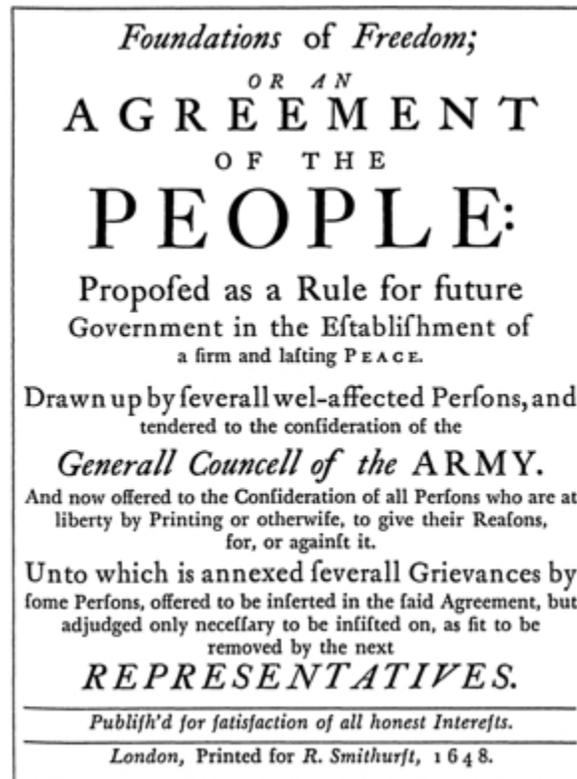


THE OLL READER: AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE BEST OF THE OLL

No. 72: "Three Agreements of the People" (1647-49)
<oll.libertyfund.org/titles/2714>

"that the only effectual meanes to settle a just and lasting peace, to obtaine remedie for all your greivances, & to prevent future oppressions, is the making clear & secure the power that you betrust to your representatives in Parliament, that they may know their trust, in the faithfull execution whereof you wil assist them. Upon all these grounds, we propound your joyning with us in the agreement herewith sent unto you ..."



Second Agreement (Dec. 15, 1648)

The OLL Reader <oll.libertyfund.org/pages/best-of-the-oll>

Quotations about Liberty and Power <oll.libertyfund.org/quotes>

[January, 2016]

Editor's Introduction

One hundred and twenty nine years before Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence a group of English radicals, called the "Levellers" by their opponents, attempted to declare their "independence" from both the monarch King Charles I and the elites who controlled Parliament.

As the Civil Wars raged in England a group of officers within the New Model Army met to discuss the demands they wanted to put to the Parliament in a series of documents which they called "Agreements of the People". In effect what they were doing was attempting to draw up the first written constitution for Britain which would define and limit the powers of the state over the people as well as publicly declare what the "rights of the people" were. The Leveller-influenced officers debated these political and legal demands among themselves, circulated their "Agreements" for other groups to discuss and then sign to show their support. Once some kind of consensus had been achieved, the "Agreements" would be formally presented to Parliament in order to put pressure on it to enact the required reforms.

Three separate Agreements of the People circulated within the Army and its allies between November 1647 and May 1649. The elites who controlled Parliament were not happy with these demands and tried to ignore them. Once the King was tried and executed in January 1649 a third Civil War broke out and Oliver Cromwell was eventually able to seize power as "Protector" of England, thus putting an end to Leveller demands for constitutional government.

The political demands made by Levellers like John Lilburne (1615-1657), William Walwyn (1600-1680), and Richard Overton (fl. 1631-1664) have some

striking similarities to the demands made by the American Revolutionaries in the 1770s. Some of the things "We the free people of England" wanted were more frequent elections, more equal representation of voters, freedom of religion, an end to conscription into the army, equality under the law, fairer taxation (including an end to religious taxes or tythes), freedom to trade with others, reform of the legal system (cutting costs and using English in court), trial by jury, an end to prison for debtors, and an end to capital punishment (except for murder).

"And further minding that the only effectual meanes to settle a just and lasting peace, to obtaine remedie for all your greivances, & to prevent future oppressions, is the making clear & secure the power that you betrust to your representatives in Parliament, that they may know their trust, in the faithfull execution whereof you wil assist them. Upon all these grounds, we propound your joyning with us in the agreement herewith sent unto you; that by vertue thereof, we may have Parliaments certainly cal'd and have the time of their sitting & ending certain & their power or trust cleare and unquestionable, that hereafter they may remove your burdens, & secure your rights, without oppositions or obstructions, & that the foundations of your peace may be so free from uncertainty, that there may be no grounds for future quarrels, or contentions to occasion warre and blood-shed"

Three "Agreements of the People" (Nov. 1647 - May 1649)

The First Agreement of the People, For a firme and present Peace, upon grounds of Common-Rights (3 Nov. 1647)

An agreement of the People, for a firme and present Peace, upon grounds of Common-Rights.

Having by our late labours and hazards made it appeare to the world at how high a rate wee value our just freedome, and God having so far owned our cause, as to deliver the Enemies thereof into our hands: We do now hold our selves bound in mutual duty to each other, to take the best care we can for the future, to avoid both the danger of returning into a slavish condition, and the chargable remedy of another war: for as it cannot be imagined that so many of our Country-men would have opposed us in this quarrel, if they had understood their owne good; so may we safely promise to our selves, that when our Common Rights and liberties shall be cleared, their endeavours will be disappointed, that seek to make themselves our Masters: since therefore our former oppressions, and scarce yet ended troubles have beene occasioned, either by want of frequent Nationall meetings in Councell, or by rendring those meetings ineffectuall; We are fully agreed and resolved, to provide that hereafter our Representatives be neither left to an uncertainty for the time, nor made uselesse to the ends for which they are intended: In order whereunto we declare,

I.

That the People of England being at this day very unequally distributed by Counties, Cities, & Burroughs, for the election of their Deputies in Parliament, ought to be more indifferently proportioned, according to the number of the Inhabitants: the circumstances whereof, for number, place, and manner, are to be set down before the end of this present Parliament.

II.

That to prevent the many inconveniences apparently arising from the long continuance of the same persons in authority, this present Parliament be dissolved upon the last day of September, which shall be in the year of our Lord, 1648.

III.

That the People do of course chuse themselves a Parliament once in two yeares, viz. upon the first Thursday in every 2d. March, after the manner as shall be prescribed before the end of this Parliament, to begin to sit upon the first Thursday in Aprill following at Westminster, or such other place as shall bee appointed from time to time by the preceding Representatives; and to continue till the last day of September, then next ensuing, and no longer.

IV.

That the power of this, and all future Representatives of this Nation, is inferiour only to theirs who chuse them, and doth extend, without the consent or concurrence of any other person or persons; to the enacting, altering, and repealing of Lawes; to the erecting and abolishing of Offices and Courts; to the appointing, removing, and calling to account Magistrates, and Officers of all degrees; to the making War and peace, to the treating with forraign States: And generally, to whatsoever is not expresly, or impliedly reserved by the represented to themselves.

"That the power of this, and all future Representatives of this Nation, is inferiour only to theirs who chuse them, and doth extend, without the consent or concurrence of any other person or persons; to the enacting, altering, and repealing of Lawes; to the erecting and abolishing of Offices and Courts; to the appointing, removing, and calling to account Magistrates, and Officers of all degrees"

Which are as followeth,

1. That matters of Religion, and the wayes of Gods Worship, are not at all intrusted by us to any humane power, because therein wee cannot remit or exceed a tittle of what our Consciences dictate to be the mind of God, without wilfull sinne: neverthelesse the publike way of instructing the Nation (so it be not compulsive) is referred to their discretion.

