The Pamphleteer's Protestant Champion: Viewing Oliver Cromwell Through the Media of his Day

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THE YEARS between 1640 and 1660 witnessed in England a greater outpouring of printed material than the country had seen since the first printing press had begun operating in the 1470s.[1] The breakdown of government and Church censorship in the early 1640s was almost total until the mid-1650s when Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector reimposed some controls. Not until the return of the Stuarts and their royal censors did the flow of pamphlets cease. This tumultuous period of English history therefore became a crowded arena for free expression of radical religious, social, and political ideas. This fact, coupled with the euphoria surrounding the victories of the New Model Army, the uninhibited exchange of ideas, and the general millennial atmosphere, especially following Charles I's execution, led many Englishman to see their nation as the emerging leader of the Protestant world.

A recurring theme among these pamphlets, sermons, and broadsides was the idea that Oliver Cromwell was the man to lead England into this new age. Like the second coming of the Swedish soldier-king Gustavus Adolphus, Cromwell would champion the Protestant cause wherever it was in need. As a Civil War hero, conqueror of the Irish and Scots, and later as Lord Protector, the devoutly religious Cromwell certainly had the background to fit the role. Yet in practical terms, England of the 1640s and 1650s was not the military juggernaut that many writers pictured it to be. The nation was not capable of wiping out the Turkish menace, unseating the Pope, and defending persecuted Protestants on the Continent all in one fell swoop. The financial difficulties of the Stuarts did not disappear with the execution of Charles, and though the navy was strong, it was not logistically feasible for the army to get involved in a large Continental war.

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Despite this, even Cromwell himself had some occasional delusions of religious and military grandeur. A well known quote has him saying that, were he ten years younger, "there was not a king in Europe I would not make to tremble."[2] In moments of religious fervor Cromwell might have seen himself and England in a millenial light, yet he was first and foremost a pragmatic politician. His genuine belief in the need to aid and protect his co-religionists took a secondary position to the day-to-day realities of English society and politics. His alliance with the Catholic French against the Spanish and his acquiescence to the war agaist the Protestant Dutch provide ample evidence of his heeding realpolitik considerations over any Pan-Protestant ideology.

Why then was Cromwell cast by the pamphleteers as a Protestant champion? The answer lies in the fact that the world view of the average Englishman was limited to either what he read or what was read to him, either at informal gatherings or in church. Thus, the power of the printed word is hard to exaggerate in this time of upheaval and millennial anticipation. How and why Oliver Cromwell was cast in the role of English savior is directly related to the outlook of his contemporaries as shaped by the literature of the era.

After distinguished service in the early years of the Civil War, Cromwell was firmly thrust into the limelight following his participation in the Battle of Naseby on 14 June 1645, the conflict's decisive engagement. Having only recently rejoined the army following his exemption from the Self Denying Ordinance, he was to play a major role in this Parliamentary victory. Despite an overwhelming numerical advantage (14,000 vs. 7,500), the Parliamentary forces were on the verge of collapse following a Royalist charge against one end of their line. Cromwell, however, led the better disciplined Parliamentary horse on a charge against the opposite flank and succeeded in getting behind the Royalist infantry and thus swinging the victory toward Parliament. Though the King held out for another year, Naseby effectively crushed the Royalist cause.[3]

Cromwell's letter to the Speaker of the House William Lenthall following the battle set the tone for future Cromwellian victory announcements. In its two paragraphs, the letter, which was read to Parliament as well as in the Churches in and around London,[4] credited the victory to God no less than six times. He wrote, "This [victory] is none other but the hand of God; and to him alone belongs the glory, wherein none are to share with him."[5] Cromwell's giving credit for his triumphs to divine providence is a recurring theme throughout his life.

Two months later, from the town of Bristol, Cromwell sent more good tidings to Parliament. Having just concluded a storming of the town, Cromwell wrote, "This is none other than the work of God. He must be a very atheist that doth not acknowledge it." After thanking God several more times, Cromwell described his

soldiers' joy as being in the knowledge "that they are instruments of God's glory and their country's good."[6]

Following Naseby, the New Model Army ran off a string of victories. An atmosphere of invincibility and a sense of divine backing began to permeate the army and its supporters. Hugh Peter, an army chaplain and Independent minister, preached a sermon before Parliament in April 1645 (which was revised and printed in 1646) in which he spoke of seeing "God's hand" in Parliament's victory. Peter made special mention of Cromwell as a decisive player in the victory at Naseby. He also saw an expanded role for England, saying that "the Lord hath made us warlike, awaked us thoroughly out of our effeminacy and we are becom[ing] formidable to our neighbors." Going even further, Peter saw the Palatinate, Germany, France, Ireland, and the Netherlands all looking to England for leadership.[7]

