

English Civil War Document Based Question

DBQ Question: To what extent were the contrasting views of Hobbes and Locke concerning absolutism reflecting in the actions of Cromwell and the Cavaliers in the English Civil War?

Document 1

The final cause, end, or design of men who naturally love liberty, and dominion over others, in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves, in which we see them live in commonwealths, is the foresight or their own preservation and of a more content life thereby; that is to say, of getting themselves out from that miserable condition of war, which is necessarily consequent,...to the national passions of men, where there is no visible power to keep them in awe, and tie them by fear of punishment...The only way to erect such a common power...is to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men that may reduce all their wills, by the plurality of voices, onto one will;...this is more than consent, or concord; it is a real unity of them all, in one and the same person...This is the generation of the great LEVIATHAN, or rather, to speak more reverently, of that mortal god, to which we owe under the immortal God, our peace and defense

Thomas Hobbes: *Leviathan*

Document 2

...Political power is that power, which every man having in the state of nature, has given up into the hands of society, and therein to the governors, whom the society hath set over itself, with their express or tacit trust, that its shall be employed for their good, and the preservation of their property...it can have no other end or measure, when in the hands of the magistrate, but to preserve the members of that society in their lives, liberties, and possessions; and so cannot be an absolute, arbitrary power over their lives and fortunes...by this breach of trust they forfeit the power the people had put into their hands for quite contrary end, and it devolves to the people, who have the right to resume their original liberty, and, by the establishment of a new legislative...holds true also concerning the supreme executor...if along train of abuses prevarications and artifices, all tending the same way... that they should then rouse themselves and endeavour to put the rule into such hands which may secure to them the ends for which government was at first erected.

John Locke: Second Treatise On Government

Document 3

God therefore hath given to the Kings, and to their lawful deputies, power and authority no only to command and execute his own laws, commanded in His world: but also to ordain and enact other good and profitable laws of their own, for the more particular governments of their people...And further, God hath given these gods upon earth, a power as to make these laws and annexed these punishments.

William Perkins, Puritan

Document 4

And since every man is not alike qualified for the same action, nor hath that discretion and propension of his own accord to fall into that place which is most proper for him; and since also there is so much darkness remaining in the minds of men, as to make them subject to call evil good, and good evil;...it cannot but be very prejudicial to human society, and the promotion of the good, of commonwealths, cities, armies or families, to admit of a parity, or all to be equal in power...

And therefore we cannot but conclude, that the ranging of men into several and subordinate ranks and degrees, is a thing necessary for the common good of men, as being the only means to remove obstructions, and to preserve order.

Declaration by Independent Churches

Document 5

The sole supreme government, command and disposition of the militia and of all forces by sea and land and all forts and places of strength is and by the laws of England ever was the undoubted right of his Majesty and his royal predecessors, kings and queens of England, and that both or either of the houses of Parliament cannot nor ought to pretend to the same.

Militia Act of 1661

Document 6

We noblemen, barons, knights, gentlemen, citizens, burgesses, ministers of the Gospel, and commons of all sorts in the kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland... having before our eyes the Glory of God and the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the honor and happiness of the King's Majesty and his prosperity, and the true public liberty, safety and peace of the kingdoms...do swear...

We shall with the same sincerity, reality, constancy, in our several vocations, endeavor with our estates and lives mutually to preserve the rights and privileges of the Parliaments, and the liberties of kingdoms, and to preserve and defend the King's Majesty's person and authority.

Taken by the House of Commons, 25 September 1643
The Solemn League and Covenant

Document 7



Oliver Cromwell- adapted from an engraving of the Van Dyck equestrian portrait of Charles I. Oliver's head was substituted for Charles', the attendant's Cavalier mustache and knee-pantalets removed, Charles' medallion was erased, and a simple collar replaced Charles' overflowing one.

Document 8

...among Cromwell's soldiers...I heard the plotting heads very hot upon that which intimated their intention to subvert both church and state.

I perceived that they took the King for a tyrant and the enemy and really intended absolutely to master him or ruin him; and that they thought, if they might fight against him, they might kill or conquer him;...They plainly showed me that they thought God's providence would cast the trust of religion and the kingdom upon them as

conquers...for the liberty of all...

...But their most frequent and vehement disputes were for liberty of conscience...civil magistrate had nothing to do to determine of anything in matters if religion by constraint or restraint...

Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (1696)
The New Model Army

Document 9

I do adhere to this present Parliament, in the maintenance and defense of the public liberty and freedom of this nation, as it now declared...the government of this nation for the future in way of a Republic, without King or House of Lords;

Whereas Charles Stuart, late King of England...hereby declared to...put to death...

To have the power thereof in any single person, is unnecessary, burdensome, and dangerous to the liberty, safety and public interest of the people...hath been made of the regal power and prerogative to oppress and impoverish and enslave the subject;...by authority of the same, that the office of a King in this nation shall not henceforth reside in or be exercised by any one single person;

...return to its just and ancient right of being governed by its own representatives or national meetings in council...

...House of Lords is useless and dangerous...

Engagement taken by Members of the Council of State, 22 February 1649
The Establishment of the Commonwealth