2. That the matter of impresting and constraining any of us to serve in the warres, is against our freedome; and therefore we do not allow it in our Representatives; the rather, because money (the sinews

of war) being always at their disposall, they can never want numbers of men, apt enough to engage in any just cause.

3. That after the dissolution of this present Parliament, no person be at any time questioned for anything said or done, in reference to the late publike differences, otherwise then in execution of the Judgments of the present Representatives, or House of Commons.

4. That in all Laws made, or to be made, every person may be bound alike, and that no Tenure, Estate, Charter, Degree, Birth, or place, do confer any exemption from the ordinary Course of Legall proceedings, whereunto others arc subjected.

5. That as the Laws ought to be equall, so they must be good, and not evidently destructive to the safety and well-being of the people.

These things we declare to be our native Rights, and therefore are agreed and resolved to maintain them with our utmost possibilities, against all opposition whatsoever, being compelled thereunto, not only by the examples of our Ancestors, whose blood was often spent in vain for the recovery of their Freedomes, suffering themselves, through fradulent accommodations, to be still deluded of the fruit of their Victories, but also by our own wofull experience, who having long expected, & dearly earned the establishment of these certain rules of Government are yet made to depend for the settlement of our Peace and Freedoms, upon him that intended our bondage, and brought a cruell Warre upon us.

For the noble and highly honoured the Free-born People of ENGLAND, in their respective Counties and Divisions, these.

Deare Country-men, and fellow-Commoners,

For your sakes, our friends, estates and lives, have not been deare to us; for your safety and freedom we have cheerfully indured hard Labours and run most desperate hazards, and in comparison to your peace and freedom we neither doe nor ever shall value our dearest blood and wee professe, our bowells are and have been troubled, and our hearts pained within us, in seeing & considering that you have been so long bereaved of these fruites and ends of all our labours and hazards, wee cannot but sympathize with you in your miseries and oppressions. It's greife and vexation of heart to us; to receive your meate or moneyes, whilst you have no advantage, nor yet the foundations of your peace and freedom surely layd: and therefore

upon most serious considerations, that your principall right most essentiall to your well-being is the clearnes, certaintie, sufficiencie and freedom of your power in your representatives in Parliament, and considering that the original of most of your oppressions & miseries hath been either from the obscuritie and doubtfulness of the power you have committed to your representatives in your elections, or from the want of courage in those whom you have betruisted to claime and exercise their power, which might probably proceed from their uncertaintie of your assistance and maintenance of their power, and minding that for this right of yours and ours we engaged our lives; for the King raised the warre against you and your Parliament, upon this ground, that hee would not suffer your representatives to provide for your peace safetie and freedom that were then in danger, by disposing of the *Militia* and otherwise, according to their trust; and for the maintenance and defense of that power and right of yours, wee hazarded all that was deare to us, and God hath borne witness to the justice of our Cause. And further minding that the only effectual meanes to settle a just and lasting peace, to obtaine remedie for all your greivances, & to prevent future oppressions, is the making clear & secure the power that you betrust to your representatives in Parliament, that they may know their trust, in the faithfull execution whereof you wil assist them. Upon all these grounds, we propound your joyning with us in the agreement herewith sent unto you; that by vertue thereof, we may have Parliaments certainly cal'd and have the time of their sitting & ending certain & their power or trust cleare and unquestionable, that hereafter they may remove your burdens, & secure your rights, without oppositions or obstructions, & that the foundations of your peace may be so free from uncertainty, that there may be no grounds for future quarrels, or contentions to occasion warre and blood-shed; & wee desire you would consider, that as these things wherein we offer to agree with you, are the fruites & ends of the Victories which God hath given us: so the settlement of these are the most absolute meanes to preserve you & your Posterity, from slavery, oppression, distraction, & trouble; by this, those whom your selves shall chuse, shall have power to restore you to, and secur you in, all your rights; & they shall be in a capacity to tast of subjection, as well as rule, & so shall be equally concerned with your selves, in all they do. For they must equally suffer with you under any common burdens, & partake with you in any freedoms; & by this they shal be disenabled to defraud or wrong you, when the lawes shall bind all alike, without priviledge or exemption; & by this your Consciencs shall be free from tyrannie & oppression, & those occasions of endlesse strifes, & bloody warres, shall be perfectly

removed: without controversie by your joyning with us in this Agreement, all your particular & common grievances will be redressed forthwith without delay; the Parliament must then make your reliefe and common good their only study.

Now because we are earnestly desirous of the peace and good of all our Country-men, even of those that have opposed us, and would to our utmost possibility provide for perfect peace and freedome, & prevent all suites, debates, & contentions that may happen amongst you, in relation to the late war: we have therefore inserted it into this Agreement, that no person shall be questionable for any thing done, in relation to the late publike differences, after the dissolution of this present Parliament, further then in execution of their judgment; that thereby all may be secure from all sufferings for what they have done, & not liable hereafter to be troubled or punished by the judgment of another Parliament, which may be to their ruine, unlesse this Agreement be joyned in, whereby any acts of indempnity or oblivion shalbe made unalterable, and you and your posterities be secure.

But if any shall enquire why we should desire to joyn in an Agreement with the people, to declare these to be our native Rights, & not rather petition to the Parliament for them; the reason is evident: No Act of Parliament is or can be unalterable, and so cannot be sufficient security, to save you or us harmlesse, from what another Parliament may determine, if it should be corrupted; and besides Parliaments are to receive the extent of their power, and trust from those that betrust them; and therefore the people are to declare what their power and trust is, which is the intent of this Agreement; and its to be observed, that though there hath formerly been many Acts of Parliament, for the calling of Parliaments every yeare, yet you have been deprived of them, and inslaved through want of them; and therefore both necessity for your security in these freedoms, that are essentiall to your well-being, and wofull experience of the manifold miseries and distractions that have been lengthened out since the war ended, through want of such a settlement, requires this Agreement and when you and we shall be joyned together therein, we shall readily joyn with you, to petition the Parliament, as they are our fellow Commoners equally concerned, to joyn with us.

"if any shall enquire why we should desire to joyn in an Agreement with the people, to declare these to be our native Rights, & not rather petition to the Parliament for them; the reason is evident: No Act of Parliament is or can be unalterable"

And if any shall inquire. Why we undertake to offer this Agreement, we must professe, we are sensible that you have been so often deceived with Declarations and Remonstrances, and fed with vain hopes that you have sufficient reason to abandon all confidence in any persons whatsoever, from whom you have no other security of their intending your freedome, then bare Declaration: And therefore, as our consciences witnesse, that in simplicity and integrity of heart, we have proposed lately in the Case of the Army stated, your freedome and deliverance from slavery, oppression, and all burdens: so we desire to give you satisfying assurance thereof by this Agreement wherby the foundations of your freedoms provided in the Case, &c. shall be setted unalterably, if we shall as faithfully proceed to, and all other most vigorus actings for your good that God shall direct and enable us unto; And though the malice of our enemies, and such as they delude, would blast us by scandalls, aspersing us with designes of Anarchy, and community, yet we hope the righteous God will not onely by this our present desire of setling an equall just Government, but also by directing us unto all righteous undertakings, simply for publike good, make our uprightnesse and faithfulnessse to the interest of all our Countreymen, shine forth so clearly, that malice it selfe shall be silenced, and confounded. We question not, but the longing expectation of a firme peace, will incite you to the most speedy joyning in this Agreement: in the prosecution whereof, or of any thing that you shall desire for publike good, you may be confident, you shall never want the assistance of

Your most faithfull fellow-Commoners, now in Armes for your service.