Along with the growing pubic praise for the New Model Army as it continued its dominance over the Royalist forces was the increased stature enjoyed by Cromwell following Naseby. A Parliamentary newspaper in 1646 was full of praise for the "active and gallant commander Lieutenant General Cromewell" when he visited London. It described his great willingness "to advance the Great Cause in hand for the Reformation of Religion, and the resettling of the peace and government of the kingdom." The article goes on to describe the awe in which the other MP's viewed him as well as to state, "[Cromwell] had never brought his colors from the field but he did wind up victory within them."[8]

It should be recalled that Europe was still embroiled in the Thirty Years War, which the Stuarts had avoided despite the fact that James I's daughter (Charles I's sister) was married to the Elector of the Palatinate. England remained neutral due to the financial crisis at home, as well as to allow James to play the role of mediator in the conflict. For many Englishmen, the refusal to aid the Protestant cause on the Continent was an embarrassment. Hugh Peter's reference to England getting over her "effeminacy" and becoming warlike is an example of Puritan disappointment with Stuart foreign policy. As Christopher Hill writes, "It was with burning shame that such patriots saw the supine or hostile attitude of their government whilst these great issues were at stake."[9]

In May 1646, the King fled to the Scottish army and with the surrender of the Royalist capital of Oxford in July, the Civil War seemed over. Cromwell returned to his home following the signing of the terms of capitulation. In the succeeding months the army became increasingly radicalized by Parliament's refusal to address the soldiers' material grievances and its rejection of the army's right to petition.[10] Negotiations with the King had become fruitless and the chances for a settlement with him looked bleak. When a group of soldiers seized Charles in

June 1647, Cromwell threw in his lot with the army radicals.[11]

With the outbreak of the second Civil War in March 1648, Cromwell again was in the field at the head of an army. After easily suppressing a Royalist uprising in Wales, Cromwell hurried to help repel the invading Scottish army from the North. In a series of battles from 17-19 August Cromwell shattered the dispirited and divided Scots at Preston. In his dispatch to Parliament, General Cromwell again credited the victory to the Lord's providence. "Surely, Sir," he wrote, "this is nothing but the hand of God." The victory did on the surface seem miraculous considering the Scots' superiority in numbers. As Cromwell wrote, "Only give me leave to add one word, showing the disparity of forces (21,000 Scots vs. 8,600 English) . . . that you may see and all the world acknowledge the hand of God in this business.[12] In truth, the English victory was much more dependent on Scottish ineptitude than divine intervention, but the effect on public opinion of a success against such a numerically superior force was undoubtedly tremendous.

The defeat of the Royalist threat in the Second Civil war was followed by the well known events of the Army entering London on 2 December 1648 and Colonel Pride's purge of the Parliament on 5 December. The Army was now in control of the government and ready to push through its own agenda. No solution involving the king now seemed possible and talk of his being put on trial and removed was circulating the capital. Early in December one London news sheet openly questioned what sort of government should replace the monarchy. It read, "For (say the Saints) shall not we be happy when we ourselves make choice of a good and upright man to be king over us?" The article described an elected king as one who "esteemeth of Religion and Virtue, [more] than of all other worldly things." Two men who were deemed to possess the necessary traits were "honorable and victorious Fairfax or Cromwell, in whom God hath miraculously manifested his presence."[13] This article was important not only because its author considered Cromwell suitable material for kingship, but also because it demonstrated the view of Cromwell as a "godly man" and one whose actions God had blessed.

