POLITICAL THEORY

IN

ANDREAS CRYPHIUS

CAROLUS STUARTUS

A Thesis

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by

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INTRODUCTION

Charles I of England was beheaded at Whitehall, England on January 30, 1646 by a group called the Independents, who were led by Oliver Cromwell. The news spread rapidly to the continent, and in Freustadt, Germany, the poet Andreas Gryphius reacted immediately by writing the drama Ermordete Majestät oder Carolus Stuardus König von Gross Britanien. That it was written within a very few days,\(^1\) testifies to the poet's deep interest in this historical happening. The drama was published in 1657. When new sources of information became available to Gryphius in 1661,\(^2\) he undertook a revision and expansion of the drama. This second version, published in 1663, is the one contained in Hermann Palm's edition and used for this thesis.

Carolus Stuardus reveals Andreas Gryphius' political views and exemplifies the major political antithesis of his day. The purpose of this study is to gain an insight into these political concepts by means of a careful examination of this drama. The method of this examination is to consult the drama alone, to allow it to speak for itself, and to formulate the political views only as they reveal themselves in the play.

Two main consequences result from this procedure. First, no prior political criteria are established, from which the

1 Andreas Gryphius, Trauerspiele, Band II, hrsg. v. Hermann Palm, p. 345.

2 Ibid., p. 346 f.
drama is then examined. The purpose of this is to assure an attitude of objectivity toward the political views and positions elaborated. However, this in no way precludes a prior study of the historical period, with special attention to the political thought of the age. Such a study is essential, principally in order to develop one’s awareness of and sensitivity for the political elements in the drama. For this purpose the following works were found to be especially helpful: H. Hildebrandt, *Die Staatsaufassung der schlesischen Barockdramatiker im Rahmen ihrer Zeit*, G. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, and R. Treumann, *Die Monarchomachen*. Other source materials consulted are listed in the bibliography.

Second, the presentation of political views in a drama necessarily involves their enmeshment with other, more human and personal ends, desires, etc. of the characters. Although political commitments can still be described, they must be seen within the larger context of the actions of the people professing them. Political conviction in a play can never be solely a matter of pure theory, but will always have only a relative significance, sometimes assuming great importance and at other times sinking into insignificance. Consequently, this study will not simply accept statements of a political nature at their face value, but attempt to discern all relevant motivations. In this manner a more objective understanding
and evaluation of the political commitments will be achieved,
and the discrepancy that often exists between what is said and
what is believed will be better illuminated. Further, it will
become evident that professed political ideals are not always
the point of departure of undertakings, but are more often a
post hoc shoring up of actions embarked upon for much more
personal and less idealistic reasons.
CHAPTER I

In *Carolus Stuardus* the political lines are drawn sharply between two parties. The first party seeks and carries out the execution of Charles I of England, is comprised of a part of Parliament and the army of the Independents, and is led principally by Oliver Cromwell and Hugo Peter. The second party consists of the king and those who wish to avert his execution.

One of the members of the royalist party is Lady Fairfax, who in the first act pleads with her husband, a general in the army of the Independents, to avert the execution of the king and to obtain a more moderate punishment for him. In the course of her plea, she makes the following admission regarding the king:

> Er hat der Länder heil, der häuser recht versehrt,  
> Er hat der Britten rüh durch grimmn krieg verstört,  
> Er ist nicht werth das schwerdt und reichs-stab mehr zu führen.  
> Es sey! ich steh es zu. Er soll den hals verlieren,  
> Mein hertz! das ist zu viel, hier, hier...  
> (I, 135 ff.).

She admits to three basic charges against the king: he has violated the well-being of the country, he has usurped the rights of Parliament and has shattered domestic peace by waging civil war against his own subjects. These acts make him unworthy of wielding power, but significantly Lady Fairfax does not deny Charles' right to wield power. As soon as she
has won her husband's assent to her plan, she reveals her ultimate hopes in the following monologue:

Ich rött, um dessen cron und ehr und haubt man spielt,
Und wo der höchst ihm noch, was er verlohr, wil schencken...
Jedoch mein geist, hult inn! Ich darf nicht so weit nicht
dencken.

Vor ietzund ists genung, dass er den leib erhalt
Und sich gewändacht entzieh der rasenden gewalt
(1, 240 ff.).

She thinks forward to and ardently hopes for Charles' ultimate restoration. In the light of her commitment, this admission of the king's failings does not carry much weight, nor is it very damning. She admits them for the sake of seeming objectivity, but they impair in no way her devotion to the king nor do they invalidate his claims to the throne.

In the following scene, Hugo Peter, a leader of the anti-royalists, encourages Hewlett, who is to behead the king, with these words:

Du wirst gantz Albion den höchsten dienst verrichten;
Du wirst den langen senck durch Gottes richt-artz schlichten;

............
Du rettest Christus kirch und schättest die gemein,
Du sel'ge faust! Du wirst des mörders blut vergiesen.
Der ertzverrätcher wältzt sich schon vor deinen füssen
(1, 253 ff.).

According to Peter, the deed will be a noble service for the common good, will end all internecine war and will save the church and protect the people. Indeed, Hewlett will be directly instrumental in the execution of God's judgment.
Peter charges the king with much the same transgressions as does
Lady Fairfax, but his charges have an emotional flavor. The
king is a murderer, he is an arch-traitor of his land. Peter's
language betrays his excessive hatred of the king personally,
and plants in the reader a seed of doubt regarding his grounds
for seeking the king's death.

Hewlett, however, seems to be motivated by visionary
ideals:

Ich schätze es hoch, dass ich vor reich, kirch und gemein
Bey dem schuld-opfer soll der hohe priester seyn,
Brich an gewohnetes licht! Der arm soll Britten rachen
Und darthun, was gehör auf künig ihr verbrechen
(I, 267 ff.).

Hewlett is filled with a glorious conception of his
mission. His is a holy work, and springs from a religious
conviction. His last two lines begin to reveal the political
thinking of the anti-royalists. Crime has been committed by
the king, and punishment must be meted out. It is he, Hewlett,
who will administer this punishment and with it will make an
example to all. However, the right of Hewlett or his party
to carry out justice has not yet been established.

Hugo Peter continues the discussion and discloses that
he seeks something more than objective justice against Charles,
justice, that is, as he would define it.

Hergegen soll die schmacht des beils den tod erherben.
Diss ists, wohin ich ziel
(I, 262 f.).
and further:

Man lasse klammern dann und sprengen fertig machen,
Und spann ihn, sperre er sich, boy so bewändigten sachen
Mit Fesseln an das klotz! Kein schimpff ist hier zu gross
(I, 293 ff.).

and again:

Der richt-block mag wohl auch was mehr dann niedrig seyn,
Um ihm, wie er verdient, den tods-kelch zu vergällen
(I, 300 f.).

Hugo Peter's proposal of these special measures points to
his deep-seated personal hatred of Charles and renders his
motives suspect. Even though he attempts to lend religious
motivations to the whole undertaking, it is impossible to
accept his professed religious justifications as the basic drive
behind his arguments.

A suggestion was made to Hugo Peter in the course of these
preparations that armed guards be placed under the execution
platform to forestall any last-minute attempts by the king
to avoid the execution. But this involves the possibility of
the king being killed by guards. To this suggestion Peter
answers:

Da siehst nicht, was ich meine!
Das urtheil wird verletzt, stürb er durch ihren stoss.
Man scheide kopff und leib! Dass ists, was ieder schloss
(I, 286 ff.).

