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Walsingham and Burghley: Factionalism in the Privy Council Under Elizabeth I

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HALSTUCHAM AND BURCHELEY:
FACTIONALISM IN THE PRIVY COUNCIL
UNDER ELIZABETH I

by
John W. Nott

A Thesis submitted to the
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of the
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INTRODUCTION

The Elizabethan Age was the age of Shakespeare and Marlowe, when the English literary renaissance attained a climax; the age of Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher, when English sea power asserted its genius. It was also the age of great statesmen and political improvisation, for England was beginning to emerge as a world power. Headed by a queen whose primary claim to fame rested with her ability to inspire her people and manage her talented ministers, the island kingdom soon attained the status of a major nation. At Elizabeth's accession the government was in a state of decline but skillful diplomacy in the hands of an intelligent monarch warded off successive crises until stability was ensured and the throne was undisputed.

Elizabeth was the keystone amidst talented individuals. Within her government were some of the most able ministers in Europe and at the height of the reign when Elizabethan policy was formulated none exceeded the abilities of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and Sir Francis Walsingham. Both were members of the privy council, a position which enabled them to influence policy profoundly.
The privy council was the vehicle employed to govern since parliament, kept weak by the earlier Tudor monarchs, was the virtual tool of the crown until late in Elizabeth's reign. Outwardly, apparently torn by schism, the council also seemed unstable and probably ineffective.

It is the purpose of this paper to show that factionalism existed within the Elizabethan privy council and that the presence of such a division was the result of a policy designed to ensure the unchallenged supremacy of the throne. The crown was never so secure as to be beyond challenge and the most powerful group within the nation was the privy council. As long as schism existed, the members could not assert individual dominance nor could their talents be misdirected from the service of their country. Thus, a government which, judged by the decline during the reigns of Edward VI and Mary, should have been weak was strengthened by reason of a secure crown and a council whose factions served to advance the cause of the monarchy and nation.
CHAPTER I

THE PRIVY COUNCIL UNDER THE TUDORS

The roots of the privy council are found in the earliest times when English kings first surrounded themselves with advisers. The three centuries which elapsed from the Norman conquest to the close of the reign of Edward III, however, witnessed an institutional stabilization which was not essentially altered during the subsequent two hundred years. ¹ Thenceforth, the council was closely associated with the royal prerogative to the extent that conciliar government and direct monarchical rule, with occasional exceptions which resolved themselves in terms of a degree of conciliar independence from the crown, are not always readily distinguishable. The entrenched nature of conciliar power at this early period of constitutional development was evidenced in a statute passed during the parliamentary session of 1331 which was expressly designed to reduce conciliar excesses. The statute read, in part, "... no man from henceforth shall be attached by any accusation nor have forejudged of life or limb, nor his lands,

tenements, goods nor chattels seized into the king's hands, against the form of the Great Charter and the law of the land."²

Already, under Henry III, the germ of the later privy council was seen in the form of the permanent or continual council which was a select standing committee of the great council although at this stage it was subordinate to the larger body.³ Under Richard II it emerged as a body of paid and sworn councillors and, whereas membership had formerly been appointed on an annual basis, members were now chosen for the duration of the reign.⁴ The effect was to form a council which frequently assumed a role of ministerial responsibility not averse to checking the actions of the monarch. This relatively independent role was sustained throughout the duration of the Lancastrian dynasty when the privy council became the connecting link between parliament and the king.⁵ Under Henry IV the council advised the

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⁴ Dicey, 25.

⁵ Viles, 3.
king; but royal decisions were, in reality, confirmed by parliament. Henry V enjoyed such domestic accord that parliamentary control of the privy council was superfluous. During the regency of Henry VI parliamentary supervision remained absent as the council continued to attain power and, incidentally, received its modern name.6 During Lancastrian rule, the privy council influence on royal policy was channelled into two main avenues: the power to deliver admonitions and submit recommendations, and the privilege of viewing all grants and writs issued by the monarch prior to their publication.7

As parliamentary influence broke down under the pressure of civil war the privy council became the real executive of England. The resulting decline of the nobility witnessed the emergence of a body whose membership included the rising middle class. Domination by the middle class increased in later years as the Reformation ended the utilization of the clergy in an administrative capacity. The consequent reduction of the threat to the monarchy by the council, however, was not accompanied by a reduction in conciliar influence because

6 Dicey, 43-44.

7 Carl Stephenson and Frederick G. Marcham (eds.), Sources of English Constitutional History (New York: Harper and Row, 1937, pp. 244-45.)
both Henry VII and Henry VIII sought increasingly to centralize government and parliamentary power. This was especially true following the passage of an act in 1536 which subordinated parliamentary statutes by giving royal proclamations, issued with the consent of the majority of the council, equal force as hitherto solely possessed by statute law.