A sermon preached before the House of Commons on 22 December 1648 by Hugh Peter is another example of the extreme views which had emerged. Comparing the Army leaders (of whom Cromwell was one) to Moses, Peter urged that the army "must root up monarchy, not only here, but in France and other kingdoms round about." By doing so, he asserted that the army would lead the English people out of their "Egyptian" religious and ideological enslavement. Monarchy was seen as a demonstrated evil and the eradication of it elsewhere would be a "godly" cause. Drawing from the Book of Daniel, Peter also saw the army as "that corner stone cut out of the mountain which must dash the earth to pieces."[14]

The actions of the radicals, who on 30 January 1649 executed Charles I, horrified the rest of Europe (and much of England). As Cromwellian biographer Charles Firth wrote, "There was indeed no prospect of the general league of European potentates to punish regicide, for which Royalists hoped, but both governments and people were hostile."[15] While the real threat of foreign invasion may not have been great, the ominous possibility of it created a siege mentality among the English people. A declaration in the name of Louis XIV published in Paris on 2 January and republished in England in translation, warned the Rump Parliament against any action towards the person of the King. Louis considered it his "Christian duty" to either "redeem from bondage the injured person of our neighbor King" or "to revenge all outrages already done or hereafter which may happen to be done" against Charles. Louis vowed vengeance not only against the perpetrators of the crimes but also their wives and children. The French King's diatribe concluded by urging all other "Kings, Princes, and States" to make similar proclamations and to join together for the safety of their brother sovereign.[16]

In the event that official proclamations against England were not effective enough in creating an air of paranoia, Royalist propagandists were also willing to contribute. In April 1649 Ralph Clare published a fabricated declaration by several monarchs, real and imaginary, condemning England's regicidal actions. The pamphlet's stated purpose was "[a] detestation of the present proceedings of the Parliament and Army, and of their [the monarchs] intentions of coming over into England in behalf of King Charles II."[17]

Up to this point one can see the background developing for identifying Cromwell as England's religious and martial defender. His popularity with the general population, and especially with the army, coupled with the nation's growing sense of isolation, pushed him further into the role of bulwark against the enemies of England. Yet it was his acceptance of his next military assignment which would propel him into the image of English and Protestant champion—the suppression of Ireland.

The Irish rebellion which broke out in October 1641 initially was directed against Protestant English settlers and landholders, large numbers of whom were murdered and abused. The reporting in England of the massacres brought the normal disdain for the "uncivilized" Irish to a fever pitch of hatred. Streams of pamphlets, some highly fictionalized, concerning the revolt poured forth and it is obvious that many people accepted them wholly as truth. In London the pamphlets were absorbed with fascinated horror. "All the news and speech is here of the rebellion," wrote one city resident.[18] In the Commons, Speaker of the House Pym inflamed fears of an Irish invasion and Catholic uprising in England. Pym's

fears were real and he took every revelation of a plot, no matter how far fetched, with equal seriousness. He honestly believed that there had been "common counsel at Rome and in Spain to reduce us to popery."[19] With a leader of the nation so paranoid and frightened, it is no wonder that the people at large were able to believe so easily any story they heard.

A typical example is one piece published in December of 1641 entitled *The Rebels Turkish Tyranny:*

> . . . taken out of a letter sent from Mr. Witcame, a merchant in Kingsdale to a brother of his here: showing how cruelly they [the Irish] put them to the sword, ravished religious women, and put their children upon red hot spits before their parent's eyes: threw them in the fire and burned them to ashes: cut off their ears and nose, put out their eyes, cut off their arms and legs, broiled them at the fire, cut out their tongues, and thrust hot irons down their throats, drown them, dash out their brains and such like other cruelty not heard of among Christians.[20]

And this is only the introduction to the pamphlet.

Another illustrated broadside of the same month by Anthony Rouse told of drunken Irish soldiers killing each other to celebrate the birthday of a rebel leader. "Each man slew his friend to the number of three thousand," wrote the author.[21] To the English mind the Irishman seemed capable of any atrocity.

While the gross exaggerations of Irish ruthlessness seem almost comical today, this sort of propaganda was common and its effects on naive readers should not be discounted. It was especially easy to swallow when the perpetrators were Catholics and the victims Protestant. News accounts from the Continent during the Thirty Years War were full of detailed accounts of the torture and barbarities practiced by the Catholic soldiers of Tilly and Wallenstein against Protestants in Germany. Protestants having their eyes "twisted out" or their faces "planed with chisels" were typical examples.[22]

Because of the Civil War in England and the subsequent unrest in the army, no troops could be sent to put down the insurrection in Ireland until 1649. The delay in sending forces did not diminish the flow of pamphlets concerning the plight of the Protestants in Ireland. A Royalist newspaper in 1644 printed a story entitled "The Clergy's Lamentation" which was a martyrology of dozens of "godly" Protestants killed through the "unparalleled cruelties and murders exercised by the inhumane Popish rebels."[23] In June of the same year Morely Gent published *A Remonstrance of the Barbarous Cruelties and Bloody Murders* in which he decried the feeding of newborns to dogs and the burning of a fat Scotsman, whose grease was used to make candles.[24] Other titles of these inflammatory pamphlets

include *The Impudence of the Romish Whore* and *A New Remonstrance from Ireland*,[25] both of which are replete with shocking stories of Irish depravity.