It becomes evident that Hugo Peter is anxious that the
sentence be carried out exactly as written. The reader gets
the feeling that his argument is advanced less out of a sincere
respect for justice than from a desire for self-protection added to his personal hatred for the king. Peter wishes to remain completely within the protective framework of the official execution order. The impression given is not of a desire to fulfill the law to the letter, but of a utilization of the law as a vehicle and shield for the furtherance of Peter's own aims.

In act III the anti-royalist party again comes to the fore, and we find Peter speaking with Hacker, another leader of the Independents. They discuss how the execution order was obtained:

Hacker: Wie schwer ging es zu, eh man die vollmacht unterschrieb!
Peter: Drum kam es gut, dass man das werk mit macht durchtrieb
(III, 23 f.!!)

These two lines allow us to look behind the scenes and to see that the order did not come through easily. It wasn't the spontaneous decision of Parliament, but an act forced and pushed through by the leaders of the Independents. Justice had to be manipulated. That Hacker and Peter wanted Parliament to pronounce the death sentence points to the respect, dignity and justness normally accorded to this body. It is therefore clear that the Independents simply wished to hide behind Parliament in order to realize their personal ambitions.

Peter and Hacker discuss further the defections from their ranks, and they conclude:

Peter: Gut ists, dass man so viel einlad in diesen kahn.
Hacker: Es würde, wenn es nicht so wol bestellt, sehr wancken
(III, 23 f.).
These admissions reveal that the group desiring the king's death is far from complete unity within itself. Several have defected and the group seems to be held together not so much by common conviction of the justice of its cause as by less worthy motives. The group begins to take on more and more the face of an outright conspiracy and scarcely answers to Hugo Peter's glowing description of its united ranks a few lines later:

Diss ist der grosse schluss, der in der wacht schar
Einhellig abgefaßt und ausgesprochen war
(II, 71 f.).

More and more the picture of a naked struggle for power emerges. Peter and Hacker continue and note that General Fairfax has not signed the execution order. They fear that grave consequences would result, should he desert the group:

Peter: Ich spür, entgieng er uns, ein unerhörtes weh.
Es wird in einer see von blut dies reich versinken
Und Cromwell selbst, was er dem könig einschenckt,
trincken
(III, 36 ff.).

Peter's prediction points to the life-and-death struggle in which the parties of Cromwell and of the king are engaged. Cromwell has bid for power, and if he does not kill the king, the king will kill him. Fear for the suffering the kingdom would endure also is expressed. This may very well be a sincere concern of the Independents, but the fact remains that they are so deeply involved at this juncture that their first and foremost concern is for their own necks. It is a major problem with
them and seriously weakens any further protestations by Peter or even Cromwell that theirs is a wholly just or God-willed cause.

Soon other arch enemies of the Independents loom in the conversations:

Hacker: Der priester schaar macht des volck nicht wenig irr.
Peters: Man zeige mir, was nicht der priester schaar verwirr!
Hacker: Sie schätzt vor schuld und fluch, suff königs blut zu witten.
Peters: Wie? sucht sie abermals Barrabas los zu bitten?
Hacker: Den sie vorhin mit mund und kirchen-feld bekriegt?
Peters: Sie schmerzt, dass er vor uns, nicht ihren füssen liegt
(III, 43 ff.).

These lines introduce another faction into the power struggle. The state church is against the Independents and the execution of the king. Peter says that it is because the priests themselves wish to have the upper hand and are now jealous of the power enjoyed by the Independents. In this exchange, concepts of justice and right seem to recede even further from the considerations of the speakers, and it becomes more and more difficult to accept at face value any statements by the Independents regarding the justice or sacredness of their action.

Shortly after this, Hewlett joins the two and reaffirms his desire to be Charles' executioner. Hacker presses the execution order into his hands with the words:

Recht so! Doch dass man auch das recht nicht unrecht handel
Und auf gewisser bahn nicht ausser gräntzen wandel,
Trägt dir kraft dieser schript der rath die vollmacht auf
Und gönnt, so viel an ihm, dem urthel seinen leuff
(III, 65 ff.).
The importance of having the order and following its directions precisely is again stated. Hecker shows a studious concern for remaining within the limits of justice. Whether his concern for justice is genuine or is only a servile fulfilling of its formal aspects is not yet clear. Hugo Peter again lauds the order:

Diss ist des herren wort! Hier, hier ist gottes finger. Er strafft nach heiligem recht den recht und land-bezwinger (II, 69 ff.).

With these words Hugo Peter indicates the basis for the law which validates his party's action. The positive law, and in particular the execution order, is an expression of divine law. At the moment no proof is presented of the connection between the two. Peter simply states that the order is God's word. In the same manner, no proof is offered that the king has in fact violated the rights of the people. Peter simply assumes that the people have God-given rights, and has thereby declared himself to be a believer in the principle of popular sovereignty and the accompanying right of resistance.

In the subsequent scene, two colonels of the army, partners in the plan of Lady Fairfax to rescue Charles, discuss the position of the army and especially of General Fairfax:

I Oberst: Wie wirds nach dieser zeit Um das gebiete stehn? Was wird sich nicht entspinnen? Stehst du, wie Cromwell sucht die hertzen zu gewinnen?

........

Glaubt man, dass Fairfax nicht versteh, whin er ziel? Dürftt auch der bürgen-krieg sich aus der schach erheben, Wofern nicht Fairfax sich will seiner macht begeben (III, 108 ff.)?
It appears that the power of the army is the decisive factor in the struggle. It is, however, basically a neutral force, which now gives its allegiance to Fairfax, while Cromwell is making every effort to gain its loyalty. If successful in winning the army to himself, Cromwell would pose a threat to the army's present commanders as well as to the people:

I Oberst: Wird nicht das volck dies stück gantz anderwerts betrachten
Und die es ietsund färcht, vor königs-mörder achten
(III, 117 f.)?

They see their hope of survival in Fairfax:

I Oberst: Wird er des königs haubt zu rotten sich bequemen,
Sie werden all es vor ein rathsam stück annehmen;
Man streich alsdann die that mit etwas farben aus,
So fällt uns ieder zu
(III, 129 ff.).

Once again the pivotal position of Fairfax is described.
The army, although it determines the balance of power, has no commitment of its own, and can be easily convinced of whatever its leaders desire. At the moment Fairfax comes, everything is at a crossroads. The two colonels, unsure of Fairfax' disposition, do not commit themselves before him. For his part Fairfax is also unsure, and, not knowing their true feelings, interprets their silence as opposition, and therefore speaks the fateful word:

Wohl en! so sterb er dann! Fahrt wol
(III, 150)!
These words of Fairfax, born of a misunderstanding, consign Charles to his executioners, and the rescue plot disintegrates. The actual power balance has shifted to Cromwell.

At this point, Fairfax meets Oliver Cromwell, and a long, stichomatic exchange takes place. As far as the action of the play is concerned, the exchange is pointless. Fairfax argues the king's case against Cromwell and hopes to persuade him to relent. Fairfax has already decided not to make a forced attempt to save the king, since he mistakenly believes he doesn't have the support of the other officers. Instead, he merely argues—though in vain—and solicits from Cromwell a detailed explanation of the latter's views. Near the beginning, the following exchange occurs:

Cromwell: Es kan nicht übel gehn: wir stehen für kirch und hiten.
Fairfax: Dass gab auch Stuard vor, auf den wir itzund witten.
Cromwell: Wir witten wider den, der über uns getobt.
Fairfax: Den gantz Europ' und selbst gantz Albion gelobt.
Cromwell: Das werek ist nun zu fern, wir können nicht zurücke (III, 165 ff.).

