

Why did people go to war in 1642?

Case study 2: 1640-42

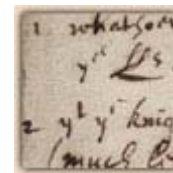
The Civil War broke out in 1642, but there were many years of tension leading up to this event. How does this selection of sources from 1640-42 help us to understand why people went to war?



Petition from the citizens of London, 1640



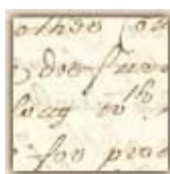
Report of disputes between Charles & Parliament



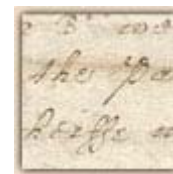
Document on the wishes of Parliament, 1640



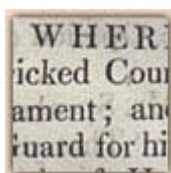
Images from the trial of the Earl of Strafford



Report of rebellion in Ireland, 1641



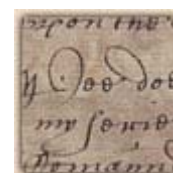
Report of tensions in the country, 1642



Pamphlet from Parliament, June 1642



Payments to help Charles I's armies, 1642



Petition from the confused gentry of Somerset

Case study 2: 1640-42 - Source 1

A petition from the citizens of London, September 1640

(John Rushworth, Historical Collections, Vol III, 1639-1640, p.1263. Published in London, 1680-1701)

What is this source?

This petition was sent to Charles I on 24 September 1640. Petitions were a way for Parliament or the citizens of a town to show that they were unhappy about something.

Charles ruled his kingdom without calling Parliament from 1629-40. During this period (called the Personal Rule) he brought in many changes. The citizens of London who sent this petition were unhappy with those changes.

What's the background to this source?

During the 1630s Charles tried rule the country without calling Parliament. This led to problems.

- Monarchs often ran out of money in the 1600s. When they needed more, they asked Parliament to agree to new taxes. Charles tried to raise money without a Parliament. He used taxes like 'ship money'. He sold monopolies and patents to merchants, giving them total control of particular trades and stopping other people making a living in these trades.
- People could be fined or jailed for not paying Charles's taxes. Charles also treated opponents of his policies harshly. They could be fined, arrested or tortured. This was often done with no trial at all, or in a special court called the Star Chamber. The Star Chamber usually did what Charles wanted.
- Charles also brought in many changes to the church. His religious policies led to a rebellion in Scotland in 1638. Charles tried to crush it, but he was very short of money to pay for the army he needed.
- By 1640 he was short of men, ships, money and supplies. He called a Parliament in April 1640 to ask for the money he needed, but he dissolved it again when MPs criticised aspects of his rule.

It's worth knowing that ...

London was by far the biggest city in the country in the 1600s, just like today. As a result, London paid a lot of taxes, collected in money and in goods. It was a rich and important city.