Quite obviously these stories stirred up passions in England and brought about calls for a rapid suppression of the "barbarous rebels." There were also practical reasons in 1649 for desiring a quick re-establishment of English authority over the Irish. Charles II had made known his intentions of soon traveling to Ireland and using it as the staging area for an eventual invasion of England. There was a Royalist Army in the field there and several of the rebel armies were negotiating with Charles to assist in restoring him to the throne in exchange for various concessions.[26]

This is the situation Cromwell faced as he accepted the command of the 12,000 man expedition to Ireland. It was not only the political and military importance of his mission which motivated Cromwell. He had a fierce prejudice against the Catholic Irish and seems to have accepted every tale of atrocity. He once wrote, "I had rather be overrun by a Cavalierish interest than a Scotch interest, I had rather be overrun by a Scotch interest than an Irish interest, and I think that of all, this the most dangerous . . . for all the world knows their barbarism."[27] Cromwell meticulously planned the strategy and provisioning of the campaign, arriving in Dublin on August 15, 1649.

The brutality of Cromwell's first two victories all but decided the outcome of the war. The Duke of Ormonde, commander of the royalist army in Ireland, wrote, "It is not to be imagined how great the terror is that those successes . . . have struck into this people. They are so stupefied, that it is with great difficulty that I can persuade them to act anything like men towards their own preservation."[28]

On 11 September 1649 Cromwell's forces stormed the town of Drogheda and slaughtered the nearly 3,500 soldiers and civilians inside. Cromwell himself personally ordered his men to "put all to the sword." In his victory announcement to Parliament he spoke proudly of the massacre. "I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgement of God upon these barbarous wretches, who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood." Cromwell went on to add that he believed all but two of the Friars in the town were killed by blows to the skull, or as he wrote, "knocked on the head promiscuously."[29]

A month later Cromwell took the stronghold of Wexford by assault as well, killing more than 2,000 Irish soldiers. Though Cromwell did not order that the whole garrison be put to the sword, his soldiers got out of hand and did so on their own initiative. Cromwell expressed no regret over the episode, but rather said that "God in his righteous justice, brought a just judgement upon them." His message of triumph to England asserted that the Irish had gotten their just desserts. "[God's

will] causing them to become a prey to the soldier who in their piracies had made preys of so many families, and with their bloods to answer the cruelties which they had exercised upon the lives of poor Protestants."[30]

These two victories broke the back of the Irish rebellion. By the time Cromwell returned to England in May of 1650 to deal with another Scottish threat, the success of the English conquest was assured. It is hard to understate the impact of Cromwell's victories on the Irish people. W. C. Abbot writes that the "conditions of the Cromwellian conquest and settlement left a heritage of hate among the defeated people `scarcely equalled and seldom, if ever, surpassed in history'."[31] Several times in the months following Wexford Cromwell was rumored to have been killed. Against these false hopes a contemporary Irish poet wrote:

> Cromwell is dead, and risen; and dead again
> and risen the third time after he was slain:
> No wonder! For he's a messenger of hell:
> And now he buffets us, now posts to tell
> Whats past: and for more game new counsel takes
> Of his good friend the devil, who keeps the stakes.[32]

If for the Irish Cromwell was a "messenger of hell," for the English he was a savior. The Poet Andrew Marvell published a tribute to Cromwell in June 1650 entitled *An Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland.* The poem, though it subtly chasted Cromwell for his inability to be satisfied by the "inglorious arts of war," was full of praise for Cromwell's exploits. And despite a doubting attitude by Marvell towards Charles I's execution, he declared that much to Cromwell "is due." He stepped out of obscurity to "cast the kingdoms of old into another mold." In what battle of the Civil War were "[Cromwell's] not the deepest scars?" asked the poet, who also admonished the Irish who "see themselves in one year tamed" by Cromwell. Marvell honored Cromwell for selflessly giving his victories to England:

> [He] forbears his fame to make it theirs:
> And has his sword and spoils ungirt,
> To lay them at the public's skirt.

