

SOME BASIC GOVERNMENTAL MOVES OF OLIVER CROMWELL  
THROUGH THE FIRST PROTECTORATE PARLIAMENT

by

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B.S., Kansas State College  
of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1956

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A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of History, Government, and Philosophy

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE  
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

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## INTRODUCTION

Oliver Cromwell: Puritan, military success, governmental failure. How unfair it is to summarize the dreams, the achievements, the very life of any man in such curt, cold terms. Yet each is of primary importance in evaluating Cromwell's career. That he was a Puritan, there can be no doubt. That he was a military success, if success is determined by winning battles and wars, is certain. That he failed in government is tragically seen as, one by one, his attempts to bring to England a better government dissolved before his eyes. The concern of this paper is to examine Cromwell, some of his governments, and the forces leading to the frustration of his efforts politically. Therefore, there can be no time spent in exploring Puritanism and its ramifications except where it has a direct bearing on the government, nor can there be a retelling of the exploits of the English Civil War. It must suffice to define the situation of power in England at the time of Charles I's execution, and then proceed directly to Cromwell's governments.

Charles was brought to the block on January 30, 1649. His death was brought about, not so much as a result of his losing the civil war to the Parliamentarians, as by his own duplicity in plotting with any faction which might help to restore him to absolute power. When his scheming reached the point that influential men in the army, Cromwell among them, felt it would be better to have no King rather than such an untrustworthy one, his fate was sealed. The death of the King did not solve the problems of government facing England, how-

ever. As could be guessed, there were many royalists who had staunchly supported the King and they could now be counted on to support the King's son.

In addition to this group which would lay every stumbling block possible in the path of the victorious parliament, that very parliament had split into at least two important factions. There were those parliamentarians who wished to see the Presbyterian form of worship and state church control in England and opposed to them the Independents who, for the most part, were not only opposed to Presbyterian control but to any form of state control over religion. Broadly speaking, an Independent was a man who believed that a church was a voluntary association of believers with the right to elect its own minister, and the Presbyterians gave no more sign of allowing men such freedom of religion than had Laud with his conservative Anglican doctrine. As the struggle between the divided opponents of the King developed, those wishing to see Presbyterianism triumph gained a majority in Parliament. The Army, however, was the stronghold of the Independents. As early as 1644, it was rumored that Manchester's army--Cromwell and his troops were under Manchester's command--was rife with Independents.<sup>1</sup> In leaning toward independency, the Army had the support of Cromwell who was one of these Puritan Independents.

Before 1628 he had become a professor of religion, and in all externals a Puritan, but by 1638 a formal acceptance of the Calvinistic creed had become the perfect faith which casts out all fears

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<sup>1</sup> William Haller, Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution, pp. 190-192.

and doubts. His conversion had been followed by a time of depression and mental conflict....<sup>1</sup>

His belief in his conversion is expressed in a letter to Mrs. St. John, his cousin, on the 13th of October, 1638. He says confidently, "My soul is with the Congregation of the First-born, my body rests in hope; and if here I may honor my God either by doing or by suffering, I shall be most glad."<sup>2</sup>

Captains in Cromwell's cavalry had been carefully chosen for their godliness and honesty rather than their social position. Cromwell made his views on what he expected in his officers particularly plain in a letter to the Committee of Suffolk.

I beseech you be careful what Captains of Horse you choose, what men be mounted: a few honest men are better than numbers..... If you choose godly honest men to be Captains of Horse, honest men will follow them; and they will be careful to mount such.... I had rather have a plain russet-coated Captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than that which you call "a Gentleman" and is nothing else.<sup>3</sup>

Puritan preachers were at work in the army and their effect must have been to win over at least some of the men to Independent views. Concern for the religious climate in the Army was expressed even by Richard Baxter, a fairly conservative Puritan.<sup>4</sup> In spite of all the work of the preachers and the concern of conservative men about radical elements in the Army, it must be kept in mind that many men had no burning

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Firth, Oliver Cromwell, pp. 37-38.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Carlyle, Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, Vol. 1, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 162.

<sup>4</sup> Haller, op. cit., p. 197.



interest in religion. Many were simply interested in more immediate desires of this world like the pressing demand for the back pay which was due them. With this the case, then, the Parliament of 1647, now controlled in both houses by the Presbyterians, blundered absurdly when attempting to deal with the Army. Parliament first attempted to get rid of Cromwell, which, since he seemed ready to bow to this, was conceivable. Next, Parliament attempted to rid itself of the Independent Army by transferring part of it to Ireland and disbanding the rest. Even this might have been accomplished had Parliament raised a loan to pay off the soldiers when they were dismissed, but Parliament did not even attempt to do so.<sup>1</sup> The lack of plain, good judgment in this matter is appalling. With some of the soldiers already fearing they would be persecuted by the Presbyterian Parliament for their religious convictions, the apparent refusal to even pay them strengthened many a man's fear of a tyrannical Parliament. They had fought the war, and now Parliament would not only rob them of the reward of freedom of conscience but also of the money promised them for risking their lives. The only result this situation could produce was the uniting of the Army against Parliament. Now the man of independent religious belief, and the man with no other desire but for his just pay, looked to the army leaders for remission of grievance.

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel R. Gardiner, Cromwell's Place in History, pp. 34-35, hereafter cited as Gardiner's Lectures.

## THE RUMP PARLIAMENT

On December 6, 1648, Cromwell made his first really direct political move when he stationed Colonel Pride and a group of soldiers outside the doors of Westminster Hall<sup>1</sup> to deny admittance to the Presbyterian members of Parliament. The remaining ninety members were Independents. This "Rump" of the Long Parliament was the agency which swiftly executed the King and proclaimed the monarchy and House of Lords abolished. Though Cromwell was responsible for it, the Rump Parliament was not his direct brain child or that of anyone else. This Parliament was formed, or pruned, as it were, by expediency, and only time would tell how it would conduct itself. Once it had executed the King and done away with the House of Lords, it possessed the combined power of King, Lords, and Commons. "Thus the Long Parliament possessed an authority which no political assembly in England has ever possessed before or since."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it had very little or no base on which to stand. It had been so purged of Royalist and Presbyterian members that the few Puritan members remaining could claim no popular consent whatsoever. This Parliament rested in actuality upon the Army alone, and other than this military backing, it possessed only the name Parliament to recommend it to the average Englishman.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There is some question as to whether Pride's Purge was at the direct order of Cromwell or not, but it is certain that Cromwell approved of this purge.

<sup>2</sup> Firth, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

The Rump was from the first in the glare of a bright light of hostile criticism which arose from serious doubts concerning its legality and, therefore, it had to produce the finished products of extensive reform to justify its very existence. No only the people who had no hand in the Rump's existence, but also Cromwell and the Army expected action from the Rump. By 1651 the Army officers and the Rump were already in disagreement. Oliver and the Army officers wanted an immediate dissolution at this point to establish a Parliament on a broader foundation. This was an opportune time to widen the governmental base, since an invasion of Scotland had increased nationalism and, consequently, the English were better affected toward the government than they had been prior to the Scotch invasion. The members of Parliament, on the other hand, were making plans to perpetuate themselves in the next parliament. As a compromise, then, Cromwell and the Army gave up plans for an immediate dissolution and Parliament gave up its plans to perpetuate itself in power. It was agreed there would be no dissolution until 1654, and so at last the Rump had a chance to prove itself.<sup>1</sup>

The Rump showed some early promise. In 1652, for instance, it appointed twenty-one commissioners, who were not members of the House, to inquire into "the mischiefs which grow by delays, and chargeableness and irregularities of the proceedings of the law."<sup>2</sup> This was a good start, since the Law was so expensive

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel R. Gardiner, History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, Vol. 2, pp. 72-73.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 82.



and ponderous the poor could hardly afford justice, but when the commissioners recommended legislation that should be passed in regard to this matter, nothing was done. Certain officers of the Army began to lose patience with the Rump and held a meeting on August 2, 1652. At this meeting, they formulated policy which they felt should be implemented including,

...that the Gospel might be propagated and its ministers supported otherwise than by tithes;  
 ...that the debts of the Commonwealth should be satisfied before private persons received anything from the public revenue; that soldiers should be paid their arrears;....<sup>1</sup>

The petition also asked for a new election among other requests. Nothing was done and, as usual, there was no report from the committee appointed by Parliament to establish a new Parliament. Cromwell patiently arranged a meeting between leading Parliamentary members and leading Army officers to work out some agreement. Oliver afterward said,

I believe...we had at least ten or twelve meetings; most humbly begging and beseeching of them, that by their own means they would bring forth those good things which 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 of the People.<sup>2</sup>

This meeting proved to be fruitless also, and tension in Cromwell was mounting. He even went so far as to discuss the possibilities of his becoming King. This was done in a private conversation, which resulted in Cromwell realizing the diffi-

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> Carlyle, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 306.

culties involved in so drastic a step and discarding it as a solution of the country's difficulties.<sup>1</sup> In spite of Cromwell's own impatience with Parliament, he was more inclined to work with and around it than many officers of the Army. Of the officers who were convinced that it was useless to prolong the life of the Rump, two of the most prominent were Major-General Lambert and Major-General Harrison. These men were pressing Cromwell for a forcible dissolution. It is about them that Cromwell said,

"I am pushed on,...by two parties to do that, the consideration of the issue whereof makes my hair to stand on end."<sup>2</sup> Concerning the opinions of the common soldiery and how Cromwell dealt with both opinions and soldiers, a news writer on April 1, 1653, wrote,

Our soldiers,...resolve to have speedily a new representative, and the Parliament resolve the contrary. The General sticks close to the House, which causeth him to be daily railed on by the preaching party, who say they must have both a new Parliament and General before the work be done; ... There came a regiment of horse to town this week full-mouthed against the Parliament, but were not suffered to stay here above two days before they, with three violent regiments more, were despatched out of the way towards Scotland.<sup>3</sup>

With the evident lack of confidence in Parliament by the Army and even Cromwell himself, why did Cromwell stick "close

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 229-231.