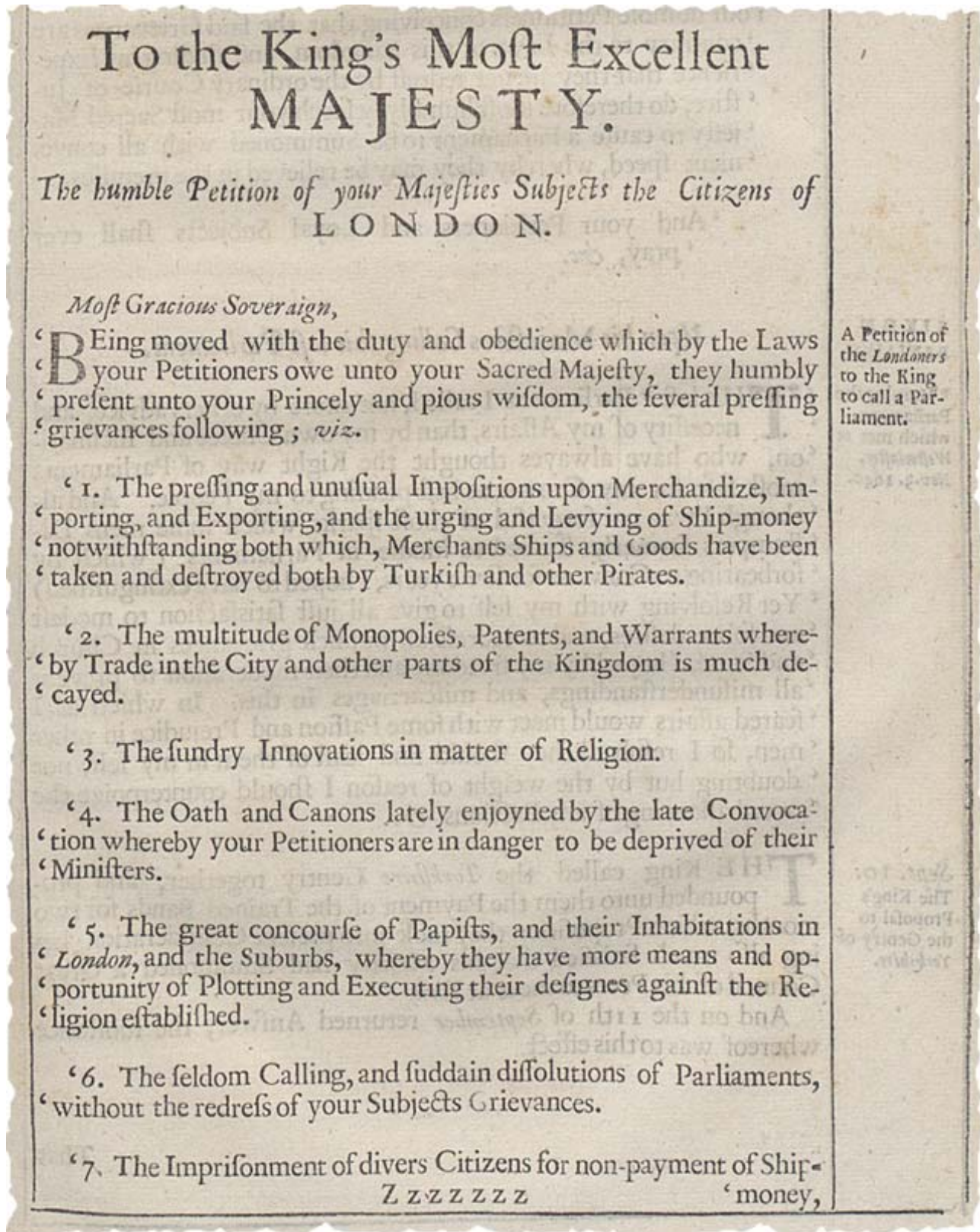
The citizens of London were also more politically active than any other part of the country and radical (wanting big changes). This helps to explain why the city sent several petitions to Charles during this period. London had more Protestant hardliners (Puritans) than other parts of the country. It is not surprising that London took the side of Parliament once war broke out in 1642.

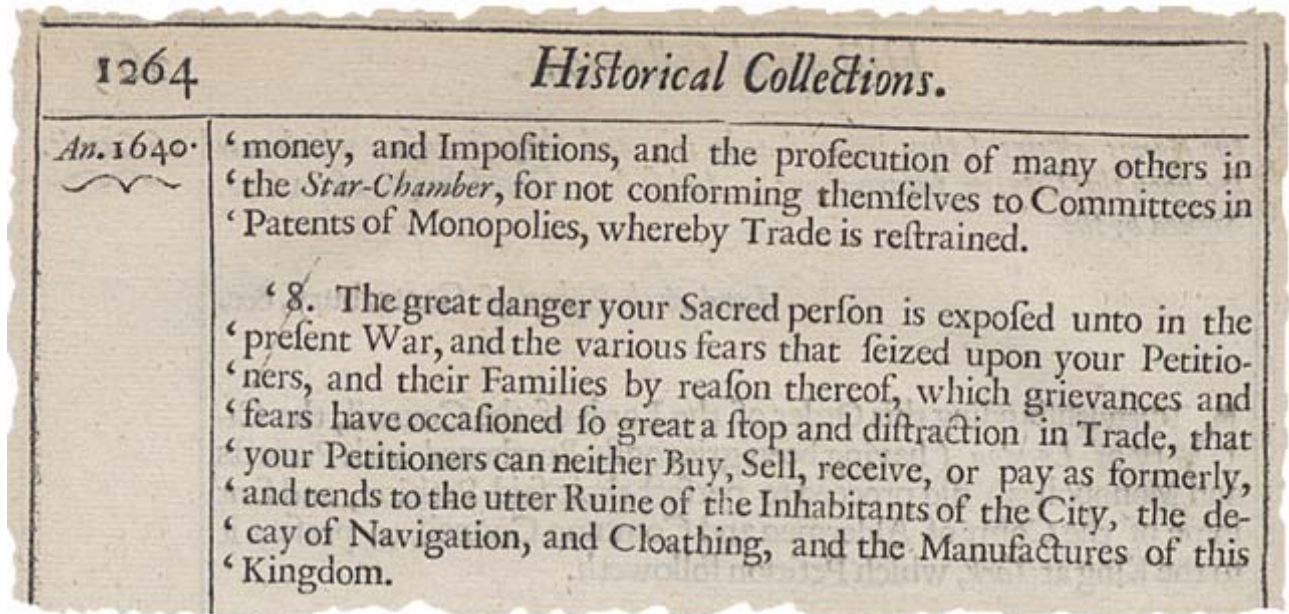
Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What were the people of London complaining about?
2. Is it possible to tell from this document which issues caused the greatest concern?
3. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?



