trouble started with the dissolution of Barebones and Cromwell's elevation to the Protectorate. The dissolution itself caused a feeling of uncertainty reflected in the letter of the commissioners to the commanders of the various precincts.<sup>(1)</sup> After Cromwell had become Lord Protector rumours began to reach London that there was widespread discontent in Ireland with the move. The newsbooks in England tried to cover up these rumours. A Perfect Account said that the loyalty oath had been tendered to the officers and for the most part had been accepted by them.<sup>(2)</sup> On 23 February a number of officers sent a paper to Cromwell urging him to further the establishment of a godly preaching ministry in Ireland.<sup>(3)</sup> But Cromwell's proclamation as Protector in Ireland met with delays far different from those which had held up the proclamation in Scotland. Ludlow, according to one report behaving "most childishly", opposed the proclamation saying it was

"a thing evil in itself, tending to the betraying  
of our cause."

A discussion was held among the commissioners and some three or four officers "of whose integrity and abilities we had the best opinion" and a vote was taken which proved inconclusive. Ludlow says that Fleetwood, whose dilatoriness in all this did not help matters, wanted to pass the proclamation and took advantage of the arrival of the

- 
- (1) R. Dunlop, Ireland under the Commonwealth, Manchester, 1913, II, pp. 384-386.
- (2) A Perfect Account, 1-8 February 1654.
- (3) Thurloe, II, p. 118.

Auditor General, Edward Roberts, to break the deadlock and it was passed with the help of his vote. However, the proclamation was signed only by the secretary to the commissioners not by the commissioners themselves as was the usual practice with a measure of such importance. The Faithful Scout adds that Fleetwood ordered the proclamation to be published but that at first many had scruples about it but upon reflection accepted it. At the proclamation ceremony itself Ludlow says there was only a sparse attendance with no senior officers present except Sir Hardress Waller and Colonel John Moore. Another report says that Sankey, who had been rebaptised in September 1653 and who was a member of Thomas Patient's congregation in Dublin, was also present. (1)

The reports of discontent and their association with the Baptists caused embarrassment amongst Baptist leaders in England who were anxious to improve their reputation in the public eye. Perhaps fearing a backlash William Kiffen (a correspondent of John Jones), John Spilsbury and Joseph Fansom wrote to their brethren in Ireland on 20 February saying that the rumours of dissatisfaction were rocking the boat and could impede further progress towards reform and only benefitted the common enemy. They suggested that the Irish Baptists should think over their position and remember that as Christians they were subject to the powers that be, an argument formerly used by the

---

(1) Thurloe, II, pp. 163-164; Ludlow, Memoirs, I, pp. 374-375; Faithful Scout, 24 February-3 March 1654; Mayer ('Inedited Letters', p. 216) wrongly gives the year of Sankey's rebaptism as 1652. It should be 1653 (N.L.W. Ms. 11,440D, f.145).

King's supporters. The London Baptists argued that those in Ireland were out of touch with what was really happening in England and condemned the Barebone's Assembly for aiming at anarchy. They felt that Cromwell's elevation to the Protectorate would guarantee their religious freedom and safety, and pointed out that it had been generally accepted by the other Churches in the nation with whom they corresponded.<sup>(1)</sup> The letter was designed to whip the Irish Baptists back into line and had the desired effect. Patient's congregation sent in an address of loyalty to the Protector on behalf of themselves and other Baptist Churches in Ireland.<sup>(2)</sup>

The government took the rumours of discontent seriously enough to send over Henry Cromwell as a trouble shooter. Henry arrived in Ireland in March 1654.<sup>(3)</sup> He reported back to England that the army was quiet and well satisfied with the change of government except for some of the Baptist officers. He also said that Ludlow and Jones were disaffected "though Jones more cunning and close with it". He said Ludlow was determined not to act in his civil capacity but would not give up his military commission, although according to Ludlow himself he wanted to do so. In a cypher Henry was more frank. He suggested that Fleetwood favoured the Baptists

"though I doe believe it rather to proceed from tendernes then love to their principles."