A comparison of the council which met under Henry IV in 1441 and that which met subsequent to the Barons' war illustrated the altered membership trend. The latter was almost devoid of nobles, and the clergy was destined shortly to disappear entirely. The former council, however, was comprised of three bishops, nine peers and six knights. The new trend was not designed to ensure popular support for the monarch as much as to ensure monarchical security and recognize the need for a new type of councillor who was not to be solely identified with internal affairs and the maintenance of national stability.

Evidence of discord occasioned by the policy of

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8 31 Henry VIII, c.8.


10 Dicey, 26.
appointing members of the middle class to the virtual exclusion of the nobles may be seen in an uprising which occurred in 1536 and was known as the Pilgrimage of Grace. Although the movement began partly as a result of the religious implications of the government's policy, many rose in defense of the old feudal order which survived longest in the north, and denounced the ambitious commoners, such as Thomas Cromwell, who sat in the privy council.¹¹ The pilgrims swore to "expulse all villain blood from the king's grace and his privy council."¹² Despite the incompatible aims of the various sections, the revolt was formidable and the government was fortunate to escape with a concession granted to landowners in 1540¹³ and the provision of a list of privy councilors by Henry.¹⁴

The consequence of the new trend toward middle class participation was not without advantages insofar as the power of the council, in relation to the nation, was concerned since the Tudors tended to entrust it with wider powers. One of the earliest statutes designed to

¹¹Plucknett, 284.

¹²Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, xi, no. 892, quoted in ibid., 221, n. 9.

¹³Plucknett, 245.

increase conciliar control under the Tudors was the act pro camera stellata of 1487, which provided greater judicial latitude and was originally designed to curb the actions of legal offenders whose powers were too great for the ordinary courts. In 1495 conciliar power was further increased by the passage of the Statute of Drogheda, otherwise known as Poyning's Law, whereby it was enacted that the Irish parliament should meet only after securing the approval of the council. This legislation was to prove significant as a precedent for conciliar jurisdiction over the councils of the Welsh Marches and the North and in extending its influence into a widening area of government.

The pattern of increasing conciliar power which was evidenced under Henry VII was hindered to some extent by the ominous tendency toward increased membership from an initial fifteen or sixteen to forty-nine at an ordinary council meeting held on November 6, 1498. The increase in size was occasioned by an extension of specialized tasks which were placed under the council.

15 Henry VII, c.1.
The large size, it was realized later, proved unwieldy when acting in a group with the other royal advisers. The result was a greater monarchical reliance on an "inner ring", an arrangement which received statutory recognition in 1504 and became virtually a cabinet within the council. The immediate reason underlying the division rested in the need for a convenient number of councillors to journey with Henry while the remainder conducted routine business at Westminster.

Thomas Wolsey's rise to power and his disinclination to administer with the assistance of a council witnessed a decline in both elements at one point during the reign of Henry VIII. In 1526, however, in response to a monarch who was becoming increasingly restive as a result of the absence of council members, Wolsey advanced a plan known as the Eltham Ordinances, to reduce the membership to twenty. They in turn would be responsible for administration and for the judicial work which was then performed by the court of Star Chamber. The ostensible purpose of the reform was to ensure that the king might have sufficient councillors attendant upon him; but the object was defeated by an arrangement

19 Elton, The Tudor Constitution . . ., 89.
20 Ibid., 89-90.
which left Wolsey still free to make the councillors attendant upon himself. The significance of the proposal was the provision within the larger body of a smaller council of twenty which was to perform all the tasks of the old council. During Thomas Cromwell's period of influence it was used as the basis for a reorganization of the council.

Wolsey's death provided the council with the opportunity to increase its influence in government which continued for the duration of the reign. Cromwell, unlike Wolsey, did not seek to usurp its place although he desired a leading personal role within the council. His major contribution was to institutionalize the inner ring, according to Pollard, in the form that became known as the "privy" council, a compact assembly which superseded all other councils including the parent body, as opposed to the regular council which continued to meet in the star chamber at Westminster. The result of the new organization was to increase centralized government and further provide unity within the realm.

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21 Ibid., 89-90.
22 Ibid.
During the last seven years of Henry VIII's reign conciliar government rose to new heights as a strong monarch, dominating a manageable council, ensured close cohesion and reduced the possibility of factionalism.