Source 1





Case study 2: 1640-42 - Source 2

Report of disputes between Charles and Parliament in early 1640 (Catalogue ref: SP 16/452/33)

What is this source?

This is an extract from a letter written by the Earl of Northumberland to Viscount Conway in May 1640.

The writer was a member of Charles I's army in the north of England facing the Scots. He was writing a private letter to a member of his family.

What's the background to this source?

Charles I managed to rule his kingdom without calling Parliament from 1629-40. However, by 1640 he was desperate for money. He was facing a rebellion in Scotland and needed to pay more soldiers to fight the rebels. He was forced to call Parliament to try and get MPs to agree to new taxes to raise the money.

During the Personal Rule of 1629-40, Charles brought in many measures to raise money without having to ask Parliament. The most unpopular was 'ship money', a kind of tax. Charles also forced many towns and villages to provide soldiers, plus equipment for his troops. On top of this, Charles and the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, brought in changes to the Church of England. Many people disliked these changes.

It's worth knowing that ...

There were two Parliaments in 1640. The Short Parliament only lasted a few weeks in early 1640. Then Charles ended it (as mentioned in this source). By November Charles was forced to call another Parliament, the Long Parliament. Both Parliaments had many complaints about different aspects of Charles's Personal Rule.

On the whole, MPs were united in opposing Charles's policies. Some were concerned about religion. Others were concerned about taxes. Others were concerned about Charles ignoring the law. However, MPs disagreed about how far they could argue with the king. They were still

loyal to Charles as king even though they were unhappy about some of his actions.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What did Charles offer the MPs?
2. How did they react?
3. What were the main concerns of the MPs?
4. Does this source suggest that relations between Charles and Parliament were good or bad?
5. Does the writer criticise MPs in any way?
6. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?



Source 2

The King did yesterday offer the house of commons to relinquish absolutely the shipping money if they would at this time supply him with 12 subsidies, this gave them not satisfaction, they desired to be also eased of the millitarie charge as they termed it ^{wh} was from the pressing, cloathing, and conducting of souldiers; innovations in religion they likewise insisted much upon, other grievances they touched but these were the maine ones they complained of, and had they bene well advised I am veryly perswaded they might in time have gained their desires, but they in a tumultuous ~~and~~ confused way ~~and~~ went on wth their businesses, w^{ch} gave so greate offence unto his Ma^{ty} that this morning he hath dissolved the parliament

Case study 2: 1640-42 - Source 3

A document setting out the wishes of Parliament, December 1640
(Catalogue ref: SP 16/474/8)

What is this source?

This source set out clearly what MPs thought the powers of Parliament should be.

For example, the first point in the document says that laws made by Parliament also apply to the courts of justice, including the Star Chamber. The Star Chamber was the meeting place in the Palace of Westminster of the King's councillors. There they could hold court cases separately from the common-law courts. Charles used this court as a means to get his own way in law, especially over church matters, until Parliament finally put a stop to it in 1641.

What's the background to this source?

Charles I managed to rule his kingdom without calling Parliament from 1629-40. During that time he introduced changes to the church. He also raised money through new taxes that were not approved by Parliament. However, by 1640 he needed more money to fight a war against the Scots. He was forced to call a Parliament.

In December 1640 most MPs were moderates (not very extreme in their ideas). However, there were some MPs who were bitter critics of Charles and his policies. They were probably the men behind this document. Above all, the aim of these proposals was to make sure that Charles would never again be able to rule as he had done in the period 1629-40.

It's worth knowing that ...

There were two Parliaments in 1640. The Short Parliament only lasted a few weeks in early 1640. Then Charles ended it. By November Charles was forced to call another Parliament, the Long Parliament. Both Parliaments had many complaints about different aspects of the king's Personal Rule.

The MPs were not completely united in their concerns. Some were concerned about religion. Others were concerned about taxes. Others were worried about Charles ignoring the law. MPs also disagreed about



how far they could argue with the king. They were still loyal to Charles, even though they were unhappy about his actions.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What were the demands of the MPs?
2. Does this source suggest that relations between Charles and Parliament were good or bad?
3. Does this speech seem more or less respectful towards Charles than other sources in this case study?
4. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?

