

Why did Britain become a republic?

Case study 2: New government - Source 3

A poem from May 1649 commenting on the new situation in England

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What is this source?

This comes from a pamphlet about the leading figures behind the trial and execution of Charles I.

Those mentioned in the poem include Oliver Cromwell (NoI) and Colonel Pride, who led Pride's Purge of Parliament (Pryde).

What's the background to this source?

From 1646-9 support for Charles I increased across the country. It was not so much that Charles was loved. It was more that rule by Parliament's County Committees and the New Model Army was even harsher than the king's rule.

Most people wanted stability, an end to war and an end to high taxes to pay for the army. As a result, most MPs tried to reach a settlement with Charles. This was unacceptable to some radical (extreme) MPs and to the army commanders. They put Charles on trial and he was executed.

It's worth knowing that ...

The trial and execution of Charles in January 1649 were among the most effective things he ever did. He was seen as standing up to an unpopular minority.

After his death many speeches, writings and drawings praised him. However, this did little good. His son, Charles, was not restored as king until 1660.



Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What words would you use to describe the attitude of this source towards those who killed the king?
2. According to this source, what did God think of democracy?
3. What did the writer of the poem hope that God would do?
4. What does this source tell you about attitudes to the army commanders?
5. Is it possible to tell from this source whether this view was widely held?

Source 3

What yet more *Fasts*, by *Rebells* made?
Oh! what faynted *Devills*
Are these, who on our *Lord* have layd
Their *Murther*s, *Sins*, and *Evills*.

What doe they think *Democracy*?
Is by the *Lord* approv'd:
No, no, they'll finde by *Monarchy*,
Ere long t'will be remon'd:

Their *Snivelling* forth *Rebellion* in,
The *Pulpit* doth but *vex*:
Our *God*, and will but hasten *him*,
T'inthrone yong *CAROLVS REX*.

Then *Toms*, and *Nol*, *Ireton* and *Phill* —
The *Dray-man Pryde* shall drive,
Upon a *Sledge* up *Houle-bouene-Hill*,
Till at *Tyburne* they arive —