



Oliver Cromwell: The Notorious Life and Legacy of the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England

Charles River Editors

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*Includes pictures

*Includes Cromwell's quotes about his life and career

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"Necessity hath no law. Feigned necessities, imagined necessities...are the greatest cozenage that men can put upon the Providence of God, and make pretenses to break known rules by." – Oliver Cromwell

"Put your trust in God, my boys, but keep your powder dry." – attributed to Oliver Cromwell

For over a thousand years, England has had a monarchy, and though the line of succession did not always pass smoothly, it has almost always been continuous. England has more often been faced with the claims of competing kings and queens than with a period of no monarch at all. The major exception to that rule came in the 11 years between 1649 and 1660, when England was a republic. Following the disastrous reign of Charles I and the civil wars that led to his execution, Parliament and the army ruled England. England's republican experiment started out as a work of collaboration and compromise; lords, army officers and members of Parliament (MPs) worked together to find a political settlement that did not include the despised royal House of Stuart.

Nonetheless, religious and political division made collective rule unworkable, and ultimately, one man emerged from the chaos to rule the country. He had risen from a humble background to become the leading general of the Civil Wars, and as a man of staunch beliefs and ruthless pragmatism, he controlled England from 1653-1658 under the title of Lord Protector. In essence, he was a king in all but name.

That man was Oliver Cromwell, and in the popular imagination, Cromwell has overshadowed the rest of the leaders of the parliamentary cause and the New Model Army. His name is known by everyone in England, while parliamentary leaders like John Pym, constitutional reformers like John Lambert, and even Sir Thomas Fairfax, who led Parliament's army through most of the wars, are known only to history buffs. But Cromwell has also been one of the most controversial figures in English history ever since. Viewed by some as a despot and others as a champion of liberty, Cromwell's legacy is so diverse that while many Irish accuse him of genocide, others look at him as a social revolutionary.

To this day Cromwell is a hugely divisive figure, hated by the Irish for his brutality, loathed by monarchists, but admired by republicans and English reformers. A film was released in 1970 celebrating his political career, and St Ives, one of his home towns, is host to a statue of the man. Of course, some observers recognize contradictions in Cromwell, such as the 20th century Scottish writer John Buchan, who may have summed the Lord Protector's life up best: "A devotee of law, he was forced to be often lawless; a civilian to the core, he had to maintain himself by the sword; with a passion to construct, his task was chiefly to destroy; the most scrupulous of men, he had to ride roughshod over his own scruples and those of others; the tenderest, he had continually to harden his heart; the most English of our greater figures, he spent his life in opposition to the majority of Englishmen; a realist, he was condemned to build that which could not last."

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chronicles the tumultuous life of one of England's most important figures. Along with pictures and a bibliography, you will learn about Cromwell like never before, in no time at all.

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