<sup>2</sup> Ludlow, ed. Firth, 1. 346., as quoted by Gardiner, Vol. 2, p. 236.

<sup>3</sup> Newsletters, April 1, Hist. Rev., July 1893, pp. 528-529, as quoted by Gardiner, Vol. 2, p. 251.

to the House?" The answer seems to lie in the fundamental reverence Cromwell held for authority and tradition. He had always upheld the established government as long as it seemed expedient. He had stuck by the "Presbyterian Parliament" and only as a last resort to preserve the freedoms the army had fought for did he instigate Pride's purge. In like fashion, he had treated with the King until it was clear that to do so was inviting disaster. It is true that, as has already been mentioned, Cromwell had once considered the possibility of taking the kingship, but this took the nature of a fit of passion directed against the ineptness of the Rump rather than that of a coldly calculated plan, and had been quickly discarded when exposed to the harsh reality of the dangers which such a step would have to withstand. Cromwell now reverted to his traditional stand of moderation and compromise. Neither Parliament nor his own army officers were making such a middle-of-the-road position easy to maintain. To increase the difficulty of any moderate solution, Parliament decided secretly to solve the issue of dissolution.

Parliament was to transmute the Bill before it into one for filling up vacancies, leaving the old members not merely to retain their seats but to decide on the qualifications of those newly elected,... As soon as the Bill was passed Parliament would adjourn till November, thus rendering it impossible legally to repeal or modify the Act.<sup>1</sup>

Cromwell heard about this plan, however, and even in the face of this duplicity, called another meeting of army officers

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 253-254.

and parliamentary leaders to effect yet another compromise. Cromwell's new plan was to get Parliament to agree to a temporary suspension of Parliament, with the government being taken care of by a small committee appointed by Parliament.<sup>1</sup> When the country had gotten settled and accustomed to the new order of things, Parliamentary government would be restored. This group met at Whitehall on April 19, 1653, and its first session was broken up only by the sheer weariness of the group. Since no agreement had been reached, it was agreed to resume discussion on the next afternoon. Meanwhile, however, the Parliamentary leaders agreed to hinder the progress on the Bill the following morning.<sup>2</sup> The House would not be held back the following morning, but sought to push the Bill through before Cromwell could learn what was happening. Even the men whom Cromwell had trusted to keep their promise to detain the House in this work either joined in this effort or remained silent and did nothing to prevent it.<sup>3</sup> One of the officers present sent word to Cromwell of the temper of the House. When Cromwell heard the news, anger flared within him. He called a guard of soldiers and went to see for himself. He was dressed in such a manner that it appeared he had no intention of going to the House that day and this, perhaps, attests to his surprise concerning the actions of the House against the promises of its leaders. Even when he entered

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<sup>1</sup> Firth, op. cit., p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup> Trevelyan, England Under the Stuarts, pp. 304-305.

the House, he sat silently until the final question of the Bill.<sup>1</sup> Cromwell then rose to address the Rump. He had had enough. Time for moderation and compromise had come and gone and his anger flashed out at the Parliamentarians. At the beginning of his speech Cromwell commended the Parliament for their pains in the care of the public good, but after a short time his tone changed and his anger lashed out at them. Although the order of his speech is not clear, the general context of it is plain enough. He said,

Come, Come! we have had enough of this.... I will put an end to your prating,... It is not fit that you should sit here any longer! you have sat too long here for any good you have been doing lately. You shall now give place to better men... You call yourselves a Parliament! You are no Parliament; I say you are no Parliament! Some of you are drunkards, some of you are living in open contempt of God's Commandments... Depart, I say; and let us have done with you.... I have sought the Lord night and day, that He would rather slay me than put me upon the doing of this work.<sup>2</sup>

And so the Rump was gone, and no one mourned its passing. This group had never been truly representative of anyone in England. It had failed to legislate on any issue except its own desire to maintain itself in power, and its only merit, that of having a last vestige of the old parliamentary authority, was insufficient to save it in the face of its own inactivity.

#### THE NOMINATED PARLIAMENT

When Cromwell dissolved the Rump, he did not know exactly

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 261-262.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Carlyle, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 293-294.



what form the government would take. He had been pushed on toward the dissolution by his army officers and particularly, as we have seen, by two major-generals, Lambert and Harrison. These two men had plans of their own concerning the form of the new government. Lambert felt that the power should be entrusted to a small council of 10 or 12 which would be helped by a written constitution.<sup>1</sup> Harrison's plan can be understood by the modern reader when the nature and background of its author are known. Harrison has been described as,

...a man of no birth and little education, bred on perverted prophecies, full of desperate courage and high-flown enthusiasms, --a man born to lead forlorn hopes and die for lost causes, who did both even to the admiration of his enemies.<sup>2</sup>

Harrison, in short, was a Fifth Monarchy man. Fifth Monarchy men were, whether calling themselves Fifth Monarchy men or not, a group of like-minded men who felt that the earth should be ruled by saints. Only when this was accomplished would reforms for all the people be established.<sup>3</sup> Harrison, of course, reflected this desire for a saint-directed government. He wanted a larger governing council than Lambert suggested, and one which would be made up of Godly men much in the manner of the old Jewish Sanhedrin.<sup>4</sup> As for Cromwell, he seemed open to any reasonable suggestion at this juncture. Whatever form of government finally selected could not be gained by free election of represent-

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<sup>1</sup> Firth, op. cit., pp. 320-321.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 321.

<sup>3</sup> Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 268.

<sup>4</sup> Firth, loc. cit.

atives, and he knew it. Since those men who won the Civil War were so divided now, the majority of Englishmen would elect to have a King again and, since this offered no prospect of any freedom for the Independents, a free election was unthinkable.

As it happened, Cromwell was not entirely satisfied with either plan submitted by his two generals. He was discouraged with parliaments, but could not place any faith in paper constitutions as Lambert's plan called for. It is true that, after his numerous victories and the dismissing of the Rump, Cromwell felt he might personally be the instrument of God,<sup>1</sup> but he was not in a real sense a Fifth Monarchist and did not wish to place England in the hands of a few fanatics. Harrison's plan, therefore, of a small saint-controlled government was not to his liking either. Under the circumstances, then, he did what any man in a similar situation would do. He compromised. Cromwell felt that the government of England would be best practiced if it were in the hands of Godly men, but that these men should be arranged more in the order of a Parliament than of a council such as Harrison advocated.<sup>2</sup> Since the elections could not be free, the method of choosing new representatives concerned only the Puritans and the Army. Letters were sent to the Congregational Churches of each county asking them to send the names of a certain number of persons who they felt would be qualified to serve in a parliament.<sup>3</sup> The Army Council took the names sent

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner's Lectures, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Firth, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

<sup>3</sup> Gardiner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 276.

in and picked those to be nominated. They exercised a real supervision as to who should be chosen.<sup>1</sup> What type of parliament was selected then? It was naturally Puritan, since the Congregational Churches sent in the lists of those they deemed worthy. Contrary to popular opinion, though, it was not a parliament predominantly of fanatics. Neither the members of the Independent congregations that started the nominating procedure nor the army officers who finished it were of the Fifth-Monarchist stripe. The moderates were clearly in the majority.<sup>2</sup> This was really Cromwell's first big attempt at any constructive action dealing with the formulation of a government. Although the basic form of this Nominated Parliament was not Cromwell's idea, but only Harrison's plan modified by Cromwell, he was willing to accept it as his own and back it enthusiastically. He felt that this was surely a parliament of God to do God's work, and he showed his feelings and religious fervor in his first speech to its members.

I say, own your call; for it is of God! Indeed, it is marvellous, and it hath been unprojected. It's not long since either you or we came to know of it. And indeed this hath been the way God dealt with us all along, To keep things from our eyes all along, so that we have seen nothing, in all His dispensations, long beforehand;--which is also a witness, in some measure, to our integrity.<sup>3</sup>

For an executive government the Nominated Parliament established a Council of State with thirty-one members. Since Cromwell was

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 281-282.

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner's Lectures, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Carlyle, The Complete Works of Thomas Carlyle, Vol. 2, p. 321.

a member of both Council and Parliament he still maintained a position of great authority.<sup>1</sup> With the procedure and form of the Nominated Parliament duly established, parliament turned to reform. One of the burning issues of the day, as far as the Independents were concerned, was the tithe. The radicals were for sweeping the tithe system away entirely and having the minister live on the voluntary contributions of his church. It was considered extremely radical and dangerous not to have the government enforce payment for ministers; nevertheless a motion was early brought before the Nominated Parliament to sweep away the tithe after November 3. This attempt was turned back, however, when the parliament voted 68 to 43 not to put the motion before the House.

