‘A Storme Out of Wales’

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The Second Civil War in South Wales, 1648

By

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For Yvonne

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PREFACE

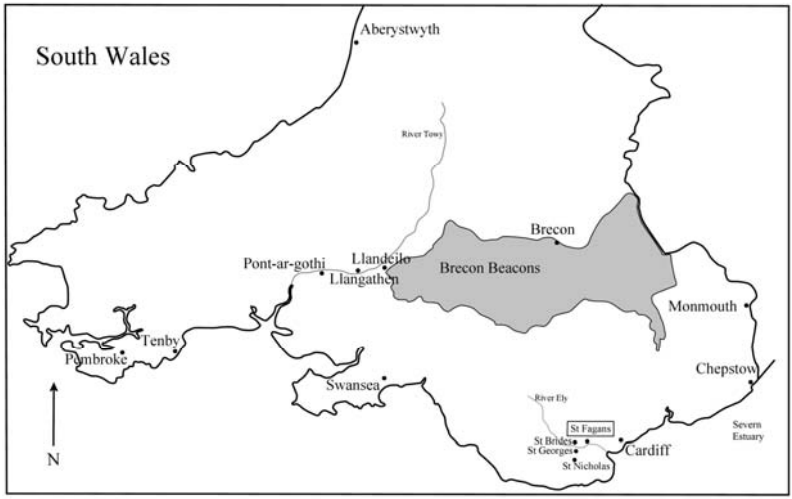
This book has grown out of a desire to understand the nature of the rebellion that spread through south Wales in 1648; and in the researching of it I have been led to question traditional interpretations of these developments, and to see them in the context of events in England, Scotland and Ireland. What seemed initially to be a short and limited project has thereby grown and occupied more time than I wish to think about. My wife, Yvonne, and our children Richard, Catrin, Rhiannon, Angharad and Dafydd have lived with the events of this book and visited their locations repeatedly: without their patience, good-natured support and, above all, their love, this work could not have been completed. In love and gratitude, I offer it to them.

NOTE ON SPELLING AND DATING

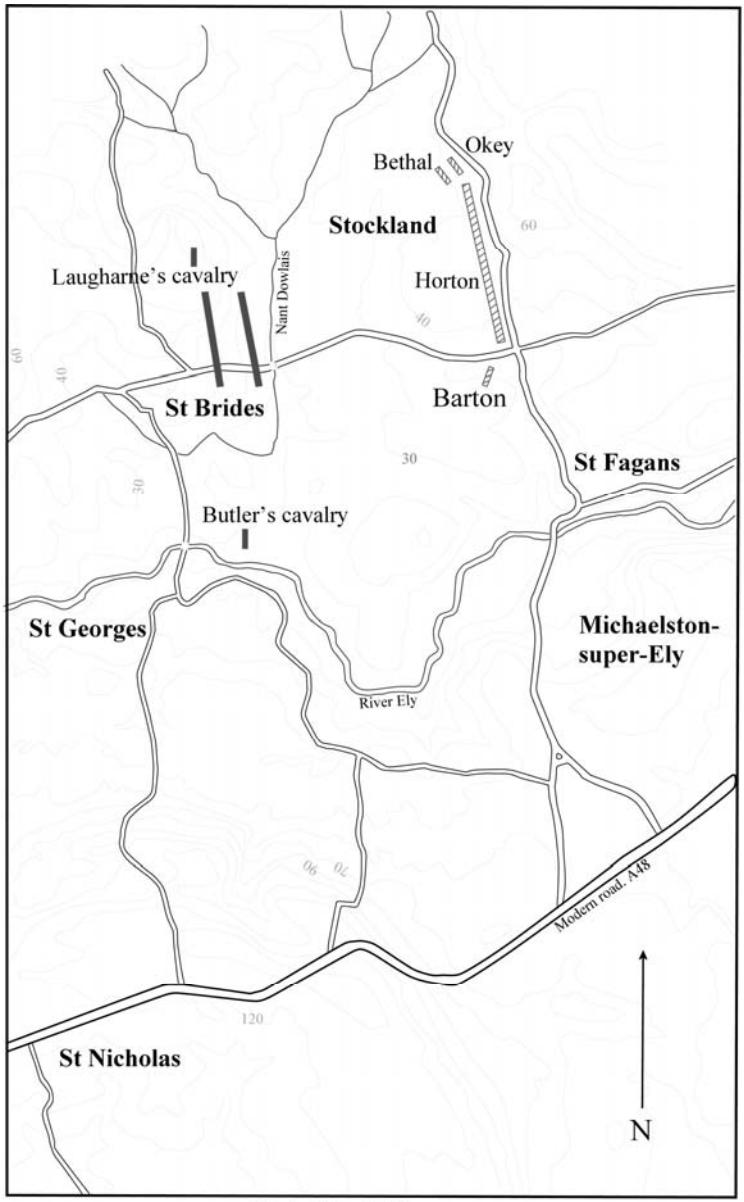
After much thought, in order best to convey something of the period's ambience, I decided to retain the original spelling, punctuation and capitalisation of all quotations from contemporary manuscripts and printed works. Similarly, all dates are given in Old Style, although I have conventionally taken the year to begin on 1 January.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

