

NEWS FROM LONDON

Josiah Berners
to John Hobart

London, 29 November 1659

Although I take no delight to write news when I can neither write safely nor any but bad—and indeed the worst of bad, ingratitude, and perfidiousness, and that cloaked with pretence of holiness—yet, holding myself obliged by civility, etc., to answer your letter as soon as I could, though not by your honest gentleman post, I send these to acquaint you that General Monck is the same as at first. He has sent up three commissioners, who were watched like hawks by the Wallingford House party till they had agreed to that I suppose you have heard.

Colonel Wilkes, one of the three, who was a tailor in Blackfriars and of Mr. Feake's¹ church, betrayed them and their secret instructions. But the main thing, I perceive, aimed at was a cessation till Monck had settled Scotland and drawn his army on this side of Sterling Bridge, which he has now done. One article is that Monck shall have his proportion and arrears of the public money, which, I believe, they cannot spare. The conduct of the army and levying money for the future are not agreed on. The treaty about the cashiered and suspended officers on both sides is to be at Newcastle 6 December by ten of each army, and all the officers concerned may be present.

Wallingford House say that the Council of State have met several times to raise forces and plot to destroy the godly, forsooth. Fleetwood sent Deane, one of the Clerks of the Council, to Sir Arthur Haselrig² to pump him and at last to let him know if he stayed in London he must secure him; whereupon he is departed.

They cannot make up an old Council at Whitehall, and their Committee of Unsafety is not much regarded nor very active, for Sir Henry Vane,³ Salwey,⁴ etc., have been very busy about a new refined government, and I hear they cannot agree, and so Sir Henry Vane is going to Raby to be nearer his friend Lambert, of whom and whose party Wallingford House is mis-trustful.

I hear some of both armies, though far asunder, run to each other, and that the scouts of both sides lately met and, instead of fighting, shot their pistols on the ground and friendly discoursed and parted. Indeed, the soldiers generally say they will not fight, but will make a ring for their officers to fight in.

I hear Wallingford House begins to be weary and desires to treat with some Parliament Members. Sir Arthur Haselrig says he will be trepanned no more. Those of the Committee of Unsafety that sit are Fleetwood, Desborough, Berry, Hewson, Holland, Tichborne, Whitelocke, Warriston, Sydenham, and sometimes Ireton.⁵ The judges on 20 November adjourned to xv^a Hillary.⁶ Whitelocke sits now and then in Chancery, and decimating Butler is imposed on him for a secretary or spy. It's said Lechmere is to be attorney. Saint John lies close and meddles not. Colonel Bennet, though I hear he sat but once at the Committee of Unsafety, yet he went of their errand and met the three commissioners at Waltham Cross, and feasted and brought them to Wallingford House in a coach.

Monck wrote a letter to the Common Council of London, which is printed and true, and was delivered them by honest Colonel Markham and Mr. Atkin, a merchant that trades hence to Leith; both imprisoned, therefore, by

¹ Christopher Feake (1612–1683), Independent minister and leader of the Fifth-Monarchist movement

² Sir Arthur Haselrig (1601–1661), M.P. for Leicestershire (1640–1659), had led the attempt to dismiss General Lambert from his command.

³ Sir Henry Vane (1613–1662), leading Republican opponent of Oliver Cromwell and Member of Parliament for Whitechurch (1659)

⁴ Richard Salwey (1615–c. 1685), Member of Parliament for Appleby (1645–1653 and 1659–1660) and Worcestershire (1653–1654)

⁵ John Deborough, James Berry, John Hewson, Cornelius Holland, Robert Tichborne, Bulstrode Whitelocke, Archibald Johnston (Lord Warriston), William Sydenham, and John Ireton, with Vane and Salwey, comprised 11 of the Committee's 23 members

⁶ Hillary term begins the Sunday after the feast-day of Saint Hillary (14 January).

the Committee of Unsafety. The City thereupon has appointed a fast on Friday next in London. Colonel Lidcott is got safe to Monck, and I hope ere long you will hear more.

Last week two soldiers, one in Lumber Street, the other in Chancery Lane, were almost killed for assisting to levy taxes, though laid by Parliament. I hear many in several counties associate against taxes if not appointed by Parliament. I hear Mr. Neville, Mr. Scott, Berners, Harrington, Samuel, etc., are left out of the new Committee of the Militia for Westminster because they utterly disowned the Committee of Unsafety's letter and order, and voted that they, being appointed by Parliament, according to their trust they ought not nor would obey any orders from or give account unto any but the Parliament or their Council of State, etc.

It's strange to see these seraphiclists can act without law, against Parliaments, and against morality, as if God had not as much commanded the duties of the second table to be kept as the first. Surely they hope for another John of Leyden to be set up again, though not so good as their late Oliver and, like Knipperdolen, to be lifted up by and under him. But the people's eyes are opened, and I am persuaded when new taxes come to be levied, they will find the dagger and one and all too strong and too many for the sword and army.

C.H. Firth, ed. *The Clarke Papers* (Longmans, Green, and Company: London, 1901), IV:299–301. *[modernized]*