- 
- (1) Nickolls, Original Letters, pp. 159-160.  
 (2) ibid., pp. 148-149.  
 (3) Thurloe, II, pp. 162-164.

He suggested that Ludlow should be removed from the army and replaced by Disborowe, and Fleetwood recalled with Disborowe acting in his place.<sup>(1)</sup> Henry's visit and report finally dispelled the rumours about discontent, and by the beginning of April at a meeting of the Council of Officers in Dublin a paper was presented by some senior officers for subscription by all the officers, declaring their loyalty to the Protectorate. It was designed to remove the aspersions cast on the army.<sup>(2)</sup> The address lacks the spontaneity and wholehearted trust in Cromwell of the army in Scotland's declaration and bears all the signs of being a document of compromise. At times it even appears half-hearted in its profession of loyalty. The signatories said they were sure that Cromwell had not been furthering his own ends in becoming Protector, and trusted that so long as he would

"resist any temptation that may tend to divide your heart from the interest of the Lord's people (who we know are as deare unto you as the apple of your eye) soe shall we be as carefull to rebuke that spirit which may in the least tend to divide us from you."

The address was signed by 90 officers covering all shades of opinion in the army including Broghill, Sir Charles Coote, Sankey, Axtell and Richard Hodden, later a favourer of Quakers. The declaration and a letter of congratulations were taken over to London by Broghill and Coote.<sup>(3)</sup> On 5 April Colonel Richard Lawrence wrote to Commissary

(1) Thurloe, II, pp. 149-150; Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 382.

(2) Mercurius Politicus, 27 April-4 May 1654. The address is printed in Nicholls Original Letters, pp. 144-145.

(3) A Perfect Account, 10-17 May 1654.

General Staines in London saying that he hoped Henry Cromwell's visit and report had cleared the air and shown that the rumours had greatly exaggerated the reality. (1)

However, some disquiet lingered on beneath the surface. On 10 March Captain John Vernon, a Baptist officer, wrote to Cromwell expressing loyalty but warning him of the temptations his new office held for him. He said that England had recently been too much troubled with pride, unthankfulness, covetousness, and oath breaking. Vernon urged Cromwell to remember those who had called him up from his humble station and caused "the upright ones" to fight under him, and that he, Vernon, had

"endeavoured with teares to keep men from thinking  
of you above w<sup>t</sup> was meek."

In this way God had honoured Cromwell, but now, Vernon says, Cromwell was doing things which "seeme to call ye proud happy", and cited the case of Cromwell knighting the Lord Mayor of London. The title of "Highness", Vernon said, "makes some few soules to mourne in secret" and he recalled Cromwell's remark that the Dutch had provoked God by assuming the style of High and Mighty and that they could not prosper under that title. There were scruples about all the oaths and engagements that had been made, although Vernon says that the Engagement to the Commonwealth was least scrupled by most Christians. Vernon said he was fully satisfied with the degree of liberty of conscience he

---

(1) Thurloe, II, pp. 163-164.

enjoyed under Cromwell and would not wish to change his government. His doubts were caused by a fear that the "deceptfulness of some" might be

"made a rod both to your owne and our reproof even to God's declaring us his unfruitfull vineyard."

In other words he was afraid that the Protectorate would lead to backsliding and deviation from the cause. Similar fears lurked behind Oates's analysis. Vernon welcomed Cromwell's readiness to counteract any enemies of freedom of conscience but cautioned him not to interfere with this liberty nor to listen to its enemies spreading rumours about "yor brethren". Vernon said that there was no widespread dissatisfaction in the army and that he knew of no one else besides himself and one Colonel in the Baptist community that had had scruples. He closed the letter by saying it was dictated by "unfeigned faithfulness of affection" and not by disaffection.<sup>(1)</sup>

Three days later Adjutant General William Allen, one of the original agitators in 1647, wrote a remarkably similar letter to Cromwell repeating many of Vernon's points. Allen was worried about a new court growing up "a company of ye worst of men" that would

"suppresse ye best by calling those friends yt have turned their tongues to yor titles though they hate yor authority."