The first two lines express the position of each of the parties. Cromwell says that he is fighting for freedom of religion and for the common good. Charles had also made the same claims. This is the Gordian Knot that is never cut in the play. Both parties claim to be fighting for the same ideals and to base themselves on the same law. Since neither party proves its claim, the reader is left to decide the issue for himself.
Cromwell's last line reiterates that it is a power struggle in which the Independents are too deeply involved to retreat. His statement acknowledges implicitly that considerations of right are for all practical purposes irrelevant. It is now a simple struggle for survival, not for justice. Cromwell indicates this explicitly:

Viel besser Carols kopff als meinen abgerissen
(III, 174)!

Fairfax mentions the opposition of the state church, and Cromwell repeats Hugo Peter's charge:

Cromwell: Es kränckt sie, dass die schar der ungebunden
blüht.
Fairfax: Die sich hat in den raub der bischoff eingetheilet.
Cromwell: Es schmertzet jene, dass es ihrem geiz gefeilet
(III, 200 ff.).

Fairfax' rebuttal that the Independents took part in the plundering of the bishops draws Cromwell's answer that the priests envy them and went the riches for themselves. However, this admission by Cromwell robs the Independents of their idealistic claims that they struggle for freedom of religion against the state religion imposed by the king.

Fairfax then broaches the central question of law:

Fairfax: Auch konnt der Britten recht nicht mit uns überein.
Cromwell: Der Britten recht mag recht für schlechte Britten
seyn.
Fairfax: Der wölcker recht verbeut erb-könige zu tödtet.
Cromwell: Man hört die rechte nicht bey drommeln und
trompeten.
Fairfax: Trompet und drommel sund dem könige verpflicht.
Cromwell: Vor, de er könig; Karl ist kein könig nicht.
Fairfax: Wir selbst sind durch den eyd fürs königs hauht
verbunden.
Cromwell: Fürs königs pochen ist auch unser eyd verschwunden
(III, 203 ff.).
Fairfax first makes a general statement. The positive law in general, as expressed in the traditional law of the land, does not support the Independents. Cromwell does not, indeed he cannot deny this, and instead reviles those still holding to such a law as "poor Britons", untrue sons of the land. By implication, what these "untrue Britons" hold to be right is untrue. What Cromwell basically does, is to make the law relative, deriving its validity from the uprightness of those upholding it. His claim, however, is gratuitous. No proof is offered that those opposing him are in fact "poor Britons".

Fairfax therefore simply repeats his unassailed statement of the law, and this time he is more precise and says that the people's law forbids regicide. It is not a law made by the king or his party. Cromwell attempts to drown out this argument by stating that the general alarm, turmoil and crisis have invalidated that law. This is an important claim, for it becomes the cornerstone of the Independents' justification of their right to power, and to the making and executing of laws. It will be emphatically stated again and again. Basically it is a claim which has it that the law is not static, but fluid. Whoever in a given historical situation is able to wrest the power to himself has thereby the power to annul previous laws and to promulgate new ones that correspond to the exigencies of the new situation.
Fairfax tries to restate the old law that prevailed, and reminds Cromwell of the oath of loyalty which the army has given to the king. Cromwell breaks this argument by saying that the other party to the contract, the king, is king no longer, and logically the oath is no longer binding. His statement about the king is, of course, at first gratuitous, but he immediately gives the reason for this, namely "königs pochen". The king has overstepped the prescribed limits to his power and has thereby forfeited his office and title of king. This is in essence a restatement of the doctrine of popular sovereignty, which emerges as the keystone of the Independents' political theory. The power ultimately resides with the people, who contract with a ruler to govern them and to secure the common good. The ruler's functions and power are narrowly prescribed, and any action on his part to enhance his power, especially at the cost of popular rights and the common good, annuls his claim to his office. The people take back the power, and have the right to depose him and set up another, or decide upon a better form of government. In Britain, the traditional guardian of the people's rights was the Parliament.

II Graff: Besteht das reich denn nur in eines fürsten macht?
I Graff: In fürst und untertan, und der mit fürsten wacht.
II Graf: Wem hat man diese wacht in Britten ie befohlen?
I Graf: Wem ist das parlament in Albion verhollen?
II Graf: Diss, wenn der könig hin, setzt andre könig ein
(III, 591 ff.).
However, although the purpose of all this is the good of the people, Fairfax remarks about the great amount of bloodshed it cost. To this Cromwell retorts:

3' kommet auf zey, drey nicht an, wenn man den statt versetzet (III, 246).

It seems, therefore, that the realization of the people's rights allows for a certain amount of trampling on individual rights. Although Cromwell considers his party to be the arm of the people, the arm is being used in an unusual fashion.

Cromwell:

Ich habe mit dem heer
Hoff, richt-platz, port und marckt besetzt. Wil
sich was regen,
So geh die klinge loss. Der zittert vor dem dogen,
Der ein gevöltes haus, ein unerzogen kind,
Ein eh'bet für sich hat... 
Ich schwere bey der macht, die mich so hoch erhaben,
Wenn auch mein nächstes blut, ja meiner heyrath gaben
Im wege wolten stehn, sie solten für mich seyn
Als der geringste kopff der wütenden gemein
(III, 252 ff.).

It becomes apparent from these statements that Cromwell and his party are in no way sure of the people, whose cause they claim to serve. The army is being actually used against the people. The last two words "wütenden gemein", indicate that Cromwell despises the people and places no confidence in them at all. They must be treated with an iron hand. In the light of this, Cromwell's statements about popular sovereignty pale in meaning, and become cover arguments for his grasp for power.
For Cromwell, might makes right, and he will tolerate no obstacles in his path to ultimate power. He swears not by popular rights, or God, but by the power that has raised him to his present position.

Rugo Peter joins the group, and the aims and methods of the Independents are again clearly stated. Referring to the possibility of the people rioting and attempting to save the king, Peter advises:

\[\text{Wird einer übereilt}\
\text{Durch was zu strenges recht und fällt im mord-getämmel,}\
\text{Reklag ihn! doch gib vor, der nur gerechte himmel}\
\text{Hab ein verborgenstück durch unverhorfte macht}\
\text{Und wolverdiente rach an helles licht gebracht!}\
\text{Noch eins: Man schöne nicht! Wer strauuchelt, den stoss nieder!}\
\text{Wer frevelt, der vergeh! Nichts ist, das mehr zu wider}\
\text{Durch sich erworbner macht als laues linde seyn}\
\text{(III, 304 ff.).}\]

What Peter gives us is perhaps in miniature the whole program of the Independents. Theirs is basically an unrelenting drive for power and they will strike down all who resist. But in order that this may not be realized by the public, their acts are advertised as the acts of divine justice. Thereby they capitalize on the great reservoir of belief in God’s law and his personal providence among the people. Consolidation of their power must be ruthless or it will not succeed.

Peter then unfolds the further program of the Independents. He devotes his attention to the institutions which oppose the Independents.
denn wird die pracht zutreten,
Die von dem pöval sich auf himmlisch an liess beten;
Dann herrscht, wer waffen führt; denn wird gantz Britten
rein
Von adel, greff und printz trot Catt und Rheten seyn

(III, 34 ff.).