Finally, the author denigrated the rebellious Scots' valor, as he unabashedly compared Cromwell to Caesar and predicted that the Scots will "Shrink underneath the plaid [their kilts]" in reaction to Cromwell's coming invasion.[33]

The victories in Ireland were only the beginning of what some thought Cromwell might accomplish. The Fifth Monarchist movement had viewed the

execution of Charles I as making way for the earthly reign of Jesus Christ Himself. One member of the sect, New Model Army veteran John Spittlehouse, published a pamphlet in 1650 which attacked the aristocracy and endorsed the King's execution. Spittlehouse warned the Papacy to "beware of Nol Cromwell's army, lest Hugh Peter come to preach in St. Peter's chair."[34] To him and other Fifth Monarchists, England (and the Revolution) represented a precedent of what God intended to do elsewhere.[35] Cromwell had originally been recalled from Ireland in order to assist General Fairfax in defeating the Scottish revolt. Fairfax, however, refused to involve himself in a war against the Presbyterian Scots, so the command was given to Cromwell alone. The Scots had been appalled by the execution of Charles, a Scottish King, and they conditionally proclaimed Charles II king six days after the execution. The young king arrived in Scotland in the Spring of 1650 and raised an army.

In the last week of July Cromwell led an English force into Scotland. The Lord General's approach to the quelling of the Scottish revolt was thoroughly different from the course taken in Ireland. Cromwell published in Scotland *A Declaration of the Army of England* upon his march into that country. He appealed to the Scots as fellow Covenanters to realize the error of their ways. He justified the invasion as a self defense "of English religion and liberty."[36] This policy of moderation by Cromwell stands in stark contrast to his behavior in Ireland where he was bent on the destruction of "popish interests."

At Dunbar on September 4, 1650 Cromwell's 11,000 man army routed a Scottish army twice its size. In his report to Parliament he described the battle in detail and related the English army's dramatic battle cry, "the Lord of Hosts!" The Lord General saw the army as comparable to the "chariots and horsemen of Israel." The victory would not only be a benefit to England but also an example which "shall shine forth to other nations who shall emulate such a pattern."[37] The 12 September issue of the government newspaper *Mercurius Politicus* described the Stuarts as being as despotic as the Roman Tarquin, and it praised Cromwell not only for his triumph but for his mercy towards Scottish wounded, whom the Lord General had ordered to be treated kindly.[38]

The Scottish forces never fully recovered from the rout at Dunbar; however, they were still strong enough to create problems for the English. On 3 September 1651, the one year anniversary of Dunbar, Cromwell won a decisive victory at Worcester, deep in English territory. Charles II himself led the Scots into the battle and only barely escaped capture. The Scottish-Royalist movement was thus exterminated for the near future. In bulletins sent to England in the days following the battle, which were read "from all London pulpits," Cromwell thanked the Lord for what "He hath wrought for this Commonwealth and for his people." He viewed

the victory as divine approval for the "[English] Nation and the change of government" brought about by the revolution.[39] A published account by an English eyewitness to the battle saw things in the same light as the Lord General. He said that the the "Lord hath clothed us in white garments, our enemies in bloody garments." To him, the victory was the "beginning of their fall [England's] before appearance of the Lord Jesus [i.e. the millennium]."[40]

His Scottish victories earned Cromwell still more glory from pamphleteers. In 1652, Payne Fisher published a tiresomely long poem dedicated to Cromwell entitled appropriately enough *Veni, Vidi, Vici*. It declared the Lord General to be an "Instrument of God used to destroy the Scots." In endless comparisons Fisher set Cromwell alongside virtually every noted military figure in Greek and Roman antiquity. He was the equal of Ulysses and Aeneas, as well as Priam and Agamemnon in the poet's eyes. Because he fought for "liberty and religion," God was on his side. The idea that the Lord General's conquests had brought God's blessings upon the English people was the main thrust of the work.[41]

In 1653, the self-proclaimed prophet Arise Evans printed a compilation of his visions. In one of them he claimed to have seen himself carried from France to Rome and heard "a voice come to me saying, `So far as thou art come, so far shall Cromwell come'."[42] Considered insane by the authorities, Evans had been a court prophet to Charles I and was to be one later for Cromwell, despite the fact that he continually predicted the restoration of the Stuarts.[43] The respect accorded to Evans is attested to by the tolerance given him, and his predictions, by both the King's and Protector's courts.

