

THE SELF-DENYING ORDINANCE

Parliament

3 April 1645

Be it ordained by the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, that all and every of the Members of either House of Parliament shall be, and by authority of this Ordinance are, discharged at the end of forty days after the passing of this Ordinance of and from all and every office or command military or civil, granted or conferred by both or either of the said Houses of this present Parliament, or by any authority derived from both or either of them since the 20th day of November 1640.

And be it further ordained that all other governors and commanders of an island, town, castle or fort, and all other colonels and officers inferior to colonels in the several armies, not being Members of either of the Houses of Parliament, shall, according to their respective commissions, continue in their several places and commands, wherein they were employed and entrusted 20 March 1644, as if this Ordinance had not been made.

And that the vice-admiral, rear-admiral, and all other captains and other inferior officers in the fleet shall, according to their several and respective commissions, continue in their several places and commands, wherein they were employed and entrusted the said 20 March, as if this Ordinance had not been made.

Provided always, and it is further ordained and declared, that during this war, the benefit of all offices, being neither military nor judicial, hereafter to be granted or any way to be appointed to any person or persons by both or either House of Parliament, or by authority derived from thence, shall go and inure to such public uses as both Houses of Parliament shall appoint. And the grantees and persons executing all such offices shall be accountable to the Parliament for all the profits and perquisites thereof, and shall have no profit out of any such office, other than a competent salary for the execution of the same, in such manner as both Houses of Parliament shall order and ordain.

Provided that this Ordinance shall not extend to take away the power and authority of any Lieutenancy or Deputy-Lieutenancy in the several counties, cities or places, or of any *Custos Rotulorum*,¹ or of any commission for Justices of Peace, or sewers, or any commission of *Oyer* and *Terminer*,² or jail-delivery.

Provided always, and it is hereby declared, that those members of either House who had offices by grant from His Majesty before this Parliament, and were by His Majesty displaced sitting this Parliament, and have since by authority of both Houses been restored, shall not by this Ordinance be discharged from their said offices or profits thereof, but shall enjoy the same; anything in this Ordinance to the contrary thereof notwithstanding.

George Burton Adams, ed. *Select Documents of English Constitutional History* (New York: MacMillan, 1920):388–389.

¹ Keeper of the Rolls

² A commission of *oyer and terminer* provided the formal appointment for a judge of assize