Here he first attacks the institution of the nobility,
and hopes through calculated strategy and exercise of power to
rid the land of the parasitic nobility. He then turns his attention
to Parliament.

Sie sehn, der herren haus wird äbel sich bequemen;
Kaum einer schleugst mit uns auffrichtig Carols tod.
Droh m'gestes abgesetzt!

(III, 346 ff.).

In Peter's proposed deposition of the house of lords, it
becomes clear again that Parliament was forced to issue the
death order for Charles. Finally Peter turns to the state church
and to the lawyers:

Der feldherr glaub es fest, es wird nicht besser stehn,
Bis rechtsgelernter nam und stand wird untergehn.
Wir haben krafft des siege macht, satzungen zu stiften;
Droh weg mit dem, was stets fusst auff verfaulthe schrifften!
Droh kirchen macht ist tod

(III, 359 ff.).

Thus Peter's program foresees the destruction of the "lords,
levits and lawyers", the three groups which most vehemently
oppose the Independents. Peter gives us here the most direct
statement of the actual credo of the leaders of the Independents.
Victory in battle has given them power and simultaneously the
right to annul all previous positive laws and to promulgate new
laws. This is the mainspring of their programmatic drive for
"legally" established power. Their public statements to the contrary that they are championing the concept of sovereignty as expressed in popular sovereignty are a ruse which exploits popular belief in both divine and traditional law.

After these violent outbursts by Hugo Peter, Fairfax gives vent to his feelings about him in a soliloquy:

Er, der des herren wort und friedens soth ankünden,  
Bilt, mit den rotten sich bashartig zu verbinden  
Setzt auf der santzel selbst das voick zum blut-bad an,  
Schmaubt eisen, bächls und mord.  
Er liess mit Cromwell sich in enge bündnis ein  
Schlug Carols bande vor, verhetzte die gemein  
Des heers, ihn vor gericht in höchsten schmach zu stellen,  
Klost selbst die blut-rath aus, sucht alle zu vergällen.  
Auch was nicht mit ihm tobt, und rähmt nach licht und geist,  
Indes er recht und stand als überhauffen schmeisst.  
Diss nennt man geistlich frey  
(III, 399 ff.)!

Fairfax's emotional condemnation provides a summary of the actions of Hugo Peter and of the Independents. It is a damning summary, since Fairfax has been close to them and it provides an accurate recapitulation of Hugo Peter and his role. He is a religious fanatic, and his actions and statements are to be evaluated in this light. A great deal of sincerity is there, but even more excess, and this excess nullifies his actions and renders his whole undertaking unreasonable and unjust.

In the succeeding exchange between two English noblemen, the political situation and its justifications are again discussed. However, their conversation does not advance the argument, and simply elaborates the situation into which we have gained an
insight from the words of Cromwell and Peter. The second count can only with difficulty cover up the naked power bid of the Independents. The conversation serves to illustrate the divided opinions of the aristocracy itself in the face of the present political turmoil.

In the subsequent scene, the views of the Scotch are presented. The Scottish emissary questions Cromwell closely, and Cromwell puts up the familiar defense.

**Cromwell:** Wir thuns; drum sehen wir, was gott und recht wil, an.
**Gesandter:** O recht! verkehrtes recht! Wer hat hier recht gesprochen?
**Crom:** Gantz Britten hat den stab suff STuArds hals gebrochen.
**Ges:** Gantz Britten? sagt zu, drey, die dieser tod ergetzt!
**Crom:** Hat nicht das parlament die richter selbst gesetzt?
**Ges:** Das parlament? wo ist? in welches kerckers hölen?
**Crom:** Man kerckert niemand ein als dienstbegier'ge seelen.
**Ges:** Wer richtet, der nicht vor gewaffnet bey euch stund?
**Crom:** Und der, dem landes bräuch und grundgesetze kund.
**Ges:** Den es an macht und muth gebrach auch zu erklären (III, 692 ff.).

Cromwell again intones the two concepts which his group carries as the aegis over their undertaking, God and the law. Very soon, however, the emissary has exposed the emptiness of these claims and begins to turn the argument against Cromwell.

**Gesandter:** Lasst Gott, der printzen Gott, so grimme blut-spiel zu?
**Cromwell:** Der unterdruckten gott schafft durch diess spiel uns ruh.
**Ges:** Der himmel wacht ja selbst für diese, die er krönet.
**Crom:** Und bricht den thron entzwey, der rechtges recht verhöhet (III, 755 ff.).

**Cromwell:** Gott führt sein recht jetzt aus durch unterdruckter waffen (II, 762).
Cromwell again reverts to the contention that God acts through the oppressed to rid the kingdom of a tyrant. Suddenly, however, the emissary is able to expose the inherent contradiction in Cromwell's stand.

Cromwell: Des höchsten ausspruch trifft des ertz-tyrannen haus.

Gesandter: Was könnt eur eigen haus in künfftig nicht entzünden
(III, 776 f.)?

This probing attack by the emissary exposes the inherent weakness of Cromwell's position: Cromwell offers no proof that he is an instrument of God's justice. He just states it gratuitously. Consequently it could just as easily be that Cromwell now or at some later time could be wrong. At present he relies only on the decision made on the field of battle as proof of the rectitude of his cause. When, conceivably, the battle goes against him someday, what then? Cromwell does not deny the validity of the argument, but simply says he will face such a turn of events when it comes:

Wir werden für den brand auch künfftig mittel finden,
Die zeit verläuft! Bey mir nur ferner nicht gesucht,
Was ausser meiner macht! Die bitt ist sonder frucht.
So wenig auch vergönnt, den grund der welt zu spalten,
So wenig könnt ihr heut das richt-beil hinterhalten,
Weil nichts mehr retten kann, nichts sag ich, glaubt es mir!
Es stünde denn gott selbst und augenscheinlich hier
(III, 777 ff.).

Cromwell evidently feels the force of the emissary's sally, for he answers it in one sentence, and then abruptly terminates
the conversation by underlining the inevitability of the execution and the futility of the emissary's plea. Cromwell emphasizes sharply the inexorable workings of divine justice, that only the author of these iron-clad laws could repeal them, and then only if he were to appear personally on the scene. This might lead one to assign a certain amount of sincerity to Cromwell, despite all evidence to the contrary. Yet his very next line seems to dispel any hint of sincere belief in God's working through him.

Hugo Peter: Wie? Hat der Schott einmal das ende finden können?
Cromwell: Ich wolt und möchte ihn mehr zu reden nicht vergünnen (III, 785 f.).

