

Was oliver cromwell a  
hero or a villain



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Cromwell is one of the most contentious figures in British History. I think that he was both a hero and a villain. At times he acted very heroic and selfless but he had to take cruel and drastic measures which forced people to believe that he was a villain. But at other times he acted very villainous and brutal and only did things that he would gain from. But is a hero someone we can admire and who is kind? Or is a hero someone who does brutal and horrendous things that have to be done? He ruled Britain from 1653-1658.

He had many supporters as well as opposers. This is because he provoked strong feelings on both sides. During the civil war Cromwell became a hero to those who supported the parliament's cause because of the vital contribution he made to their victory. By 1644 he had become a general and he helped form the New Model Army which was very effective and using this army he won the Marston Moor battle for parliament. He also helped the parliament win the Naseby Civil War in 1645. He was a great and efficient cavalry commander who led men into the charge but kept them on the battlefield.

I think he was a hero at this time as he didn't gain any power out of fighting this battle which proves that he fought because he believed in it. By 1648 he had contributed more than anyone else in the parliament. He was very selfless and honest during this time. But royalists thought that he was acting quite villainous as they thought he was a traitor and only fought for power.

By 1648 Cromwell was faced with a difficult decision; should he let the king live and rule or was it better to have him executed. Royalists, MPs and most people in Britain did not want Charles I to go on trial and they wanted the

king and parliament to work together therefore they considered Cromwell a villain whereas he was a hero to those who believed in republic because they thought that the king should be executed because he couldn't be trusted. I think that he was a hero during this time as the king had started another civil war and if left alive Charles would be capable of starting yet another war so for the sake of peace Charles had to be killed. It was a "cruel necessity".

With Charles dead no-one was quite sure how England should be ruled; some thought she needed a new ruler, others a strong king. At this time Cromwell was the most powerful man and so he was offered the crown but he refused.

Instead he made himself a Lord Protector. This could be either because he was not a hypocrite and did not kill the king just so he could get the crown. But he saw that Britain needed a ruler to keep law and order, therefore he let himself be made lord protector OR he refused because the army would not support his choice of becoming king and without the army he would be nothing. This suggests that he wanted to be king but would not be able to get away with it and therefore made himself lord protector which had the same amount of power and authority - if not more - but without the name. I think that during this time Cromwell was a villain and there are many sources to prove this that were quite reliable. Cromwell's decision to suppress the levellers calls for radical reform was swift and ruthless.

But it was necessary to execute the levellers to set an example to the rest of the army. If the army kept on quarrelling they would not have a chance in winning the battle so he shot four of them to make the rest of them obedient and unified and he was successful in doing so. The army defeated the Irish

and Scottish. Also Cromwell needed the support of the landowners to survive but the landowners hated the levellers.

He acted like a hero during this occasion. On the other hand, if you were to look at it from a villainous point then the levellers wanted a vote for every man. They had served faithfully in Cromwell's army and he repaid them with death because he did not wish to share power with lower classes. Nowhere are Cromwell's actions more open to argument than in his campaign in Ireland. Cromwell acted villainous and inhumane as he killed everyone in Ireland – including woman, babies and children – not just the soldiers because they were catholic and he was extremely anti-catholic.

He showed no mercy. In Drogheda he ordered all to be murdered even if they surrendered and threw down their arms. It wasn't necessary to kill everyone and he was being very brutal. But, after he had killed everyone in that part of Ireland, the rest of the country got very scared and so they did not fight back and they welcomed him in. However, according to supporters of Cromwell such as his army he was considered a hero as he did what any cavalry commander would have done. But did he have to kill everyone.

.. was it his only choice..

.? Overall, I think that Cromwell was both a hero and a villain as I have mentioned at the beginning. At first he was a misunderstood hero but soon he became a villain. It was easier for him to be a hero when he was just a simple cavalry commander but when he entered the government he got a greed for power and it was not as easy to act heroic given the circumstances and options and problems he faced.

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