The real importance of this reference to the vote on the tithe is to show that the House was actually not united in policy, but was, from the first, split between moderates and ultra-liberals.<sup>2</sup> The Nominated Parliament not only attempted to destroy the tithe, but also struck out at other institutions which had been offensive in the past. The Court of Chancery was extremely unpopular and the Nominated Parliament abolished it without a division. The House then referred the matter to the Committee of Law with instructions to carry out this resolution and to report how suits might now be taken care of and how the equitable jurisdiction Chancery had exercised would be

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 290.

carried out. This was done in the best of faith, but there was not a practicing lawyer in Parliament! This reform-minded parliament evidently did not understand what a difficult undertaking it would be to replace law systems which had been established throughout the centuries, or more caution and good judgment would have been exercised.<sup>1</sup> Parliament continued upsetting the existing order of things by blithely appointing a committee to codify the law. This task would have been a great one under any circumstances, but was naively attempted by this parliament devoid of a single lawyer. Cromwell was certainly against the legal abuses that had been prevalent, but he was a solid, sensible man in most respects and in private conversation made reference to this "overturning" parliament as being rather foolish.<sup>2</sup>

While Cromwell was belatedly coming to understand that pious and holy men are not always wise or capable of carrying out intelligent policies, he was having difficulty from another quarter. No matter who the leader is who is attempting to carry out controversial policy, he is bound to be criticized. Cromwell was particularly vulnerable to criticism of every type from every source. At this time in English history, the wisest man who ever lived would come in for his share of criticism from someone whose "special revelation" from God conflicted with the way the government was being managed. There were many such revelations in many minor religious groups which existed among

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 302.



the Independents. These groups are called by many names: Diggers, Brownists, Fifth-Monarchy men, and others, but the name which may be used to apply to them in general is Leveller. The Levellers all had at least one thing in common. They wanted reform, and Cromwell was expected to meet their demands, some of which were fantastic! For instance, Gerard Winstanley, the leader of the Diggers, addressed a pamphlet to Cromwell asking that there be a community established where there would be no money at all and the death penalty only for the two crimes of murder and of buying and selling.<sup>1</sup> Not all sects were as fanatical as the Diggers, of course. Some groups advocated democracy and, since these groups were more numerous, they were more influential. The loudest leader of the democrats was John Lilburn. He seized every opportunity to attack anything which seemed to him to be hindering the visionary democracy he advocated. Cromwell had not established a complete democracy; therefore, Cromwell was open to attack. Lilburn and his disciples attacked Cromwell as a hypocrite and tyrant. One pamphlet stated that,

"You shall scarce speak to Cromwell about anything, but he will lay his hand on his breast, elevate his eyes, and call God to record. He will weep, howl, repent, even while he doth smite you under the fifth rib."<sup>2</sup>

Lilburn, by his ceaseless oratory about democracy, had won over the common, credulous Englishman. In his eyes Cromwell was a traitor because after he had dissolved the Rump, he had not

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 78-79.

<sup>2</sup> Pamphlet of Republican as quoted by Firth, op. cit., p. 244.

asked "'the lords the people of England', to elect representatives according to their indubitable rights, and to stand by them with his army 'as servants, as in duty he and they...ought to have done.'<sup>1</sup> Nothing would satisfy Lilburn but a representative election by the people under no restraint whatsoever. The people were the only legitimate authority and any authority not of the people was, to him, plainly illegal. This type of free-wheeling oratory sounds wonderful to the credulous dreamer, but fails woefully to come to grips with reality. Fortunately, Lilburn never got in a position of authority where he could carry out the idea of democracy he was so vocally advocating. A democratic vote would have brought back the monarchy, and John Lilburn would have had his neck in one of the first and foremost nooses of the Restoration government. Because of his frantic outbursts, Lilburn was put in jail a number of times by a number of different governments. Since being in jail did not stop his tongue and it was not wise to hang him because of his tremendous popular following, he remained a thorn in the flesh of every government until his death in 1657. Lilburn is only the arch example of Cromwell's political and religious attackers, but the attacks practically all have the same stamp. It has been the time-honored privilege of the "outs" to attack the "ins" because it is not the business of the "outs" to deal with reality.

While Cromwell was being belabored on all sides, his parliament seemed to settle down and proceed as expected. It has been

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<sup>1</sup> A Charge of High Treason, 669, f. 17, No. 52., as quoted by Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 303.

established that the majority of its members were moderate Puritans and not wild fanatics, and this is further seen when, according to plan, a new Council of State was elected on November 1, 1653. Cromwell was unanimously elected to this Council by the 113 voters present while Harrison, the Fifth Monarchist, received only fifty-eight votes. Cromwell received a working majority in the council in favor of his more moderate policies while it is clear that Harrison could not gather much support.<sup>1</sup> While on the surface this picture that all is well for the moderates in the Nominated Parliament seems justified, it is extremely deceptive. The plain fact of the matter is that the moderates could not stand the boredom of attending the House. In fact, during the very day of the election of the new Council of State, the attendance dropped from 113 to 95 before the day was over.<sup>2</sup> The lack of attendance hurt the moderate cause because it was mostly the moderates who absented themselves. The Radicals, since they had a great, burning desire for reform, were much more constant in attendance and so in actuality the moderate and Radical factions were about equal in the House when divisions were taken. The tendency for the Radicals to overturn was apparent even on such vital legislation as the Assessment Act for the military and naval services. The ultra-liberals wanted to change the county assessment and some even suggested that officers who had purchased forfeited estates for very little should serve the

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> Loc. cit.

Commonwealth without pay for a year to help out.<sup>1</sup> The assessment was finally allowed to pass and serious trouble for the moment abated, but the mere fact that there was so much resistance to so important a bill is indicative of the temperament of the Radicals.

Religious difficulties were still arising, although Cromwell had done his best to get the clergy of differing sects to live peaceably among themselves. He had even taken part in conferences with ministers from the Presbyterian, Baptist, or Independent elements in a vain attempt to quiet them. The real danger now came from the Fifth Monarchists who were gathering in great crowds to attend the preaching at Blackfriars. That they held extreme views can readily be shown when it is considered that they wished to abolish the whole English legal system and substitute a simple system based on the law of Moses.<sup>2</sup> This simple legal system might have worked well for Moses and his tribes of the desert, but for an advanced and complex nation, such a code is beyond the bounds of any but the fanatic's reason. In frequent attendance at the Blackfriar preaching were the Radicals of the House, and this naturally tended to reduce their voting strength on occasion. This gap in the ultra-Liberals' defense gave the moderates the chance they had been looking for to strengthen the executive power of the government at the expense of their opponents.

That the executive power needed strengthening was pointed up

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 331-313.

<sup>2</sup> Firth, op. cit., p. 325.

when John Lilburn was acquitted by jury trial. Lilburn was legally guilty of felony. The mere fact of his presence in England, since he had been banished from the country, should have been enough to hang him, but, because he was popular with the masses, no jury would convict him. After this acquittal, the Moderate party realized that it was next to impossible to obtain a fair verdict from a jury trial when political issues were involved. Consequently, it was felt there should be a High Court of Justice which could not be influenced by public prejudice. Such a High Court had been proposed but had been sidetracked in committee. The Moderates shrewdly called out this Bill for a High Court of Justice without advance warning and passed it in a single morning when many of those opposed to it were attending the preaching at Blackfriars.

It is interesting to note that within three days after the passing of this Bill, Harrison retired into the country.<sup>1</sup> This was explained as the result of his having lost Oliver's favor: the conjecture was that Cromwell was switching his sympathy to Lambert. Lambert now headed up a meeting to which all army officers within traveling distance were invited. He was in favor, as always, of taking some action which would make Parliament less harmful. While Cromwell, no doubt,

...sympathised with Lambert in his wish to render the existing Parliament innocuous, he appears to have set himself against a second military expulsion, and to have shrunk from accepting the title of King which it was now proposed to revive in his favour.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 316-318.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.



At this juncture Cromwell was holding true to his tradition of clinging to what legal order there is for as long as it is absolutely possible. The Moderates now attempted, perhaps at the urging of Cromwell who still hoped to work with them, to put through a bill establishing Ejectors. These Ejectors were to examine the ministers of the country concerning their real devotion to religion and competence. This plan was not new, for it was well known that there were many clergymen without a spark of true religious devotion. The clergy, in too many cases, was one means by which a man might gain a comfortable living with little effort. The bill for Ejectors was, then, designed with the express purpose of eliminating both the ignorant and the lazy clergymen. The ministers, on the other hand, who were accepted as being fit for office, would receive maintenance guaranteed by the government. On the 10th of December the plans of the Moderates were frustrated when the majority of Parliament rejected the first clause of the Bill.<sup>1</sup> It was felt that this rejection meant that the majority of the Parliament members still wished to deprive all ministers of maintenance provided by the government. This was, as had previously been explained, an idea presented by the ultra-liberals and certain fanatical religious groups. They had championed a move whereby each clergyman would be supported by the offerings of his own congregation. The Moderates opposed this on the principle that there would be no surety of the clergy's being provided for and that religion might suffer. This move to block the Ejectors was naturally a great disappointment to Cromwell,

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<sup>1</sup> Firth, *op. cit.*, pp. 330-331.

but it seemed to be the last straw for Lambert and his committee of officers.