He was also alarmed about what would happen once Cromwell died, a concern that was shared by Oates. Like Vernon, Allen claimed that the recent rumours had been stirred up by flatterers and liars. The

---

(1) B.M. Add. Ms. 4156, f.49ff; c.f. Brown, Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men, pp. 140-141n.

Baptists, he said, were being called disloyal because they were not shouting with the multitude in the street, but were praying for Cromwell and would stand by him and his authority "with whatsoever is near or dear to them". Allen's letter was respectful, moderate and well-intentioned. But privately Allen had more profound doubts. He wrote to Captain Theophilus Hart, of Twisleton's regiment, a few weeks later, saying that there had been enough blood shed in recent years for all good men to want an end to it. He intended to live peacefully under the government but, if opposition should turn out to be necessary,

"we shall not, I trust, be solicitous as to ourselves." (1)

Allen wrote similar letters to Hugh Courtney and to Cornet Caithness late of Cromwell's Life Guard, whom he chastised for laying down his commission rather than serve under the Protectorate. But in these letters he was not so outspoken on the question of possible opposition.<sup>(2)</sup> It has been pointed out how Alured was recommended to contact Vernon and Allen when he went to Ireland but it seems likely he could get nowhere with them, if indeed he even managed to meet them.

It would be wrong to characterise Allen's, or Vernon's, views at this time as verging on extreme republicanism.<sup>(3)</sup> This is a retrospective view from the vantage point of 1659. Allen returned

- (1) B.M. Add. Ms., 4106, f.226ff.; Bodl. Rawlinson Ms. A13, f.26; c.f. Brown, Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men, pp. 142-143.
- (2) Thurloe, II, pp. 214, 215.
- (3) Hardacre, 'William Allen', p. 300.

to England in late 1654 and after an interview with Cromwell he moved to the West Country where he became involved in Baptist activity and was alleged to have mixed with other critics of the government, including Hugh Courtney and local Royalists. He was also said to have spoken out against the government. In keeping with the government's determination to clamp down on any potential opposition Allen was arrested and put under house arrest at his father-in-law's residence in Devon. Cromwell felt sufficiently moved to write to Allen justifying the detention and Allen wrote a stinging letter in reply, styling the Protector "My Lord" rather than "your Highness". In some ways it recalls Robert Overton's letter to Cromwell after his arrest. Allen felt the sentence far in excess of what was alleged let alone proven, and was "an ill reward for 13 years faithfull service". He wrote to his fellow Baptists in Ireland, Colonel Daniel Axtell and Philip Carteret, the Advocate General in Ireland, enclosing copies of Cromwell's letter and his reply to it. They were asked to forward the reply to the Protector if they saw fit. He also denied that he had participated in anti-government activities. Fleetwood pressed for his release which was effected in the spring of 1655. In the late summer Henry Cromwell wrote from Ireland that Allen had been keeping up a correspondence with comrades in Ireland "representinge things in the worst sense". He recommended Allen be removed from London, little suspecting that the Adjutant General would be sent back to Ireland after promising to be faithful to the Protectorate. Allen had



expressed keenness to return to Ireland especially as his wife was ill. Fleetwood supported Allen's desire to return to Ireland. He was to receive money out of contingency funds at Oliver's suggestion. Perhaps the government was glad to give in to this desire as it would keep him out of the way. He returned to Ireland late in 1655 and immediately became a thorn in Henry Cromwell's side.<sup>(1)</sup> No action was taken against Vernon, Allen's brother-in-law.

Thus, there is nothing to suggest, as does Dr. Barnard, that the Baptist Churches were being used as a cover for opposition to the Protectorate. Discontent with the government was not endemic in the army in Ireland, but limited to a few individuals who were not at this stage prepared to move into all-out opposition; they were not even prepared to go as far as some of their comrades in England and Scotland.