Edmond Bear
Robert Everard
George Garret
Thomas Beverley
William Pryor
William Bryan
Matthew Weale
William Russell
John Dover
William Hudson.

Agents coming from other Regiments unto us, have subscribed the Agreement to be proposed to their respective Regiments, and you.

For Our much honoured, and truly worthy Fellow-Commoners, and Souldiers, the Officers and Souldiers under Command of His Excellencie Sir THOMAS FAIRFAX.

Gentlemen and Fellow Souldiers;

The deepe sense of many dangers and mischiefes that may befall you in relation to the late War, whensoever this Parliament shall end, unlesse sufficient prevention be now provided, hath constrained Us to study the most absolute & certain means for your security; and upon most serious considerations, we judge that no Act of Indempnity can sufficiently provide for your quiet, ease, and safety; because, as it hath formerly been, a corrupt Party (chosen into the next Parliament by your Enemies meanes) may possibly surprize the house, and make any Act of Indemnity null, seeing they cannot faile of the Kings Assistance and concurrence, in any such actings against you, that conquered him.

And by the same meanes, your freedome from impressing also, may in a short time be taken from you, though for the present, it should be granted; wee apprehend no other security, by which you shall be saved harmlesse, for what you have done in the late warre, then a mutuall Agreement between the people & you, that no person shall be questioned by any Authority whatsoever, for any thing done in relation to the late publike differences, after the dissolution of the present house of Commons, further then in execution of their judgment; and that your native freedome from constraint to serve in warre, whether domestick or forraign, shall never be subject to the power of Parliaments, or any other; and for this end, we propound the Agreement that we herewith send to you, to be forthwith subscribed.

"Therefore in this Agreement wee have inserted the certaine Rules of equall Government, under which the Nation may enjoy all its Rights and Freedomes securely"

And because we are confident, that in judgment and Conscience, ye hazarded your lives for the settlement of such a just and equall Government, that you and your posterities, and all the free borne people of this Nation might enjoy justice & freedome, and that you are really sensible that the distractions, oppressions, and miseries of the Nation, and your want of your Arrears, do proceed from the want of the establishment, both of such certain rules of just Government, and foundations of peace, as are the price of bloud, and the expected fruites of all the peoples cost: Therefore in this Agreement wee have inserted the certaine Rules of equall Government, under which the Nation may enjoy all its Rights and Freedomes securely; And as we doubt not but your love to the freedome and lasting peace of the yet distracted

Country will cause you to joyn together in this Agreement.

So we question not: but every true English man that loves the peace and freedome of England will concurre with us; and then your Arrears and constant pay (while you continue in Armes) will certainly be brought in out of the abundant love of the people to you, and then shall the mouthes of those be stopped, that scandalize you and us, as endeavouring Anarchy, or to rule by the sword; & then will so firm an union be made between the people and you, that neither any homebred or forraigne Enemies will dare to disturbe our happy peace. We shall adde no more but this; that the knowledge of your union in laying this foundation of peace, this Agreement, is much longed for, by

Yours, and the Peoples most faithfull Servants.

Postscript.

GENTLEMEN.

WE desire you may understand the reason of our extracting some principles of common freedome out of those many things proposed to you in the Case truly stated, and drawing them up into the forme of an Agreement. Its chiefly because for these things wee first ingaged gainst the King, He would not permit the peoples Representatives to provide for the Nations safety, by disposing of the Militia, and otherwayes, according to their Trust, but raised a Warre against them, and we ingaged for the defence of that power, and right of the people, in their Representatives. Therefore these things in the Agreement, the people are to claime as their native right, and price of their bloud, which you are obliged absolutely to procure for them.

And these being the foundations of freedom, its necessary, that they should be settled unalterably, which can be by no meanes, but this Agreement with the people.

And we cannot but mind you, that the ease of the people in all their Grievances, depends upon the setling those principles or rules of equal Government for a free people, & were but this Agreement established, doubtlesse all the Grievances of the Army and people would be redressed immediatly, and all things propounded in your Case truly stated to be insisted on, would be forthwith granted.

Then should the House of Commons have power to helpe the oppressed people, which they are now bereaved of by the chiefe Oppressors, and then they shall be equally concerned with you and all the people,

in the settlement of the most perfect freedom: for they shall equally suffer with you under any Burdens, or partake in any Freedom. We shall onely adde, that the summe of all the Agreement which we herewith offer to you, is but in order to the fulfilling of our Declaration of Iune the 14. wherein we promised to the people, that we would with our lives vindicate and cleare their right and power in their Parliaments.

Edmond Bear
Robert Everard
George Garret
Thomas Beverley
William Pryor
William Bryan
Matthew Wealey
William Russell
John Dober
William Hudson

Agents coming from other Regiments unto us, have subscribed the Agreement, to be proposed to their respective Regiments and you.

Second Agreement of the People: Foundations of Freedom, Or An Agreement of the People (15 Dec. 1648)

The Publisher to the Judicious Reader.

Dear Countryman,

THis Agreement having had its conception for a common good, as being that which contains those Foundations of Freedom, and Rules of Government, adjudged necessary to be established in this Nation for the future, by which all sorts of men are to be bound, I adjudged it a just and reasonable thing to publish it to the view of the Nation, to the end that all men might have an opportunity to consider the Equity therof, and offer their Reasons against any thing therein contained, before it be concluded; That being agreeable to that Principle which we profess, viz. to do unto you, as we would all men should do unto us; not doubting but that the Justice of it will be maintained and cleared, maugre the opposition of the stoutest Calumniator, especially in those clear points in the Reserve so much already controverted, viz. touching the Magistrates power to counsel or restrain in matters of Religion, and the exercise of an arbitrary power in

the Representative, to punish men for state offences, against which no Law hath provided; which two things especially are so clear to my understanding, that I dare with confidence aver, That no man can demand the exercise of such a power, but he that intends to be a Tyrant, nor no man part with them, but he that resolves to be a slave. And so at present I rest,

Friday, Decemb. 10. 1648.

Thy true-hearted Countryman.

*"that Principle which we profess, viz.
to do unto you, as we would all men
should do unto us"*

AN AGREEMENT Of the People of ENGLAND, And the places therewith INCORPORATED; For a firm and present PEACE, Vpon Grounds of *Common Right and Freedom.*

HAving by our late labors and hazards made it appear to the world, at how high a rate we value our just Freedoms, and God having so far owned our cause, as to deliver the enemies thereof into our hands, we do now hold our selves bound, in mutual duty to each other, to take the best care we can for the future to avoid both the danger of returning into a slavish condition, and the chargeable remedy of another War: For as it cannot be imagined that so many of our Countrymen would have opposed us in this quarrel, if they had understood their own good, so may we safely promise to our selves, that when our common Rights and Liberties shall be cleared, their endeavors will be disappointed, that seek to make themselves our Masters: Since therefore our former oppressions, and not yet ended troubles have been occasioned, either by want of frequent national meetings in Council, or by the undue or unequal constitution thereof, or by rendring those meetings ineffectual; we are fully agreed and resolved to provide, that hereafter our Representatives be neither left for uncertainty for time, nor be unequally constituted, nor made useless to the end for which they are intended.