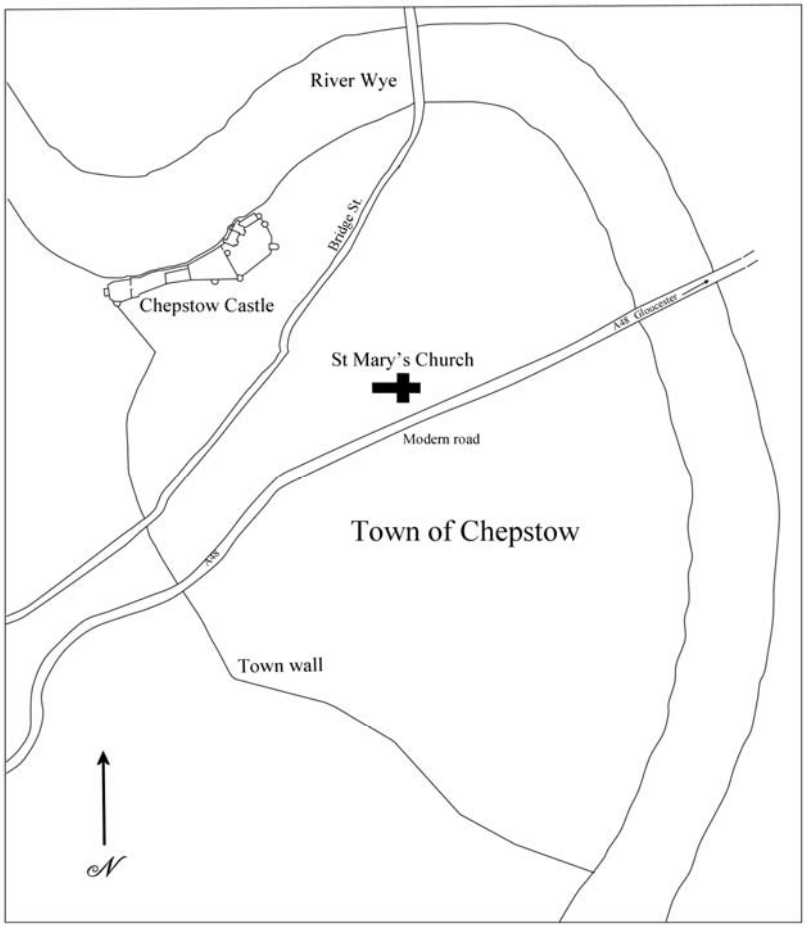
I owe a great debt of gratitude to my daughter Catrin for using her professional experience in mapping archaeological sites to prepare the maps for this book. I am also most grateful to Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff, for permission to use on the cover of this book the engraving of the keep of Cardiff Castle drawn by Henry Castineau *circa* 1815-30, after a sketch by F. Stockdale (Glamorgan Archives, document DX535/1).



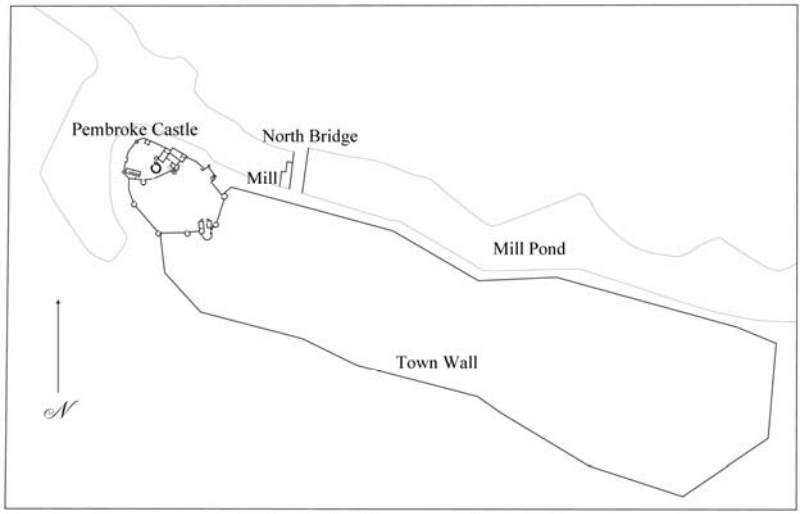
South Wales, showing places mentioned in the text