In July 1654 Fleetwood in expectation of the Parliament then being elected, wrote to Thurloe about his concern that reforms had not been progressing as he felt they should :

"The Lord awaken us to our duty. It is much wondered that the regulation of the law goes on so slowly, and the bysness of tythes not ascertained in some medium 'twixt thos two extremes, of no allowance to a preaching minister, and that of having tythes in its hight, which hath been so much a bone of contention 'twixt minister and people, and so burthensome to many good and tender consciences."

---

(1) Thurloe, III, pp. 140-141, 246, 744; ibid., IV, pp. 55, 108; B. M. Lansdowne Ms. 823, ff. 357-358; c.f. Hardacre, 'William Allen', which is a useful, though at times inaccurate, summary of Allen's career, esp. pp. 300-302. For Allen in Ireland under Henry Cromwell q.v. below.

Fleetwood was not confident that the Parliament would solve the question,

"ther will be such a diversity of interests, I feare it may prove as fatall as both have bine in the two last parliaments." (1)

On 13 September, despite Henry Cromwell's unfavourable report earlier in the year, Fleetwood was proclaimed Lord Deputy in Dublin in the presence of the new Council. He had recommended that Hewson and Sankey be appointed to it as military members, but this was not taken up by the Protector who preferred to give the new Council a more civilian appearance although it did include two ex-officers, Robert Hammond and Matthew Thomlinson.<sup>(2)</sup> Cromwell wanted men whom he knew and personally trusted. On 27 September Fleetwood wrote optimistically to Thurloe about the state of the army in Ireland. He said he was convinced

"that there is not any one of the three armies, that have lesse dissatisfaction then this hath."

He felt that people should have confidence in Cromwell and the present government. He said a petition was being fomented, although this was being done very carefully so as to prevent any divisions among the officers, implying that the picture was perhaps not quite as rosy as he was trying to make out.<sup>(3)</sup> He was also ignoring the attitude of Lt. General Ludlow.

(1) Thurloe, II, p. 445.

(2) Mercurius Politicus, 14-21 September 1654; Thurloe, II, p. 493. Hammond and Thomlinson arrived in Ireland in September and Hammond died the following month (Thurloe, II, p. 602; Mercurius Politicus, 12-19 October 1654).

(3) Thurloe, II, p. 631.

By the end of the year Ludlow's part in distributing copies of the Three Colonels' Petition and Some Momentos came to Fleetwood's attention. Clearly, he felt let down by Ludlow, although the Lt. General's reservations about the Protectorate must have been well-known to him already. Fleetwood's reaction has the quality of naivety about it.<sup>(1)</sup> News of Ludlow's actions was sent to London and Cromwell ordered Ludlow to give up his commission to the Lord Deputy. Fleetwood summoned Ludlow before him and asked him to comply. According to Ludlow, Fleetwood said he had received the order for the recall of his commission some months before but had kept it quiet adding that he could no longer do so for fear of being implicated in Ludlow's discontent. Ludlow refused to hand it in and, taking advantage of Fleetwood's weak personality, made a big issue of principle out of it claiming that since he had received it from Parliament he would only return it to Parliament, meaning the Rump. He added that he hoped his retirement from public affairs would be enough to satisfy the Protector. Ludlow sought the advice of some officers "of whose integrity I had a good opinion", and it was decided he should send a letter to Fleetwood justifying his action and condemning Cromwell. The letter was sent to Fleetwood who replied that Ludlow must either deliver up his commission or be arrested and sent to England. Ludlow told the Deputy that he could go into his quarters himself and get the commission, but he did not and went away. In the end Ludlow gave a promise to Fleetwood to return to England by the 10 March. The delay

---

(1) Thurloe, III, p. 70.