Source 3

1. whatsoever is declared by y^e 2 houses binde y^e Archbishops
y^e B^{is} of y^e Councell and all other Courts of Justice.

2. y^e y^e King hath not power to lay any imposition upon forrayne
(much lesse home-borne) commodities though wth consent
of y^e merchants without Consent of Parliament.

3. y^e y^e clergy though by y^e Kings Consent and wth his Confirmation
can make no Constitutions or Canons to bind y^e clergy (much
lesse the laity) without Consent of Parliament. See Confeg^h
y^e Kings alone can not doe it without full consent. See also the
Commons Journall II pth 1

4. y^e of right we ought to have Parliament once or twice a
year.

5. y^e dissolving of Parlt^h suddaynly without redressing y^e
grievances Complaynd of is a great grievance.

Case study 2: 1640-42 - Source 4

Images from the trial of Thomas Wentworth, the Earl of Strafford

(4a: John Rushworth, *The Trial of Thomas Earl of Strafford*. Published in London, 1680. 4b: SP 16/479/28, 4c: Wenceslaus Hollar D1317, 1641 [National Portrait Gallery](#))

What is this source?

Here is a portrait of the Earl of Strafford, an extract from the final speech he made on 13 April 1641, and a picture of his execution in May 1641.

Strafford was accused of treason (betrayal of one's country or king). He believed his enemies in the House of Commons had given him an unfair trial. He made this speech to the House of Lords in 1641, shortly before Strafford faced a vote by Parliament on whether he was guilty of treason or not.

The speech did no good and he was found guilty and executed. The picture shows that event, which took place in London in May 1641. (You can see the Tower of London in the background.)

The portrait of Strafford comes from a book published in 1680, which told the story of the trial. In the 1680s many books and pamphlets marked the anniversary of the events of the 1640s.

What's the background to this source?

Strafford was Charles I's right-hand man during the Personal Rule. This was the period from 1629-40 when Charles ruled without once calling Parliament. Charles's opponents in Parliament (led by John Pym) feared Strafford. When Parliament finally met in 1640, Pym accused Strafford of treason. The penalty was death. Basically, Pym and his supporters were trying to have Strafford killed.

Pym and other Parliamentary leaders were afraid of Strafford for several reasons.

- Strafford was a very tough man, although he was also a loyal and effective government official.
- From 1628-32 he was in charge of the Council of the North. He carried out Charles's policies in the North of England and crushed anyone who was against him.

- From 1632 Charles put him in charge of Ireland. He recruited a large army in Ireland and used this to stop opposition there. In Ireland he treated Catholics quite fairly. He did not favour them, but he did not victimise them either. This made some hard-line Protestants suspicious about him.
- In 1639 Charles called Strafford back from Ireland to go to Scotland. Pym was afraid that if Strafford used his army to crush the Scots who were rebelling against Charles, he could then crush all opposition to Charles in England – including people like Pym!
- Strafford was also probably the only leader who could gain the support of neutral MPs and get them to support Charles.

It's worth knowing that ...

The evidence against Strafford was very weak. The trial dragged on into 1641 and fell apart. John Pym then accused Strafford again, using a Bill of Attainder. This was a legal process that allowed Parliament to simply vote on whether he was guilty rather than basing the judgement on evidence in a fair trial. Strafford was found guilty. Many MPs disliked the way Pym twisted the law to get Strafford executed. Pym's actions eventually led many MPs to support Charles.

Strafford was very unpopular, but Charles would not agree to sign the death warrant. He was always loyal to his ministers. Eventually Strafford agreed to die for the good of the country. He thought the country could avoid civil war if he died. Charles reluctantly agreed, but he was tortured with guilt over the decision. It was another reason why he was so hostile to Parliament.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What was Strafford accused of?
2. Look at the extra information in the notes on this source. Does this information suggest other reasons why Strafford was put on trial?
3. According to Strafford's speech, what methods did his enemies use against him in his trial?
4. How did Strafford's opponents justify what they did to bring him down?
5. In 1640 most MPs were critical of Charles I. However, by 1641 many Lords and some other MPs were concerned about the actions of Pym

and the other leading opponents of Charles. What impact do you think Strafford's speech might have had on those concerned MPs?

6. Look at the image in source 4c. How would you describe this scene if you were commenting on it for a radio broadcast?
7. How can you tell that this was an important event?
8. Does this picture suggest that Strafford was popular or unpopular?
9. How do you think this event might have affected Charles I's views towards Parliament?
10. Does this give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?