The extent to which Henry VIII effected changes in the privy council has been raised, in recent years, by G.R. Elton, an English historian. Elton contends that the privy council attained an institutional form, as opposed to the earlier inner ring, sometime between 1534 and 1540. He bases his belief on the fact that the councillors accompanying the king deliberated apart and as a board, suggesting the existence of two halves of the privy council acting side by side yet independently of each other. While admitting that the evidence is not conclusive, Elton suggests the presence of a council permanently attending the king subsequent to 1536. He also notes that daily meetings of this council were recorded and that the meetings were concerned with policy and administration rather than the hearing of petitions, indicating the meeting of a genuinely governing council. The apparent surprise which the frequency of meetings elicited from informed contemporaries has led Elton to believe that what was to become the ordinary practice

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of the council from 1540 onwards, was, two years earlier, still something new and unusual. 26

If the institutionalization of the privy council is dated from the late 1540s a question arises concerning the duration of this transition. Under Edward VI the council failed to function as an advisory body as the personal ambition of the members predominated. Then, under Mary, it was a source of contention to the monarch as a result of differences in policy between many of the members of the council and the queen who lacked the means of suppressing the members. The Elizabethan council adds weight to a refutation inasmuch as the council virtually ceased to play a vital role as an advisory board, membership ensuring the individual of a significant voice in national policy. 27 The element of surprise by contemporary observers may indicate nothing more than an increased role in the affairs of state by the inner ring, a change similar to the one which the ordinary council underwent during the reign of Richard II; rather than the new body. 28 Thus, instead of indicating

26 Ibid., 334.
28 Dicey, 25.
a revolution in the role of the privy council, the changes would seem only to emphasize the versatility of the council.

Elton also suggests that the appointment of a "clerk of the privy council" tends to support his belief in the transition from an informal to a formal privy council although he is careful to qualify the inference.29 Finally, the increased distinction between ordinary councillors and privy councillors, epitomised by Henry's reply to the demands of the participants in the Pilgrimage of Grace when he gave a list of his "privy council", is advanced as further evidence.30

The writer does not refute the validity of an argument in favor of a more formal privy council than had hitherto existed, but for Elton to argue that this constituted a revolution in the history of conciliar government seems unwarranted. Henry VIII desired a strong, centralized form of government which necessitated a compact council rather than the indefinite ordinary council with its inner ring. The privy council, as it developed in the 1530s, was a consequence of this need but it evolved out of the established order and


30 Ibid., 337-338.
was not a new creation. The nineteenth century historian, A. V. Dicey, can hardly be discounted in the manner indicated by Elton,\textsuperscript{31} although the former's contention that by the reign of Richard II the character of English institutions had become permanently fixed seems somewhat vague.\textsuperscript{32} The privy council, however, may be said to have existed from Richard's time as a body of paid and sworn councillors.\textsuperscript{33} What occurred under Henry VIII was merely a phase in conciliar development but it was not without precedent.

Privy council jurisdiction under Henry VIII extended into every facet of English government, embracing legislation, taxation, the judicature, and the administration. In the area of legislation, its proclamations assumed the force of statute law, a practice abolished by Edward VI\textsuperscript{34} but resurrected by both Mary and Elizabeth.\textsuperscript{35} Although parliament maintained the right to raise direct taxation, recourse was made to the practice of raising forced loans and "voluntary"

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31}Elton, The Tudor Constitution ..., 87, n. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{32}Dicey, 23-24.
\item \textsuperscript{33}Ibid., 25.
\item \textsuperscript{34}Edward VI, c. 11.
\end{itemize}
benevolences when the former failed. The court of Star Chamber, which had always been subordinate to the privy council, ensured legal support of proclamations. The major reason for the inability of the privy council to enforce proclamations rested in the lack of a standing army, however, a situation which acted as a check on the undue usurpation of what were otherwise almost unrestrained powers. Nevertheless, conciliar jurisdiction ensured fairly constant activity and relative efficiency on the part of the local executive and, under Elizabeth, it was to further prove its worth by maintaining vigilance over the execution of parliamentary enactments.

Henry VIII sought to ensure the continuation of conciliar government after his death by designating a sixteen-member privy council that was also to act in the capacity of executor. The councillors realized, however, that in serving under a nine-year old monarch

36 Plucknett, 230.

37 Maitland, 258.

38 Ibid., 261.

they would be unable to wield the same degree of authority as they had under Henry VIII and concessions would be necessary. Accordingly, the statute providing royal proclamations with the same status as statute laws was repealed although proclamations continued to enjoy legal support.\footnote{40} The reign witnessed a disruption in conciliar continuity by the appointment of the Duke of Somerset as sole regent, with the title of Protector, utilizing the assistance of the council but possessing the power to add to their number. The result of the lack of a strong constitutionally sanctioned authority was internecine strife which witnessed the overthrow of Somerset's council and its successor which met under the leadership of Northumberland.