In order whereunto we declare and agree,

1. That to prevent the many inconveniences apparently arising from the long continuance of the same persons in authority, this present Parliament be dissolved upon or before the last day of *April*, in the year of our Lord 1649.

2. That the people of *England* being at this day very unequally distributed, by Counties, Cities, or Burroughs for the election of their Representatives, be more in differently proportioned, and to this end, That the Representative of the whole Nation, shall consist of 300 Persons; and in each County, and the places thereto subjoynd, there shall be chosen to make up the said Representative at all times, the several numbers hereunder mentioned.

viz. [Editor: A long table listing the number of representatives to be elected for each County has been cut.]

The maner of Elections.

1. THat the Electors in every Division, shall be Natives or Denizons of *England*, such as have subscribed this Agreement; not persons receiving Alms, but such as are assessed ordinarily towards the relief of the poor; not servants to, or receiving wages from any particular person. And in all Elections (except for the Universities) they shall be men of one and twenty yeers old, or upwards, and House-keepers, dwelling within the Division, for which the Election is; Provided, that until the end of seven yeers next ensuing the time herein limited, for the end of this present Parliament, no person shall be admitted to, or have any hand or voyce in such Elections, who have adhered to, or assisted the King against the Parliament in any of these Wars or Insurrections; or who shall make or joyn in, or abet any forcible opposition against this Agreement; and that such as shall not subscribe it before the time limited, for the end of this Parliament, shall not have Vote in the next Election; neither, if they subscribe afterwards, shall they have any voyce in the Election next succeeding their subscription, unless their subscription were six months before the same.

2. That until the end of fourteen yeers, such persons, and such onely, may be elected for any Division, who by the rule aforesaid, are to have voyce in Elections in one place or other; Provided, that of those, none shall be eligible for the first or second Representatives, who have not voluntarily assisted the Parliament against the King, either in person before the fourteenth of *June*, 1645. or else in Mony, Plate, Horse, or Arms, lent upon the Propositions before the end of *May*, 1643. or who have joyned in, or abbetted the Treasonable Engagement in *London*, in the yeer 1647. or who declared or engaged themselves for a Cessation of Arms with the *Scots*, who Invaded the Nation the last Summer, or for compliance with the Actors in any the Insurrections of the same Summer, or with the Prince of *Wales*, or his accomplices in the revolted

Fleet.

3. That whoever, being by the Rules in the two next preceding Articles incapable of Election, or to be elected, shall assume to Vote in, or be present at such Elections for the first or second Representative, or being elected, shall presume to sit or Vote in either of the said Representatives, shall incur the pain of confiscation of the moyety of his estate, to the use of the Publike, in case he have any estate visible, to the value of fifty pounds. And if he have not such an estate, then he shall incur the pain of imprisonment for three months. And if any person shall forcibly oppose, molest, or hinder the people (capable of electing as aforesaid) in their quiet and free Election of their Representatives; then each person so offending, shall incur the pain of confiscation of his whole estate, both real and personal; and if he have not an estate, to the value of fifty pound, shall suffer imprisonment, during one whole yeer, without bayl or mainprise. Provided, that the offender in each such case be convicted within three months, next after the committing of his offence.

4. That for the more convenient Election of *Representatives*, each County, with the severall places thereto conjoynd, wherein more then three *Representatives* are to be chosen, shall be divided by a due proportion into so many parts, as each part may elect two, and no part above three *Representatives*. And for the making of these Divisions, two persons be chosen in every Hundred, Lath, or Wapentake, by the People therein, (capable of electing as aforesaid) which People shall on the last Tuesday in February next between eleven and three of the Clock, be assembled together for that end at the chiefe Towne, or usuall meeting place in the same Hundred, Lath, or Wapentake; And that the persons in every Hundred, Lath or Wapentake so chosen, or the Major part of them, shall on the fourteenth day after their Election, meet at the Common Hall of the County-Towne, and divide the County into parts as aforesaid, and also appoint a certain place in each respective part or Division, wherein the People shall alwaies meet for the choice of their *Representatives*, and shall make Returnes of the said Divisions, and certain places of meeting therein, into the Parliament Records in writing under the hands and seales of the major part of them present: And also cause the same to be published in every Parish in the County before the end of March now next ensuing: And for the more equall Division of the City of *London*, for the choice of its *Representatives*, there shall one person be chosen by the People in every Parish in the said City (capable of Election as aforesaid) upon the last Tuesday in February aforesaid; on which day they shall assemble in each Parish for the same purpose, between two and

four of the clock: And that the persons so chosen, or the major part of them, shall upon the fourteenth day after their Election, meet in the Guild Hall of the said City, and divide the same City into eight equall parts or Divisions, and appoint a certain place in every Division respectively, wherein the People of that Division shall alwaies meet for the choice of their *Representatives*, and shall make Returne thereof; and cause the same to be published in the manner prescribed to the severall Counties, as in this Article.

5. That for the better provision for true and certain Returnes of persons elected, the chiefe publique Officer in every Division aforesaid, who shall be present at the beginning of the Election, and in absence of every such Officer, then any person eligible as aforesaid, whom the People at that time assembled shall choose for that end, shall regulate the Elections, and by Poll or otherwise clearly distinguish and judge thereof, and make true Returne thereof, in writing indented under the hands and seales of himselfe, and of six or more of the Electors, into the Parliaments Records, within one and twenty daies after the Election, and for default thereof, or for making any false Return, shall forfeit 100 l. to the publique use.

4. That one hundred and fifty Members at least be alwaies present in each sitting of the *Representatives*, at the passing of any Law, or doing of any Act whereby the People are to be bound.

5. That every *Representative* shall within twenty daies after their first meeting, appoint a Councell of State for the managing of publique affaires, untill the first day of the next *Representative*, and the same Councell to act and proceed therein, according to such instructions and limitations as the *Representatives* shall give, and not otherwise.

6. That to the end all Officers of State may be certainly accomptable, and no Factions made to maintain corrupt interests, no Member of a Councell of State, nor any Officer of any salary Forces in Army or Garrison, nor any Treasurer or Receiver of publique moneys, shall (while such) be elected to be a *Representative*: And in case any such Election shall be, the same to be void; and in case any Lawyer shall be chosen of any *Representative*, or Councell of State, then he shall be incapable of practise as a Lawyer, during that trust.