The battle of St Fagans.



Chepstow, showing castle and town walls.



Pembroke, showing castle and town walls.

INTRODUCTION

"THE HAND OF GOD": REBELLION IN SOUTH WALES, 1648

On the night of Sunday, 7 May 1648, an army made up mainly of Welshmen from Pembrokeshire and Glamorgan, many of them armed with clubs and bill-hooks, encamped around the village of St. Nicholas in the Vale of Glamorgan, south Wales. Comprising a mixture of troops who had fought for Parliament during the Civil War of 1642-46, ex-Royalists, neutralists, and 'countrymen', it was an army in rebellion against the Parliamentarian government that, almost exactly two years after the defeat of the king, was still seeking a political settlement with him. The objective of the rebels was the county's administrative centre, Cardiff, which had an arsenal of gunpowder and weaponry within its castle walls. To reach Cardiff, the rebels needed to cross the river Ely; and at this moment government troops, intent on holding the line of the river, had occupied the village of St. Fagans, little more than three miles away.

The rebels significantly outnumbered their opponents, by perhaps as many as two-to-one; but the latter were seasoned troops from the New Model Army, which had proved its effectiveness in the closing stages of the First Civil War. The government troops were due shortly to be reinforced by a further force, under the command of Oliver Cromwell, which was advancing into south Wales and was at this moment at Gloucester. The knowledge of Cromwell's approach forced the hand of the rebels: delay would undermine the possibility of their being able to reach Cardiff. Early the following morning, therefore, the rebels began an advance on the village of St. Fagans, crossing fields made sodden by days of rain.

The struggle that followed, lasting two hours, was, in terms of the number of combatants engaged, the largest battle ever to take place in Wales, and revealed, for the government forces, "the hand of God."[1] Its

[1] *A true and particular relation of the late victory obtained by Colonel Horton and Colonel Okey against the Welsh Forces under Major Generall Langhorn*, British Library, E.441[36], 6.

outcome was decisive, and it both determined the fate of the rebellion in south Wales and the manner in which Wales was to be governed for the next decade.

The road that led Welshmen to take up arms against the Parliamentarian government that had emerged from the military defeat of the king in 1646 reached back to December 1647, and its direction was determined primarily by men who had themselves been in arms for Parliament during the First Civil War of 1642-46.

CHAPTER ONE

"A HOSTILE AND UNGRATEFUL PARLIAMENT": CONTEXTS OF MUTINY

A serious problem that Parliament faced by the end of the First Civil War was that its resources were insufficient to maintain the cost of its victorious armies. The New Model Army, established by Parliament in April 1645 under the command of Sir Thomas Fairfax, was not the only body of troops in arms for Parliament when the First Civil War ended in the summer of 1646.[1] Prior to the formation of the New Model, the Parliamentarian war effort had comprised several regional armies whose commanders were responsible to Parliament's Committee for Defence rather than to a single military commander-in-chief, and even with the fading out of hostilities in 1646 there were Parliamentarian forces separate from the New Model, under commanders who were not subject to Fairfax's authority. The largest bodies of troops outside the New Model Army were those making up the Northern Army, which operated in the north of England under the command of Sir Sydenham Poyntz, and the Western Army, in the south-west of England under Edward Massey. Additionally, there were numerous garrisons holding towns and castles throughout England and Wales, and relatively small regional armies under local commanders.[2]

The financial burden that the war had placed upon local communities did not, therefore, disappear with the end of hostilities in England and Wales. War, in fact, continued in Ireland, and in 1646-47 Parliament received numerous petitions from the counties complaining at the continuing burden of maintaining large bodies of troops.[3]

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[1] Charles I surrendered to the Scots on 5 May 1646; Oxford, which had been the king's headquarters through the war, surrendered to Parliament on 24 June; and the Parliamentarian siege of Raglan Castle ended with the garrison's surrender on 19 August.

