

Petition by the citizens of london



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AUTHORSHIP

This document was a petition by the citizens of London to King Charles the I, written in September of 1640. Due to the nature of the precise formatting and proper grammatical usage, it is plausible that it was written by members of Parliament on behalf of the citizens, or a highly educated member of high social status. The exact authorship is not clear, but it is clear that the petition was written on behalf of the citizens of London to address their concerns, of which there were many.

As the exact author is unknown it is hard to state with any authority what the author's history and association with the issues are, precisely. However, as King Charles I was the King of three separate countries (England, Ireland, and Scotland), at the same time, it is reasonable to conclude that the citizens of London were familiar with the current state of Political and Religious concerns in the other two Countries that Charles the I was the King of. An excellent example of such a concern that virtually every citizen of London had to be aware of was the Religious Strife in Scotland. " In 1633 Charles appointed William Laud as Archbishop of Canterbury. Charles and Laud held similar views on the Anglican Church (the Church of England). They both wanted the clergy (ordinary priests) and bishops (senior churchmen) to have more power and importance." [1] William Laud then took a drastically confrontational step with regard to the operation of Religious Ceremonies in Scotland with the approval of King Charles I. " In 1637 Laud and Charles insisted that Scotland should use the prayer book that they had brought into the Church of England." [2] The first time it was used in a (Calvinist/Presbyterian) Church Service in Scotland, a riot in Scotland

immediately ensued. This prompted King Charles I to immediately march to put an end to this religious rebellion. “ Charles immediately marched north with an army, but the Scottish Covenanters defeated him in 1638. Charles was beaten again in 1640 and the Scots invaded Newcastle.”[3]The Scots offered to leave occupancy of Newcastle if Charles agreed to pay a large sum of money, but as Charles was unable to pay the sum and he was forced to call parliament for monetary support. Between 1629-1640 he had ruled without the convening of a Parliament. This essentially led him to lead the Kingdom of England as a Monarchy or Absolutist, until he was forced to convene the parliament and was actually responsible to answer to a parliament and cooperate with said parliament to rule the country in a form a Constitutionalist form of government, even if it was a temporary change.

The intended audience of the Petition by the Citizens of London, was clearly King Charles the I, as the petition starts with “ To the King’s Most Excellent MAJESTY. The humble petition of your Majesties subjects, the citizens of London.[4]The author of the petition is encouraging the King to address many of the citizens’ grievances that had not been addressed previously to the publication of the document.

The document reflects the values of the society at every point addressed in the petition. Those values are an increasing level of frustration of having to pay excessive taxes that were previously non-existent. As London was the largest city in the nation, it was also the most heavily taxed and suffered more than other regions of the country. The monopolies, patents, and warrants that one person was granted, which caused trade in the city and other areas of the country to decline as it limited the citizens’ ability to

produce goods for trade and earn an income from trade as well as the unfair advantages to those patents, warrants, and monopoly holders. The further reduction in the ability to provide an income either through import and export being lost during transit over-seas or from the taxation on ships that were previously non-existent. This taxation was due regardless of the ships successful arrival at it's intended destination or their destruction by Turkish pirates as well as other un-named pirates, during transport. The fear of changes in religion, the changes in church rules and the resulting fear that the citizens may be deprived of their ministers. Further, the concern over the great crowd of Catholics living in London and their access to means and opportunity to plot against the established religion. The concern over the perceivably unfair imprisonment of various citizens for non-payment of taxes, and the prosecution of many others in the Star Chamber for not following rules regulating trade. And finally their loyalty to the king and their fear of the danger that King Charles I had been exposed to in the events leading up to this petitions presentation. The citizens were still very loyal to King Charles I, even though they were upset over the causes for concern that were addressed in the petition. Including the sudden rising and falling of parliaments without resolution of the citizen's grievances.