The situation failed to improve under Mary as the monarch and the council differed concerning the royal marriage and the return of lands to the Roman Catholic Church.\footnote{41} According to the Venetian ambassador to Paris, nothing of importance was decided by the queen without the confirmation of six councillors who were private and trusted friends, the most important being Lord William Edward VI, c.11. \footnote{41} Frederick C. Dietz, A Political and Social History of England (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932), p. 196.
Paget, the lord privy seal, and Edmund Bonner, the bishop of London. This state of affairs the ambassador credited to the influence of Philip, Mary's husband. The actual membership totalled thirty-two at the end of the reign despite the fact that Mary had not filled any vacancies which occurred.

The period of weak monarchical rule which lasted from 1547 until the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558 added further weight to the argument that without a strong monarch a strong privy council could not be sustained.

\[^1\text{Viles, 8.}\]

\[^{43}\text{Tbid.}\]
CHAPTER II

THE FOUNDATIONS OF FACTIONALISM

At the time of Elizabeth's accession to the throne in 1558 the privy council had passed through eleven years of comparative instability, first under a weak king and, second, under an unpopular Catholic queen who, despite appointing men of sympathetic views, experienced a degree of difficulty which emphasized the continuing gap between the privy council and the monarch. Mary was handicapped by her tenuous hold on national sentiment due to both her religion and, insofar as England was concerned, her unfortunate choice of a husband in Philip II of Spain.

Elizabeth was not encumbered by undue religious sentiment and her first council bore evidence of this singular lack of zeal. Thus, the privy council appointed in 1558 included eleven Catholic holdovers and seven

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new members. The number of Catholics steadily declined, however, since she was aware that strong religious sentiments in others constituted a breeding ground for differences which would ultimately manifest themselves in the form of political factions.

Although Elizabeth's firm grasp on government was felt early in the reign, it was imperative that she have the absolute loyalty of her leading ministers. Security rested on a curiously complex foundation which was sensitive to public feeling because of the lack of coercive power which a professional army or a paid bureaucracy would guarantee, leaving it without these final arbiters. The one resource available to the crown was its capacity to reward and promote its supporters. Advancement did not extend, however, to the members of the privy council, all of whom had already attained the highest post in government. Until the failure of the Duke of Norfolk and the Roman Catholics to overthrow Cecil in 1569, most leading statesmen had

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reason to fear for their lives. As a result, council members were discouraged from succumbing to ambitious tendencies which would challenge the royal prerogative. The disappearance of the Catholic threat, however, coincided with the emergence of a new element which tended to restore the check against encroachment. This was the appearance of two powerful factions which balanced each other. Elizabeth shrewdly encouraged the interplay between the two by refraining from engaging in council meetings and by seeking advice from individual councillors.

Elizabeth and her ministers carefully husbanded their resource of patronage by keeping a firm and economical hand on distribution. This meant less opportunity for political aspirants but it also succeeded in restoring a sense of proportion to the political scene. The consequence was a tendency for men to have less fear of losing what they held but to refrain from desperate gambles for great prizes at any odds.

Elizabeth did not succeed alone for a center of stability was provided by the emergence of a single,

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4 Hume, 78.
5 S.T. Bindoff et al., 102.
dominant figure, Sir William Cecil. Since 1543, when he first became a member of parliament, Cecil had successfully avoided the pitfalls of monarchical change and had held political posts in every reign. During Edward VI's minority he supported the Duke of Somerset until the latter's fall; then came to terms with the Duke of Northumberland and was appointed principal secretary to the council in 1550. Showing admirable foresight, he opposed the rule of Lady Jane Grey and secured a pardon from Mary. In the pay of Elizabeth after 1550 when he became manager of her estate, Cecil was her first choice as councillor in 1558. In addition, he was again granted the post of principal secretary. Despite his obvious opportunism, Cecil never deserted Elizabeth and remained the single dominant figure in her government until his death in 1598. His loyalty was not without its compensations inasmuch as Elizabeth supported him against a revolt which sought to remove him from power in 1569, and in 1571 he was raised to the peerage as Lord Burghley.

Early in the reign, Cecil sponsored two acts which were designed to ensure the rapid stabilization of government after the chaotic experiences of Elizabeth's two predecessors. The Act of Supremacy repealed the statute passed by Mary abrogating all previous acts
affecting religion, and the effect was to restore most of the laws of Henry VIII establishing the ecclesiastical supremacy of the crown. The Act of Uniformity revived and confirmed the Book of Common Prayer as revised under Edward VI in 1552, and commanded the attendance of English subjects at the parish churches on Sundays and holy days.