[2] J. Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London, 1993), p. 333.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 334.

In 1643 the Parliament had established two forms of tax to provide income for the financing of its war against Charles I: an assessment - raised at first weekly, and then monthly – levied on the seventeen counties then under Parliament's control; and an excise, charged on a variety of basic commodities. These taxes were to be collected by local committees established to administer the counties under its jurisdiction. Comprised of local supporters, these county committees were the agents of Parliamentarian central government for the implementation of its fiscal and political policies.[4]

Initially, the assessment was to be for a period of only ten months, but the continuation of the war beyond this made renewals necessary.[5] Parliament set the amount to be raised by each county, and it was left up to the local committeemen to decide how they were to raise this. Pembrokeshire, under Parliament's control since September 1645, was assessed in June 1647 to raise £116-4s-7¼d per month "for the due paying of such Forces under the Command of Sir Thomas Fairfax…..for the effectual and more vigorous carrying on the Warre." Neighbouring Carmarthenshire was assessed at £100-15s-6d; Glamorgan, at £131-15s-10d; and Breconshire at £103-6s-11d.[6]

Additional money might be raised by 'sequestration': the confiscation and sale or re-lease of the property of 'delinquents' (those who had supported the King during the war) and of Catholics. Those subject to sequestration were commonly allowed to pay an assessed fine, or 'composition', upon which they could retain possession of their property.[7] Although appeals might be made to a central committee established by Parliament in London – the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents' Estates – the county committees therefore had a good deal of autonomy in the mechanism of tax collection. Nevertheless, the Parliamentarian process of revenue collection produced considerable dissatisfaction in the localities. The emphasis on decentralised authority created an indisposition to send locally-raised money to London for the use largely, after the creation of the New Model Army in April 1645, of a national army rather

[4] M. Bennett, *The Civil Wars in Britain and Ireland 1638-1651* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1997), pp. 174-5; P. Edwards, 'Logistics and Supply', in J. Kenyon & J. Ohlmeyer, *The Civil Wars: A Military History of England, Scotland and Ireland 1638-1660* (Oxford, 1998), p. 261.

[5] *Lords Journals*, VII, 537-8; *Lords Journals*, VIII, 275; *Commons Journals*, IV, 692.

[6] C.H. Firth & R.S. Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660* (London, 1911), I, pp. 958, 960.

[7] J. Morrill, *Revolt in the Provinces* (Harlow, 1999), p.81.

than for local or regional forces.[8] Further, complaints grew both about the high level of taxation and its apparently wilful nature. Parallels were drawn between the extra-parliamentary financial expedients of Charles I in the 1630s and the arbitrariness of Parliamentarian government.[9]

The burden of taxation, exacted by both Royalists and Parliamentarians during the civil war, was an inevitable element of the impositions of the war years; but the high level of taxation necessary for the maintenance of troops continued under the Parliamentary regime that followed the surrender of the king to Parliament's Scottish allies in May 1646. Armed conflict had not yet ended in Ireland; troops still under arms in England and Wales required provision; and under the agreement by which the Scots handed over the king to the English parliament in January 1647, the Parliament was to pay the Scots expenses in the sum of £400,000.[10] This made for a continuation into peacetime in England and Wales of the heavy burden of taxation, the unpopularity of which was expressed in anti-excise riots in Norwich in November-December 1646 and again in April 1648, and in London in February 1647.[11] Strong criticism of the excise also came from Army radicals, who in their manifesto *The Case of the Armie Truly Stated* urged that "all the oppressions of the poore by Excize upon Beare, Cloath Stuffes, and all manufacturies…be forthwith taken off".[12] In reality the monitoring and evaluation of consumer goods subject to the excise required a degree of administrative means and efficiency beyond that actually possessed by processes of government in the mid seventeenth century British Isles, and this was a problem compounded by widespread smuggling and tax avoidance. The excise therefore never provided the

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[8] I. Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645-1653* (Oxford, 1992), p.29; Morrill, *Revolt*, p. 82; R. Ashton, *Counter Revolution* (Yale, 1994), p. 73.

[9] R. Ashton, 'From Cavalier to Roundhead Tyranny, 1642-9', in J. Morrill (ed.), *Reactions to the English Civil War 1642-1649* (London, 1982), p. 192.