Source 4a



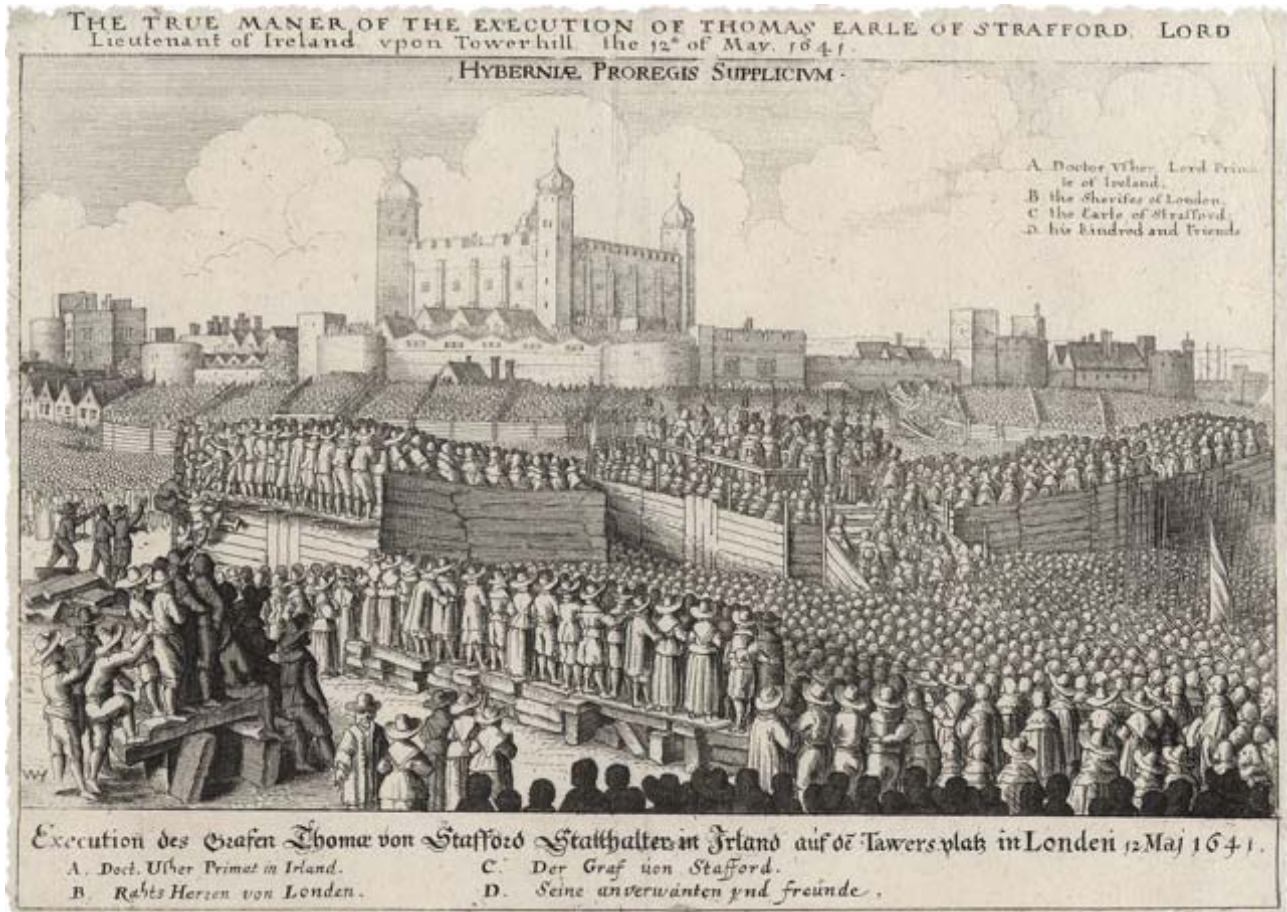


Source 4b

y^e y^e Estates y^e p^resentment by all at y^e State of such Barons
 sent as those whose Lungs are well acquainted wth such
 proceedings shalbe started against y^e if y^e findes y^e
 somer, somer, somer to y^e, if y^e p^resentment
 admitted to witness against y^e, if y^e word intention
 instances of y^e be alldged and reasonably, not because
 of a Statute, but a consequence a construction of Lawe heard
 by in a high Historiall strain, and a number of supposed
 probabilities. I leave it to y^e L^os consideration to consider,
 what
 what may be y^e issue of so dangerous for recent proceedings.
 These Gentlemen tell me they speak in defence of y^e Common
 weale against my Arbitrary Land, give me leave to say that I
 speak in defence of y^e Common weale against their Arbitrary
 Exaction for if the latitude be admitted, no p^rinciples shall follow
 to y^e King, to y^e Countrey of y^e and y^e posterity be defailed
 by y^e same from y^e greatest affaires of y^e Kingdom.
 For my poore self, if it were not y^e L^os Interest and y^e Interest
 of a Saint in Heaven, who hath left me two pledges, here on earth



Source 4c



Case study 2: 1640-42 - Source 5

Report of rebellion in Ireland, November 1641

(Catalogue ref: SP 16/485/58)

What is this source?

