

Hello and welcome I am Vanessa Barros Colaco and today I'm going to be discussing with you about the Republican interlude- Oliver Cromwell. So we will first discuss about Oliver Cromwell, the execution of Charles I, the Commonwealth, Lord Protector- 1650, his major achievements and reforms.

This module will enable the students to discuss the transition from the Crown to the Commonwealth. To analyze the role of Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector, examine the achievements and legacy of Oliver Cromwell.

A man of a great, robust, massive mind and an honest stout English heart. Is how Thomas Carlyle described Oliver Cromwell in his edition- Oliver Cromwell's letters and speeches, 1845.

The picture that you see is that of a statue of Oliver Cromwell placed outside the Palace of Westminster, the parliament house in London.

Oliver Cromwell belonged to a humble background.

His family was connected to Puritans.

He grew up in the legend of the Elizabethan Golden Age.

People appreciated and looked in awe and wonder at what

Queen Elizabeth had done, the Tudor monarch had done

in England.

It was a period when the parliament and the Crown went

hand in hand. It was the period

when a lot of positive reforms took place in England, and

overall a lot of prosperity was witnessed in England.

The church was by and large Protestant in character. However, all of these things changed when the Stuart monarchs came to power. When the monarchs would not act in accordance with the wishes of the people, the people would nostalgically look back to the contributions of Queen Elizabeth, look back to the Golden age.

Queen Elizabeth meant much to Cromwell. In fact, his mother, his wife and one of his favorite daughters was called Elizabeth.

Oliver Cromwell was a firm believer in performing his duties in accordance to the will of God. He was a devout believer in God. Even though he sat on the seat of the parliament as an MP in around 1628 and 1629, in 1644 was when he actually played a crucial role by leading the parliament's independent factions. When there was a tussle between the King and the parliament. He brought into effect the iron sides. This regiment, called the Ironsides, was later going to help Cromwell win several battles.

Oliver Cromwell and the Supreme military commander Sir Thomas Fairfax, formed the new Model Army and it is the new model army that helped them to win a victory against King Charles I, in the Battle of Naseby, which was fought in 1645 when things went wrong between the parliament and the King.

The Parliamentary forces and the King's forces took to battle, and while the King felt that he would win a decisive victory, he was surprised because he was defeated by the armed forces of the parliament. So by 1647 the King was in the hands of the parliamentary forces and Cromwell became the negotiator between the Parliamentary forces and the King and he was trying to introduce a constitutional system of government. However, King Charles I did not agree to it. He was not ready to budge. Ultimately, King Charles I escaped. He tried to rally around several supporters, especially the Scots with the help of whom he tried to get back to the parliamentary forces.

He was tried for treason. A trial for treason, for the King had begun, and Oliver Cromwell was one of the main characters who backed this trial. The King was declared guilty of treason, he was

considered to be a traitor of the people and it was decided that he would be executed so the execution of

King Charles the first was held on 30th of January 1649. It was a bitter cold winter morning. It is said that the King as usual, went for a stroll in Saint James Park and after he returned back from his stroll he was ready to be executed. In fact, it is said that the King wore two shirts so that he would not appear to be shivering. He did not want the message to go across that the King was shivering out of fright. He wanted to face his execution boldly. " I am a martyr of the people." the King boldly declared and after inspecting the Executioners axe, he said " I go from a corruptible to an incorruptible Crown, where no disturbance can be no disturbance in the world."

The execution sent shock waves throughout Europe. Why? Because, for the very first time in the history of Europe, a monarch was executed by his very own people. A clear signal was sent by the parliament that no one could temper with the rules of the land, not even the King himself.

And upon the execution of Charles I, when Oliver Cromwell looked down upon the body of the King, he murmured the words "cruel necessity."

What happened after the execution? Who would be King?

After the execution of Charles I, the House of Commons abolished the monarchy, the House of Lords and the official Church of England. Kingless England was now declared a Republic and this Republic was named the Commonwealth. And of course the most powerful man in England, was none other than Oliver Cromwell.

The Commonwealth faced several challenges. First and foremost, Pro Stewart, Scotland and Ireland were bound to create problems for the Commonwealth time and again.

The supporters of Charles II- the uncrowned heir to the throne, attacked England by way of Ireland and Scotland.

At the Battle of Dunbar in 1650, Oliver Cromwell defeated these divisive forces. After the Battle of Dunbar, 1650 Cromwell wrote to the speaker of the parliament: " the enemy made a gallant resistance, and there was a very hot dispute at Swordpoint between our horse and theirs.

Prince Charles made an attempt to counterstroke the attack at Worcester in 1651, but again, he was defeated and he was exiled and that was the end. He would never again interfere with Oliver Cromwell's reign.

Oliver Cromwell faced several challenges himself. There were diverse religious and political opinions in the country. Radical socialist views within the army, squabbles and disagreements in the parliament and he was so fed up of it all that finally he decided that he himself would do away with the parliament and

rule by himself with the help of the army. And therefore, in 1653, Oliver Cromwell took the title of Lord Protector of England and ruled over England as Lord Protector with the help of the army.

Some of his major achievements and reforms. He managed to acquire the political representation of Scotland and Ireland. In the Dutch and Spanish Wars. England won victory under the leadership of Admiral Blake. He took the historic decision of bringing the Jews back to England. The Jews were exiled for more than 350 years.

Social justice and the cause of the poor was at his heart always. He wanted to convert England into a world of godliness and therefore he brought about certain Puritan reforms as a result of which theaters were shut down in England, education was promoted because they believed that people should be educated in order to learn the Bible. In order to gain religious education, education is important and hence every class and section of the English society went to schools.

Some critics argue that the destroyer of divine rights of the King ended up as the exponent of the divine rights of republicanism.

In 1657, something very interesting happened. The parliament offered Cromwell the Crown.

What did Cromwell do?

Would he accept or would he reject it? Accepting the Crown would mean an excellent opportunity to revert to a type of government which everyone understood. It was a great opportunity for Oliver Cromwell to create a dynasty of his own.

Oliver Cromwell declined the Crown. He refused the title of the King because he believed that he had no divine right to the seat of the government, just as a previous monarch had no divine right to the seat of the government, just as the parliament had no divine right to the seat of the government. So also he believed that he had no divine right to the seat of the government.

In 1658, Oliver Cromwell passed away and that was the end of the Commonwealth. He was succeeded by his son Richard, however, Richard's leadership created a power vacuum in England and this went on to show how dependent Cromwellian England was on the talent, the force and the personality of Oliver Cromwell.

The newly elected Parliament in 1660 invited Charles II to England. And what ultimately happened, though ironical, is that England's kingless decade ended with the restoration of monarchy.

So in order to conclude I would like to say that even though the Puritans lost their control over England,

but their ideas about morality, equality, government, and education endured in the following century, these ideas would play an important role in shaping the United States of America. The Republican experiment sadly ended, but it marked Oliver Cromwell's place in history as a man of conscience, fearless leadership,

military brilliance and sincere piety.

Thank you.