[10] D. Stevenson, *Revolution and Counter Revolution 1644-51* (London, 2003), pp. 60-1; I. Gentles, *The English Revolution and the Wars in the Three Kingdoms 1638-1652* (London, 2007), pp. 296-7; M. Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire: a new history of the English Civil Wars* (London, 2008), pp. 473-4

[11] Bennett, *Civil Wars*, pp. 264-5; Ashton, *Counter Revolution*, pp. 76-7; Morrill, *Revolt in the* Provinces, p. 119; J. Morrill & J. Walter, 'Order and Disorder in the English Revolution', in R. Cust & A. Hughes (eds.), *The English Civil War* (London, 1997), p. 315; M.J. Braddick, 'Popular politics and public policy: the excise riot in Smithfield in February 1647 and its aftermath', *The Historical Journal*, 34 (1991), pp. 597-626.

[12] W. Haller & G. Davies (eds.), *The Leveller Tracts 1647-1653* (Columbia University, 1944), p.79.

amount of income intended, and overall generated rather more anger than cash; and in August 1647 Parliament modified the incidence of the excise, removing it from meat and salt, but doubling it on beer.[13]

Substantial though these financial exactions were, their collection seems commonly to have been in arrears, and as the payment of soldiers' wages was dependent on the full collection of the assessments and excise, this led routinely to shortages of pay.[14] In turn, this caused a further grievance for both soldiers and the populations amongst whom they were stationed. Troops were expected to feed and clothe themselves out of their wages, and where these were not forthcoming the practice had arisen – by both sides during the civil war – of seeking free-quarter.[15] For people living in areas where New Model or provincial troops were based, or where there were garrisons, the result was, in effect, a double payment of the assessment.

To a large extent, therefore, popular resentment against levels of taxation was linked with the physical presence of troops. The problems were succinctly put to Fairfax on 1 November 1647 in a published letter from some anonymous disgruntled gentry, who complained about the "frequent taxes which have been put upon us for the use of the Armies." The authors continued:

> "What infinite slavery the free borne people of this Kingdome have been brought of late, by the intolerable yoke, and insupportable bondage of Free-quarter…By means whereof the best of our Gentry, and their wives are looked upon but as Hosts and Hostesses, subject unto the insolvency and imperiousnesse of the Common Souldiers, who understand their own powers and strength too well."[16]

The problem might, moreover, extend beyond the financial and the simply annoying: amongst the complaints to Fairfax was a reproach about

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[13] J.A. Shedd, 'Thwarted Victors: Civil and Criminal Prosecution against Parliament's Officials during the English Civil War and Commonwealth', *Journal of British Studies*, 41 (2002), pp. 152-3; *An Ordinance and Declaration for Re-establishing the Duty of Excise* (28 August 1647), British Library (hereafter BL), E.404[37], 3; *Lords Journals*, IX, 402-3, 411-12.

[14] Ashton, *Counter Revolution*, pp. 50, 53.

[15] C.H. Firth, *Cromwell's Army* (London, 1902), pp.216-7*;* Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 29; R. Hutton, *The Royalist War Effort 1642-1646* (London, 1999), pp. 30, 96-7.

[16] *Vox Populi: or The Supplication and Proposals of the Subjects of this miserable Kingdom Languishing and almost expiring, under the heavy burden of Free Quarter*, (1 November, 1647), BL E.412 [12], 3-4.

the moral dangers of quartering. Troops with time on their hands, having no enemy to fight, were a potential threat to local order, and gave rise to complaint at

> "…the ill example given our children by their [the soldiers'] licentiousnesse, who having nothing whereupon to employ themselves, spend the whole day in smoake and drinke…[and] in the inveighling of the Daughters of many Gentlemen…to the great discomfort of their Parents, and their owne sad ruine."[17]

At the beginning of December 1647, petitions were presented to the House of Lords from the gentry of three English counties – Middlesex, Hertford and Buckinghamshire – complaining at the practice of free-quarter. The Hertford petition, read to the House of Lords on 7 December, contrasted expectations with the reality of Parliamentarian rule:

> "That we have adventured our lives and exhausted our Estates, for the re-gaining of our almost lost and irrecoverable Freedoms; and have been, through the Blessing of God, instrumental to the subduing of the common Enemy; by which Means we hoped before this Time to have had the Foundations of a just Government settled, and our Estates freed (at the least) from all unequal and illegal Taxations: But we find that we are now subject to greater Bondage than when we first engaged for Freedom…"[18]