This extract comes from a letter written by a gentleman called Thomas Wiseman to Sir John Penington, a senior commander in Charles I's navy.

The State Papers for this period, held in the National Archives, contain many letters. The great majority of them mention the rebellion in Ireland. It was a very shocking and disturbing event.

What's the background to this source?

Charles I was ruler of England, Scotland and Ireland. English rulers had struggled to control Ireland for many years. In the early 1600s James I got Protestant settlers to live in Ireland and help him control the Irish, who were Catholics. These settlers had good land and many other privileges. Catholics faced discrimination and laws restricting their rights. The Catholic Irish resented the new settlers and in October 1641 they rebelled. Around 2000 Protestant settlers were killed, mainly in the north of Ireland.

Ireland was always a concern for English rulers and for English Protestants. The fact that the Irish were Catholics made Protestants suspect them of plotting against them. Also, Ireland was seen as a possible base for England's Catholic enemies, particularly France and Spain. The chance of a rebellion that left Catholics in charge of Ireland was very worrying.

It's worth knowing that ...

The rebellion in Ireland horrified all English Protestants. Charles and his MPs agreed that an army had to be sent to Ireland. However, this soon became a difficult issue. Leading opponents of Charles, such as John Pym, did not trust the king. Pym feared that Charles would use the new army to crush people like him, rather than the rebels in Ireland. He demanded that Parliament should be in charge of the new army and not the king. The argument was never solved. By the time the civil war started in 1642 Ireland was still in the hands of the Catholic rebels.



As well as the dispute over the army, wild rumours began to spread about Catholic plots inside England to murder key officials, take over important buildings and link up with the Irish rebels. Most of the alleged plots were nonsense. However, they made relations between Charles and his opponents even worse. Charles's ministers were seen as too pro-Catholic. Charles was even married to a Catholic.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What events were described in this source?
2. What was the reaction of the writer to these events?
3. What were his main concerns?
4. Did he feel that Parliament acted properly?
5. Why did the Irish rebel?
6. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?

Source 5

late Tyrant of the Lord of Strafford.
upon you moved them to it, and that
by the example of the Scots; they
hoped to purchase such privileges; by
this means in these Religious, and
otherwise they now ^{expected} ~~hoped~~ to have
granted to them

Case study 2: 1640-42 - Source 6

Report of tensions in the country, 6 January 1642

(Catalogue ref: SP 16/488/27)

What is this source?

These are extracts from a report written by a gentleman called Thomas Wiseman to Sir John Penington. Penington was not in London at the time and wanted to be kept informed of what was happening.

Wealthy and important people at the time were surprisingly well informed about events. There were many pamphlets and newspapers, as well as personal letters such as this one.

What's the background to this source?

By 1642 relations between Charles and Parliament were a disaster. In January 1642 Charles lost patience with Parliament and tried to arrest five leading MPs and one Lord (John Pym, John Hampden, Arthur Haselrigg, Denzel Hollis, William Strode and Lord Mandeville). This destroyed any trust that was left between the two sides after years of arguing.

Clashes between Parliament and Charles leading up to this point included:

- In November 1641 they disagreed over who should control the army that was to be sent to Ireland to defeat the rebellion there.
- In the same month Parliament passed the Grand Remonstrance criticising Charles's policies.
- By this stage Parliament was dominated by Charles's opponents, led by John Pym and other Puritans. The Puritans opposed many aspects of Charles's rule. They especially disliked the religious changes he brought in and that many people had been arrested and punished without a trial for opposing the king's policies.

It's worth knowing that ...

One of the most important privileges of Parliament was that the king could not enter unless he was invited. This rule was to prevent the king sitting in Parliament and making MPs too nervous to say what they really thought. The

attempt to arrest the MPs was a big step by Charles and convinced many MPs that he could not be trusted.

Although we talk about Charles fighting Parliament, we should remember that not all MPs thought the same way. In 1640 most MPs were united in criticising Charles. By 1642 some MPs were now on the king's side as they felt that Pym and the other opponents of Charles had gone too far. Many of Charles's supporters stood by him out of loyalty, rather than because they believed he was in the right.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What did Parliament do to the 12 bishops?
2. How did the king respond?
3. How did the crowd in London treat the king?
4. Was Thomas Wiseman impressed with the way the king handled the situation?
5. Was Wiseman's sympathy with the king or with Parliament?
6. Do you get the impression that Wiseman was a reliable reporter of what happened?
7. What was the reaction to Charles's attempt to arrest the MPs?
8. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?