The forcible dissolution of the Long Parliament (the Rump) in April 1653 by Cromwell and the army, and the establishment of a nominated (Barebones) parliament was seen by many religious extremists as a step towards a "new age." This was especially true for the Fifth Monarchists with whom Cromwell was associated closely at this time. This association was the result of Cromwell's friendship with General Harrison, a known Fifth Monarchist, as well as the Lord General's appointing of several members of the sect to the Barebones. His speech on 4 July 1653 to the first assembly of the Barebones Parliament gave encouragement to beliefs of the coming of a new age of "godly rule." Cromwell had "surrendered himself to millenarian enthusiasm" according to Barry Coward, as he told the Barebones,

> Truly you are called by God to rule with Him and for Him, I confess I never looked to see such a day as this when Jesus Christ should be so owned as He is, at this day... this may be the door to usher in the things

> that God has promised; which have been prophesied of . . . we have some of us thought, that it is our duty to endeavor this way; not vainly to look at that prophesy in Daniel.[44]

Cromwell's euphoria soon dissipated as the Barebones Parliament became a thorn in his side just as the previous parliaments had been to the Stuarts. A conservative backlash, joined by Cromwell himself, also swelled up against some of the more radical ideas espoused by the Parliament, especially those concerning property. As Cromwell later told his officers, "Ministry and property were like to be destroyed . . . Who could have said anything was their own if they [the barebones] had gone on?"[45]

On 12 December 1653 the moderate majority of the Barebones resigned and four days later Cromwell accepted the Instrument of Government and was installed as Lord Protector. To most radicals, Cromwell was seen as a traitor to the Revolution. Some however held on to the hope that he would use his new power to enact reforms and pursue the crusading pro-Protestant policies which the Barebones had been unable to do. Among these men was John Rogers, an Independent minister and Fifth Monarchist who still believed Cromwell to be a champion of reform.[46] In 1654 he published *Doomsday Drawing Nigh,* a book he dedicated to Cromwell, "the People's Victorious Champion." He wrote, "His Excellency the Lord Jesus hath sent out his summons to other nations also, and the blade of the sword (whose handle is held in England) will reach to the very gates of Rome." Rogers called upon England to help her Protestant neighbors in Bordeaux and Germany. In his mind, all Protestants were bound together and should join together their armies and navies. "The peoples eyes and cries are directed to the Lord General," according to Rogers, "as the interest by whom they are [to be] recovered out of the Norman tyranny." The characterization of the "Norman Tyranny" as a "yoke" was a reference to the equal rights and privileges believed to have been lost by the average Englishman through the Norman conquest.[47] Oliver Cromwell was the people's champion in Rogers eyes because he conquered "not for himself but for the people," in contrast to the selfish William the Conqueror. The author finished out his work by quoting and interpreting numerous prophesies of his own and others. One prophecy, which he credited to the French astrologer Nostradamus, had England beginning a Reformation by destroying Rome with her armies. The Turk too would be vanquished by the English, in league with the Venetians according to the predictions.[48] Like others, Rogers picked up upon the theme of England emerging as a power to be reckoned with, led by Cromwell.

Andrew Marvell wrote a poem in 1655 to the Protector to commemorate the

first anniversary of Cromwellian rule. Marvell, a protege of Milton, was not only unperturbed by Cromwell's assumption of one man rule, he rather seemed to grow in his fondness for the Protector. The poem opened with almost fifty lines praising the vigor of the Lord Protector as a ruler. The next sixty lines were a testament to his construction of such a harmonious state. Marvell then bemoaned the fact that man's sins had delayed the millennium. He decried those who still worshiped "the whore" (Rome) and those who subjugated the Indian and burned the Jew (Spain), when instead they should have been trying to convert them in anticipation of the millennium. The poet pictures Cromwell rooting out Catholicism by using the image of the scarlet beast of the Apocalypse.

> Till then my muse shall hollo far behind
> Angelic Cromwell who outwings the wind,
> And in dark nights, and in cold days alone
> Pursues the monster thorough every throne:
> Which shrinking to her Roman den impure,
> Gnashes her gory teeth; nor there secure.