Lambert, at this point, would seem to be in a rather difficult position. He wished to rid the country of the Nominated Parliament, but he had already appealed to Cromwell to dissolve Parliament by force and Cromwell refused. Cromwell, a man who at times seemed to have had almost boundless patience, was still attempting to deal with this unpredictable group. Since the direct intervention of Cromwell seemed unlikely, Lambert and his officers devised a plot to eliminate Parliament. They met on the 11th of December, and by taking some of the parliamentarians into the scheme, plotted to swiftly introduce the resolution that the House dissolve itself before the opposition Radicals could rally their forces. The following morning, the members that were in on this scheme arrived early in the House to gain a majority before the Radicals came in force. One of their number, after condemning previous actions of the House, moved that it dissolve itself and turn the political powers back to Cromwell. Since there was danger of losing the motion when the House became fuller, when those who knew nothing of the plot should come, debate was not allowed on the motion. The speaker, without putting the question properly, rose from his chair and made his way to Whitehall. Those in favor of the dissolution followed him and after two army officers cleared the House of those few Radicals who were against the dissolution and had therefore remained, the Nominated Parliament was at an end.<sup>1</sup> At Whitehall, the delegation told Cromwell

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 331-333.

that Parliament was dissolved and had given back to him the governmental power. On hearing this, he appeared to be surprised and regretful but accepted the resignation.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE FIRST PROTECTORATE PARLIAMENT

Since Lambert and other army officers had been anticipating the downfall of Parliament, they had been planning another form of government. This government was now under consideration and eventually accepted under the title The Instrument of Government. Cromwell knew the army officers had been considering a new government, but until Parliament dissolved itself, he had refused to consider it. Stubborn though it was, he had preferred to work with the Nominated Parliament while it was still in session. Now that Parliament had dissolved itself and given its power back to Cromwell, the only government existing in England was a direct dictatorship based solely on army power. Cromwell, the man who had fought against the political pretensions of the king, could not think it best to rule as a dictator. Such a rule could only gain the enmity of the Parliamentary-minded English, and Cromwell felt it his duty to heal the wounds in the hearts of men, not rake them open again. Under these circumstances, Cromwell was ready to consider The Instrument of Government. His action in this matter presents the unusual situation of an absolute dictator attempting to limit his power. The Instrument, framed without the help or encouragement of Cromwell, provided for a dual leadership between a Lord

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<sup>1</sup> Journal of Guibon Goddard. Edited by John Towill Rutt, Vol. 1, pp. xiv-xv. Hereafter cited as "Burton" for convenience.

Protector, Cromwell, and the people of England, Scotland, and Ireland assembled in Parliament. According to the Instrument, the office of Protector was to be elective. Certain bills passed by Parliament could be delayed for 20 days by the Protector, but at the end of that time, if Parliament was not satisfied with his objections, these bills became law. Other matters, to be specified in the Instrument, could be vetoed by the Lord Protector. With regard to voting rights, all men could vote who held real or personal property valued at £200, and only Roman Catholics and those who had abetted the Irish Rebellion were permanently excluded from voting. It is true that all who had taken part in wars against Parliament were barred from voting or being elected to Parliament for the first three Parliaments, but this was the only penalty placed on them. Provision was made for a new Parliament every three years.<sup>1</sup>

While there was some balance of power between Parliament and the Protector, the real check on the Protector's power was to be a Council. This Council was to be composed of, not less than 13 nor more than 21, members chosen for life. Once chosen they were irremovable except by a special court--half the members of this court to be nominated by Parliament--which would try any Council member charged with corruption or miscarriage. This Council exercised extensive power over the Lord Protector, since he was bound in almost every case by the Council's advice.<sup>2</sup>

Parliament held the power of taxation, since no taxes were

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 331-333.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 333-334.



to be levied without its consent. The section about control of the military was so vague, however, that Parliament could not hope to have much influence here. During the Parliamentary session, five months in every three years, the Protector was to order the militia and other forces by the consent of Parliament, but during the rest of the three years when Parliament was not in session, he was to order the militia with the consent of his Council. Since nothing was mentioned about the control of the standing forces, it was assumed that they would be under the Protector's own personal command.<sup>1</sup>

This plan was, on the whole, fairly moderate. The power of government would be divided between Parliament and Protector, and the power of the Protector was further checked by his Council. There were two very grave difficulties at the outset, however. There was the usual difficulty of aversion to military rule that typified the English, and, since the Instrument was produced by a military clique exclusively, the plan was immediately open to suspicion and searching criticism. Another difficulty that had to be faced was that few people believed that control of the Council over the Protector was more than a pretense. It has been put very well that,

Elizabeth could set aside the recommendations of her council at her pleasure. Oliver was bound to do nothing without the consent of his...the ordinary belief that Oliver was an autocrat and his councillors mere puppets is a very incorrect view of the situation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 335-336.

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner's Lectures, *op. cit.*, p. 86.



What is actually the case, though, mattered little, and Republicans throughout England looked on the idea of a Council exercising a controlling influence on Oliver with deep suspicion.

In spite of this opposition which was bound to come, Cromwell was sworn into office as Lord Protector on December 16, 1653. There was no expression of joy at this ceremony other than that of Oliver's immediate supporters. In fact, the attitude which seemed to prevail with the majority of the people was simply accepting that which was inevitable. The officers had nominated 15 men to the Council, Cromwell included, and this constituted the ruling force until the meeting of the First Protectorate Parliament.<sup>1</sup> A government was again in operation; criticism of that government was also in operation.

The new government took immediate abuse from the more fanatical of the religious sects. One of the Fifth-Monarchy preachers openly called the Protector a lying villain while another cried out against Cromwell as being mentioned in prophecy as one who would war against the Saints and finally be destroyed by them.<sup>2</sup> A few preachers of this type were warned to speak like this no more, but the warning did little good and several were put in jail. Although a few of these more violent men were jailed, the attitude of Oliver concerning most men in connection with their loyalty to the Commonwealth was very liberal. No man, even as a test of office, had to promise that he would be faithful to the

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Firth, *op. cit.*, pp. 359-360.

Commonwealth. These, "...general and promissory oaths and engagements," said Oliver, had "proved burdens and snares to tender consciences."<sup>1</sup> Oliver was, therefore, tolerant of opinion as long as it stayed opinion.

Cromwell's own position with regard to dangerous opinions was that, if they were but opinions, they were best left alone. "Notions will hurt none but those that have them." When they developed into actions, it was a different matter, and especially when they led to rebellion and bloodshed.<sup>2</sup>

Tolerant as he was of opinion, he was in no way tolerant of what he felt to be practices leading to immorality. He prohibited cock-fights on much the same grounds as the Nominated Parliament had prohibited bear-baiting. He said these practices were,

...by experience found to tend many times to the disturbance of the public peace, and are commonly accompanied with gaming, drinking, swearing, quarreling, and other dissolute practices to the dishonour of God, and so often produce the ruin of persons and their families.<sup>3</sup>

He was always quick to point out that it was not the pleasure involved, but the disorderliness of such practices that he condemned, and, since he himself amused himself with diversions like music, riding, attending a wrestling match, he was, no doubt, sincere in this belief.

In regard to the religious settlement, the men formulating the Instrument decided on an established church plus liberty for

<sup>1</sup> Scobell, 11. 227., as quoted by Gardiner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Firth, *op. cit.*, pp. 359-360.

<sup>3</sup> Scobell, 11. 283., as quoted by Gardiner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 18.

voluntary congregations. The questions of an established church left unsolved by the Instrument were maintenance, appointment, dismissal of ministers, and what dogma should be taught.<sup>1</sup> It was now decided that if a minister wanted a benefice, he was to be examined by a body of commissioners that would act as triers. They were to examine him to make certain he was moral, religious, and competent.<sup>2</sup> There was nothing in the instructions to the triers that sanctioned prying into doctrine, and, although there may have been some of this from overzealous Puritans, the commission itself was only concerned that the minister be earnest, sincere, and capable.

With this thorny religious question at least temporarily out of the way, all attention may now be focused on the forthcoming Parliament. There was still the ever-present problem of reconciling a civilian Parliament and, for that matter, the civilian population of England, to a government backed and now even dictated by the army. This was a grave problem, a problem which existed primarily due to a basic difference in the concept of what a good government should do for the people governed. The conception of the army was that it was the responsibility of government to educate the people concerning what is best for them, even if they do not realize what is in their best interest. With this philosophy, the government became, in fact, a gigantic school teacher whose function was to shield the childish public from vice and to give instruction on moral issues. This type of philosophy of govern-

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3. pp. 19-20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

ment was diametrically opposed to that of the Republicans who felt that a good government was one which reflected the will of the public.<sup>1</sup> The army realized that there would be difficulties in securing a Parliament that would accept the Instrument as a base for the permanent government of England. Every precaution was taken, therefore, to secure members in the First Protectorate Parliament who would be well affected toward the Instrument. Since the hope of the Puritans for a smoothly functioning government might be expected from the middle class more than from any other group, precautions were taken to strengthen this group in the forthcoming Parliament.

...they had dealt roughly with the small boroughs, which fell naturally under the influence of the neighbouring gentry. Whereas the Long Parliament had contained 398 borough members, there were but 133 in the Parliament of 1654. The University representation sank at the same time from 4 to 2, whilst the number of country members was raised from 90 to 265.<sup>2</sup>

One innovation appeared in this Parliament that had not been present before. For the first time, an elected Parliament was to contain members from Scotland and Ireland. The viewpoints of Scotland and Ireland were not really represented in the Parliament, however. The Scotch would be expected to show little interest in the elections so that members returned from Scotland would come from the small group which had accepted English government. The Irish, on the other hand, were so hampered by voting laws excluding Catholics and those who had abetted the rebellion that the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 171.

elections could only concern the English and Scottish settlers in Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

Considering all this tampering with the election, it would appear an easy thing to get a Parliament with a working majority to back the Instrument. That this did not work out must have surprised many an army leader. The difficulty was probably twofold. First of all, the Instrument was composed and accepted as a working base in such a rush that there was no provision included in it for machinery to register the voters. This, coupled with the fact that many a voter could not say for sure what his property would bring on the market, helped to nullify the £200, property qualification restriction. Secondly, there was no clear-cut issue on which to base the selection of a candidate. Had the government made acceptance or rejection of the Instrument the issue in choosing candidates, there might have been more men elected who would have been better affected toward the Instrument. Many men were elected, not on their opinion of the Instrument, however, but on their political philosophy.<sup>2</sup> In a struggle based on Radical versus Conservative, it was a foregone conclusion which would win. England was tired of the Radical and wished for a Parliament that would protect the law and the ministry. The hardest hit by this conservatism were members of the old Nominated Parliament.