Source 6a

12 B^{ro} were impeached of
high treason by the Parliament, and this
week 5 of the thieves members of the House
of Commons, & the Lord Maudslai, in the
Lord's house, by the King, and by the charge
given them, & their names, you may
perceive, by a petition hereth enclosed
wth hath breed such a distemper both in
the House of Commons, & Houses of Parliament, that we are
not free from the fears of an insurrection



Source 6b

Myd ma^{tye} yestorday came
in to the Citie, and made a great word
speech to the Lord Mayor, Alders & Councill
at the Guild hall where they
were assembled to take order for the safety
of the same & did wth much ad in him say
strive to give them all satisfaction, they
repyd out to her Ma^{tye} to mayntaine the privilege
of parliamt^{nt}, to whom hee most gently replyed
it was his desire so to doe & would not in the
least invade upon them. but they must give
him leave to distinguish betwene the parliamt^{nt}
& some ill affected memb^r in it wth have gone
about by treasons, to invade his person and to
wth drawe his people from their allegiaunce, and
therefore, both for his owne safety & their good
hee must & will furde them out to bring them
to Justice wth should bee done in a legall and
parliamentary way, ^{& no other way} and if they could heare
your solace, hee should bee glad of it, if other-
wise, hee held them not meet fitt to
sitt in that Assembly, wth were meet together
to make good lawes, & to reforme the abuses
of the Kingdom. & not to betray their King,



Source 6c

Afterwards his ma:^w was pleased to bidd him self
to dinner to sheriff. Garrett, where his ma:^w
stayed till 3 of the clock, & then returning
to whitehall, the rude multitude followed
him trying againe, p^rincelodges of parlant,
p^rincelodges of parlant, whereat the good king
was some what moved, and J. beloyse was
glad, when he was at home,



Source 6d

What these distempers will
produce: the God of heauen knowes but
it is feared, they rauet other wise and
then in blood. The paritan fact will
with the, seruaues & perijuratiiks. are
to preualent both in Cittie & Countrey
soe that no man can tell, if the King &
Parliament should not agree, with parties,
would bee strongest; On Tuesday his
ma^{ty} went to the house of Commons to demand
the persons of those that were arrested
for Treason, but they were not there
to be found; the house, it seems taking
it ill, the King should ^{in it manner} come to break
there, perijured, & for ought I can
understand: resolve to protect their

ma^{ty} & not to delate them in to the
hands of the King; & to take them by force
they have such a partie in the Cittie that it
will not hott water;

Case study 2: 1640-42 - Source 7

A pamphlet published by Parliament, 9 June 1642

(Journals of the House of Commons, Vol. II, 1640-1642, p.618. Reprinted in 1803 by Order of the House of Commons)

What is this source?

These are sections of a pamphlet published by Parliament. The Civil War was fought on the battlefields, but also through propaganda (in the form of pamphlets like this) which promoted the ideas of one side or the other.

The new technology of printing made it possible to produce leaflets like this in large numbers.

What's the background to this source?

By 1642 relations between Charles and Parliament were a disaster.

In January 1642 Charles lost patience with Parliament and tried to arrest five leading MPs and one Lord. This destroyed any trust that was left between the two sides. Charles left London and began to recruit an army. Parliament did the same.

It's worth knowing that ...

The war officially began on 22 August 1642. Although we talk about Charles fighting Parliament, we should remember that the country was divided in many ways.

In 1640 most MPs were united in criticising Charles. By 1642 some MPs were now on the king's side as they felt that the opponents of Charles had gone too far. Many of Charles's supporters stood by him out of loyalty rather than because they believed he was in the right. The great majority of people did not want war at all.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. According to this source, what had the king been doing?
2. According to this source, was the king to blame for the troubles affecting the country?
3. What actions was Parliament taking?
4. How did the source try to reassure people about Parliament's actions?
5. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?



Source 7

Propositions
for bringing
in Plate, &c.