was at Fleetwood's suggestion because he felt that, given the atmosphere in England with the various 'plots' and fear of a Royalist rising, Ludlow would not get a fair enough hearing.<sup>(1)</sup> However, the Council of State were not keen to have Ludlow back in England anyway. Perhaps they feared he might stir up trouble if he returned. At the end of April Fleetwood was instructed to prevent Ludlow leaving for England until further orders were issued. Ludlow was keen to return home to put his estate in order, and Fleetwood sympathised with him in this. The arrival of Henry Cromwell to take up his new duties and the order for Fleetwood's, supposedly temporary, recall complicated matters. Fleetwood, exceeding his power, secured a second engagement from Ludlow whereby he would be allowed to go back to England in return for a pledge not to act in any way contrary to the government. Henry wrote to Thurloe criticising the Deputy's action and saying that, if Ludlow went to England,

"you would be necessitated to deale with him  
as you have done with Harrison." (2)

In expressing this view Henry was exaggerating Ludlow's importance.

With Fleetwood's return to England in September 1655, Ludlow was forced to deal with Henry who recommended that Ludlow stay in Ireland. He ignored this advise, returned to England and was arrested at Beaumarais by order of Henry Cromwell and the Irish Council. They wrote to Fleetwood reassuring him that this order was not meant to be a usurpation of Fleetwood's authority, although clearly it was.<sup>(3)</sup>

---

(1) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, pp. 408-412; Thurloe, III, pp. 112-113.

(2) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, pp. 419-421; Thurloe, III, p. 744.

(3) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 426n.

At Beaumarais Ludlow was confined. He speculates this was done to stop him spreading disaffection among troops in transit between England and Ireland under the command of Colonel Sadler.<sup>(1)</sup> Ludlow was requested to sign another engagement not to act in any way against the present government which he at first scrupled but then conditionally signed. He was also informed that Fleetwood had been trying to secure his release but that Lambert had tried to convince the Deputy

"that I was of such principles and such a spirit as not to deserve my liberty, though I cannot remember that our familiarity had ever been as great as to enable him to give a character of me." (2)

Once in London Ludlow was summoned before the Protector, on 13 December, and was asked to give an assurance not to act in opposition to the government. Ludlow said he was ready to submit

"But ... if Providence open a way, and give an opportunity of appearing in behalf of the people, I cannot consent to tie my own hands before-hand, and oblige myself not to lay hold on it."

Cromwell attacked Wildman as the author of the Three Colonels' Petition, saying he deserved to be hanged. There were contributions from other members of the Council of State. Lambert asked why Ludlow could not give his whole-hearted support to the present government and, according to his own subsequent account, he replied

"because ... it seems to me to be in substance a re-establishment of that which we all engaged against, and had with great expense of blood and treasure abolished."

---

(1) ibid., p. 428; B. M. Lansdowne Ms. 821, ff.20-21, 36-37.

(2) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 431.

Lambert asked him on what authority he felt he could act against the government and the Lt. General vaguely replied on an authority "equal or superior to this" when he saw that "the said authority would employ its power for the good of mankind". Lambert, hitting the nail on the head and exposing the weakness of Ludlow's position, asked who would judge that

"for all are ready to say they do so, and we ourselves think we use the best of our endeavours to that end."

Ludlow limply replied that if they did then their crime was the less. It is hardly surprising that the government felt no qualms about releasing Ludlow.<sup>(1)</sup> He had not worked out any alternative to the Protectorate capable of attracting substantial support. His views hardly even matched up to those of the Three Colonels'. His regiment was disbanded in August 1655 and he did not become important again in army politics until 1659.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Ludlow affair, although it involved a man of considerable standing both militarily and politically, had few repercussions even despite other possible sources of discontent, including the delay in working out a satisfactory method by which to allocate and distribute lands for officers and soldiers to satisfy their arrears. These caused hardship amongst the soldiery, many of whom sold their debentures at give-away prices to their officers. The quest for a practicable land settlement is a complex one and is related to the disbanding of some

---

(1) ibid., pp. 434-436; C.S.P.D. 1655-56, pp. 56, 109, 196.