As the author is unknown the qualifications that the author possessed for production of the document is uncertain, though a reasonable argument can be made that anyone living in the city of London was critically aware of these issues and had experienced them since the Scottish defeat of King Charles I, both the first and second time the two armies engaged in combat. The resulting cost of financing the military losses and costs of rebuilding the

English Army of King Charles I, and the lack of a parliament from 1629 until 1640 and the financial strains that placed upon the King would have been evident to any citizen who authored the petition.

As the publication date of the petition was so close to the 3 preceding years of conflict with Scotland, it is inherently implied that the Author was a witness to these events. The author's credibility is also questionable, however, as it matches with all other historical representation of the time frame of the publication of the document it is also probable to assume with a reasonable degree of certainty that the author was indeed a credible author with accurate representation of the Petition's requests for addressing the citizens of London's multiple grievances that had not been addressed.

RED FLAGS

As the author is unknown, there are a few things that may have been intentionally left out of the document or could cause a misunderstanding of the topic. This is specifically almost probable in the discussion regarding the Puritan English Religion and the fear of the Catholic Scottish citizens occupying London and surrounding regions following the second Bishop's war (which was after the date of the publication of the document, stated in the interest of clarity). Since it is not clear who the author is, the author's religious preference is questionable, and thusly it is questionable that the Religious points in the Document may not have fully represented the London Citizens desires fully, and/or, further that some information might have been intentionally omitted if it were a damning evidentiary piece of information that might have caused harm to the author's Religious alignment, if the

author was not accurately representing the London Citizen's petition preferences accurately.

Again, as the author is unknown, the social status that the author held within the London Citizens population is questionable and may have been slanted to the author's benefit. Due to the nature of the writing in the petition, it is reasonable to conclude that the author was highly educated, most likely a member of the higher levels of the social hierarchy, and further that it is reasonable to assume that the author may have even had legal training or served in a governmental capacity (either in a Parliamentary role or even a member of the courts).

At the time of the publication of the document King Charles I was essentially ruling a Monarchy, which is very similar, if not exactly the same as an Absolutism form of government, in which the ruler claims sole and incontestable power, and usually relies heavily on the church for funding. It even eventually leads to the mentality stated by King Louis XIV of France that " L'etat, c'est Moi.", meaning " I am the state.", during the reign of his rule of France in the Absolutism form of Government in the years (1643-1715).[5]King Charles I, as a result of the First Bishop's war and England's defeat by the Scots, was forced to change his form of Governmental Rule immediately, primarily because he needed funding for the preparation for future conflicts with the Scots (The Second Bishop's War.)

After the publication of the Petition, King Charles I was forced to call Parliament, even though it only lasted for three weeks. When this occurred it changed his governmental rule to a Constitutionalism Government, a form of

government closely resembling a democracy. Constitutionalism was the competing form of government to Absolutism (Monarchy). This inherently leads to questions with regard to misinterpretations with the demands presented in the petition, as the transitional timeframes of governmental change occurred within of 2 years time and then 3 weeks later was again reverted back to Absolutism with the dismissal of the Short Parliament. These frequent changes are indicative of chronological slants or misinterpretation as they occurred within such a short time frame and the citizens at those transitional periods may have been under the impression their grievances were being addressed. Then concerned they weren't. Then again, unsure where the future of the Governmental Rule would end and whether their grievances were going to be addressed.

HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

From 1629-40 Charles I ruled without calling Parliament.[6]In doing so he had no one he was responsible to answer to in the form of a Parliament who was able to place restrictions upon the Monarchy. "...The State of Monarchy is the Supremest thing upon Earth, for Kings are not only God's lieutenant's upon Earth and sit up God's Throne, but even by God himself they are called Gods." [7]This 11-year lapse of a parliament ended when the Covenanters won the first Bishops' War. " Charles refused to concede victory and called an English parliament, seeing it as the only way to raise money quickly. Parliament assembled in April 1640, but it lasted only three weeks (and hence became known as the Short Parliament)."[8]King Charles was unwilling to concede to any compromises at the Short Parliament. " The House of Commons was willing to vote the huge sums that the king needed

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to finance his war against the Scots, but not until their grievances—some dating back more than a decade—had been redressed. Furious, Charles precipitately dissolved the Short Parliament.”[9]This led to an underfunded army facing the Scots in the Second Bishop’s war, an utter defeat of the English Army, and even the Occupation of Newborn.