On the same day, a "humble representation" from Fairfax and the Army Council was presented to Parliament, acknowledging that "…the greatest and most immediate and pressing evill" to the counties was "…the disorders, exactions, and abuses of the Souldier, with the burthen and annoyances of free quarter." This was, however, the fault of Parliament for failing, despite "frequent addresses" from Fairfax, to make "…sufficient establishment and provision of pay for the Army and other Forces of the Kingdome…"[19]

Fairfax blamed "…the difficulty or delay of getting things part in Parliament to this purpose" on "…the neglect or slowness of County Committees, Assessors, or Collectors to do their duty" due to "the Malignancy of some who…doe industriously retard all supplyes of money,

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[17] *Ibid.*, 5.
[18] *Lords Journals*, IX, 563 (7 December, 1647).
[19] *An humble representation from His Excellencie Sir Thomas Fairfax and the Councel of the Armie For the immediate disburthening the Kingdom of free quarter, the prevention of any further encrease of arrears.* (5 December, 1647), BL E.419[16], 6-7; *Lords Journals*, IX, 562-3 (7 December, 1647) .

and …the Generall backwardnesse of all…"[20] The solution, Fairfax argued, was that "the Parliament do forthwith enlarge monethly contribution for five or six Moneths…by the addition of forty thousand pounds per mensem [per month] to the present sixty thousand pounds…"[21]

The problem, therefore, was circuitous: high taxation was unpopular, and as a result taxes were neither sufficiently high nor exhaustively collected. The insufficiency of tax revenue thereby produced led, in turn, to the extension of free quartering – which was even more unpopular than high taxation and spawned a host of civilian grievances, from complaints at the commandeering of horses and other goods to accusations of assault, damage to property and disorderly conduct, and to financial claims for the consumption of food and livestock. Perhaps surprisingly, accusations of sexual indiscipline seem to have been very rare.[22]

By January 1647, the amount of back pay owing to all of Parliament's land forces had risen – on a conservative estimate – to £2.8 million, and even the Assessment Ordinance of 25 March 1647, which increased the number of paying counties from the original 17 to 52, increased the total amount to be collected by assessment to only £60,000 a month.[23] Additionally, in September 1646 the Parliament had agreed to pay the Scots £400,000 towards the expenses that their army had incurred in its campaigns in alliance with the English Parliament since 1643.[24] On 21 December 1647 the House of Commons, noting that the assessment was now nine months behind in collection, ordered that any counties able by 15 January 1648 to pay six months' worth of assessment would have the remaining three of the nine months' arrears "remitted and taken off."[25] The hope was that this would provide for the Parliament's Treasurers at War a sufficient lump sum within just three weeks that would enable such provision to be made for the Army "that no more Free Quarter may be hereafter taken by them." Moreover, it would enable a disbandment of superfluous troops to begin, and for "the Withdrawing of all other Forces into Towns and Garisons."[26] For obliging counties, assessment payments

[20] *Ibid.* 7.
[21] *Ibid.*, 12.
[22] Gentles, *New Model Army*, pp. 129-135.
[23] I. Gentles, 'The Arrears of Pay of the Parliamentary Army at the end of the First Civil War', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, XLVIII (1975), pp. 55-56.
[24] Stevenson, *Revolution and Counter Revolution*, pp. 60-61; *Commons Journals*, IV, 659-660; *Lords Journals*, viii, 487-8.
[25] *Commons Journals*, V, 396 (21 December, 1647).
[26] *Loc. cit.*

would then be due on a regular basis, without arrears, payable from 25 December 1647, "for the constant Pay of the continuing Army."[27]

Unfortunately, however, by 15 January 1648 not a single county in England or Wales had made available the six-months' conflated assessment; nor did Parliament renew the assessment – due to end on 25 December 1647 – until March 1648.[28] The centralised system of financing Parliament's armies was clearly in disarray, leaving soldiers with grievances against the Parliament and dissatisfaction by many of the gentry in the counties towards the burden that the Army had come to represent.[29] Parliament was at this time dominated by 'political Presbyterians' – Parliamentarian conservatives – who were determined to face down the Independents and radicals so strongly represented in the Army and to press ahead with the disbandment of a large part of the armed forces.[30] For MPs this had a dual benefit: significant reduction in troop levels would reduce the financial outgoings of Parliament, thereby releasing some of the pressure generated by the contentious excise issue; and it would disperse in part the base of support available to the Independents. Over the early months of 1648 the total size of the Army was reduced by almost a half: most of this burden of disbandment fell upon the provincial forces, and many of the regular New Model troops were ordered to Ireland to deal with the ongoing Catholic rebellion.[31]

At the end of the First Civil War, one of the causes of financial pressure on the Parliament had been the continued presence in the north of England of the Scots' army, which had entered the war in 1643 in alliance with the Parliament. The surrender of Charles I to the Scottish army on 5

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[27] *Loc. cit.*

[28] *Lords Journals.*, X, 121.

