

What kind of ruler was Oliver Cromwell?

Case study 2: Cromwell in the eyes of others – Source 6

Edmund Ludlow, on reactions to the death of Cromwell

(By permission of Oxford University Press: Firth (ed.), *The Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow, Lieutenant-General of the Horse in the Army of the Commonwealth of England, 1625-1672*, Vol. II, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1894, pp.45-6)

What is this source?

This is an extract from the *Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow*. It was published in the early 1700s.

Ludlow's memoirs were edited in the 1690s. At this time the monarchy was back in power.

What's the background to this source?

Ludlow was an opponent of Charles I, but he also fell out with Oliver Cromwell.

- Ludlow was an MP and commander of the Parliamentary armies in the Civil War. He was a hard-line opponent of Charles I and signed his death warrant.
- Ludlow later clashed with Cromwell when Cromwell closed Parliament in 1653 and became Lord Protector. He felt that Cromwell's rule was illegal.
- Ludlow felt very strongly that the role of the army was to obey the government, not to take part in government.

It's worth knowing that ...

After Cromwell's death there was the problem of who would rule the country.

- Cromwell's son, Richard Cromwell, became Lord Protector. However, he was not the man for the job and retired.



- MPs were then faced with the possibility of another civil war between rival army leaders. However, one commander, General Monck, emerged as the most powerful leader.
- He agreed with Parliament that the best solution to the problem of running the country was to bring back the monarchy. As a result, Charles I's son became Charles II in 1660.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What can we tell about Cromwell's rule from this source?
2. What were the different reactions to his death?
3. Who were the different groups competing for power after his death?
4. What overall impression does this source give of what people thought of Cromwell?



Source 6

Different were the effects that the death of Cromwell produced in the nation: those men who had been sharers with him in the usurped authority were exceedingly troubled,

whilst all other parties rejoiced at it: each of them hoping that this alteration would prove advantagious to their affairs. The Commonwealthsmen were so charitable to believe that the souldiery being delivered from their servitude to the General, to which they were willing to attribute their former compliances, would now open their eyes and join with them, as the only means left to preserve themselves and the people. Neither were the Cavaliers without great hopes that new divisions might arise, and give them an opportunity of advancing their minion, who had been long endeavouring to unite all the corrupt interests of the nation to his party. But neither the sense of their duty, nor the care of their own safety, nor the just apprehensions of being overcome by their irreconcilable enemy, could prevail with the army to return to their proper station. So that having tasted of sovereignty under the shadow of their late master, they resolved against the restitution of the Parliament.