Why did people go to war in 1642?

Case study 1: 1637-39 - Source 1

A proclamation by Charles I on playing cards and dice, 1638 (Catalogue ref: SP 45/10/212)

What is this source?

This is a royal proclamation (announcement or order) from 1638. Charles was effectively taking control of the trade in playing cards and dice.

The main purpose of a proclamation was to make people aware of a new law or rule. It would be read out in a public place, often the church on Sunday.

What's the background to this source?

Parliaments often gave the king the right to control certain trades. This was usually to make sure that products in a particular trade were safe. Goods that were approved were given the seal of approval. Most trades accepted that they should pay a small fee to get the seal of approval.

Parliament usually gave the king the right to control a trade for a certain number of years. However, the king always controlled some important trades (e.g. the salt trade). Charles took control of many trades during the 1630s. In many cases he sold the control of the trade to one merchant or company, giving them a monopoly (sole control of a trade). Not surprisingly, many other merchants who got left out were upset by Charles's actions.

It's worth knowing that ...

People accepted that kings would try to use regulations like this to raise money, but in the 1630s many people felt Charles was going too far. From 1629-40 he ruled without calling Parliament (the Personal Rule) and instead used measures like this to get the money he needed.

For example, he banned the growing of tobacco except on royal plantations in 1638. He brought in strict laws in 1635 that made people pay fines for swearing and cursing. Many MPs were concerned that

Charles was trying to find ways to raise money so that he could rule without ever calling Parliament.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

- 1. How do we know that this is a genuine royal proclamation?
- 2. Study source 1a. The king claimed that this regulation was to protect the public from poor quality dice and cards. Do you think the public were really worried about poor quality dice or cards?
- 3. Study source 1b. What do makers or sellers of cards or dice now have to do?
- 4. Will it cost them money?
- 5. People today often complain about having to pay taxes on too many things. Do you think this proclamation would have led to complaints?
- 6. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?





Civil War > Why did people go to war in 1642? > 1637-39 > Source 1

Source 1a



By the King.

A Proclamation touching the Manufactures of Playing-Cards, and Dice.



He Kings most Excellent Maiesty, for the better imployment and relieft of the Card-makers and Dice-makers of the Bealme, having of late taken order for a constant weekly buying and taking off from them, of their Panusactures of Cards and Dice, whereby they may be enabled to live of their Trades: And for prevention of these common abuses which have been and are still practised, by the vise of faile Cards and Dice, to the great deceit and dammage of his Subjects; his Paiestic, by his Letters Patents, buder his Great Seale of England, bearing date the

nine and elbentieth day of April, in the thirteenth yeere of his Reigne, hath appointed an Officer for the Searching and Sealing of all such good and merchantable Cards and Dice, as now are or hall be hereafter either made within this Realme, or Imported into the same from any forraine, or other parts, before the said Cards and Dice hall be bettered or put to sale.



Civil War



Civil War > Why did people go to war in 1642? > 1637-39 > Source 1

Source 1b

Dis Maielly therefoze doth hereby declare his Royali will and Pleasure to be, and doth fraight-ly Charge and Command, That all person of persons whatsoever, as well Pakers of Cards and Dice within the Realme, as Perchants of others, who hall impost the same from Fortain of other parts, do from henceforth from time to time, bring the same Cards and Dice to his Paiellies Officer, of his Deputies in London, and other remote places, to be there viewed, examined, and sealed, if they shall be found good and merchantable; paying to his Paiellies said Officer, of his Deputies, by the sealing thereof, such allowance and fee, as by his Paiellies said Letters Patents is appointed in that behalfe.