

Why did people want the king back in 1646?

Case study 2: Viewpoints, 1645-46 - Source 5

A letter on economic conditions in Cheshire, 11 July 1646

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What is this source?

This is an extract from a letter written by George Manley to his brother Thomas.

George was in Cheshire and Thomas was in London.

What's the background to this source?

The Civil War was virtually over. However, there were pockets of Royalist soldiers still fighting. Parliament and the army commanders were also very suspicious of areas of the country that had supported Charles, even if they were no longer fighting. As a result, they stationed large numbers of soldiers in these areas and forced the local people to pay for the soldiers through harsh taxes.

Cheshire had tried to declare itself neutral during the Civil War, but Parliament had not allowed this. The city of Chester supported Charles I and so did much of the rest of the county. Parliament forces besieged Chester. Cheshire people had to suffer both Royalist and Parliament armies in their county.

It's worth knowing that ...

Even areas that had not supported Charles had to pay heavy taxes to support the army. As discontent with taxes grew, army control gradually got tighter.

From 1646 onwards the army became an increasingly powerful force. Taxes to pay for the army were far higher than they had ever been in the rule of Charles I. Parliament's County Committees also controlled each county very closely.



Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. How bad were things in Cheshire in 1646?
2. What did Manley blame for the conditions?
3. How does this source help to explain why Charles gained support in 1646?

Source 5

a poore and miserable country we live in, and if this
Stagnation continue, it is like to be worse, if that possibility
of being worse, for the taxes are so many, and the gaine^r lands
toppon us, is more than our land is worth, our stocks are wasted,
and we are put into a way of ruine, not easily to be recovered, but
by great provident, and length of time, the Lord look down in mercy
toppon his poore distressed people. It is a great griefe to me to be
reduced to so low an estate, that I cannot receive yo^r wanttth in yo^r owne,
for your land and tithes for this year will not yeald you about 20,
yo^r tenants are so opprest it will hardly be gotten from them. And
so wth a troubled and grieved hartt, he bids you farewell that will
ever be yo^r loving brother

Geo: Manley