Cromwell gives the impression of having acted initially in accordance with traditional law. Events then forced him to go further than he perhaps was convinced was right, and he finally continued because he had to—it was a question of his or the king's death. Yet he could and did recount the religious and juridical arguments to his opponents as the ones from which he started, but which do not now justify the extremes to which he has gone. Although the other leaders of the Independents are of a different cast and mind, Cromwell still seems to characterize the Independents as a whole. That is, they began from initially solid premises and then, being forced by circumstances and hot-
heads within their own ranks to go further than the premises allowed, were finally pushed beyond a point of no return and caught up in a life-and-death struggle.
CHAPTER II

Having examined the views held or at least proclaimed by the anti-royalists, we shall now consider the situation from the side of those opposing them. In the first scene, when Lady Fairfax seeks to persuade her husband to avert Charles' execution, and to have the sentence perhaps commuted to life imprisonment, her husband answers:

Ich hör sa, was sie mein;
Sie wil, dass Karl vergeh in langer kercker rein.
Ach herts! es ist sehr schwer vor ein durchnacht gesätthe.
Meint sie, dass Stuard selbst bewillig ihre bitte?
Nein, sicher! so ein geist, der nicht an erden klett,
Der niemani dienen kan, der durch die lüften schwebt,
Verlacht den grimsten tod und zagt ob steten banden.
Sie dann versichre sich, dass Karl sein ende küss,
Dass ihn der kurtze tod aus langer quaeal entschliess,
Dass ihn nichts schwerer drück als kercker, wach und schlosser
(I, 143 ff.).

Charles therefore cannot endure to languish in prison, and embraces willingly swift, public death. This could, of course, emanate from his exalted character and the exalted view he holds of himself and his office. Yet the fact that he prefers death points perhaps also to a simple desire on his part to achieve public renown as a martyr for the divine right of kings, for God, for his country. Were his willingness to be a sacrifice pure and all of a piece, he should have nothing against the martyrdom of long imprisonment as opposed to swift, public execution.

In prison, however, one is gradually forgotten by the public.
A few lines further, the fact emerges that the king's death wasn't entirely inevitable:

Fairfax: Das heer schlug nach dem spruch noch rottungsmittel vor.
Gemahlin: Ich rühms, dass er sie nicht zu seinem schimpff erkohr
(I, 137 f.).

This incident closely parallels a similar occurrence in act V, shortly before the king's death:

Graf: ...bis man bey naher nacht
Ihm vorschläg artig durch der haubtleut ausschuss bracht,
Auff welchen, da er sie durchaus belieben wolte,
Ob wol durch noth gepreßt, sein heil bestehen solte.
Kaum hat er diss papier mit unlust übersehn,
Als er es von sich gab. Diss müsse nicht geschehn,
Was (sprach er) wider stat und gott, dienst und gesetze
Und freyheit meines volcks, wie viel man bell auch wetze
(V, 67 ff.)!

Charles accordingly was given a chance on two separate occasions to have his punishment at least mitigated, if not entirely canceled. On both occasions he refused the proffered compromise. He chose to die rather than to relinquish any of his rights and thereby to jeopardize or violate the divine order sustaining him and the nation. The fact that Charles considered death to be the only alternative to his full reinstatement points to the sincerity of his convictions. However, it also points to a certain trait of "all or nothing" in his character, which was described at length by Fairfax (I, 143 ff.). This inability to compromise seems to have its roots in a deep-seated personal pride. It prevents him from exercising political resourcefulness
and decides his choice of public martyrdom. The possibility of an admixture of latent egotism in his decision to die cannot be ruled out.

At the end of act I, the choir of murdered English kings gives almost a complete résumé of the royal position. We shall examine their statements in detail, since these and their implications present the main contentions of the royalist party.

I Chor: Die heisse pest, die kirch und herd
Und gantz reich in nichts verkehrt,
Auffruhr, das ebenbild der hällen,
Das die mit blut gefärbten wellen
Mit tausend leichen überdeckt
Und das verderbte land befleckt,
Wil nach den bürgerlichen kriegen
Auf Stuarts trüben mord-platz siegen
(I, 305 ff.).

The uprising against the king is characterized as a plague which destroys the church, its members and the entire nation. Again and again the figure of the plague, that of a deadly epidemic attacking the otherwise healthy body politic, is used by the royalist to castigate the uprising. Insurrection reflects hell itself, which is essentially an adamant refusal of spirits to obey God, and this initial dissolution of a divinely-intended order issues in every imaginable evil, dissension and misery. As in the moral order, the perversion of the correct, divinely-appointed political order works destructively upon its perpetrators.
In act IV, employing the same image of the epidemic, Charles speaks bitterly of the Independents, and unmasks the real face of the insurrection.

Ob schon die scharffe pest
Mit heilig-seyn sich schminkt, ob man mit lümmel-fellen
Den wolfsbalg überzeucht, man kann sich nicht verstellen.
Diss sag ich rund, dass nichts dem frieden wie ersteh,
Denn derer eigensinn, die ringend nach der höh,
Aus knechten sich erhöht, als meister zu regieren
Und in des könings thron den pövel einzuführen
(IV, 140 ff.).

Charles sees the entire insurrection as a ruthless grasp for power by the Independents, who trample on the traditional concept of the divine right of kings. The very attempt is damnable, but even more so is the insurrectionists' use of deception, their pretense of justice and godliness, their duping of the people into believing they have a right to determine the ruler.

The use of the mask of religion is especially singled out for attack. In the Rayen of act IV, Religion appears as a personified figure and complains of the abominable misuse of religion by the heretics and political opportunists:

Wer itat die wehr ergreifft, ergreifft sie mich zu schätzen,
So spricht er, und steckt land und kirchen selber an,
Wenn zwang, wenn eigensinn, wenn auffruhr nicht wil nützen,
Deckt sie mein nahm und kleid, auf den man pochen kan
Wer seinen tollen traum nicht darff zu marckte bringen,
Schminckt ihn mit meiner tracht und sätet hass und streit
(IV, 313 ff.).

Wer printzen aus wil heben
Und cronen niederdruckt, bringt meine larve mit
(IV, 323 f.).
The terrible end prepared for those making such a mockery
of justice and religion is seen shortly before Charles' execution
by one of the judges who condemned the king, Poleh.\(^3\) Vering on
insanity, he sees visions of divine retributions:

> Der straffen wetter blitst, Heult richter! Mörder weinet!
> Wie? Hugo, fälltst du auch in den verdienten hohn?
> Wie zittert noch dein hertz in grauser herncher händen!
> Wo wird man deinen kopff, wo die vier stück hinsenden,
> In die man dich vertheilt
> (V, 194 ff.)?

Welch scheusslich anblick! Hier prangt Cromwels blosse
leiche
Nachat Irrestons geripp an einer galgen eiche
(V, 213 f.).

These visions are followed by a prophetic picture:

(Der schauplatz öffnet sich zu dem drittenmaal uns stellet
vor, wie der bischöff Carlen den II krönet).

Wo? Wie? was schau ich dort? Setzt dar gerechte gott
Den fürsten wieder ein nach so viel herben stürmen?
Ach freylisch! gottes hand pflegt gütter zu beschirmen
(V, 232 ff.).

Poleh's horrible visions paint the individual punishments
to be meted out to the leaders of the Independents, and then
depict the restoration of Charles II, which is simultaneously
the restoration of the entire divine right order by God.

In addition to the image of the epidemic, an image from
another natural order underlines the relationship of king and people:

I Chor: Was hat dich Albion erhitz,
⊙ landl mit königs-blut durchspritzt?

3 Poleh fulfills a special function. Gryphius explains in his
commentary on v. 157: "Wer diser sey, ist vilen unverborgen. Ich
schone noch des eigenen namens. Er hat bereits sich selbst abgestraft
und seinen richter erlitten." Poleh is a pseudonym for Judas, and by
contrast heightens Charles as a martyr and Christ-figure. For a more
detailed treatment of this question, cf. A. Schöne, \textit{Säkularisation
als sprachbildende Kraft}, pp. 56-57.
Machst du mit einem tollen streiche
Dich selbst zu einer toten leiche?
Das heil, das du auf Carlen wetzt,
Wird deiner ruh en hals gesetzt (I, 313 ff.).