7. That the power of the Peoples *Representatives* extend (without the consent or concurrence of any other person or persons) to the enacting, altering, repealing, and declaring of Lawes; to the erecting and abolishing Officers of Courts of Justice, and to

whatsoever is not in this *Agreement* excepted or reseryed from them:

"We do not empower our *Representatives* to continue in force, or make any Lawes, Oaths and Covenants, whereby to compell by penalties or otherwise, any person to any thing, in or about matters of Faith, Religion, or Gods Worship"

As particularly:

- 1. We do not empower our *Representatives* to continue in force, or make any Lawes, Oaths and Covenants, whereby to compell by penalties or otherwise, any person to any thing, in or about matters of Faith, Religion, or Gods Worship, or to restraine any person from the professing his Faith, or exercise of Religion, according to his Conscience, in any house or place (except such as are, or shall be set apart for the publique worship,) neverthesse the instruction or directing of the Nation in a publique way, for the matters of Faith, Worship, or Discipline (so it be not compulsive or expresse Popery) is referred to their discretion.
- 2. We do not empower them to impresse or constraine any person to serve in Warre either by Sea or Land, every mans conscience being to be satisfied in the justnesse of that cause wherein he hazards his life.
- 3. That after the dissolution of this present Parliament, none of the people be at any time questioned for any thing said or done in reference to the late VVarres, or publique differences, otherwise then in execution or pursuance of the determination of the present House of Commons, against such as have adhered to the King or his interest against the People: And saving that Accomptants for publique moneys received, shall remain accomptable for the same.
- 4. That in any Lawes hereafter to be made, no person by vertue of any Tenure, Grant, Charter, Pattent, Degree or Birth, shall be priviledged from subjection thereto, or being bound thereby as well as others.
- 5. That all priviledges or exemptions of any persons from the Lawes, or from the ordinary course of legall proceedings, by vertue of any Tenure, Grant, Charter, Pattent, Degree or Birth, or of any place of residence or refuge, shall be henceforth void and null, and the like not to be made nor revived againe.
- 6. That the *Representatives* intermeddle not

with the execution of Lawes, nor give judgement upon any mans person or estate, where no Law hath been before provided; save only in calling to an accompt, and punishing publike Officers for abusing or failing their trust.

- 7. That no Member of any future *Representative* be made either Receiver, Treasurer or other Officer during that employment, saving to be a Member of the Councill of State.
- 8. That no *Representative* shall in any wise render up, or give, or take away any the foundations of Common Right, liberty or safety contained in this *Agreement*, nor shall levell mens estates, destroy propriety, or make all things common.

8. That the Councill of State, in case of imminent danger or extream necessity, may in each intervall, summon a *Representative* to be forthwith chosen, and to meet, so as the Sessions thereof continue not above forty daies, and to it dissolve two moneths before the appointed time for the meeting of the next *Representative*.

"That no *Representative* shall in any wise render up, or give, or take away any the foundations of Common Right, liberty or safety contained in this *Agreement*, nor shall levell mens estates, destroy propriety, or make all things common."

9. That all securities given by the publike Faith of the Nation, shall be made good by the next and all future *Representatives*, save that the next *Representative* may continue or make null in part or in whole, all gifts of moneys made by the present House of Commons to their own Members, or to any of the Lords, or to any of the Attendants of either of them.

10. That every Officer or Leader of any Forces in any present or future Army, or Garrison that shall resist the Orders of the next or any future *Representative*, (except such *Representative* shall expressly violate this *Agreement*) shall forthwith after his or their resistance, by vertue of this *Agreement*, loose the benefit and protection of all the Lawes of the Land, and die without mercy.

These things we declare to be essentiall to our just Freedomes, and to a through composure of our long and wofull distractions. And therefore we are agreed and resolved to maintain these certain Rules of Government, and all that joyne therein, with our utmost

possibilities, against all opposition whatsoever.

These following Particulars were offered to be inserted in the *Agreement*, but adjudged fit, as the most eminent grievances to be redressed by the next *Representative*.

1. IT shall not be in their Power, to punish or cause to be punished, any person or persons, for refusing to answer to Questions against themselves in criminal Cases.

2. That it shall not be in their Power, to continue or constitute any proceedings in Law, that shall be longer then three or four months, in finally determining of any Cause past all Appeal, or to continue the Laws (or proceedings therein) in any other Language, then in the English tongue.

3. It shall not be in their Power, to continue or make any Laws, to abridg any person from Trading unto any Parts beyond the Seas, unto which any are allowed to Trade, or to restrain Trade at home.

"It shall not be in their Power, to continue or make any Laws, to abridg any person from Trading unto any Parts beyond the Seas, unto which any are allowed to Trade, or to restrain Trade at home"

4. It shall not be in their Power, to continue Excize longer then twenty days after the beginning of the next *Representative*, nor to raise moneys by any other way, except by an equal rate, proportionally to mens real or personal Estates; wherein all persons not worth above thirty pound, shall be exempted from bearing any part of publike Charge, except to the poor, and other accustomed Charge of the place where they dwell.

5. It shall not be in their Power, to make or continue any Law, whereby mens Estates, or any part thereof, shall be exempted from payment of their Debts; or to continue or make any Law, to imprison any mans person for Debts of any nature.

6. It shall not be in their Power, to make or continue any Law, for taking away any mans life, except for Murther, or for endeavoring by force, to destroy this *Agreement*; but shall use their uttermost endeavor, to propound punishments equal to Offences, That so mens Lives, Limbs, Liberties, and Estates, may not as hitherto, be lyable to be taken away upon trivial or slight occasion; and shall have special care, to keep all sorts of people from Misery and Beggery.

7. They shall not continue or make a Law, to deprive any person, in Case or Tryal, from the benefit of Witnesses, as well for, as against him.

8. They shall not continue the grievance and oppression of Tithes, longer then to the end of the first *Representative*; in which time, they shall provide for, and satisfie all Impropiators: Neither shall they force any person, to pay toward the maintenance of the publike Ministers, who out of Conscience cannot submit thereunto; but shall provide for them in some other unoppressive way.

9. They shall not continue or make a Law, for any other ways of Judgment or Conviction of Life, Liberty, or Estate, but onely by twelve sworn men of the Neighborhood.

10. They shall not continue or make a Law, to allow any person to take above six pound *per cent.* for loan of Money for a year.

11. They shall not disable any person from bearing any Office in the Common-wealth, for any opinion or practise in Religion, though contrary to the publike way.

Unto these I shall adde.

I. That the next *Representative*, be most earnestly pressed, for the ridding of this Kingdom of those Vermine and Caterpillars, the Lawyers, the chief bane of this poor Nation; to erect a Court of Justice in every Hundred in the Nation, for the ending of all Differences arising in that Hundred, by twelve men of the same Hundred, annually chosen by Freemen of that Hundred, with express and plain Rules in *English*, made by the *Representative*, or supreme *Authority* of the Nation, for them to guide their Judgments by.

II. That for the preventing of Fraud, Thefts, and Deceits, there be forthwith in every County or Shire in *England*, and the Dominion of *Wales*, erected a County Record for the perfect Registring of all Conveyances, Bills, and Bonds, &c. Upon a severe and strict penalty.

III. That in case there be any need after the erection of Hundred Courts of Majors, Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, Deputy Lieutenants, &c. That the People capable of Election of *Parliament men*, in the foregoing *Agreement*, be restored by the *Representative*, unto their native, just, and undoubted Right, by common Consent, from amongst themselves, annually to chuse all the foresaid Officers in such maner, as shall be plainly and clearly described, and laid down by the supreme *Authority* of the Nation: And

that when any Subsidies or publike Taxes be laid upon the Nation, the Freemen of every Division or Hundred, capable of Election as aforesaid, chuse out Persons by common Consent from amongst themselves, for the equal division of their Assessments.

IV. That the next *Representative*, be earnestly desired to abolish all base Tenures.

Third Agreement of the People: An Agreement of the Free People of England (1 May 1649).

A Preparative to all sorts of people.