Religion lay at the back of almost every conflict in Elizabethan society, coloring foreign affairs and domestic politics. Thus, the two acts which Cecil sponsored were designed as much with his own future in mind as they were to ensure national stability. Cecil and the men who generally sided with his political views in the years ahead had all survived the recent changes of religion by means of compromise and intrigue. Cecil had once seen the inside of the Tower, and only foresight coupled with a willingness to change his religion had saved him on another occasion. As for Elizabeth, official church business was solely her affair and, whether or not others considered it to be

6 Elizabeth, c. 1.
7 Elizabeth, c. 2.
in accord with the divine purpose, she maintained the sole right of correction. Conformity was, above all, essential and religious dissent was no more to be tolerated than political rebellion. The lack of religious commitment by the crown, however, occasioned opposition from both Catholics and Puritans. The Marian exiles returned following Elizabeth’s accession to the throne and, although relatively few in number, they proved to be the most vocal group expressing dissatisfaction with the Established Church. The queen, however, viewed both Catholic and Puritan dissenters as tolerated rather than sanctioned minorities.

The Puritans included within their ranks several men of considerable ability; and Elizabethan government was not to be denied their services while, on their part, the former exiles were not to be denied a voice in national policy. By virtue of their recent exile and the fact that they were generally younger, they tended to lack the political experience of the men, like Cecil, who maintained a more conservative political attitude. Often guided more by religious than

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10 Ibid.

11 Read, English Historical Review, XXVIII, 40.
nationalistic motivations, the Puritans did not always find favor with Elizabeth. The queen, essentially pragmatic, for her part was not willing to deprive herself of their abilities for the sake of religious scruples. Hence, by 1578 they formed a powerful faction in the privy council.

The most significant privy councillor among the Puritans was Sir Francis Walsingham. As a student at Cambridge he had acquired strong Protestant leanings.

Following his return from voluntary exile during Mary's reign, he was quick to establish himself in political circles, sitting in the first two Elizabethan parliaments. At this time he became a close friend of Cecil and from 1567 to 1570 he engaged in counterspy activities, providing the latter with details concerning spy movements in London. It was in the field of diplomacy and foreign affairs, however, where Walsingham excelled and in 1570 he succeeded to the post of ambassador to Paris. Following his return in April, 1573, he was appointed principal secretary and took his place in the privy council.

Unlike Cecil, Walsingham was not willing to subordinate his religious convictions in favor of politics. His desire was to preserve England as a bulwark for Protestantism rather than simply as a sovereign
He produced his first political pamphlet, a diatribe addressed to a radically Protestant group of readers and revealed his hostile attitude toward Mary Stuart, in connection with the Norfolk plot. Thus, from the beginning he was convinced that the hope of Elizabeth lay in the complete identification of her cause with the cause of militant Protestantism.

Of the other privy councillors who ostensibly shared Walsingham's religious position and its political ramifications, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was the best known. There is considerable justification for the charge that Cecil's partisans were more fortunate in their leader, Leicester's faction having the advantage in its followers, among them, notably Walsingham. The fifth son of the Duke of Northumberland, Leicester was sent to the Tower in 1553 as a result of his father's conspiracy to elevate Jane Grey to the throne. Upon his release, he served with English forces in France but it was with Elizabeth's accession that his fortunes soared. He appealed to

12 Read, *English Historical Review*, XXVIII, 36.

13 Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Elizabeth* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1925), I, 63.

14 Read, *English Historical Review*, XXVIII, 38.
the queen's emotions as much as to her political discernment and she appointed him a privy councillor in 1559. Suspicions aroused by the death of his wife, Amy Robsart, removed the possibility of a royal match since Elizabeth dared not risk the scandal which might arise under such circumstances. For most of the remainder of his life, however, Leicester maintained a certain jealousy for Elizabeth and he was invariably the foe of those who advanced the claims of others for her hand despite the fact that she had suggested him as a husband for Mary Stuart in 1564. Cecil opposed Leicester's designs from the start, seeking a politically favorable marriage insofar as national security was concerned and, as a consequence, incurred Leicester's opposition. Although Leicester tended to favor the policies of the Puritans throughout his political career, his allegiance to their cause in the council was based on his antagonism toward Sir William and his followers. There is a dearth of evidence to support a claim for a strong religious motivation. He was

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16 Ibid., 62-63.
17 Read, English Historical Review, XXVIII, 38.
useful to the Puritans, however, in his capacity as a favorite of the queen, a state of affairs which matched Cecil's close liaison and ensured them of a royal hearing.