[29] Gentles, 'Arrears of Pay', p. 60.

[30] 'Presbyterianism' is a religious term, applicable in this period to Puritans who believed in a centralised system of church government under the control of elders (Latin: *presbyters*). This form of Protestantism was dominant in Scotland, and became increasingly influential in England following the alliance between the Scots and the English Parliament in 1643. Presbyterians were opposed to 'Independents', who rejected church centralisation and wanted a measure of religious liberty for different varieties of Puritanism. Presbyterianism was notably strong amongst MPs in Parliament, and Independency was strong amongst both officers and rank-and-file in the New Model Army. Today historians commonly use the term 'political Presbyterians' to describe the more conservative Parliamentarians who sought a moderate settlement with the king and opposed the social, political and religious radicalism promoted by 'political Independents'.

[31] Gentles, *New Model Army*, pp. 231-4; R. Ashton, *Britain in Revolution 1625-1660* (Oxford, 2002), p. 351.

May 1646 had enabled the Scots to bargain for a repayment of their expenses as the price of handing over the king. It was not until February 1647 that the Scots, having been paid a sufficiently large part of the agreed sum, gave Charles into the custody of the English Parliament, and then marched north, crossing the border on 1 February.[32]

The departure of the Scots, who were strongly Presbyterian and had a clear Presbyterian influence on MPs, had been earnestly desired by English Independents; but it was the political Presbyterians dominating Parliament who gained the immediate advantage of this development. The exit of the Scots removed the need to retain a large army in existence in England and Wales, and on 18 February 1647 the House of Commons decided upon a further, and even more radical, reduction in the number of troops being maintained: a resolution was passed to keep only 5,400 Horse and 1,000 Dragoons "at the Pay of the Kingdom."[33]

In early March, however – against a growing feeling amongst soldiers that the political Presbyterians in Parliament were intent on getting rid of them as quickly as possible – a petition began to be circulated for signature amongst New Model Army cavalry troops, asserting that they would not go to Ireland until their arrears had been paid.[34] On 24 March an anonymous tract was published, which insisted that the soldiers would "not to undertake another Warre in a strange Kingdom…before they see the conditions performed to themselves and fellow Commons of England."[35] This was followed two days later by an open letter to the commissioned officers on Fairfax's army, complaining that having "faithfully served both the state and you without any respect to ourselves" and "gone through all difficulties to the uttermost of our power, even to the adventuring of lives", they were now "disregarded, or rather contemned" by an ungrateful Parliament. The authors expressed the hope that the MPs would "out of a godly and serious consideration thinke upon us their Soldiers who have faithfully served them."[36] Parliament reacted by ordering the immediate disbandment of troops who refused to go to Ireland, and on 29 March Denzil Holles, a leading the Presbyterian M.P.,

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[32] S. R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War 1642-1649, III* (London, 1901), p. 188; Braddick, *God's Fury*, pp. 473-4.
[33] Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 145; *Commons Journals*, V, 90 (18 February, 1647).
[34] *Perfect Diurnall*, 190 (15-22 March, 1647), BL. E.515[4] , 1525-6; *Weekly Account*, 12 (17-24 March 1647), BL. E.381[12], unpaginated.
[35] *A Warning for all the Counties of England* (24 March 1647), BL. E.381[13], 14.
[36] *An Apollogie of the Souldiers to all their Commission Officers in Sir Thomas Fairfax his Armie* (26 March 1647), BL. E.381[18], unpaginated.

presented a motion to the Commons urging that if the soldiers persisted in their criticism and threatened disobedience of Parliament they would be "looked upon and proceeded against as enemies of the state."[37] This 'Declaration of Dislike' was seen by the soldiers as an attack on their honour: it immediately became a further grievance that they had against the political Presbyterians, and Fairfax had to struggle to keep the Army under control.[38] Holles and his supporters, however, were intent on pushing on with the dual approach of sending troops to Ireland and disbandment. Recruitment for the Irish expedition, however, went poorly, with few officers ready to encourage their troops to enlist for this service.[39] On 23 April it was reported to the House of Commons that only 115 officers were willing to serve in Ireland, and that only some 1,000 rank-and-file troops would go with them.[40]