Marvell demonstrated his desire for Cromwell to become king by comparing him favorably to Gideon and Noah. He was critical of the Fifth Monarchists, whose prophesies were "fit to be [put in the] Koran." Marvell's final plea to Cromwell, "the angel of our Commonwealth," was to continue healing yearly the "troubling water" around England as he had done thus far.[49]

Some of the literature of this period which applauded Cromwell or cast him in the role of religious crusader was either outright government-sponsored propaganda or, at the least, encouraged by the government. An example of this is in the 1656 translation of Bartolomeo De La Casas' book *The Tears of the Indians*. The translator, John Phillips, wrote the book's dedication to "Oliver, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth," asking the Protector to avenge the Spanish slaughter of the twenty million Indians of whom De La Casas wrote. Phillips suggested that the Indians cries would cease "at the noise of Your [Cromwell] great transactions, while you arm for their revenge." The translator saw divine virtues in Cromwell which would rightfully allow him to punish "the bloody and popish nation of the Spaniards," whose crimes were "far surpassing the popish cruelties in Ireland." Phillips' timely translation and dedication were used to help rouse up support for the coming war with Spain. As Phillips was the nephew of John Milton (Cromwell's first official censor and propaganda minister), Phillips' work was surely encouraged, if not authorized, by the government.[50]

Another example of Cromwellian propaganda can be seen in the government's response to the public outcry to help the persecuted Protestants in the French

regions under the Duke of Savoy. News sheets from the Continent had described in depth the persecution suffered by the Protestants in that area. An account of the atrocities against Protestants in Savoy was printed in April of 1655. It described people being nailed to trees, babies being eaten, and "abuses upon women as are not to be named, so that it was a favor to be cut into pieces." The account was accompanied by pictures "so that the eye may affect the heart."[51] Another 1655 pamphlet by a Frenchman recounted the history of one hundred and fifty years of suffering endured by Savoy Protestants. His narrative reportedly was "sent to his highness the Lord Protector" and "published by his command."[52]

The government of the Protector published a series of letters in 1656 from Cromwell to Foreign princes and states "for the strengthening and preserving of the Protestant religion." The letters asked the rulers of Sweden, United Provinces, Denmark, and Transylvania to pressure France and join England in a Protestant league.[53] It is obvious the letters were a government-backed public relations ploy to drum up support for the regime. While it is certain that Cromwell did sympathize with his Protestant brethren, the Anglo-French alliance signed in March 1657 casts doubt on his sincerity in proposing a Protestant league against France.[54]

On the whole, Cromwell's reversion to one-man rule disillusioned most radicals. Tracts concerning Cromwell now tended to dwell on betrayal and missed opportunities. Quakers James Nayler and George Fox in 1655 wrote a piece critical of Cromwell for not carrying out the reforms which they felt he had promised, denouncing any move towards the abolition of lay preaching. To them Cromwell had surrounded himself with less "godly" men than previously. They wrote that the "Lord has set the army above all your enemies," on the one hand, but, "[you must] choose men of God to bear the Sword of God" on the other.[55]

Some writers even went farther in their solutions to the Protector's problems. Walter Gostello in his pamphlet *Charles Stuart and Oliver Cromwell United* urged Cromwell to ask Charles II's forgiveness and restore him. Claiming his message to be "declared from God Almighty to the publisher," Gostello predicted Rome's downfall. His message to Cromwell was to "stay the Sword," convert the Jew and the Irish, and restore Charles II along with the peers.[56] While he is obviously a prophet with Royalist leanings, Gostello's pleas to Cromwell to change his course are typical of this period.

The most impassioned admonition to Cromwell was written by George Fox. The Protector had always been friendly to the Quakers on a personal level and they had felt he was on their side. But by 1657 it was apparent that the desired changes were not forthcoming. But Fox still believed it was Cromwell's sinfulness, not his

intentions, which had ruined England's chance for greatness.

> O Oliver, hadst thou been faithful and thundered down the deceit, the Hollander [could] had been thy subject and tributary, Germany had given up to have done thy will, and the Spaniard had quivered like a dry leaf wanting the virtue of God, the King of France should have bowed his neck under thee, the Pope should have withered as in winter, the Turk in all his fatness should have smoked, thou shouldst not have stood trifling about small things, but minded the work of the Lord as He began with thee first.[57]

Ending with Fox is appropriate in more ways than one. First, he summed up the wide range of expectations concerning Cromwell and England. Secondly, and more importantly, the quote is full of irony: Fox was bitter towards Cromwell for not living up to the very image which pamphleteers like himself helped to create. The facade of Protestant Champion was a result of many factors--international events, the millennial atmosphere created by the Revolution's upheaval, and the martial skill of the New Model Army and Cromwell. However, the key to the pamphleteers' motivation lay in the utterances and writings of Cromwell himself. His deep religious convictions and belief in God's hand as the controlling force in his own life were transferred into his public character. Oliver Cromwell unintentionally projected the image of a millenial crusader, though he was not above exploiting this reputation for political benefit. The explosion of pamphlets fostered and encouraged this image, but by the mid-1650s it was clear that Cromwell was unfit for the role. The fatal flaw for Cromwell was that his military and political pragmatism made him both unsuitable and unwilling to fulfill the wilder aspirations of the popular media.