I Chor: Verbranntet Britten land!
Die straffen brechen ein, du hast dein haupt verloren
Und taumelst in den sand (I, 332 f.).

At the end of act III, the women deepen the image:

Brittens heil, das in dir lebt,
Das sich wider dich erhebt,
Das, wenn du wirst niedersincken,
Wird in deinem blut ertrincken (III, 845 ff.).

The element common to all these outcries is that of the
organic unity of the body with the head. In like fashion, the
body politic is naturally composed of a head (the king) and a
body (the kingdom, the subjects). To sever this head is to
destroy the guiding principle of the nation, and political death
must result. Regicide is equivalent to suicide of the nation.
This organic political body, however, is not simply autonomous,
but is most closely integrated into a larger, divine order:

I Abgesang: Herr, der du frästen selbst an deines statt
gesetzt,
Wie lange siehst du zu?
Wird nicht durch unsern fall heilig recht verletzet?
Wie lange schlummerst du
(I, 321 ff.)?

This statement is the cornerstone of the royalists'
political views. The king is the personal vicar of God. God
himself chooses the king and through him exercises his divine
sovereignty over the people. This is, of course, a clear
expression of the principle of the divine right of kings, and it is from this source that all the attributes and prerogatives of the king are drawn. It clearly opposes any notion of God delegating his power to the people directly, the view professed by the party of Cromwell.

The correct relationship of the king and the people, of the king's obligations to the people in this divinely-ordained structure, is outlined by Charles in act V:

Wass nun das volck angeth,  
Zeugt der, der für sein volck und volckes freyheit steht,  
Der dessen freyheit mehr als eignen nutz betrachtet,  
Wenn man des volckes heil und leben recht beachtet,  
Und, wie es recht, beherracht und treu versichert hält,  
So hat es seinen wunsch, Wer nach dem scepter stellt,  
Reisst elle schrancken durch und sucht ein schrecklich ende,  
Weil printz und unterthan doch unvermischte stände  
(V, 375 ff.).

It is the king's function to assure the well-being of his people. In return, the people are obligated to render absolute obedience to the king. This obedience is essential and stands in direct contradiction to the right of resistance claimed by the protagonists of popular sovereignty. The penalty for violating this divinely-ordained subordination is "ein schrecklich ende". The fulfillment of this terrible retribution was most forcefully displayed in the visions of Poleah (V, 194 ff.).

Since the institution of the king is by divine ordinance, it may not be abrogated by human acts. Yet, a problem arises when not the people, but the king acts against divine law:

II Chor: Wahr ists! ein fürst der frevelt dir,  
Und du hast mittel da und hier,
Dein recht, das evig recht muss zieren
Durch menschen unrecht auszuführen.
Wird aber das verkehrte reich
Erquickt durch seines königs leich?
Und steht es frey den mord zu wagen
Und die gesalbten auszutagen

(I, 315 ff.)

It is first admitted that the case may arise in which a ruler commits an offense against God. Maintenance of the people's interest being the duty of the king, a violation of the rights of the people is a violation of the divine law as well. Not even the king may break divine law, and he must be punished. But he can be punished only by God himself, who, however, may decide to utilize secondary causes to accomplish this. Yet it is strictly forbidden for the people to attempt to punish the king, even less to bring about his death. For the people are wholly subordinate to the king and God, and have no right to judge their king or execute punishment. It is precisely on this right that Cromwell and the Scottish emissary had such opposing opinions.

Gesandter: Ein erb-fürst frevelt gott, gott hat nur
macht zu straffen.

Cromwell: Gott führt sein recht jetzt aus durch unter-
drucktar waffen
(III, 761 f.).

Any attempt by the people to assume this divine prerogative is a perversion of the right order:

If Gegenchor: Zu tagen vor ein blindes recht,
Da aber herren spricht ein knecht!

4 Due to wrong numbering in text, the lines I, 315-24 appear twice. This quotation is from the second numbering.
Da war der unterthan verbrochen,  
Wird durch des försten mord geröchmen,  
Des försten, dessen höchste schuld  
Kein ander als zu viel geduld!  
Wird das mit wohlto nat beschöne?  
Heisst das nicht recht und gott verböhnet  
(I, 323 ff.)?

Again the strict subordination of the people to the ruler  
is emphasized. They have no right at all to judge, and any attempt  
to do so is blindness to the real order. They scorn God and his  
law and call down divine vengeance upon themselves. In act II, the  
same complaint is made by the spirit of Mary Stuart:

Kan recht ein urtheil bagen,  
Wenn thörchte gewalt den richterstuhl besetzt  
(II, 136 ff.)?

Als knechte sich vermessen,  
Als knechte wider uns den richterstuhl besessen,  
Und die, die keine macht kennt aber sich als gott,  
Der printzen setzt und richt, verwiesen zu dem tod  
(II, 217 ff.)!

Sie rassen mit vernunft, sie setzen richter sin,  
Es muss ihr doppelmord durch recht beschöne seyn  
(II, 231 ff.).

In addition to denying the people any right at all to either  
judge or condemn, these statements accuse those so doing of a  
terrible hypocrisy. They murder the king and at the same time  
try to invest their action with the sanctity of justice.  
For the power of administering justice is a special prerogative  
of the king, deriving from his office as ruler. He may delegate  
it as he sees fit, but under no circumstances may any of his  
subjects arbitrarily appropriate the office of judge to himself.
It is especially galling to the royalists that the insurrectionists pretend to properly exercise this power and turn it against the king. In the eyes of the royalists, it is a monstrous caricature of justice and a perversion of the God-willed order.

Returning to the choir of murdered English kings, we see that they speak of the king in a special way:

Und die gesalbten auszutagen
(I, 322.)?

The king, by virtue of God's choice of him, becomes the anointed of God. This attribute of the king is taken up again by the ghost of Laud in act II as he envisions the king's execution:

Des fürsten heilig blut treuflt auf den greuel-sand
Und sein gesalbtes haubt ist in des herackers hand
(II, 119 f.).

The same concept is echoed by the count in act V:

Man eilt das spiel zu schliessen
Und das gerechte5 blut des königs zu vergliessen
(V, 33 f.).

The king becomes holy in his very person. He is not subject to the people both by reason of law and right, and by the fact that his person is anointed, holy, specially consecrated to God. Correspondingly, the people's crime becomes not only a legal offense, but a sacrilege as well. This particular concept of

5 In manuscript A, gerechte is replaced by gesalbte; cf. Palz, p. 450, footnote 7.
the holiness of the king is further heightened by the view Charles takes of himself and his approaching execution:

Wir sind des lebens sat
Und scheun den könig an, der selbst ein creutz betrat,
Verhasst von seinem volck, verlacht von seinen scharen,
Verkennt von ländern, die auf ihn vertrüstet waren,
Den freund wie uns verkaufft, den feind wie uns verklagt
Und kränckt um fremde schuld und bis zum tode plagt
(Ili, 259 ff.).

In act V, the count describes the king's behavior as he was awaiting execution:

Ich schreck, ein toller bub spié in sein angesicht
Und blärt ihn grimmig an. Er schwieg und acht es nicht,
Ja schätzet is ihn vor ruhm, dem försten gleich zu werden,
Der nichts denn spott und creutz und speichel fand auf erden
(V, 55 ff.).

