

# DENUNCIATION OF THE RUMP PARLIAMENT

8 February 1648/1649

Declaration and protest of the Peers of this realm of England against the late perfidious, traitorous, and tyrannical usurpations of some members of the House of Commons, who are trying to overturn the fundamental laws and kingly government of this country, and to make its subjects the slaves of this insolent tyranny.

Compelled to vindicate ourselves and to assert the rights of Parliament, especially of the House of Peers, the prerogatives of our King, and the inviolability of his person, the fundamental laws of this Kingdom, and the liberty of all freeborn in it, and our own honour against this last unprecedented usurpation of some few insolent, ill-advised members of the House of Commons, after the expulsion and imprisonment of the soundest part thereof; after long patience and in utter despair of their repentance, being bound by our oaths and our patriotism, and in virtue of that solemn compact, the Covenant:

We declare and protest that, from time immemorial, the supreme judicial power of Parliament has resided in the single person of the King and in the House of Peers—not in the House of Commons, which never claimed it and which has not even authority to examine witnesses on oath, not being a court of justice, but has only the power of accusing delinquents before the House of Peers, before which its members ever appear with head uncovered, not even daring to sit down or tender advice. That without the consent of the House of Lords and of the King it has no power to pass acts or publish ordinances of Parliament, nor to create a new chamber of justice for the trial even of the least subjects of the realm, much less their King or any peer, who, by the common laws and *Magna Carta*, ought only to be tried by their peers.

That to take his Crown from the King and disinherit him, to alter the government and fundamental laws, and the great seal, yea, the ancient forms of justice and process of law in this Kingdom; to enact that what is high treason is nothing of the kind, and that that is treason which is no treason; to create new officers, deposing others from the bench, to impose penalties, taxes, and oaths on the subjects of this realm is not to be borne.

Therefore before God, angels, and men, we disavow all their acts and deliberations, and also the erection of that new high court of justice to try, condemn, and put to death our King, or any peer or subject. And we declare it an act of the deepest treason in anyone to take our place as judges or commissioners, and that a wilful murder has been by them committed in taking away the life of the King, and an unparalleled crime in disinheriting the Prince of Wales and forbidding men to proclaim him King after the murder of his father; in seeking to alter the monarchical government, the laws and ancient legal procedure of this Kingdom; in setting up any commissions, judges, or officers, such as those created to effect that sanguinary murder; in continuing to maintain the old bands of soldiers; in imposing new taxes or oaths on the subjects of this realm; in putting them to death, and depriving them of their liberty or their goods; all which is contrary to the fundamental laws of the realm, especially that insolent declaration of the House of Commons dated 6 February that the House of Lords is useless and dangerous, and must be abolished.

We assert that this flagrant treason will end in the destruction of the rights of Parliament, the prerogatives and security of the Kings of England, and the life, liberty, and property of the people; in the utter annihilation of this flourishing state by the substitution of anarchy and confusion, a result which we Peers, and all free Englishmen, are bound by every tie, at the peril of our lives, to prevent, lest we be regarded by posterity as consenting thereto, though for their preservation we have already shed so much blood and consumed so much treasure.