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The results were the Decimation Tax and the rule of the Major-Generals. Cromwell insisted that 'the sole end of this way of procedure was the security of the peace of the nation, the suppressing of vice and encouragement of virtue, the very end of magistracy.' 54 The Major-Generals were instructed to 'encourage and promote godliness and virtue, and discourage and discountenance all profaneness and ungodliness'.

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Durston attributes the failure of the major generals to their aim in establishing godly rule, which he regards as being impossible given the resources at their disposal, and their failure in this task is why the rule of the major generals collapsed. The failure of the major generals shifted Cromwell's outlook, and his opposition to the Decimation Tax showed that he no longer supported the rule of the major generals.

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The Major-Generals' efforts to mobilise commissioners who were both godly and influential were fatally hampered by the resentments born of the fratricidal military coups of 1648-49 and 1653. Even so, Cromwell was pleased by the rule of the Major-Generals. They had, he told them, 'done their parts well'.

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