



Why did Britain become a republic?

Case study 1: Death of Charles I - Source 2

Initial plans for a treaty between Charles I and Parliament after the Second Civil War, 6 September 1648

(Catalogue ref: SP 16/516/86)

What is this source?

These are extracts from a document setting out the process that Parliament's negotiators had to follow as they tried to work out a peace treaty with Charles I after the Second Civil War.

This is just a few from a list of more than 20 instructions.

What's the background to this source?

After the first Civil War ended in 1646 Charles refused to reach a settlement with his enemies. His enemies were divided so he played them off against each other. Late in 1647 he escaped from London. He allied with the Scots. Royalist supporters across the country also rose to support him. However, Parliament and the New Model Army defeated Charles again in this Second Civil War in August 1648.

This document shows that in September 1648 MPs were once again trying to reach a settlement with the king. While these talks were being planned, the leaders of the army were planning more radical action.

It's worth knowing that ...

Charles's actions in starting a Second Civil War led the leaders of the army to believe he could not be trusted.

In November 1648 they demanded that the king should be put on trial for treason (for betraying his country and leading it into war). Most MPs were appalled by the idea.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What was the purpose of this document?
2. What did Parliament's Commissioners have to do?
3. What did they want Charles I to do?
4. Where did they want the king to end up?
5. How would you describe the tone of this document in the way it dealt with the king?
6. Reading this document, do you think that most MPs were very anxious to achieve a final treaty settlement with the king?



Source 2