The other Puritan councillors were the Earl of Warwick, the Earl of Bedford, and Sir Francis Knollys. Warwick was Leicester's brother and, if for no other reason, it was expedient for him to follow the latter's fortunes. The Earl of Bedford, Warwick's father-in-law, was a Protestant who had been among the Marian exiles. Sir Francis Knollys had also been a refugee abroad during Mary's reign and, like Walsingham, returned to England a more radical Protestant than he was at the time of his departure. He sat in the parliament of 1552, was knighted in 1547 and, under Elizabeth, was perhaps the most outspoken of all the councillors in his criticism of the Established Church.

The Puritan faction was also closely knit outside the council, thus furthering continued cohesion, for they were all related either by blood or by marriage. Warwick was, as mentioned above, Leicester's brother; Bedford's daughter Anne was Warwick's wife; Leicester married Knollys' daughter Lettice; Sir Philip Sidney, Leicester's nephew, married Walsingham's daughter, Frances, thus forming what might be termed a family
The Puritan faction, furthermore, commanded a numerical preponderance in the council, a fact which would have counted for much had Elizabeth held formal council meetings. The apparent advantage was nullified by the queen's habit of following the advice of the council only when it suited her. Since she was more frequently at odds with the Puritans than in accord with them, there is some question whether her policies would have been different if full meetings had been held. Indirectly, however, this factor must have carried some weight because, with the death of one of the principal secretaries in 1577, both secretaryships were filled by men of Leicester's persuasion. This advantage was probably even more important than numerical superiority in the council because these officials were responsible for the correspondence which passed between government agents in England and abroad.19

As a consequence, the records of the privy council provide little information on foreign affairs as these details were usually the concern of the secretaries and never reached the council board.

18 Ibid., 4:1, n. 23.
Cecil's followers, Sussex, Bacon, and Hunsdon, all of whom were essentially Erastian, having held high office, like their leader, in more troublous times, sought to maintain the via media and accepted the Established Church as a political necessity. Thomas Radcliffe, third Earl of Sussex, educated at Cambridge, was knighted in 1541 and began, in 1551, what was to become almost a career of arranging royal marriages. He performed the task successfully in 1554 for Queen Mary, and unsuccessfully in 1567 when the Archduke Charles was considered as a possible match for Elizabeth. His effort did not endear him to Leicester who manifested his revenge in the privy council by accusing Sussex of responsibility for Shane O'Neill's rebellion in Ireland, the Earl having served as lord deputy under both Mary and Elizabeth before his appointment to the privy council in 1570. Sussex appealed to Elizabeth by reason of his gallantry as a soldier and his skill as a diplomat, and consequently enjoyed a considerable amount of the royal favor. His allegiance to Cecil was never in doubt and in an item of correspondence dated November 8, 1578, assured the

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latter that he would on all occasions "stick as near to you as your shirt is to your back".21

Another conservative, Sir Nicholas Bacon, had made friends with Cecil while at Cambridge, and Sir William had later married the sister of Bacon's second wife. Bacon retained office under Mary despite his Protestantism and, probably largely as a result of Cecil's influence, was knighted and made a member of the privy council early in Elizabeth's reign. During those early years he shared with his leader the task of supervising church matters, and by 1570 he was viewed as the leading advocate of strengthening the position of the Established Church.22

Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, a cousin of Elizabeth's, had retained a seat in parliament throughout the reigns of Edward VI and Mary. He was knighted in 1558, created a baron the following year, and admitted to the privy council in 1561. His major claim to fame during Elizabeth's reign was as warden of the Welsh Marches when, in 1570, he decisively routed the northern rebels. In later years Cecil sought to capitalize on his relationship to the queen but Hunsdon's influence proved

21 Read, English Historical Review, XXVIII, 39, n. 16.

22 Dictionary of National Biography I, 839.
The remaining members of the faction, the Earl of Lincoln, lord high admiral, and Sir James Crofts, had both conformed under Mary, but had reverted to their Protestant views when Elizabeth came to the throne.

As might be expected of what are basically reports of government activities, the privy council records have little to offer in regard to the factionalism which existed. It is essential, however, to understand how the business of the state was conducted by the council and how the body exercised its authority. This is not always easy to ascertain because of the vast range of its jurisdiction and by the degree to which individual councillors were entrusted with state affairs. The latter procedure has prompted one historian, Sir Almeric Fitzroy, to record that it was the degree of latitude given to the major councillors which determined the success of Elizabeth’s rule.23

The council was responsible for the execution of the law. In performing this task, it relied heavily on the justices of the peace in the various localities. In emergency, if the council felt it was necessary,

forced loans were raised through special collectors after information had been secured from the sheriffs and lord lieutenants; but Elizabeth's frugality made such loans a rare occurrence. Those who were reluctant to subscribe could generally be intimidated by the threat of an expensive journey to London and a stern lecture from the council.