IF AFFLICTIONS make men wise, and wisdom direct to happinesse, then certainly this Nation is not far from such a degree therof, as may compare if not far exceed, any part of the world: having for some yeares by-past, drunk deep of the Cup of misery and sorrow. We blesse God our consciences are cleer from adding affliction to affliction, having ever laboured from the beginning, of our publick distractions, to compose and reconcile them: & should esteem it the Crown of all our temporal felicity that yet we might be instrumentall in procuring the peace and prosperity of this Common-wealth the land of our Nativity.

And therefore according to our promise in our late Manifestation of the 14 of Aprill 1649. (being perswaded of the necessitie and justnesse thereof) as a Peace-Offering to the Free people of this Nation, we tender this ensuing Agreement, not knowing any more effectuall means to put a finall period to all our feares and troubles.

It is a way of settlement, though at first much startled at by some in high authority; yet according to the nature of truth, it hath made its own way into the understanding, and taken root in most mens hearts and affections, so that we have reall ground to hope (what ever shall become of us) that our earnest desires and indeavours for good to the people will not altogether be null and frustrate.

The life of all things is in the right use and application, which is not our worke only, but every mans conscience must look to it selfe, and not dreame out more seasons and opportunities. And this we trust will satisfie all ingenuous people that we are not such

wilde, irrationall, dangerous Creatures as we have been aspersed to be; This agreement being the ultimate end and full scope of all our desires and intentions concerning the Government of this Nation, and wherein we shall absolutely rest satisfied and acquiesce; nor did we ever give just cause for any to beleve worse of us by any thing either said or done by us, and which would not in the least be doubted, but that men consider not the interest of those that I have so unchristian-like made bold with our good names; but we must bear with men of such interests as are opposite to any part of this Agreement, when neither our Saviour nor his Apostles innocency could stop such mens mouthes whose interests their doctrines and practises did extirpate; And therefore if friends at least would but consider what interest men relate to, whilst they are telling or whispering their aspersions against us, they would find the reason and save us a great deale of labour in clearing our selves, it being a remarkable signe of an ill cause when aspersions supply the place of Arguments.

We blesse God that he hath given us time and hearts to bring it to this issue, what further he hath for us to do is yet only knowne to his wisdom, to whose will and pleasure we shall willingly submit; we have if we look with the eyes of frailty, enemies like the sons of Anak, but if with the eyes of faith and confidence in a righteous God and a just cause, we see more with us then against us.

JOHN LILBURN.
WILLIAM WALWYN.
THOMAS PRINCE.
RICHARD OVERTON.

From our causelesse captivity in the Tower of
London,
May 1. 1649.

The Agreement it selfe thus followeth.

After the long and tedious prosecution of a most unnaturall cruell, homebred war, occasioned by divisions and distempers amongst our selves, and those distempers arising from the uncertaintie of our Government, and the exercise of an unlimited or Arbitrary power, by such as have been trusted with Supreme and subordinate Authority, wherby multitudes of grievances and intolerable oppressions have been brought upon us. And finding after eight yeares experience and expectation all indeavours hitherto used, or remedies hitherto applyed, to have encreased rather then diminished our distractions, and that if not speedily prevented our falling againe into factions and divisions, will not only deprive us of the benefit of all

those wonderful Victories God hath vouchsafed against such as sought our bondage, but expose us first to poverty and misery, and then to be destroyed by forraigne enemies. And being earnestly desirous to make a right use of that opportunity God hath given us to make this Nation Free and Happy, to reconcile our differences, and beget a perfect amitie and friendship once more amongst us, that we may stand clear in our consciences before Almighty God, as unbyassed by any corrupt Interest or particular advantages, and manifest to all the world that our indeavours have not proceeded from malice to the persons of any, or enmity against opinions; but in reference to the peace and prosperity of the Common-wealth, and for prevention of like distractions, and removall of all grievances; We the free People of England, to whom God hath given hearts, means and opportunity to effect the same, do with submission to his wisdom, in his name, and desiring the equity thereof may be to his praise and glory; Agree to ascertain our Government, to abolish all arbitrary Power, and to set bounds and limits both to our Supreme, and all Subordinate Authority, and remove all known Grievances.

**"We the free People of England
..agree to ascertain our Government, to
abolish all arbitrary Power, and to set
bounds and limits both to our Supreme,
and all Subordinate Authority, and
remove all known Grievances."**

**And accordingly do declare and publish to
all the world, that we are agreed as
followeth,**

I. That the Supreme Authority of England and the Territories therewith incorporate, shall be and reside henceforward in a Representative of the People consisting of four hundred persons, but no more; in the choice of whom (according to naturall right) all men of the age of one and twenty yeers and upwards (not being servants, or receiving alms, or having served the late King in Arms or voluntary Contributions) shall have their voices; and be capable of being elected to that Supreme Trust, those who served the King being disabled for ten years onely. All things concerning the distribution of the said four hundred Members proportionable to the respective parts of the Nation, the severall places for Election, the manner of giving and taking of Voyces, with all Circumstances of like nature, tending to the compleating and equall proceedings in Elections, as also their Salary, is referred to be settled by this present Parliament, in such sort as the next Representative may be in a certain capacity to meet with safety at the time herein expressed: and such

circumstances to be made more perfect by future Representatives.

II. That two hundred of the four hundred Members, and not lesse, shall be taken and esteemed for a competent Representative; and the major Voyces present shall be concluding to this Nation. The place of Session, and choice of a Speaker, with other circumstances of that nature, are referred to the care of this and future Representatives.

III. And to the end all publick Officers may be certainly accountable, and no Factions made to maintain corrupt Interests, no Officer of any salary, Forces in Army or Garison, nor any Treasurer or Receiver of publick monies, shall (while such) be elected a Member for any Representative; and if any Lawyer shall at any time be chosen, he shall be incapable of practice as a Lawyer, during the whole time of that Trust. And for the same reason, and that all persons may be capable of subjection as well as rule.

"all publick Officers may be certainly accountable, and no Factions made to maintain corrupt Interests, no Officer of any salary, Forces in Army or Garison, nor any Treasurer or Receiver of publick monies, shall (while such) be elected a Member for any Representative; and if any Lawyer shall at any time be chosen, he shall be incapable of practice as a Lawyer, during the whole time of that Trust."

III. That no Member of the present Parliament shall be capable of being elected of the next Representative, nor any Member of any future Representative shall be capable of being chosen for the Representative immediately succeeding: but are free to be chosen, one Representative having intervened: Nor shall any Member of any Representative be made either Receiver, Treasurer, or other Officer during that employment.

V. That for avoyding the many dangers and inconveniences apparently arising from the long continuance of the same persons in Authority; We Agree, that this present Parliament shall end the first Wednesday in August next 1649, and thenceforth be of no power or Authority: and in the mean time shall order and direct the Election of a new and equall Representative, according to the true intent of this our Agreement: and so as the next Representative may meet and sit in power and Authority as an effectuall Representative upon the day following; namely, the first Thursday of the same August, 1649.

VI. We agree, if the present Parliament shall omit to order such Election or Meeting of a new Representative; or shall by any means be hindered from performance of that Trust:

That in such case, we shall for the next Representative proceed in electing thereof in those places, & according to that manner & number formerly accustomed in the choice of Knights and Burgesses; observing onely the exceptions of such persons from being Electors or Elected, as are mentioned before in the first third, and fourth Heads of this Agreement: It being most unreasonable that we should either be kept from new, frequent and successive Representatives, or that the supreme Authority should fall into the hands of such as have manifested disaffection to our common Freedom, and endeavoured the bondage of the Nation.