Charles likens himself and his coming death to Christ and his death. Christ's title in both instances is related most intimately to Charles: "den könig", "dem försten". Charles considers himself a sacrificial victim for the sins and wrongs of his people, in order that they be cleansed.

In act III, before the king appears, the spirits of Thomas Wentworth (Count Strafford) and Archbishop Laud discuss their deaths. They were in reality victims of political expediency, since Charles allowed them both to be put to death, even though they were among his closest supporters. Strafford, however, can still excuse the king.

Doch klag ich, wether printz! nicht über deine treue.
Du liebstest bis ans end und trueste keine scheue
Zu reden für mein heyl. Was hast du nicht versucht,
Zu retten diesen kopff, und gleichwoil sonder frucht!
Wie lang hat deine faust das mord-papier verschoben!  
Dich hat die freche rott, dich hat das tolle toben  
Und leichter buben schaum an ehr und macht verletzt,  
Eh als an meinen hals das richt-beil ward gesetzt  
(III, 45 ff.).

Strafford exonerates the king entirely by saying that  
his hand was simply forced against his will. The blame lies  
upon the insurgents, who drove Charles to assent to the deaths  
of Strafford and Laud. The sovereign power of the prince was  
violated. Yet although Strafford absolves the king of guilt,  
the king's assent still has an air of appeasement about it,  
and Charles himself returns to it again and again in his speeches:

Carolus: Uns druckt, dess glaubt uns fest, nichts mehr als  
Straffords tod.

Thomisson: Die richter haben ihm die halsstraff aufferleget.  
Carolus: Sein unschuld hat den plitz auf unserer haubt erreget  
(IV, 60 ff.).

Carolus: Das ewigscheinend aug, das in die hertzen siehet,  
Sieht, dass ich so viel recht von meinem recht nachliess,  
Als mich in diesem werck mein rein gewissen hiess  
(IV, 170 ff.).

Carolus: Weil uns der himmel ruft, ich scheide, gute nacht!  
Komm, Wentworth werthe seel! Ich wil den frevel büssen  
(IV, 220 ff.).

Carolus: Wie Wentwort durch uns fiel in nicht verdiente pein,  
So mussa sein herber tod itzt unser straffe seyn  
(IV, 319 f.).

Obviously Charles is greatly tormented by his assent to  
Strafford's death, and still holds himself to blame for it.  
Even more, it seems to be precisely this that has led to Charles'  
own death. Yet soon thereafter he attempts to justify himself by
saying he relinquished his authority and power in Wentworth's case out of a sincere conviction and in good conscience. This points to the nature and kind of authority invested in Charles. It was a divinely-given authority which none had a right to wrest from his hand or force him to misuse. None could take it, save he who had bestowed it, God. Charles knows his responsibility for preserving his authority and power inviolate. Yet his temporary self-justification does not soothe his conscience, and his later statements reveal only too clearly his preoccupation with this wrong and his clear wish to atone for it by his death. Charles' death therefore receives additional motivation, namely, expiation for a personal crime.

Wentworth's previous exoneration of the king, however, contains a reference to a further prerogative of the king.

Wentworth says:

Dich hat die freche rott, dich hat das tolle toben
Und leichter haben schaum an ehr und macht verletzt
(III, 50 ff.).

Charles himself bitterly complains of this several times:

Ein heer, das sich erkhant (o greuel auszusprechen!) 
Mich haubtfeind, mich tyrann zu nennen und zu brechen
Die mir verschworne pflicht
(IV, 105 ff.).

Lasst nun die welt aussagen,
Ob einem lager frey, so grause that zu wagen
Und wider recht und eyd dem reich widerstehn,
Ja mit dem reich und recht und freyheit durchzugehn
(IV, 177 ff.).
Sie suchten aus der Faust das Kriegsrecht uns zu winden, 
Die sich doch überzeugt durch ihr gewisse finden, 
Dass es das meine war.

(V, 301 ff.).

The sword, or the military power, is given exclusively into 
the hands of the king by God, and none may wrest it from his 
grasp. The subordination of the military to the king was confirmed 
and sealed by the oath which had to be made to the king. The 
turning of the army against Charles was a double offense, for it 
was both a violation of an oath before God, and a violation of 
the divinely-ordained subordination of power under the king. Not 
only was the prerogative of the king usurped, but a grave crime 
against right order, law and the good of the state itself was 
committed. The disloyalty of the army led to the destruction of 
Charles’ authority and of the whole civil order dependent on it. 
The army was the pillar upon which the divine right order based 
itself. Hence Charles’ bitter denunciation of the army’s 
disobedience.

In Charles’ conversation with his children, he takes special 
care in impressing upon his son and daughter another basic concept 
of the divine right order, which they must maintain at all costs. 
Charles’ eldest son is not present, but in France, and Charles 
counsels the younger son, who might yet fall into the insurgents’ hands:

Drum nimm dich selbst in acht
Und meide, meine leich so schändlich zu beschimpfen,
Dass, da man meinen mord gesonnen zu verglimpfen,
Indem man, weil noch wer von deinen brüdern lebt,
Dich ihm zu nachtheil ehrt und auf den thron erhellt,
Du dich erkennen dörffst, ihr vorderrecht zu brechen
Und, was mein blut anigt bestbrochen soll, zu schwächen!
Fleuch! Meide diese achmach

(II, 443 ff.)!
His son answers:

Es blüh auf seinem stuhl, der zu dem stuhl gebohren
(II, 461.)

Turning to his daughter, Charles solemnly counsels again regarding the eldest brother:

Dem bruder eure pflicht, gehorsam zu erzeigen,
Dem bruder, der (obsohn ihn wall und wetter treibt)
Doch dieser ländrer först und euer könig bleibt
(II, 470 ff.).

In his final monologue before the execution, Charles dwells again upon this conviction:

Ihr musst dem försten geben
Und denen, die nach ihm ihr erbrrecht soll erheben,
Und denen, über die der först den scepter führt,
Was printz und printzen erb und unterthan gebührt
(V, 361 ff.).

In unmistakable terms Charles delineates the right of the king to the throne through the laws of inheritance. It is this right that his children must at all costs uphold. It is the means through which God designates the ruler in whom he places his power, and through which continuity of the divinely-established order is guaranteed.

With the exposition of this central tenet of the divine right theory, the main contentions of the royalist party have been presented. A complex of idealistic and personal motivation has been uncovered, and it remains now to summarize the positions of the two parties and to devote our attention to the basic problem aroused by their opposition to each other.
CONCLUSION

The anti-royalist party, headed by Oliver Cromwell, upholds, at least superficially, the theory of popular sovereignty. They do not break with the tradition that all political power derives ultimately from God, but they do deny a direct bestowal of that power upon the ruler. Instead, they redirect it through the people. The people, as the visible repository of political power, become the source of the ruler’s power. However, power is not delegated arbitrarily to the ruler, but is conferred by means of a contract. In return for upholding the people’s rights and securing their well-being, the ruler is entitled to his office, prerogatives and to the obedience of the people. Should the ruler not fulfil his obligations, abuse his rights or those of the people, he breaks the contract and forfeits his office. The people may call him to task, and refuse obedience. All forces normally subservient to the ruler are also automatically absolved of oaths to the ruler and are to uphold the people’s cause. If the ruler’s offenses are of a grave enough nature, the people may forcibly resist the ruler and violently depose or even kill him, should he refuse to abdicate. The people’s right of resistance is sacred and indissolubly bound up with their sovereignty.