The party which had threatened law and property was wiped out of political existence. Of the fifty-six who had given the last destructive vote in the Parliament of 1653, four only obtained seats in the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 192-193.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 175-176.



Parliament of 1654. It was made plain that England would not hear of a social revolution.<sup>1</sup>

With this conservative temperament dominating the political scene, times were particularly favorable to the Presbyterians. As a political group they generally favored an enlargement of Parliamentary authority which later caused Cromwell great difficulty. Presbyterians could now be safely elected to office because they had lost much of the stigma, as far as the thinking of the common Englishman was concerned, of being an authoritarian group attempting to press all Englishmen into the Presbyterian system of worship. They had been baffled in their attempt to regulate their own congregations and so now it was understood that in actuality a Presbyterian was just another Puritan of a somewhat conservative turn of mind.<sup>2</sup> With so much emphasis put on electing men of a conservative temperament to see that the law and the ministry were preserved, men who were elected on this principle alone could not be counted as supporters of the Instrument.

The conservatism of the election returns made it necessary for Oliver to win over the Presbyterians who had been returned in force. The attitude of this new Parliament, and no doubt that of Oliver, was considerably different from that of the Nominated Parliament, and the speech Oliver delivered to open Parliament reflects his changed outlook. There is not much of the fervor with which he greeted the Nominated Parliament. Cromwell had discovered that God-fearing men do not always govern best. He had

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> Loc. cit.

lost many illusions, and was more in tune with the conservative attitude of the Presbyterians. This is easily seen by a casual reading of his address. He made a particular point of lashing out at men of Levelling principles by saying,

A nobleman, a gentleman, a yeoman: that is a good interest of the Nation, and a great one! The Magistracy of the Nation, was it not almost trampled under foot, under despite and contempt, by men of Levelling principles? I beseech you, for the orders of men and ranks of men, did not that Levelling principle tend to the reducing of all to an equality? Did it think to do so; or did it practise towards that for property and interest? What was the purport of it but to make the tenant as liberal a fortune as the Landlord? Which, I think, if obtained, would not have lasted long! The men of that principle, after they had served their own turns, would they have cried up property and interest fast enough!<sup>1</sup>

Cromwell had definitely lost his illusion about Levelling ideas and this must have pleased the Presbyterian conservatives very much. In this speech Cromwell also called upon Parliament to look forward, not backward, but this they were, unfortunately, not prepared to do.

What I judge to be the end of your meeting, the great end, which was likewise remembered to you this day;<sup>2</sup> to wit, Healing and Settling. The remembering of Transactions too particularly, perhaps instead of healing,--at least in the hearts of many of you,--might set the wound fresh a-bleeding.<sup>3</sup>

It was typical of Oliver to refer to that which weighed heavily on his mind, namely "healing and settling"; healing and settling which never came.

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<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> In a sermon that they had heard that day prior to Cromwell's speech.

<sup>3</sup> Carlyle, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 401-402.

As soon as a speaker for the House had been chosen, and a day of fasting proclaimed and observed, Parliament was ready to attack the business at hand. There were, from the first, several sharp speeches from the Republicans. They cried down the Protector for his more than kingly attitude as shown by his calling the Parliament into his presence in the Painted Chamber at Whitehall. They also raised the question of one man having too much power. These speeches were, no doubt, expected from the staunch Republicans. One of the Republicans, a man named Hazlerigg, surprised the government, though, by calling on the Presbyterians to settle the religious problems at once and suppress the minor sects. Until this time, Hazlerigg had been known as a strong Independent and a man championing toleration, but now he was willing to discard what principles he had concerning freedom of conscience in hopes that, by appealing to the prejudice of the Presbyterians, he could swing them into the camp of Republicanism.<sup>1</sup>

With the Republicans in such strong force, the hope of the government, that the Instrument would be accepted as a whole quickly, melted away. A resolution was soon passed referring the Instrument to a committee of the whole House. As a committee, the House turned to discussion on the nature of the power of Parliament and Protector. Parliamentary members were determined to have legislative ability and they wanted it free from even the mild restriction that the Protector could voice his objection to bills. On the other hand, the supporters of the Instrument urged that it was just as necessary to have restrictions on Parliament as it was

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 3, pp. 181-182.

to have them on the Protector. They were worried, among other things, about Parliaments perpetuating themselves. These supporters of the Instrument and the Protectorate, now beginning to be called the Court Party, were in the minority and, therefore, the idea of a rough checks and balances system including Parliament, Protector, and Council was in danger.<sup>1</sup> The House was quick to follow up Hazlerigg's suggestion that minor sects be stamped out and a national church be established. They voted to have an Assembly of Divines, which would be chosen by Parliament, to give advice on such matters. The dreaded religious intolerance appeared to be on its way.<sup>2</sup>

There were speeches against the Protector from the Republicans stating numerous arguments. It was said, for instance, that sovereignty was with the people. Any great power must go to Parliament because a single person cannot be trusted too far, and that if the title is to be won by the sword, the Grand Turk may be above all Christian princes. Those supporting the Protectorate, the Court Party, insisted that the Protector have the power to keep Parliament from perpetuating itself, that the Protector's power was from God, and that the Parliament sanctioned the governmental power of the Protector, since his Indenture<sup>3</sup> had been signed by them all.<sup>4</sup> And so the argument raged.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 185-186.

<sup>3</sup> All members returned had signed this statement which said they would uphold the government as settled in Protector and Parliament.

<sup>4</sup> Burton, pp. xxviii-xxx.

With all the trouble and conflict in Parliament came trouble from outside. Harrison, who had refused to support the new government and had, therefore, been relieved of his command, was talking of petitioning Parliament to rise against tyranny and boasted that he would have twenty thousand men to back up his demand. He was arrested and, at least for the time being, lodged in jail.<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that things were not going as planned. Not only was Parliament not prepared to rubber stamp the Instrument, but certain members had been questioning the Protector's power and attempting to set up an authoritarian state church. Added to these political troubles from within came the sedition of Harrison from without. Oliver decided it was high time to come to some sort of understanding with the overenthusiastic Republicans in Parliament. Accordingly, he closed Parliament and directed its members into his presence in the Painted Chamber at Whitehall. He spoke with them very plainly and even, for Oliver, bluntly. As was typical of him, he first stated that he sought not the office of Protector. He said,

I called not myself to this place. I say again I called not myself to this place! Of that God is witness:--and I have many witnesses who, I do believe, could lay down their lives bearing witness to the truth of that.<sup>2</sup>

Cromwell, after attacking the excesses of past Parliaments and dwelling on how absolute his power was after the Nominated Parliament had dissolved itself, explained that he took the job of Pro-

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> Carlyle, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 425.



tector only because the framers of the Instrument told him 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.<sup>1</sup>

So far, the knowledge Oliver was imparting could not be expected to impress any of his listeners. They knew how he got his power, and it was this very fact that disturbed them most. Government based on the power of the army was not the type of government which endeared itself to the English as has been previously mentioned and Oliver was certainly aware of this. He attempted, therefore, to show that not only had he been elevated by circumstances, but also that the army wished to have Parliament rule. He made this clear by saying,

...--the Soldiery were a very considerable part of these Nations, especially all Government being dissolved. I say, when all Government was thus dissolved, and nothing to keep things in order but the sword! And yet they, --which many Histories will not parallel, --even they were desirous that things might come to a consistency; and arbitrariness be taken away; and the Government be put into a person limited and bound, as in the Act of Settlement, whom they distrusted the least, and loved not the worst.<sup>2</sup>

And still the Parliament was questioning the right of the Protector to power. Cromwell reminded them that the nation had accepted this fact. The city of London recognized him as Protector, the judges of the country were acting under his writs and that certainly implied his position was legal. To clinch this argument, he clearly pointed out to them that they themselves attested to his position.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 431.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 434.

And I shall now make you my last witnesses! And shall ask you, Whether you came not hither by my Writs directed to the several Sheriffs, and through the Sheriffs to the other Officers of Cities and Liberties? ...And the Government also required to be distinctly read unto the People at the place of election, to avoid surprises; --where also they signed the Indenture, with proviso, "That the Persons so chosen should not have power to alter the Government as now settled in one Single Person and a Parliament!" ...Yea, surely! --And this being so, --though I told you in my last Speech "that you were a Free Parliament," yet I thought it was understood withal that I was the Protector, and the Authority that called you! That I was in possession of the Government by a good right from God and men! And I believe if the learnedest men in this Nation were called to show a precedent, equally clear, of a Government so many ways approved of, they would not in all their search find it.<sup>1</sup>

The tone of this speech is plain even at a cursory reading. Oliver was thoroughly disgusted with this bickering group.

During the course of his speech Cromwell mentioned four fundamentals which he felt would be of the utmost importance. They were freedom of conscience, limitation of the time a Parliament could sit, the settlement of the government in one person and a Parliament, and the division of control over the militia between Protector and Parliament.<sup>2</sup> The summation of this speech called for all those who would sit in this Parliament to sign the following modest document.

I do hereby freely promise, and engage myself, to be true and faithful to the Lord Protector and the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland; and shall not (according to the tenor of the Indenture whereby I am returned to serve in this present Parliament) propose, or give my consent, to alter the government as it is settled in a Single Person and a Parliament.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 436.

<sup>2</sup> Godfrey Davies, The Early Stuarts, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> Carlyle, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 446.