VII. And for preserving the supreme authority from falling into the hands of any whom the people have not, or shall not chuse, We are resolved and agreed (God willing) that a new Representative shall be upon the first Thursday in August next aforesaid: the ordering and disposing of themselves, as to the choice of a speaker, and the like circumstances, is hereby left to their discretion: But are in the extent and exercise of Power, to follow the direction and rules of this agreement; and are hereby authorised and required according to their best judgements, to set rules for future equall distribution, and election of Members as is herein intended and enjoyed to be done, by the present Parliament.

VIII. And for the preservation of the supreme Authority (in all times) entirely in the hands of such persons only as shal be chosen thereunto—we agree and declare: That the next & al future Representatives, shall continue in full power for the space of one whole year: and that the people shall of course, chuse a Parliament once every year so as all the members thereof may be in a capacity to meet, and take place of the foregoing Representative: the first Thursday in every August for ever if God so please; Also (for the same reason) that the next or any future Representative being met, shall continue their Session day by day without intermission for four monthes at the least; and after that shall be at Liberty to adjourn from two monthes to two months, as they shall see cause untill their yeer be expired, but shall sit no longer then a yeer upon pain of treason to every member that shall exceed that time: and in times of adjournment shall not erect a Council of State but refer the managing of affairs in the intervals to a Committee of their own members, giving such instructions, and publish them, as shall in no measure contradict this agreement.

IX. And that none henceforth may be ignorant or doubtful concerning the power of the Supreme authority, and of the affairs, about which the same is to be conversant and exercised: we agree and declare, that the power of Representatives shall extend without the consent or concurrence of any other person or persons,

1. To the conservation of Peace and commerce with forrain Nations.

2. To the preservation of those safe guards, and securities of our lives, limbes, liberties, properties, and estates, contained in the Petition of Right, made and enacted in the third year of the late King.

3. To the raising of moneys, and generally to all things as shall be evidently conducing to those ends, or to the enlargement of our freedom, redress of grievances, and prosperity of the Commonwealth.

For security whereof, having by wofull experience found the prevalence of corrupt interests powerfully inclining most men once entrusted with authority, to pervert the same to their own domination, and to the prejudice of our Peace and Liberties, we therefore further agree and declare.

X. That we do not impower or entrust our said representatives to continue in force, or to make any Lawes, Oaths, or Covenants, whereby to compell by penalties or otherwise any person to any thing in or about matters of faith, Religion or Gods worship or to restrain any person from the profession of his faith, or exercise of Religion according to his Conscience, nothing having caused more distractions, and heart burnings in all ages, then persecution and molestation for matters of Conscience in and about Religion:

XI. We doe not impower them to impresse or constrain any person to serve in war by Sea or Land every mans Conscience being to be satisfied in the justness of that cause wherein he hazards his own life, or may destroy an others.

"We doe not impower them to impresse or constrain any person to serve in war by Sea or Land every mans Conscience being to be satisfied in the justness of that cause wherein he hazards his own life, or may destroy an others."

And for the quieting of all differences, and abolishing of all enmity and rancour, as much as is now possible for us to effect.

XII. We agree, That after the end of this present Parliament, no person shall be questioned for any thing said or done in reference to the late Warres, or publique differences; otherwise then in pursuance of the determinations of the present Parliament, against such as have adhered to the King against the Liberties of the people: And saving that Accomptants for publick moneys received, shall remain accomptable for the same.

XIII. That all priviledges or exemptions of any persons from the Lawes, or from the ordinary course of Legall proceedings, by vertue of any Tenure, Grant, Charter, Patent, Degree, or Birth, or of any place of residence, or refuge, or priviledge of Parliament, shall be henceforth void and null; and the like not to be made nor revived again.

XIII. We doe not impower them to give judgment upon any ones person or estate, where no Law hath been before provided, nor to give power to any other Court or jurisdiction so to do, Because where there is no Law, there is no transgression, for men or Magistrates to take Cognisance of; neither doe we impower them to intermeddle with the execution of any Law whatsoever.

XV. And that we may remove all long settled Grievances, and thereby as farre as we are able, take away all cause of complaints, and no longer depend upon the uncertain inclination of Parliaments to remove them, nor trouble our selves or them with Petitions after Petitions, as hath been accustomed, without fruit or benefit; and knowing no cause why any should repine at our removall of them, except such as make advantage by their continuance, or are related to some corrupt Interests, which we are not to regard.

We agree and Declare,

XVI. That it shall not be in the power of any Representative, to punish, or cause to be punished, any person or persons for refusing to answer to questions against themselves in Criminall cases.

XVII. That it shall not be in their power, after the end of the next Representative, to continue or constitute any proceedings in Law that shall be longer then Six months in the final determination of any cause past all Appeal, nor to continue the Lawes or proceedings therein in any other Language then English, nor to hinder any person or persons from pleading their own Causes, or of making use of whom they please to plead for them.

The reducing of these and other the like provisions

of this nature in this Agreement provided, and which could not now in all particulars be perfected by us, is intended by us to be the proper works of faithful Representatives.

XVIII. That it shall not be in their power to continue or make any Laws to abridge or hinder any person or persons, from trading or merchandizing into any place beyond the Seas, where any of this Nation are free to Trade.

XIX. That it shall not be in their power to continue Excise or Customes upon any sort of Food, or any other Goods, Wares, or Commodities, longer then four months after the beginning of the next Representative, being both of them extreme burthensome and oppressive to Trade, and so expensive in the Receipt, as the moneys expended therein (if collected as Subsidies have been) would extend very far towards defraying the publick Charges; and forasmuch as all Moneys to be raised are drawn from the People; such burthensome and chargeable wayes, shall never more be revived, nor shall they raise Moneys by any other wayes (after the aforesaid time) but only by an equal rate in the pound upon every reall and personall estate in the Nation.

XX. That it shall not be in their power to make or continue any Law, whereby mens reall or personall estates, or any part thereof, shall be exempted from payment of their debts; or to imprison any person for debt of any nature, it being both unchristian in it self, and no advantage to the Creditors, and both a reproach and prejudice to the Commonwealth.

XXI. That it shall not be in their power to make or continue any Law, for taking away any mans life, except for murder, or other the like hainous offences destructive to humane Society, or for endeavouring by force to destroy this our Agreement, but shall use their uttermost endeavour to appoint punishments equall to offences: that so mens Lives, Limbs, Liberties, and estates, may not be liable to be taken away upon trivial or slight occasions as they have been; and shall have speciall care to preserve, all sorts of people from wickedness misery and beggery: nor shall the estate of any capitall offender be confiscate but in cases of treason only; and in all other capitall offences recompence shall be made to the parties damnified, as well out of the estate of the Malifactor, as by loss of life, according to the conscience of his jury.

XXII. That it shall not be in their power to continue or make any Law, to deprive any person, in case of Tryals for Life, Limb, Liberty, or Estate from the benefit of witnesses on his or their behalf; nor deprive

any person of those priviledges, and liberties, contained in the Petition of Right, made in the third year of the late King Charls.