The rights of the people (including those of the nobility) are to a large measure reflected in the body of tradition, and
this traditional law is *ipso facto* an expression of the divine law. It forms an integral part of the regulatory mechanism obtaining between the ruler and the people. In England, Parliament was the *custodian* of this body of traditional law. Its task was to both maintain these rights of the people, and as the voice of the people to enact new legislation based upon tradition. It was basically the organ representing the people in the contract with the ruler.

Although this is the basic framework the Independents represent, their motivation is by no means selfless or consonant with this system of thought. It is all too clear that they utilize these concepts for their own ends. Certain of the leaders of the Independents are sincerely and religiously motivated. Others are by no means convinced of their cause, waver in their loyalties and even desert the camp. Still others represent the most violent type of religious and political fanaticism, and are consistent only in their excesses. The core of the Independents' leadership grasps unashamedly for power, becomes locked in a life-and-death struggle with the prevailing authority and acts largely out of an instinct for self-preservation. Theirs is not only a struggle for political, but religious ascendency as well. They manage to maneuver the dignity and authority of Parliament behind their cause to effect the deposition and execution of the
king, and they capitalize on the religious beliefs of the people to win their support. Where such persuasions fail, the naked power of the military, which they have wrested into their hands, is applied in order to coerce any and all recalcitrants and to secure the execution of the king. Under the pressure of circumstances and their own ambitions, their actions become guided less and less by the principles of a basically God-fearing system of popular sovereignty, and more and more by amoral machiavellian expediency.

The political system elaborated on the part of the royalists is the divine right of kings. Under this dispensation, all power in the civil order derives from God, who transmits his ruling authority and power unilaterally to a single vicar. Neither the king nor any others have any intrinsic right to this power— it is a free bestowal—and consequently no one can claim or obtain it for himself except through predetermined channels. These channels, or outward means of bestowal, are the laws of royal inheritance. This direct election of the king by God makes the king a consecrated person, partaking in some manner of the holiness of the deity.

The king derives certain basic powers from his office. The first of these is the power of judging. He is the supreme judge of the land, and all other power to judge is received only by means of delegation from him. Secondly, he has complete control
of all military forces. All military power is simply an extension of the king's power. Its sole task is to assist the king in maintaining internal order and protecting against foreign intrusion. The military is bound by oath to the king and may never act against his commands, since this would be to the detriment of the entire civil order. Thirdly, the king has the right to the unquestioning obedience of his subjects. Conversely, his subjects have no right to disobey, let alone to resist or attempt violence against the king. The entire divine right order depends upon the subordination of the subjects, and it is the greatest crime possible for them to oppose the king in any way.

The trust imposed on the king by God is to justly and wisely govern his subjects and to provide for their welfare. From this point of view, the people have certain rights and privileges. These are to be respected by the king, and guidelines regarding these rights are provided by the body of traditional law. Insofar as this traditional law reflects divine law, it is binding upon the king. In England, Parliament was the custodian of this law, and was to assist the king, but never to override his decisions. Should the king, however, violate his trust and in so doing violate divine law as well, a delicate question arises. It is solved by stating that he is subject only to God, and only God can punish him, in whatever way he sees fit. While the manner of such punishment remains somewhat indeterminate, the people are categorically denied any right to either judge or punish the king. Further, no
theory of contract may be construed to exist, in order to form a
basis upon which to question the king's ultimate authority. He
is directly responsible to God alone for his crimes.

Charles is ostensibly the protagonist of this order, and has
been put into a position where he has lost control of the political
situation. He and others in his camp declaim his rights most
emphatically, yet the power has passed from his hands. A plot to
rescue him disintegrates and he is left facing certain execution.
He thereupon views his coming death as God-willed, as a magnificent
gesture of martyrdom for the divine right order, and as a necessary
sacrifice for the aberrations of his people. Yet it has been
illustrated that his motivation is not devoid of secondary considera-
tions. He seeks public death almost too willingly, which points
to a latent pride in self-sacrifice. Further, unmistakable signs
of remorse for the part he played in the deaths of his close
councillors reappear constantly in his words, and point to personal
feelings of guilt and a desire to expiate these personal crimes.
His motivation cannot therefore be adjudged as entirely idealistic.
Other very human and personal considerations underlie his desire
for death, and to that extent weaken his idealistic protestations,
although they do not necessarily nullify his basic sincerity.

Perhaps the cardinal problem that presents itself is that
both parties base themselves on a political framework derived from
a common, divine source. Both parties, however, merely make this
claim, very vociferously upon occasion, but never offer any convincing proof. Especially in the stichomatic exchanges, only blow, simple statements and restatements of positions, are traded. Neither does, nor perhaps can, convince the other, and hardly ever is the cleft between the two parties bridged. There is a chronic lack of communication, no real dialogue is ever established. Where are the reasons for this to be sought?

Within the context of the play, a partial explanation would seem to lie in the fact that often there is no desire on the part of one or even both disputants to be convinced. Sincerity is lacking, and we are only too aware of the many layers of motivations behind the speakers at times. One could also consider further reasons arising from the method of presentation, both of characters and ideas, within the play. A definite tendency toward fitting out unrealistic figures with eloquence and rhetoric cannot be denied. But at a deeper and more telling level, this failing within the play is symptomatic of the age and of Gryphius himself. It was an age of extreme duress and violent political change. Gryphius had just lived through the horrors of the Thirty Years' War, and he had been following political events on the continent and in England with great acrivity. He saw crumbling about him an order and a system of values to which he was deeply committed. The popular sovereignty movement was making alarming progress against the traditional political concepts. Almost with
an air of desperation, Gryphius countered with his political dramas: Carolus Stuardus, Leo Armenius, Papinian. Carolus Stuardus especially has the character of a desperate outcry, as indeed its initial, hurried composition clearly reflects. It has the character of a last stand of an older, dying order, which no longer can convince. This was especially true in its answer to the central problem of what was to be done when a ruler abuses his subjects and becomes a tyrant. The best answer Gryphius could muster was for the people to endure patiently their suffering and trust that God would in some inscrutable manner and at some future time relieve them of oppression and punish the ruler. For Gryphius’ day and age, this solution was wholly unsatisfactory. Consequently, the old system could only restate its values and hope to convince simply by the forcefulness of its restatement. For it realized that in such cases the new political idealists were not accessible to argument. Their systems were mutually exclusive, despite their mutual departure from a common, divine source.

This same spirit of the age reflects itself in a related problem of the drama. For although the drama is heavily weighted in favor of the royalists, Gryphius nonetheless permitted the proponents of popular sovereignty to display much strength, vigor and cogency in their arguments. This would attest, of course, to objectivity on the dramatist’s part, but it must certainly have its deeper roots in a certain degree of right in the claims of popular
sovereignty, which even Gryphius could not deny. This would lend additional credibility to the view that the same battle that was joined in the world about him was taking place in Gryphius also. He, as well as the age which he championed, stood on the threshold of a new age possessing a disturbing degree of vitality and validity. The established order, which the new concepts sought to abolish, felt itself extremely uncertain, restated its position emphatically, but was at the same time aware that its rationale was no longer entirely valid and that it was fighting a losing battle. This was in great measure attributable to the fact that it could not compromise, and hence was incapable of establishing genuine communication.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