“ As with the collapse of Royal Power in 1639-1640, the defeat of Charles I owed much to the Scots, and it is not surprising that they played such a major role in the politics of the late 1650s, nor that England only became stable when a government acceptable to the Commonwealth was installed in Scotland in the early 1650s. The union of the Crowns ensured that the political fate of the two countries could not be separated.”[10]King Charles I was forced to call the “ Long Parliament” as a result of the defeat by the Scots in the second conflict, in 1640. This parliament called for the impeachment of Wentworth, the Earl of Stratford, and even the eventual execution of Stafford. Constitutionalism triumphed in England ONLY after the execution of one King as a traitor and another had been deposed. The English conflicts over authority laid the groundworks for modern political science.

The Second Primary Document is a Document addressing Scotland in 1639. “ This nation knows (that contrary to their claims) there is an intention to invade England. So to clear all doubts, that may breed worries in your minds, we repeat our just and real demand. If all civil obedience is effectively and quickly given to us, we do not intend to invade with any hostility.”[11]This document corroborates the intention of the Scots to engage in hostile actions which transpired in the First and Second Bishop’s wars. It states with

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authority that the Scots intend to invade England as a result of the hostility of the 1637 actions by Laud and King Charles I with regard to religious services in Scotland. It also corroborates the Petitioners of London's fear for the King's safety. It is indicative of the expenditure Charles I knew he would have to manufacture in the defense of England should England be invaded by the Scots. It further corroborates that King Charles I knew he would have to have financial assistance in the future from Parliament. However due to his stubbornness to concede to the Short Parliaments only requests of concession. He was solely responsible for generating that funding, which he accomplished through the various imposed taxes stated in the petition as grievances.

CONNECTIONS

This Absolutism vs Constitutionalism competing forms of government is something that was seen in the Roman Empire as well. Initially, Julius Caesar refused to give up the title of Emperor. When he was assassinated shortly afterward, his successor Augustus was a more politically shrewd ruler. He disguised the Government as the Roman Republic while maintaining the appearance of an Empire. By allowing a false Senate to hold the Glory while he maintained ironclad control over the Senate's actions through the use of various manipulations and forceful Senatorial member removals by violence when necessary.

King Charles the I was more obvious about his rule of Government as a Monarchy, but he also gave the appearance of reverting to a Democratic rule when calling Parliament, even though he ignored the few requests of the

Parliament. He also was responsible for executing five members of parliament who were his strong political opponents. This was done without a fair defense at trial, and in some cases with no trial at all.

This same type of Governmental behavior is repeated as recently as 2017, by President Trump. Trump forcefully threatened nations in the United Nations who voted against his decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. “ The Palestinians claim Jewish settlers are trying to buy property from Palestinians in East Jerusalem to prevent the eventual establishment of a Palestinian capital there — and it’s exacerbated by the Trump administration’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, move the U. S. embassy to the city and downgrade the U. S. consulate in Jerusalem that conducted relations with the Palestinians.”[12]

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[1] <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/civilwar/g3/key/>

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/civilwar/g3/images/g3cs2sl.jpg(accessed November 2, 2018)

[5]Lynn Hunt, *The Making of the West*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013), 502.

[6] <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/civilwar/g3/key/#p1>

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[7]Deborah Roberts, Absolutism and The English Civil War, HIS 201 Western Civilization I, (Yavapai College, 11/30/18).

[8] <https://www.britannica.com/event/English-Civil-Wars#ref932086>

(Accessed, November 25, 2018)

[9]Ibid.

[10]Jeremy Black, *A History Of The British Isles*, (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1996), 127.

[11] <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/education/civilwarpack.pdf>

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[12]<https://www.axios.com/us-citizen-palestinians-settlement-land-sales-israel-52a84cd0-05fe-4c47-b022-bf751b9b4e1e.html>(Accessed, November 25, 2018).