Most of the privy council members sat in the Commons although their seats were acquired as the result of elections and were not obtained because they were councillors. The lord chancellor, himself a councillor, presided over the Lords. Since the infrequency of sessions and the general popularity of Elizabeth precluded the formation of an organized opposition, the council generally determined parliamentary policy. In fact, the secretary rather than the speaker was frequently the queen's spokesman in the Commons. It has been suggested that the lack of friction between the council and parliament offers striking proof of national harmony and solidarity. Accordingly, it

25 Ibid., p. 403.
26 Viles, 32.
27 Ibid., 33.
would seem as though parliament was such an innocuous body that it was almost incapable of offering solid opposition. Whereas this claim might be made of the early parliaments, the situation changed as the reign progressed.

In almost every area of the royal prerogative in England itself the council enjoyed a power which approached the rule of law. In regions under English control conciliar rule was, in fact, the equal of law. At the outset of the reign its widespread responsibility necessitated the division of the council into committees, but the situation was only temporary and there were no standing committees.28

In its early dealings with the Puritan element the privy council recognized the need to maintain peace within the realm, at least, until Elizabeth's government was firmly established. Consequently, until 1563 most dissenting clergymen were assured of remaining unmolested regardless of their doctrinal position as long as they maintained the peace and refrained from encouraging riots.29 Cecil's policy was one of prevention dictated by a consciousness of the lack of

28 Ibid., 45-46.
29 Ibid., 107.
an armed force or money to support it. Uncertainties regarding public spirit were present, particularly in regard to religion. Even after 1563, when ministers could be deprived of convocation, the council maintained an aloofness in ecclesiastical affairs. Cecil generally supported Matthew Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in his endeavors to maintain orthodoxy, but Puritan opposition in the council grew too strong and the queen refused to sanction the public notices which the archbishop sent to the council for approval.

Parker's successor, Edmund Grindal, showed strong Puritan sentiments although there is every reason to believe that Cecil, as well as the Puritan faction, favored a more moderate successor. Generally, the conciliar attitude toward the Puritans during the early years of the reign showed lenience. This policy can be attributed to both Cecil's careful policies and the strength of the Puritans in the council, for Elizabeth was no more amenable to Puritans than she was to Catholics.

Elizabeth's attitude toward Catholicism had been

30 Plucknett, 311.
31 Viles, 108.
32 Ibid., 117.
largely prescribed by her predecessors and whatever was lacking the Catholics were quick to provide. Henry VIII's desire for the retention of Catholic theology in a national church was abandoned by the nobles who framed the policy of Edward VI. Mary failed to improve matters as a result of her Spanish marriage and her subservience to Spain. Philip's desire to dominate England after his wife's death; Mary Stuart's claim to the throne; and the fact that the papacy viewed her as a bastard, combined to force Elizabeth away from Catholicism. Furthermore, she was supported in this action by Cecil and, of course, the Marian exiles.

A violent change was out of the question since a low treasury, a languishing war with France, and Philip's aspirations counselled caution. The council contented itself with maintaining a loose connection with ecclesiastical affairs by reason of its control over the Court of High Commission, the latter body usually including councillors among its membership. The government was not aware of the dangers of Catholicism as a political party, however, until the rebellion of 1569 and the publication of the papal bull of excommunication, Regnans in Excelsis, in 1570.33

33_Ibid., 65.
Thereupon, new statutes were imposed extending legislation to include any acceptance of the bull as a criminal act.\textsuperscript{34}

