

Grade 9 Answer

How Far Do You Agree

16
Marks

Question:

'The main cause of war between England and Spain was the political rivalry.' How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You may use the following in your answer:

- Philip II
- Privateering

You must also use information of your own.

(16 marks)

Answer:

The war between England and Spain was influenced by multiple factors, one of which was privateering. English privateers, such as Sir Francis Drake, engaged in aggressive raids against Spanish territories and ships. Between 1577 and 1580, Drake captured an estimated £400,000 worth of Spanish silver and gold, significantly impacting Spanish trade and prestige. These attacks heightened tensions between England and Spain, as the Spanish viewed them as acts of piracy that undermined their empire. Consequently, privateering contributed to the animosity between the two nations and was a significant factor leading to war.

However, political rivalry also played a crucial role in escalating tensions. Philip II of Spain was involved in numerous plots to depose Elizabeth I, including the Babington Plot, which sought to place the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots, on the English throne. This treasonous scheme exacerbated hostilities, especially after Elizabeth executed Mary in 1587, an act that further enraged Philip. Additionally, Philip's earlier marriage proposal to Elizabeth had been rejected, which soured their relationship. This political rivalry, driven by attempts to manipulate succession and control, significantly contributed to the deterioration of relations and ultimately led to war between England and Spain.

Nonetheless, I argue that religious rivalry was the primary cause of the conflict. With Elizabeth I's ascension to the throne in 1558, England shifted from Catholicism to Protestantism, effectively severing the alliance with Catholic Spain. The Pope's excommunication of Elizabeth further polarized the two nations, as Catholics were called to oppose her rule. Philip II's "Enterprise of England" sought to overthrow Elizabeth and restore Catholicism, indicating that religious motivations were at the heart of the conflict. The intertwining of religion with political ambitions underscored the deep-rooted enmity between the two powers.

In conclusion, while privateering and political rivalry were significant factors in the war between England and Spain, religious rivalry was the main cause. The transition of England to Protestantism and the subsequent actions of both Philip II and Elizabeth I solidified their nations' opposition, ultimately leading to open conflict.

Feedback:

This answer would get 16/16 marks because the pupil has explained three reasons for the war with Spain (political rivalry, privateering and religious rivalry). They have explained each point in depth using historical information, and directly linked to the question throughout. They have also made a judgement and justified it in their conclusion.