This statement was so moderate that everyone but the extreme Republicans were likely to accept it. Over one hundred signed this document the first day and by the end of the month there were approximately three hundred signatures affixed to it. When this new, purged Parliament met to discuss the Instrument, all seemed to be going smoothly. The provision for government by a Protector and Parliament was speedily passed and restriction against perpetual Parliaments was set up by a declaration for triennial elections.<sup>1</sup> Two of the fundamentals were thus speedily put out of the way and the third concerning the militia that,

...the Present Lord Protector during his life, the Parliament sitting, with the consent of Parliament, and not otherwise, shall dispose and employ the forces both by sea and land, for the peace and good of the three nations.<sup>2</sup>

was also voted in.

The only one of these four fundamentals now remaining was the one dealing with control of the armed forces. The Instrument left their control to the Protector and Council when Parliament was not in session and so, quite naturally, discussion in the House turned on who would be in the Council and how they would be chosen. The Instrument stated that members of the Council were to be appointed for life and by a very complicated process. On the death of a Council member, Parliament was to present to the Council six names which were to be considered in filling the vacancy. The Council would then select two of the six and the Pro-

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<sup>1</sup> Burton, op. cit., p. xl.

<sup>2</sup> Loc. cit.

lector was to make the final choice between these two. This scheme was rejected by Parliament. In place of it, Parliament proposed to have the Councilors nominated by the Protector and subject to the approval of Parliament with the stipulation that they could not remain in office more than forty days after a new Parliament convened without a renewed vote of confidence from the House.<sup>1</sup> This change in the Instrument was, of course, designed to strengthen Parliament's control of the Council to insure a better check on the Protector. Parliament undoubtedly felt that life membership in the Council would make that body altogether too independent. By constantly forcing the Council members to receive a vote of confidence from each new Parliament, the Council would be tied to Parliament and be more inclined to work Parliament's will when Parliament was not in session.

The change in nomination and term of office for Council members was the greatest change Parliament had attempted to date. There were many small changes, however, which tended to push the Parliament's prerogatives further than the Instrument had planned. For example, the Instrument had provided the Council and Protector the right of the making of war and peace, providing that after the initial decision had been made, Parliament would be called, in the case of war, to provide money for that war. The House in Committee was in favor of allowing the Protector and Council to make peace when Parliament was not sitting, but insisted that in a decision of war, Parliament must give its consent even if a special session were necessary.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 198-199.

<sup>2</sup> Burton, *op. cit.*, pp. xliv-xlvi.

Parliament decided that the office of Protector should be elective and that, when Parliament was not in session, the choice of a new Protector would be with the Council, but should the Protector die when Parliament was in session, the decision would revert to the House. A decision was also quickly made to accept the provision of the Instrument that officers of State appointed by the Protector should have the approval of Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

So far, with the exception of changes in nomination and tenure of the Councilors, Parliament had only stretched its prerogative slightly. Oliver would probably have preferred a blanket acceptance of the Instrument, but there is no indication that he was so displeased with what had been taking place that he wished to dissolve Parliament. One of the most important questions, that of religion, was temporarily taken out of the political picture when Parliament appointed a Committee to study the ecclesiastical situation of the country.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, extremely thorny problems lay in wait to disrupt this apparent concord. The discord of the future could be sensed as discussion began to develop about the nature of the Protector's negative. There were two definite sides to this question and a middle ground was not at first apparent. The side of the Court Party was put forward by one of its members who bluntly assumed that it was only through mere kindness that the Protector agreed to divest himself of some of his absolute power, and the implication was that Parliament had better conduct itself in the

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> Burton, op. cit., p. xlvi.



light of this fact. On the other side, it was said that the House had inherent rights and it was for the House alone to impose such restrictions upon itself as it deemed wise. There would seem to be an irreconcilable disagreement here, but in the end, a compromise position was taken, at least for the moment. On bills that would be accepted it was stated that they should "...contain nothing in them contrary to such matters wherein the said single person and the Parliament shall think fit to declare a negative to be in the said single person."<sup>1</sup> This is not really a solution to the problem, only an agreement to attempt to work out the matter of the negative with Oliver.

As of yet, there had been no insurmountable difficulties facing the reconciliation of those wishing to uphold the Instrument and those wishing to advance the power of Parliament. The most difficult situation of all, though, was that of the military forces and their maintenance. By the terms of the Instrument, extraordinary forces necessitated by wars were to be maintained only by consent of Parliament. This meant that, not only were 27,000 men of the army in the extraordinary forces category and therefore by the very terms of the Instrument dependent on Parliament, but two fleets as well. To look into this situation with the purpose of reducing the armed forces, Parliament had sent a commission to confer with Oliver and the army. This Commission had been told by a committee of eight officers that only six garrisons could prudently be discharged. This small number did not satisfy them, but on returning to speak with Oliver about further reductions

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<sup>1</sup> Burton, op. cit., pp. lxx-lxxi.

they were met with his bitter disapproval. Oliver said that he was,

...wholly dissatisfied with the thing, and had no pro-pensity nor inclination to it; and that the Parliament had already taken the government abroad, and had altered and changed it in the other articles as they pleased without his advice; and therefore it would not become him to give any advice at all, singly and apart, as to this article.<sup>1</sup>

These were sharp words and helped to widen a gap that had been developing between Parliament and Protector. As a matter of fact, the very day the Protector's angry words were reported to the House, they voted to limit the control of the army to the lifetime of the present Protector. Under this provision, with the death of the Protector, the army would be under control of the Council until Parliament could be called, then controlled as Parliament should think fit. To the argument that to take away the control of the army from the next Protector would make him completely ineffective, the Parliamentarians replied that the army was never meant to be under the control of one man unless it was by Parliament's consent.<sup>2</sup> No matter how much good will was in evidence at the outset, the final question of who would be in ultimate control was bound to come. There was always the fear of the Protector's power lingering in the minds of the members of Parliament. Cromwell, on the other hand, could not allow the Parliament full control because he feared that with their intolerance they would establish a national church which would stifle the free-

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<sup>1</sup> C. J. vii. 385., as quoted by Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 3, pp. 207-208.

dom of conscience which he was championing.<sup>1</sup>

There was hinting in Parliament of the disbanding of the extra 27,000 troops. Their places would be filled by militia which were to be controlled, not by the central government, but by local authority. This plan could not fail to anger the army officers and to make them look on Parliament as an enemy. On the other hand again, Parliament, when it learned that the army leaders were generally against any change in the Instrument, was offended at this army interference. A group of army officers had met in November and expressed their intentions to support the Instrument until "death."<sup>2</sup> Parliament saw this as meddling in the highest degree and it was said that "The army had shown its wish to take part in the government, as if it had been a second House."<sup>3</sup> This was, then, an explosive situation, but it too was resolved for the time being by postponement of the discussion on reduction of the army. It was understood that an agreement between Protector and Parliament was to be expected and so the issue was allowed to rest for a while.<sup>4</sup> "Healing and Settling" was not an accomplished fact, however, as can be shown when the religious question was again taken up. On December 7, a day after the debate on the military was tabled, there was a vote that, "...the true reformed Protestant religion, as it is contained in the Holy Scriptures, ...and

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 217-218.

<sup>3</sup> Salvetti's Newsletter, Dec. 1; Add. Mss. 27, 962 O, fol. 349., as quoted by Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 219.

<sup>4</sup> Burton, op. cit., pp. cvii-cviii.

no other, shall be asserted and maintained as the public profession of these nations."<sup>1</sup> It was agreed that the consent of the Protector would have to be obtained to pass any bill against those of tender consciences, unless they abused their liberty and disturbed others. Unfortunately this bill was so full of exceptions and qualifications that it was potentially dangerous as far as the champions of religious toleration were concerned. For instance Parliament could by itself pass bills in restraint of blasphemy, atheism, popery, prelacy, licentiousness, and damnable heresies. With Parliament defining all these terms, particularly the definition of what a "damnable heresy" included, Parliament could use religious matters to persecute almost anyone it wanted. The Court Party failed to strike "damnable heresies" from the bill but, by a majority of one, managed to include a section providing that said "damnable heresies" be enumerated in the Constitutional Act and not left undefined for future Parliaments to twist as they chose.<sup>2</sup>

Parliament was not the only means whereby men attempted to further their respective causes. Certain Radical members of Parliament became disillusioned with concessions that were being granted to the Court Party and applied themselves to the City Councilors to help in the preparation of a petition intended to encourage Parliament to settle Church Government; settle it evidently in the old intolerant way.<sup>3</sup> With respect to drafting petitions, the army

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<sup>1</sup> C. J. vii. 397., as quoted by Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 3, pp. 219-220.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 221.

officers were not idle either. At about this same time they also presented a petition, this one going to Cromwell, however, asking, among other things, "...that liberty of conscience be allowed, but not to papistry in public worship, that tithes be taken away," and "that a law be made for the righting persons wronged for liberty of conscience."<sup>1</sup> The House members were in no mood to be persuaded by pressure from army petitions. They reaffirmed their previous vote in restraint of blasphemy and damnable heresies and, while agreeing to define just what these heresies were, reserved the decisions for Parliament alone to be passed, if necessary, even over the Protector's disapproval. This was a defiant move and only served to widen the gap which had already been visible over the matter of army reduction.<sup>2</sup> To add fuel to this already raging fire, Parliament began a new tack against the military. This new move was to control the army by limiting its revenue. By a large majority the House agreed to grant finances to the army and navy only until forty days after the next session of Parliament. There were debates about the financial drain of the army ruining the country and the national debt increasing. The Parliamentary solution was again militia instead of regular forces. Perhaps members of the House were aware of the danger they were facing by taking this stand, though, for it was agreed to adjourn this matter for a few days.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Clark Papers, 111. 12-14., as quoted by Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 221.

