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## The Levellers and the Folly of Consolidated Power

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How did the Cromwell lead government crush the progressive movement known as the Levellers near the end of the British Civil war?

Throughout the British civil war a large portion of the forces under Cromwell identified as “Levellers” an ideological sect that believed in radically expanding voting rights, redistribution of land, and greatly expanding how many representatives would be involved in the government to help distribute power. But by the end of the British Civil War they were cast out of all areas of power or had coalesced into the more conservative sect of the post-war government. The levellers had two very different evolutions, the first was a rural reaction to the aristocracy starting to enclose the commons land and not allowing the lower classes to farm or hunt on it as they had for generations. Then several years later the nickname was attached to the more progressive wing of the Cromwell army during the British Civil War. Then later we see most of the leaders that hold influence within the Cromwell government and army are persecuted and imprisoned or exiled. How and why did the more conservative forces in the revolution attack more progressive sects and force them to come to heel and consolidate power, while the progressive Levellers fell apart and were swept under the tide of history.

The Time line and events leading up to the Levellers being removed from prominence has a striking note that reflects many populist movements of the past, the very drivers of the movement were women and those from the lowest classes. They were pushed to the fringe of the movement and power was consolidated into easily controlled and silenced upper class men. This examination will show the weakness of the individual leader or small consolidated power population, and the blatant advantages of a dispersed power system within a revolutionary movement.