

DECLARATION

Sir Henry Lingen (1612–1662)

22 August 1648

To wave all misconstructions that may unhappily be cast upon our real intentions in this present engagement, we thought it necessary to hint upon and publish some principles and motives that have induced us hereunto wherein we shall be very succinct in regard our fellow-subjects, even of the humblest fortunes and capacities, are already not insensible of them.

After the storm of the late war was blown over, and the Scots calmed and retired within their own confines, both they and we in this universal concernment stood at gaze, hoping to taste of the sweet and often promised fruits of the many declarations and protestations of the two Houses and armies for the settlement of the kingdoms, peace, religion, laws, and His Majesty in his pristine rights with glory and splendor equal to the best of his progenitors.

But our pregnant expectations herein miscarried, for the King is iugled in the Isle of Wight, barbarously mis-used, traitorously and desperately conspired against, being yet scarce a prisoner of hope, his most royal consort divorced, banished, and most of his princely race under an un-natural restraint, the known and ancient laws (which are the principal security of the subject's prosperity) dispirited and daily wounded by contradictory votes and ordinances upon every estate's design, religion wholly unjoined, and instead of a settled peace, a schismatical army is propagated with a perpetuated support of £60.000 a month, besides excise, free-quarter, and innumerable other vast and insupportable pressures, amongst which we cannot pass by the arbitrary and uncontrolled power of the committees and governors of the said city and county, by which our purses have been mulcted, our persons imprisoned, our horses taken away, our cattle driven, and many of us plundered and bloodily butchered at Kington and elsewhere, without appeal or known law whatsoever, and for the more firm entailing of this vassalage upon us and our posterity, they have laid a foundation for the future of a new militia to over-awe and enslave us to the law-martial forever.

Wherefore finding all their pretences in order to peace and settlement to be shadowy (not to mention the votes of no addresses, whereby the door of all pacification was lately bolted) and their dilatory overtures still to clash with the honour and conscience of His Majesty,

We have for the antecedent causes re-assumed our arms and do declare that with the expence of our blood and uttermost hazard of our lives and fortunes we will endeavour against all opposition whatsoever to restrain His Majesty; with glory and honour to repeal the Queen from banishment; to enlarge the royal children under restraint; to establish the true Protestant religion and known laws; to have a free Parliament, for the better settling of our differences; to preserve the union between us and the Scots, according to the Act of Pacification; and with the extirpation of all arbitrary power, nulling of all illegal taxes, and disbanding of armies to obtain a lasting well-grounded and honourable peace.

In pursuance of which ends (being fully authorized and encouraged by His Highness, the Prince of Wales, Captain-General of His Majesty's forces by sea and land within the Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales, from whom the charge and command in chief of the city and county commissioned to Sir Henry Lingen (under hand and seal), we are confident that all the good and loyal subjects of this and the adjacent counties, for we shall have others to their demerits, will rise and engage with us or contribute assistance to us, declining all obedience to any other authority whatsoever, in which engagement (we by God's grace) hope to demean ourselves that the whole Kingdom shall see we squint not upon self-ends, but firmly fix our eyes upon the public interest.

And so God save the King and bless our endeavours.

Adjacent Counties (London: Longman, Green, and Company, 1879), II:422–423. [modernized]