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 223-224.



At this time came another proposal that Oliver become king. This was rather strange, since it came from one of the regicides and what his motives were behind such a proposition we are not sure. It is supposed, however, that he felt if Oliver had the title of king, Oliver could free himself more easily from army influence. Since House sentiment was unfavorable to this change in Oliver's title, the motion was withdrawn without a division.<sup>1</sup>

While the battle between the army leaders and Parliament was raging, news was received of a plot against the government. This was one of the numerous plots which began to darken the political scene and muddy the already darkened political water. This plot occurred among disaffected Protestants of Levelling tendencies who hoped for army backing. Plans had gone so far that agents from the plotters had been sent to Ireland and Scotland to feel out the soldiery in those countries in hopes they would join a revolt against the Cromwellian Government. The man to whom they evidently looked as a probable leader for their movement was Major-General Overton, who was then commanding English troops in Scotland. The Government had had suspicions as to Overton's loyalty prior to this time. He apparently had made it plain that he felt scruples about establishing the Protectorate, and was discovered to have written to the London conspirators that there was a party in Scotland ready to stand by the Commonwealth. This is a rather vague, meaningless phrase except that it was written to known conspirators. To further add suspicion of his guilt in this matter it was discovered that he had allowed disaffected officers to meet in his quart-

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 225.

ers and had not said a word to his Commander-in-Chief, Monk. When Monk finally learned of this, he sent Overton to the tower and this revolt was stopped after other leaders had been sent to jail.<sup>1</sup> Whether Overton was actually in on this plot is hard to say, but evidence certainly indicates he was a dangerous man to have commanding a military post.

This plot was successfully halted, but the danger was by no means at an end. Not only were there still many Levellers in the army, but the Royalists appeared to be on the move again. On December 20, 1654, the Tower garrison was strengthened and it was again strengthened on the 25th. The wages of the soldiers in London were paid promptly to assure their devotion, and cannon were placed outside Whitehall. Some of this armament was there to impress Parliament perhaps, but there seemed to be real danger of another Royalist uprising. At the end of the month suspicion had been aroused when excessive powder was transported from London to the country. A check of the gun shops further revealed that there had been a marked increase in the order for pistols and muskets of late.<sup>2</sup>

All in all, the situation did not look too promising and conspiracy appeared to be in the air. Parliament, however, was not interested in modifying its position, even in the face of this very real danger. Perhaps the strengthening of the tower only served to anger the Parliamentarians so that they looked upon this as a challenge they must meet. Whether this is true or not,

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Ashley, Cromwell's Generals, pp. 137-149.

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 233.

Parliament passed a bill nullifying its old compromise of November 15 whereby the negative of the Protector was to be decided by Protector and Parliament. This new bill stated that bills should pass in spite of the consent of the Protector except where Parliament alone decided that the Protector should have a negative.<sup>1</sup> The absolutism of Parliament was again beginning to rear its head!

The House also undertook to lower the franchise but was careful to hedge it around with sweeping restrictions. Forbidden the right of voting were atheists, scoffers, blasphemers, those who were either Catholic, or had allowed their children to be reared Catholics, or had married a Catholic, or had allowed their children to marry Catholics. Those who denied that the Scriptures were the word of God or were swearers or cursers or common inhabitants of taverns or alehouses were also excluded from voting privileges. The House was again the sole judge of these iniquities and therefore held tremendous power over the voters.<sup>2</sup>

Nor was this the only blunder Parliament was making. A committee had been appointed, headed by a Colonel Birch, with the express purpose of investigating ways of reducing expenditure on the armed forces. When Birch's committee submitted its report, it suggested among other things to reduce the pay of men in the army. This report also had the clear implication that the army would be reduced by 27,000 men and this would mean that just short of half the men of the army would be forced to seek other employment. On

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 233-234.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

top of this, the two fleets of Blake and Penn were not included in the estimate of expenditure for the armed forces.<sup>1</sup> Parliament was evidently bent on keeping the Protector in check concerning his foreign and domestic policy, and also to weaken his power by reducing the army. Parliament granted the Protector only £1,000,000, for instance, and that on a temporary basis. This amount of money was, even by Birch's estimate, too little to do the job and Birch was below the figure the government felt would be necessary.<sup>2</sup>

This was the final blow to any reconciliation between Protector and Parliament. Three moves of Parliament which followed each other in close succession had caused this final widening of the gap. The three decisions were, of course, the vote to have issues on which the Protector would have a negative decided by Parliament alone, the vote which in effect decided that Parliament would be in control of deciding just how much toleration would be permitted, since Parliament would be the sole judge of such things as "damnable heresies," and the attempt by Parliament to control the Protector by limiting him financially. Oliver was tired of this Parliament that wished to rule alone, and Parliament was tired of army intervention into matters which they considered to be strictly Parliamentary business.<sup>3</sup> Parliament was guaranteed, by provision of the Instrument, a five-month tenure. Now for the first time, government-controlled newspapers hinted these five months

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 236-237.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 238-239.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 239.

would be reckoned by the lunar months of the soldiers' pay and, therefore, Parliament would be dissolved on the 22nd of January instead of the 3rd of February.<sup>1</sup>

Actually the real power in the state was neither the Parliament nor the Protector. The real power was the army and even the Lord Protector was forced to pay attention to army sentiment. This was unendurable to the Parliament, but they once again began to proceed with caution. Perhaps the House realized it had gone rather far toward angering the Protector, so it shrewdly began to make concessions. On the 15th of January, there appeared a coalition between the Court Party and the more moderate Republicans. They granted the Protector an additional £1,000,000 for domestic government plus £4,000,000 for the navy and fortifications for the country's safety. These sums were to be continued annually until the Protector and Parliament should agree to halt them. The next day, £700,000 was voted to be expended on the army and this was to continue until December 25, 1659. This gave Oliver five years of control over the military.<sup>2</sup>

These were all steps in the right direction toward healing the breach that had widened so alarmingly, but this time any effort toward conciliation was destroyed by the Court Party. They became overconfident and defiant with their recent successes, and asserted that if the Protector did not choose to accept the new Constitution the Instrument would remain in force. They should have realized

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> C. J. viii. 417-418., as paraphrased in Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 243.



that even the moderate Republicans could not accept such a rabid idea of Protector power. The alliance between the Court Party and the moderate Republicans was immediately shattered by this rash assertion, and in quick succession Parliament denied that the Constitutional Bill needed the Protector's consent and that the militia should be controlled by the Protector. On the 17th, however, Parliament again reversed itself and voted that without the Protector's agreement the Constitutional Bill would be void.<sup>1</sup>

This type of vacillating is strange to see and shows that, on some issues at least, the Republicans in Parliament were not united. On other issues, particularly the pretenses of Parliament, they unfortunately held fast. One of these ideas was that only Parliament should have jurisdiction, considering the make-up of the Constitutional Bill. Parliament was very concerned to keep its privileges of legislation. The Court Party pleaded in vain that the most realistic way to get a settlement was to send a commission from the House to the Protector to work out compromises and get the opinions of the Protector so that the final Constitutional Bill would be acceptable to all concerned, but Parliament steadfastly refused to do this. Parliament not only wished to subject the Council to itself, control the standing army through the purse strings it held, and decentralize the militia, but also to assert its authority in making such decisions by not even making a pretense of listening to the advice of the Protector.<sup>2</sup>

On the 20th of January, Parliament added to its Constitution-

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<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 243-244.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

al Bill a statement reading,

...whereas the militia of this Commonwealth ought not to be raised, formed and made use of but by common consent of the people assembled in Parliament, be it therefore enacted that the said militia, consisting of trained forces, shall be settled as the Lord Protector and Parliament shall hereafter agree, in order to the peace and safety of the Commonwealth, and not otherwise.<sup>1</sup>

This statement, while harmless looking and even moderate at first glance, is actually a statement that stood to enforce Parliament at the expense of the Protector. If no militia could be called without Parliamentary consent, and the Protector was relying on the military for support, it is evident that Parliament was again attempting to undermine the military strength of the Protector. Further action taken by the House that same afternoon merely highlights Parliamentary intent. The Court Party attempted to establish, "...that no future Lord Protector should consent to take away the negatives, hereby declared to be in the Lord Protector."<sup>2</sup> This was voted down! The only probable reason for denying this request is that Parliament evidently considered the negative of the Protector only as a passing concession. If the Protector's negative was to be a temporary concession, if his control of the army was at the mercy of finances controlled by Parliament and therefore a temporary concession, then, without power, it follows that the office of Lord Protector would likewise be a temporary concession. This, Oliver could not tolerate! He had plainly had his fill of intolerant, bigoted Parliaments. Oliver had sin-

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<sup>1</sup> C. J. vii. 420-421., as quoted by Gardiner, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 245.

<sup>2</sup> Burton, op. cit., p. cxxxiii.

cerely hoped for joint control of the army with Parliament, but it was impossible to have joint control of the army with each party to that joint control striving for mastery.

Since there seemed to be no hope of the situation getting any better, Cromwell dissolved Parliament at the earliest time that was legally possible, on January 22. On that day he called the members of Parliament to meet with him in the Painted Chamber at Whitehall, and delivered a very long dissolution speech. This speech gives real insight into the inner workings of Oliver's mind with regard to what he felt about the work of this Parliament, and these feelings are generally negative as could well be expected. Since portions of this speech, aside from the usual appeals to God's revelations through history and quotations from Scripture, are so meaningful, it would be well to examine this speech at some length.