Amidst considerable bitterness among the soldiers at their perceived betrayal by Parliament, the rank and file showed a growing solidarity. Petitions addressed to Fairfax in April and May 1647 voiced the suspicions of the troops: "Can this Irish Expedition be any thing else but a Designe to ruine and break this Army in pieces…?"[41] It is significant that the petitioners addressed themselves to Fairfax as "your Souldiers, who have served under your Commands, with all readinesse, to free this our Native Land and Nation from all tyrannie and oppressions whatsoever…", and they claimed that "to the great griefe and sanding of our hearts wee see that Oppression is as great as ever, if not greater."[42] This suggests a willingness, if necessary, to confront Parliament, should the latter be seen to be ruling oppressively. Despite this wide political dimension, however, the primary concerns of the petitioners were with the issues of fundamental interest to soldiers: expressing anger at the "things done by a Parliament", they demanded the payment of arrears; an Act of Indemnity "for all things done in time and place of Warr"; proper financial provision for the wives and children of soldiers killed or maimed in service; and that troops "that have served Parliament freely, may not be pressed out of the Kingdome" – that is, made to serve in Ireland. Finally, they urged that the

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[37] *Lords Journals*, IX, 115; *Commons Journals*, V, 129; A. Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*: *the General Council of the Army and its debates, 1647-1648* (Oxford, 1987), p. 37.
[38] *Perfect Diurnall*, 193 (5-12 April 1647), 1543.
[39] Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 155.
[40] *Weekly Account*, 17 (21-29 April 1647), BL. E.385 [10], unpaginated; *Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer* (20-27 April, 1647), BL E.385[6], 506.
[41] *The Apologie of the Common Souldiers* (28 April, 1647), BL E.385[18], 3.
[42] *Ibid*, 5.

honour of the Army should be vindicated by "justice done" to Holles and "the fomenters" who had introduced into Parliament the petition "to proclaime us Enemies of the State."[43] The authors of the *Apologie* wanted Fairfax and the other senior commanders to be in no doubt as to the strength of feeling amongst the rank and file:

> "Therefore, brave Commanders, the Lord put a spirit of courage into your hearts, that you may stand fast in your integritie…and wee doe declare to you, that if any of you shall not, he shall be marked with a brand of infamie for ever, as a Traytor to his Countrey, and an Enemie to his Armie."[44]

This represented the emergence of the 'agitator' movement within the Army, which was fermenting into an increasingly dangerous state.[45] However, forthright criticism of the seemingly anti-Army stance of Presbyterian MPs was not confined to rank-and-file soldiers. On 27 April 1647 a group of officers submitted to the Commons a *Petition and Vindication of the Officers* in which they expressed the hope that "in purchasing of the freedoms of our Brethren, wee have not lost our owne", and reproached Parliament that "We left our estates, and many of us our Trades and Callings to others, and forsook the contentments of a quiet life, not fearing or regarding the difficulties of warre for our hardly-earned-wages… would have been no unwelcome request, nor argued us guilty of the least discontent, or intention of mutiny."[46] In this, the officers were forthright in showing solidarity with the rank-and-file, asserting that their petition "tooke its first Rise from amongst the soldiers, and that wee ingaged but in the second place to regulate the souldiers proceedings."[47]

The document was subscribed to by 151 officers, including seven colonels, seven lieutenant colonels and six majors; and the House of Commons was clearly concerned at the prospect of military disobedience to disbandment underwritten by a solidarity of purpose between officers and men.[48] Without making any reference to the *Petition and Vindiction*,

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[43] *Ibid.*, 8.
[44] *Ibid.*, 7.
[45] Gentles, *New Model Army*, pp. 158-160; Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, pp. 57-65.
[46] *The Petition and Vindication of the Officers of the Armie*, BL E.385[19]. Unpaginated.
[47] *Loc. cit.*
[48] M.A. Norris, 'Edward Sexby, John Reynolds and Edmund Chillenden: Agitators, "Sectarian grandees" and the relations of the New Model Army with London in the spring of 1647', *Historical Research*, 76 (2003), p. 37.