WHEREAS it appears that the King, seduced by wicked Counsel, intends to make War against his Parliament; and, in pursuance thereof, under Pretence of a Guard for his Person, hath actually begun to levy Forces, both of Horse and Foot; and sent out Summons, throughout the County of *York*, for the Calling together of great Numbers; and some ill-affected Persons have been employed in other Parts to raise Troops, under the Colour of his Majesty's Service, making large Offers of Reward and Preferment to such as will come in: And that his Majesty doth with a high and forcible Hand, protect and keep away Delinquents; not permitting them to make their Appearance, to answer such Affronts and Injuries as have been by them offered unto the Parliament: And those Messengers which have been sent from the Houses for them, have been abused, beaten, and imprisoned; so as the Orders of Parliament, which is the highest Court of Justice in this Realm, are not obeyed;

1. They the said Lords and Commons do *Declare*, That whosoever shall bring in any Proportion of ready Money or Plate, or shall underwrite to furnish and maintain any Number of Horse, Horsemen, and Arms, for the Preservation of the publick Peace, and for the Defence of the King, and both Houses of Parliament, from Force and Violence, and to uphold the Power and Privileges of Parliament according to his Protestation, it shall be held a good and acceptable Service to the Commonwealth, and a Testimony of his good Affection to the Protestant Religion, the Laws, Liberties, and Peace of this Kingdom, and to the Parliament and Privileges thereof.

Case study 2: 1640-42 - Source 8

Voluntary payments to help Charles I's armies, June 1642

(Catalogue ref: SP 16/491/29)

What is this source?

This is part of a list of lords and officials who agreed to help Charles with his war effort against Parliament.

It lists the various men who were prepared to help pay for horses for the king's army. Horses were expensive to buy and feed. They were also essential for an effective army in the 1600s.

What's the background to this source?

By now relations between Charles and Parliament were a disaster. The war officially began on 22 August 1642, two months after this document was written.

In the months leading up to war:

- In November 1641 king and Parliament clashed over who should control the army that was to be sent to Ireland.
- In the same month Parliament passed the Grand Remonstrance criticising Charles's policies.
- In January 1642 Charles lost patience with Parliament and tried to arrest five leading MPs. This destroyed any trust that was left between the two sides.
- Charles left London and began to recruit an army. Parliament did the same.

It's worth knowing that ...

Although we talk about Charles fighting Parliament, we should remember that the country was divided in many ways and the great majority did not want any war at all.

By 1642 many MPs were against Charles. Some MPs were on Charles's side because they felt that his opponents had gone too far. Many people supported Charles from loyalty, rather than because they believed he

was in the right. Others, such as many of the men on this list, were convinced that the king's cause was just.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What types of men were listed on this document?
2. What have they agreed to do?
3. Why might this class of men have supported the king's side?
4. According to this document, what were the king's forces fighting to defend?
5. What does this source tell us about support for Charles I in 1642?
6. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?

Why did people go to war in 1642?

Case study 2: 1640-42 - Source 9

Petition from the confused gentry of Somerset, August 1642

(Catalogue ref: SP 16/491/117)

What is this source?

This petition or request was presented to a court in Somerset to be sent on to the king.

It explained the feelings of the petitioners and asked for actions to be taken.

What's the background to this source?

By 1642 relations between Charles and Parliament were disastrous. Both sides were preparing for war. Both sides had plans for the militia.

- Every county had a band of trained soldiers called the militia. Their job was to defend against enemies and to keep order.
- In March 1642 Parliament passed a law called the Militia Ordinance that said that Parliament controlled the militia.
- In June 1642 Charles sent out orders called the Commissions of Array. These orders told all local officials to get the militia ready in their area to fight for him.
- Parliament responded by telling the local gentry they had to obey the Militia Ordinance and get the militia ready to fight for Parliament.

It's worth knowing that ...

The gentry of Somerset were not the only group who were confused in 1642 about whether to obey the Parliament or the king.

In Cheshire the gentry sent a document to Parliament and the king saying that they were not prepared to take either side in a war, as civil war was a sin. There were similar developments in Staffordshire and many other counties.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What does this source tell us about the feelings of the Somerset gentry in August 1642?
2. What do the Somerset gentry want?
3. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?



Source 9

And Contrary
Command as I heard of from the
Commanders of both places to the great terror of
us who are ready to obey all the Commands grounded
upon the Lawes of this Kingdome
We doe humbly petition for the avoidance of the
my service that may befall us by means of Contrary
Commandes that his gracious Ma^{ty} would be
pleased to suspend the Execution of the Commission
of Array and that the High Court of Parliament
would likewise be pleased to suspend the
Execution of the Order for the Militia. And that
for the settlement of the Militia of this Kingdome
according to the Lawe, his Ma^{ty} & the Members
of both Houses of Parliament would be pleased
to assemble againe and in full Court to make an
Act for the settlement thereof. Or to take some
such good Course in the same as may
establishe the peace and settlement of this
Kingdome. And that in the mean tyme the Militia
of this County may be ordered by the Justices of
the peace of this County resident for the
tyme being according to the Statutes
now in force.