After an introduction in which the Lord Protector touched on the high hopes he had held for achievements from this Parliament on its convening and about the doubts he had which called him to request the signing of the Indenture which insured the settling of the government in Protector and Parliament, Cromwell approached the business at hand. He told them that he had not meddled in or attempted to meddle in their business,

For sure I am you will all bear me witness, That from your entering into the House upon the Recognition, to this very day, you have had no manner of interruption or hindrance of mine in proceeding to what blessed issue the heart of a good man could propose to himself,--to this very day.

With the exception of signing the Indenture, which Cromwell acknowledged, this is essentially true. Oliver does not think there

should have been no communication between himself and Parliament, however, and says so rather bitterly.

As I may not take notice what you have been doing; so I think I have a very great liberty to tell you That I do not know what you have been doing!<sup>1</sup> I do not know whether you have been alive or dead. I have not once heard from you all this time; I have not: and that you all know.<sup>2</sup> If that be a fault that I have not, surely it hath not been mine!

With apparently increasing heat, Oliver advanced his attack with an analogy from nature. He said that some trees will not grow under the shadow of other trees, and that some will. Using this analogy, then, Oliver accuses Parliament of causing dissension.

I will tell you what hath thriven, --I will not say what you have cherished, under your shadow; that were too hard. Instead of Peace and Settlement, --instead of mercy and truth being brought together, and righteousness and peace kissing each other, by reconciling the Honest People of these Nations, and settling the woful distempers that are amongst us; which had been glorious things and worthy of Christians to have proposed, --weeds and nettles, briars and thorns have thriven under your shadow! Dissettlement and division, discontent and dissatisfaction; together with real dangers to the whole, --have been more multiplied within these five months of your sitting, than in some years before!

These are hard words, but not undeserved. There had been dissettlement and trouble in England, to say nothing of Scotland. There were rumors of Royalist plots and proof of Leveller activity in the army. For this latter difficulty, Oliver blamed Parliament for failing to produce sufficient revenue for payment of the sol-

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<sup>1</sup> Depending on the inflection, this could mean, not that Oliver didn't know of their activities, but that he considered them useless.

<sup>2</sup> This is evidently not to be taken literally. Oliver had heard of their activities through his supporters and even from a committee sent from Parliament for reduction of the army. What Oliver undoubtedly means by this is in regard to Parliament not consulting him about the Constitutional Bill.



diers.

Endeavors have been to put the Army into a dis-temper, and to feed that which is the worst humor in the Army. Which though it was not a mastering humor, yet these took advantage from delay of the Settlement, and the practices before mentioned, and the stopping of the pay of the Army, to run us into Freequarter, and to bring us into the inconveniences most to be feared and avoided.

Having accused Parliament of causing disquiet because of their procrastination and of causing dangerous dissatisfaction in the army by attempting to choke the army, as it were, for Parliament's own political aggrandizement, Oliver at last reached his favorite topic of religious liberty.

...I say you might have had opportunity to have settled peace and quietness amongst all professing Godliness; and might have been instrumental, if not to have healed the breaches, yet to have kept the Godly of all judgments from running one upon another; and by keeping them from being overrun by a Common Enemy, rendered them and these Nations both secure, happy and well satisfied.

Are these things done; or any things toward them? Is there not yet upon the spirits of men a strange itch? Nothing will satisfy them unless they can press their finger upon their brethren's consciences, to pinch them there.

After leaving religion, with more reproaches, Oliver turned his attention to the control of the militia. He told them plainly that he must have control of the militia for at least a time.

And although, for the present, the keeping up and having in his power the Militia seems the hardest, yet if the power of the Militia should be yielded up at such a time as this, ...what would become of us all! Or if it should not be equally placed in him and the Parliament, but yielded up at any time, --it determines his power either for doing the good he ought, or hindering Parliaments from perpetuating themselves; from imposing what Religion they please on the consciences of men, or what Government they please upon the Nation. Thereby subjecting us to dissettlement in every Parliament, and to the desperate consequences thereof. And if the Na-



tion shall happen to fall into a blessed Peace, how easily and certainly will their charge be taken off, and their forces be disbanded!

At this point, then, Oliver has hit upon the real issue at stake. If, indeed, the nation were at peace and a settlement procured, the control of the militia would cease to be troublesome. As long as the nation remained in a state of disruption, however, and the differences in viewpoint between the Parliament and Protector remained so widely separated, control of the army was all-important. The main portions of Oliver's dissolution speech were now completed. Cromwell hinted near the end of this speech what his philosophy for the government of England must be. He accused the Parliamentarians of many fine words when action was necessary. Necessity should, thought Oliver, be the determiner of action even at the expense of temporary liberty. As he put it so well, "And if it be my 'liberty' to walk abroad in the fields, or to take a journey, yet it is not my wisdom to do so when my house is on fire!" All that was left was the actual pronouncement of the dissolution which, after such long and ponderous oratory, Cromwell put briefly and simply. He said in conclusion,

...That I think myself bound, as in my duty to God, and to the People of these Nations for their safety and good in every respect, --I think it my duty to tell you that it is not for the profit of these Nations, nor for Common and public good, for you to continue here any longer. And therefore I do declare unto you, That I do dissolve this Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

And so, with the dissolution of the Lord Protector's First Protectorate Parliament, this work must also come to an end.

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<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 458-482.

Other political moves by Cromwell, most notably his rule of England by Major-Generals and his Second Protectorate Parliament, follow but come to the same end. Cromwell was attempting to uphold his beloved religious tolerance in the face of all obstacles and he did, this much at least, as long as he lived. Cromwell was fighting the bigotry of the times and so he cannot be blamed for the failure of his ideas which occurred after his death. England was not ready for religious tolerance any more than each minute, fragmented, bigoted sect was ready to grant to another sect the religious freedom it claimed for itself. Yes, Cromwell failed to establish the "healing and settling" of even the Puritan section of England, but he did his sincere best. This is all that may be expected of any man. In the long run, it is better, perhaps, to be a sincere failure than, as the next real ruler of England, a deceitful success.

## SUMMARY

After the execution of the king in 1649, the only legal power in England was the Rump Parliament. This Parliament had been so purged of Royalists and Presbyterians it had no real political base. The actual power was possessed by the army and the army leaders. First and foremost among the army leaders was Oliver Cromwell who became the most powerful man in the country when he dissolved this last vestige of a legal authority, the Rump Parliament. After this time, the government of England attempted a "healing and settling", but this was impossible since two very different political ideologies were striving for mastery. The Republicans were attempting to establish a Parliament that would be representative of the majority of the English people. This had been one of the great reasons for fighting the English Civil War. The other faction, supported by the army and Cromwell, was also attempting to maintain a principle for which the Civil War had been fought, that of religious tolerance for the numerous sects which had split from the Anglican Church. Since the majority of the people did not want to have religious liberty for others, Cromwell had to use the army to maintain this liberty. He attempted several types of governments, but each failed for a combination of reasons. Contributing to these failures were political inexperience, bickering of factions, and above all, the fear of the Englishman of military rule in whatever form, for whatever purpose.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to acknowledge the help and support of his major professor, Dr. G. D. Wilcoxon of the Department of History, Government, and Philosophy of Kansas State College, whose patient guidance from the beginning to the end of this thesis was invaluable.

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SOME BASIC GOVERNMENTAL MOVES OF OLIVER CROMWELL  
THROUGH THE FIRST PROTECTORATE PARLIAMENT

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of History, Government, and Philosophy

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE  
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1958

The purpose of this thesis is to examine some of the political efforts of Oliver Cromwell, leading figure in English politics, from approximately 1648 until the end of the First Protectorate Parliament on January 22nd, 1655. This necessarily entails some discussion of the character and attitudes of Cromwell the man, but, in the main, I have let Cromwell speak for himself through his letters and speeches. Concerning my procedure in this work, I have relied heavily upon the letters and speeches of Cromwell as well as the diary of Thomas Burton M. P.. The noted historians, Samuel Rawson Gardiner and Sir Charles Firth, have been my "ever present help in time of trouble."

When Charles I was executed in 1649, the only political power in England was the Rump Parliament which had been purged of both Royalists and Presbyterians. When this unrepresentative group failed to accomplish reform and insisted only on perpetuating itself in power, Cromwell dissolved it by force. Oliver, with army backing, was now the leading political figure in England. He called a new government, composed of Godly Puritans, called the Nominated Parliament.

The Nominated Parliament, while having good intentions, was ineffective in the face of real problems like reform of the legal system. In attempting to make extensive reforms with little practical political experience, the Nominated Parliament angered both Cromwell and a group of army officers headed by Major-General Lambert. Lambert's army officers Council, with the help of moderate elements in Parliament, tricked Parliament into declaring itself dissolved, and the political power reverted back to Oliver.

Cromwell was now the dictator of England, but he sought to remedy this situation by a new government in which he would have the title of Lord Protector and the political power would be divided and checked among a Parliament, a Council, and the Lord Protector. Such an arrangement would not only eliminate dictatorship but also keep Parliaments from perpetuating themselves, preserve religious tolerance, and keep the peace in England. Unfortunately, however, the times were against Oliver and his government. He was much more tolerant of the numerous religious sects than was the average Englishman. Since this was the case, and since religious tolerance was his main concern, he was forced to maintain himself in power in order to restrain Parliament from persecuting religious minorities. This position of power that he maintained, with army support, offended the staunch Republicans and they undermined it as much as possible.

Since the government was not working smoothly but was, in fact, producing discord throughout England by its protracted wranglings, Cromwell dissolved it at the earliest possible date, January 22, 1655. Oliver tried to settle the country and so did Parliament, but this could not be done because of the opposing political philosophy of the Protector and the Parliament. Oliver felt that the government should protect the best interests, as he conceived them, of the people. Parliament felt that the government should carry out the majority of the people's wishes.