

Who fought whom in the English Civil War?

Introduction

A civil war is a war between groups of people in the same country. The civil war which lasted from 1642 to 1649 was between King Charles I and Parliament. Not many people actually chose which side they were going to be on. They supported the side that got its army there first or the side the local lord supported. The ordinary people were then forced to fight for that side.

Read the following sources about the two sides in the civil war:

Source A

For Parliament

- ? Leeds, Halifax and Bradford; three very rich towns
- ? The ports
- ? The common people
- ? The poorest and the lowest of England

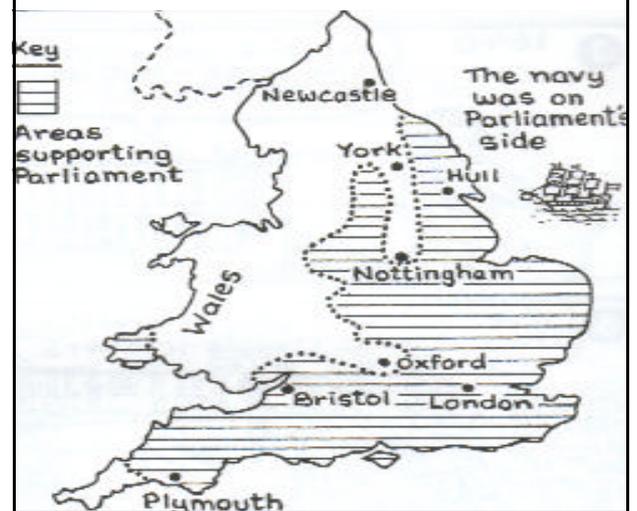
For the King

- ? Oxford was the only city in England which was completely on his side
- ? Most of the gentry (nobles)
- ? Persons of great honour or fortune

Written by a supporter of the King, 12 years after the war.

Source B

England in 1642 at the start of the Civil



Source C (Recent findings by modern historians)

Parliament: Nearly half the MPs in the House of Commons fought for the King. The King was supported by MPs from all parts of the country, although Parliament had more supporters from the East and South of the country.
The counties: In Lancashire 272 of the nobles supported the King, 138 supported Parliament, nine changed sides.
Men and women: The female half of the population contributed nothing to making war break out. Women did fight once the war had started - wives of nobles sometimes had to defend their homes.

TASKS

1. Using evidence from all the sources draw up a complete list of the supporters of the King and of Parliament in the civil war.
2. Look at source B. Who had more towns on their side, King or Parliament?
3. Why was it difficult for the King to get help from other countries?
4. Read source A. Why do you think the common and poor people supported Parliament?
5. Look at the author of source A. Why should historians be careful when reading this source? Give 2 examples to support your answer.
6. Read source C. Do you think that this source is more reliable than source A? Give reasons for your answers.