

The failure of the Commonwealth, 1649-53

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| NMA hostility | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Army believed C'wealth not radical enough• Insufficient religious reform as the independents wanted• Suppression of the Levellers• Rump especially alienated the army (pay & not sent home/failure to 'heal & settle'/Dutch war meant money not used in other ways) |
| Anglo-Dutch War | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meant more tax, inability to spend on widows pensions/poor relief |
| Rump (i)
Unpopularity of | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of army support (see above)• Lack of any religious settlement• Lack of radical political/legal/social reform after first months• MP's accused of working for their own gain |
| Rump (ii)
Treatment of
former royalists | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of land• Fines• Failure to encourage "heal & settle" |
| Rump (iii)
confusion over
1653 elections | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• = attempt to perpetuate itself |
| Cromwell's
position | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dominates through personality, public stature, military power• As leader of army could use it to close/change systems at will• Rump/Barebones always had to "look over their shoulder" - no real freedom to act |
| Fear that radical
reform would
lead to a
conservative
reaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rump especially was always concerned that to act too radically would bring the enemies of Parliament together and lead to opposition & possible unrest.• Moderate/radical conflict in Barebones alarms moderates so much that they close the barebones down and hand back power |

In conclusion, after the death of Charles, the Commonwealth system failed to provide clear, effective government.

It was always envisaged that the Rump would be shortlived to prepare for a new permanent way of governing the country. The early failure of the Commonwealth, just speeded this up.