(2) Ludlow, Memoirs, I, p. 416.

of the army to ease the financial burden on the government of Ireland.<sup>(1)</sup> There appears to have been no support for the stand taken by the Lt. General over giving up his commission, apart from the few nameless officers he mentions who urged him to write to Fleetwood, and even they were unwilling to come forward and support Ludlow more openly.

On 15 December 1654 Fleetwood wrote to Thurloe mentioning his unhappiness at not being kept more fully informed about what decisions the government in England was making. He felt he knew no more than anyone else and resented this.<sup>(2)</sup> It is unlikely that this indicated deliberate neglect on the part of Cromwell and the Council of State. Henry Cromwell was to make similar complaints. Besides at the turn of the year the government in London had quite a lot on its plate with the army 'plots' and the deteriorating position regarding its relations with Parliament. Successive governments in the 1650's gave Ireland attention secondary to their other concerns, which would seem to suggest that their primary interest in relation to Ireland had been to subdue the revolt and contain the discontent. A fully fledged colonial policy did not yet exist and it was felt could wait.

The year 1655 was very quiet in terms of the army in Ireland. We do not have much evidence for the state of the army other than Fleetwood's correspondence with Thurloe and even this is not very illuminating. Fleetwood had no sharp analytical mind. He was inclined to see Penruddock's rising and the catastrophe in the West Indies as

---

(1) q.v. J. P. Prendergast, The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland, London, 1865, esp. pp. 95-112; K. S. Bottigheimer, English Money and Irish Land, Oxford, 1971.

(2) Thurloe, III, p. 23.

signs of God's displeasure and to draw generalised statements of the need for unity amongst God's people from them.<sup>(1)</sup> He was a moralist at heart, and no pragmatic politician. Fleetwood was not at all opposed to Henry Cromwell's coming across to Ireland and wrote to Thurloe on 14 March asking for his speedy departure for Ireland.<sup>(2)</sup> However, there are indications that the army was somewhat divided on this, a division that was to emerge more openly once Henry had arrived, although even then it should not be magnified out of all proportion. On 11 April Fleetwood reported that some senior officers had written to Cromwell requesting Henry to come over. Fleetwood was a little hurt by this and said "let men say what they will, he will find welcome here".<sup>(3)</sup> However, Fleetwood continued to play a full part in the Irish government until he departed for England in September.<sup>(4)</sup> It would be unfair to say he left Ireland in disgrace, although in the Ludlow affair he had certainly exceeded his authority and this must have raised some doubts in London. However, Cromwell wrote him a warm and friendly letter in June expressing confidence in him.<sup>(5)</sup> It would be quite wrong to suggest, as does Seymour, that he was recalled because he opposed the Protectorate.<sup>(6)</sup> However once back in England Fleetwood, at first anyway, was looked upon as a focus for

---

(1) Thurloe, III, pp. 196, 246, 690.

(2) ibid., p. 246.

(3) ibid., p. 363.

(4) ibid., pp. 558-559, 566-567.

(5) ibid., p. 572.

(6) Seymour, Puritans in Ireland, p. 109.



Fifth Monarchists and Baptists who were critical of, if not opposed to, the Protectorate. On 9 October Sankey wrote to Henry that many dissatisfied people whom he hopes are "honest" have come to see Fleetwood unsolicited by the Lord Deputy. There was a long discussion with Simpson, the Fifth Monarchist, and Henry Jessey, the Baptist, at which there was much debate after which "we parted with out making Proselytes of either side". Another one was to follow. Sankey felt the subjects discussed were not fit to be set down on paper but were for verbal communication. Fleetwood in his correspondence with Henry does not allude to the meetings which probably amounted to no more than an informal exchange of ideas.<sup>(1)</sup> Fleetwood's departure brings to a close a particular phase in the discussion of Ireland. Affairs under Henry Cromwell will be dealt with in a separate section below.

---

(1) B. M. Lansdowne Ms 821, ff.24-25.