ENDNOTES

1. G. E. Aylmer, *Rebellion or Revolution* (Oxford, 1986), 65.
2. Christopher Hill, *God's Englishman* (New York, 1970), 155.
3. Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age* (London, 1980), 188-190.
4. In Stow's 1603 survey of the city, he counts 123 parish churches, along with St. Pauls and St. Peters, in London and the immediate suburbs. John Stow, *A Survey of London* (Oxford, 1908), 2:143.
5. Thomas Carlyle, ed., *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (London, 1857), 1:173.
6. Ibid., 1:187.
7. Hugh Peter, *God's Doings and Man's Duty* (London, 1646), 14-23.

8. *Mercurius Civicus* (London, 30 April 1646), 1-2.

9. Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution* (New York, 1958), 126.

10. Mark Kishlansky, *The Rise of the New Model Army* (Cambridge, 1979), 180.

11. Charles Firth, *Oliver Cromwell* (New York, 1908), 163.

12. Carlyle, *Letters and Speeches*, 1:295.

13. *Mercurius Elenctius* (London, 6 December 1648).

14. Clement Walker, *The History of Independency* (London, 1649), 49.

15. Firth, *Oliver Cromwell*, 238.

16. Louis XIV, *The Declaration of the Most Christian King of France and Navarre* (Paris, 2 January 1649).

17. Sir Ralph Clare, *A Declaration to the English Nation* (London, 28 April 1649), 1-7.

18. Anthony Fletcher, *The Outbreak of the English Civil War* (New York, 1981), 136.

19. Ibid., 138-139.

20. W. R. *The Rebels Turkish Tyranny* (London, 1641).

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22. *Barbarous and Inhumane Proceedings* (London, 1655), 24-46.

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26. D. M. R. Esson, *The Curse of Cromwell* (London, 1971), 38-62.

27. Firth, *Oliver Cromwell*, 257.

28. Ibid., 267.

29. Carlyle, *Letters and Speeches*, 2:49-55.

30. Ibid., 70.

31. W. C. Abbot, *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (New York, 1937).

32. Carlyle, *Letters and Speeches*, 2:71.

33. Elizabeth Donno, ed., *Andrew Marvell: Complete Poems* (England, 1985), 55-58, 238-241.

34. John Spittlehouse, *Rome Ruin'd by Whitehall* (London, 1650).

35. B. S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarch Men* (London, 1972), 151.

36. Oliver Cromwell, *A Declaration of the Army of England* (Newcastle, 1650).

37. Carlyle, *Letters and Speeches*, 2:193.

38. *Mercurius Politicus* (London, 12 September 1650).

39. Carlyle, *Letters and Speeches*, 2:296.

40. Robert Stapylton, *Letter To Parliament* (London, September 1651), 1, 6-7.

41. Payne Fisher, *Veni, Vidi, Vici* (London, 1652), 8-26, 85-89.

42. Arise Evans, *An Echo to the Voice from Heaven* (London, 1652).

43. Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (London, 1972), 278-279.

44. Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age*, 222.

45. Hill, *God's Englishman*, 140-43.

46. Robert Zaller and Richard Greaves, *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century* (Sussex, 1982), 76.

47. Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution*, 50-55.

48. John Rogers, *Sagir, or Doomsday Drawing Nigh* (London, 1654), 14-17, 89, 132.

49. Donno, *Andrew Marvell*, 126-137, 268-273.

50. Bartolomeo De La Casas, *The Tears of the Indians* (London, John Phillips, trans., 1656), intro. Hill, *God's Englishman*, 164.

51. *Barbarous and Inhumane Proceedings*, 46-48.

52. Jean Paul Perrin, *History of the Vaudois* (London, 1655), 1.

53. *Oliver Cromwell's Letters to Foreign Princes* (London, 1656).

54. Aylmer, *Rebellion or Revolution*, 239-240.

55. James Nayler and George Fox, *To Thee Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1655), 2-3.

56. Walter Gostello, *Charles Stuart and Oliver Cromwell United* (London, 1655).

57. William Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism* (Cambridge, 1970), 440.