

# THE ARMY AND THE FIFTH MONARCHISTS

Henry Cromwell (1628–1674)

to General Charles Fleetwood (c. 1618–1692), his brother-in-law

*After the death of Oliver Cromwell on 3 September 1658, his son Richard became the new Protector. Henry Cromwell, Richard's younger brother, heard rumors that Charles Fleetwood, one of the New Model Army's most popular commanders, intended to make Richard subservient to the Army.*

18 September 1658

I received your account of the petition of the officers, but pray give me leave to expostulate with you. How came these two or three hundred officers together? If they came of their own heads, their being absent from their charge without licence would have flown in their face when they petitioned for a due observance of martial discipline. If they were called together, were they not also taught what to say and do? If they were called, was it with His Highness' privity? If they met without leave in so great a number, were they told their error?

I shall not meddle with the matter of their petition, but, dear brother, I must tell you I hear that dirt was thrown upon His late Highness at that great meeting. That they were exhorted to stand up for that Good Old Cause which had long lain asleep. I thought my father had pursued it to the last.

He died praying for those that desired to trample on his dust. Let us then not render evil for good and make his memory stink before he is under ground. Let us remember his last legacy, and for his sake render his successor considerable, and not make him vile, a thing of nought, and a by-word.

Whither do these things tend? What a hurly-burly is there? One hundred independent ministers called together a council, as you call it, of two or three hundred officers of a judgment. Remember what has always befallen imposing spirits. Will not the loins of an imposing independent or anabaptist be as heavy as the loins of an imposing prelate or presbytery? And is it a dangerous opinion that dominion is founded in grace when it is held by the Church of Rome and a sound principle when it is held by the Fifth Monarchy men.

Dear brother, let us not fall into the sins of other men, lest we partake of their plagues. Let it be so carried that all the people of God, though under different forms—yea, even those whom you count without—may enjoy their birthright and civil liberty, and that no one party may tread upon the neck of another. It does not become the magistrate to descend into parties, but can the things you do tend to this end? Can these things be done and the world not think His Highness a knave or a fool, or oppressed with mutinous spirits?

Dear brother, my spirit is sorely oppressed with the consideration of the miserable state of the innocent people of these nations. What have these sheep done that their blood should be the price of our lust and ambition? Let me beg you to remember how His late Highness loved you, how he honoured you with the highest trust by leaving the sword in your hand, which must defend or destroy us. And his declaring His Highness his successor shows that he left it there to preserve him and his reputation.

O brother! Use it to curb extravagant spirits, and busy-bodies, but let not the nations be governed by it. Let us take heed of arbitrary power; let us be governed by the known laws of the land, and let all things be kept in their proper channels. And let the army be so governed that the world may never hear of them unless there be occasion to fight. And truly, brother, you must pardon me if I say God and man may require this duty at your hand, and lay all miscarriages of the army in point of discipline at your door.

You see I deal freely and plainly with you, as becomes your friend and a good subject.. And the great God, in whose presence I speak, knows that I do it not to reproach you, but out of my tender affection and faithfulness to you. And you may rest assured that you shall always find me your true friend and loving brother.