XXIII. That it shall not be in their power to continue the Grievance of Tithes, longer then to the end of the next Representative; in which time, they shall provide to give reasonable satisfaction to all Impropriators: neither shall they force by penalties or otherwise any person to pay towards the maintenance of any Ministers, who out of conscience cannot submit thereunto.

XXIV. That it shall not be in their power to impose Ministers upon any the respective Parishes, but shall give free liberty to the parishioners of every particular parish, to chuse such as themselves shall approve; and upon such terms, and for such reward, as themselves shall be willing to contribute, or shall contract for. Provided, none be chusers but such as are capable of electing Representatives.

"That it shal not be in their power, to continue or make a law, for any other way of Judgments, or Conviction of life, limb, liberty, or estate, but onely by twelve sworn men of the Neighborhood; to be chosen in some free way by the people"

XXV. That it shal not be in their power, to continue or make a law, for any other way of Judgments, or Conviction of life, limb, liberty, or estate, but onely by twelve sworn men of the Neighborhood; to be chosen in some free way by the people; to be directed before the end of the next Representative, and not picked and imposed, as hitherto in many places they have been.

XXVI. They shall not disable any person from bearing any office in the Common-wealth, for any opinion or practice in Religion, excepting such as maintain the Popes (or other forraign) Supremacy.

XXVII. That it shal not be in their power to impose any publike officer upon any Counties, Hundreds, Cities, Towns, or Borroughs; but the people capable by this Agreement to chuse Representatives, shall chuse all their publike Officers that are in any kinde to administer the Law for their respective places, for one whole yeer, and no longer, and so from yeer to yeer: and this as an especial means to avoyd Factions, and Parties.

And that no person may have just cause to complain, by reason of taking away the Excise and Customs, we agree,

XXVIII. That the next, and all future Representatives shall exactly keep the publike Faith, and give full satisfaction, for all securities, debts, arrears or damages, (justly chargeable) out of the publike Treasury; and shall confirm and make good all just publike Purchases and Contracts that have been, or shall be made; save that the next Representative may confirm or make null in part or in whole, all gifts of Lands, Moneys, Offices, or otherwise made by the present Parliament, to any Member of the House of Commons, or to any of the Lords, or to any of the attendants of either of them.

And for as much as nothing threateneth greater danger to the Common-wealth, then that the Military power should by any means come to be superior to the Civil Authority,

XXIX. We declare and agree, That no Forces shall be raised, but by the Representatives, for the time being; and in raising thereof, that they exactly observe these Rules, namely, That they allot to each particular County, City, Town, and Borough, the raising, furnishing, agreeing, and paying of a due proportion, according to the whole number to be levied; and shall to the Electors of Representatives in each respective place, give Free liberty, to nominate and appoint all Officers appertaining to Regiments, Troops, and Companies, and to remove them as they shall see cause, Reserving to the Representative, the nominating and appointing onely of the General, and all General-Officers; and the ordering, regulatng, and commanding of them all, upon what service shall seem to them necessary for the Safety, Peace, and Freedom of the Common-wealth.

"That generally men make little or nothing, to innovate in Government, to exceed their time and power in places of trust, to introduce an Arbitrary, and Tyrannical power, and to overturn all things into Anarchy and Confusion"

And in as much as we have found by sad experience, That generally men make little or nothing, to innovate in Government, to exceed their time and power in places of trust, to introduce an Arbitrary, and Tyrannical power, and to overturn all things into Anarchy and Confusion, where there are no penalties imposed for such destructive crimes and offences,

XXX. We therefore agree and declare, That it shall not be in the power of any Representative, in any wise, to render up, or give, or take away any part of this Agreement, nor level mens Estates, destroy Propriety, or make all things Common: And if any Representative shall endeavor, as a Representative, to destroy this Agreement, every Member present in the House, not entering or immediately publishing his dissent, shall incur the pain due for High Treason, and be proceeded against accordingly; and if any person or persons, shall by force endeavor or contrive, the destruction thereof, each person so doing, shall likewise be dealt withal as in cases of Treason.

And if any person shall by force of Arms disturb Elections of Representatives, he shall incurr the penalty of a Riot; and if any person not capable of being an Elector, or Elected, shall intrude themselves amongst those that are, or any persons shall behave themselves rudely and disorderly, such persons shall be liable to a presentment by a grand Inquest and to an indictment upon misdemeanor; and be fined and otherwise punish'd according to the discretion and verdict of a Jury. And all Laws made or that shall be made contrary to any part of this Agreement are hereby made null and void.

Thus, as becometh a free People, thankfull unto God for this blessed opportunity, and desirous to make use thereof to his glory, in taking off every yolk, and removing every burthen, in delivering the captive, and setting the oppressed free; we have in all the particular Heads forementioned, done as we would be done unto, and as we trust in God will abolish all occasion of offence and discord, and produce the lasting Peace and Prosperity of this Common-wealth: and accordingly do in the sincerity of our hearts and consciences, as in the presence of Almighty God, give cleer testimony of our absolute agreement to all and every part hereof by subscribing our hands thereunto. Dated the first day of May, in the Yeer of our Lord 1649.

JOHN LILBURN.
WILLIAM WALWYN.
THOMAS PRINCE.
RICHARD OVERTON.
April 30. 1649.

Further Information



Source

These three documents come from a larger, 7 volume collection of *Leveller Tracts* (1638-1660) which is in production. For more information see the combined table of contents page for the collection </pages/leveller-tracts-table-of-contents>:

1. T.115 [1647.11.03] [Several Hands], *An Agreement of the People for a firme and present Peace, upon grounds of common-right and freedome* (3 November 1647).
2. T.167 [1648.12.15] Anon., *Foundations of Freedom, Or An Agreement of the People* (15 December, 1648).
3. T.191 [1649.05.01] John Lilburne, William Walwyn, Thomas Prince, Richard Overton, *An Agreement of the Free People of England* (1 May 1649).

Further Reading on the Levellers

Group: The Levellers:

- </groups/139>

Topic: The English Revolution:

- </groups/68>

Introductions to the OLL Collection

Quotations about Liberty and Power. Each week a new quote is added to the front page of the OLL. It highlights a key idea about liberty or power by one of our authors. The collection now totals over 500 quotes which are categorized by topics such as free trade, money, abolition, law, literature, politics, war & peace, despots, etc. <oll.libertyfund.org/quotes>.

The OLL Reader is an anthology of some of the most important material in the Online Library of Liberty. They are chapter length extracts which have been formatted as pamphlets in PDF, ePub, and Kindle formats for easier distribution. These extracts are designed for use in the classroom and discussion groups, or material for a literature table for outreach. The full list can be found here <oll.libertyfund.org/pages/best-of-the-oll>.

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About the the OLL & Liberty Fund

The Online Library of Liberty is a project of Liberty Fund, Inc., a private educational foundation established in 1960 to encourage the study of the ideal of a society of free and responsible individuals. The Foundation develops, supervises, and finances its own educational activities to foster thought and encourage discourse on enduring intellectual issues pertaining to liberty.

The OLL website has a large collection of books and study guides about individual liberty, limited constitutional government, the free market, and peace. It makes these resources available at no charge to the public for educational purposes. The OLL has won a number of international awards and recognition from such bodies as the Library of Congress (we were selected for the Minerva Archiving Project), the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the British Arts & Humanities Research Council.

- Liberty Fund: <www.libertyfund.org>
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