As far as Catholic churchmen who survived from Mary's reign were concerned, they were shown remarkable lenience. In 1574 they were sent to relatives in the country\textsuperscript{35} and those who disobeyed the injunction were merely ordered to report to all council meetings in London.\textsuperscript{36} Catholic priests were a great concern to the council but their lot was not entirely desperate until the mission of the Jesuits Edmund Campion and Robert Persons. They were liable to a sentence of treason only if found guilty of seducing Catholics from their national allegiance or importing Catholic trumperies. Until 1580 the function of the council toward recusants extended only to the extent of stimulating local officials and the Court of High Commission and even after 1580 the council acted directly only when dealing with special cases of abnormal difficulty.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{34} Elizabeth, c. 1 and 2.
\textsuperscript{35} Dasent, VIII, 253, 264, 283.
\textsuperscript{36} Viles, 65.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 86.
In foreign policy and privy council acted within the dictates of overall national policy, that is, it ensured that England should never be entirely isolated. Scotland, France, or Spain must not unite against her nor anyone become sufficiently powerful to overawe a combination of the others. The means employed were, first, to stir up jealousy by suggesting a marriage alliance and, secondly, to weaken opponents by aiding the rebels in their territories in such a way as to avoid the appearance or emergence of open war. In pursuing the latter design, the council aided the Huguenots, the Scottish Protestants, and the Dutch rebels. It was a unique feature of the Elizabethan privy council that it was able to perform all these tasks despite the presence of factions whose effect was to facilitate rather than debilitate policy. Individuals found the conflict restricting but the outcome was a more carefully deliberated and less partial decision. For Elizabeth, it meant that she alone held control of the government as long as the factions continued. Yet at no stage during the thirteen years after 1573 when Elizabethan policy may be said to have been formulated was there a danger that these factions would unleash a national rebellion or otherwise endanger the existing form of government. The frequently divergent views of
Walsingham and Cecil, after 1571 the Baron of Burghley, were not always immediately evident and correspondence between the two seldom indicates the presence of hostility. Furthermore, Sir Francis, behind the facade of Leicester, was seldom as clearly implicated as Lord Burghley and when such a danger appeared as occurred over Elizabeth's desire for a scapegoat in the granting of Mary Stuart's death warrant, he proved himself a shrewd tactician as well as a diplomat.  

Amid this conflict, however, there was no indication of an attempt to organize parties and frequently the factions could be found to agree on issues. The temptation to attribute the role of conciliatory subordination to the loyalty of the councillors is somewhat mollified by a reference to the Essex revolt of 1601 which occurred at a time when such restraint as existed by reason of the opposing factions in earlier years, was absent. Thus, for the first time, factionalism in the council appeared sufficiently strong to govern the land without the monarch if its composition had been unified.

Religion was at the base of the conflict between Walsingham and Burghley but this common denominator

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38 Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham ..., III, 64.
manifested itself particularly in three major areas. Sir Francis's antagonism toward Catholicism entailed the need for a warlike policy which was opposed by the conservative desire to preserve peace by means of negotiation. His religious convictions could not condone a Catholic suitor for Elizabeth; whereas Burghley viewed this possibility as an admirable means of ensuring international harmony. On the domestic scene Walsingham saw in Mary Stuart's incarceration a center for Catholic usurpation which only her death would remove. Burghley, on the other hand, although not in any sense a supporter of Mary, often viewed Puritanism as evidencing a greater threat to internal harmony than Catholicism.
CHAPTER III

THE MARRIAGE CONFLICT

In 1559 Queen Elizabeth's first confrontation with what soon became "the marriage problem" was the recommendation by parliament that she find a husband. Sir Francis Walsingham's initial contact with the problem occurred during his term as English ambassador to Paris from 1570 to 1573. The attitudes which he displayed on that occasion were to vitally affect his relationship with the councillors in later years when, as a member of the privy council, he enjoyed greater influence over government policy. The early experience, however, introduced him to the controversy between Burghley and Leicester on a personal basis and shaped the course of his alignment when in the council.

The problem of Elizabeth's marriage troubled Lord Burghley much earlier, for he had urged the queen to marry since the commencement of the reign. A royal match meant the assurance of national stability and the succession and, perhaps as important, the assurance that Burghley would not have to endure the trials which he had experienced when Mary came to the throne. He
knew that if Elizabeth died a smooth transition of power would occur only if she had offspring. Her serious illness in 1562 caused much concern over the future of the dynasty. In 1570 Burghley listed some of the advantages pertaining to a royal match and, although he discreetly avoided mentioning either the delicate subject of royal heirs or the personal advantages which such an event would give him, the suggestions are revealing in terms of Burghley's immediate concerns of state.

If your Majesty shall marry with France upon reasonable conditions, many things now evil digested and dangerous shall, by God's goodness, prove easy and ordered, that is to say:

(1) The perilous case of the Scottish Queen and of Scotland.
(2) The discontentment of a great number of the subjects upon sundry causes.
(3) The unkindness and abstinence of traffic betwixt this realm and the King of Spain's countries.
(4) The dangerous and unmeasurable charge in retaining of Ireland.
(5) The general uncertainty of events of your neighbors, by occasion whereof your Majesty hath been or shall be to stand upon your guard with unmeasurable expenses both by sea and land.¹

It was not that Elizabeth lacked suitors for she was probably the most eligible princess in Europe.

Ferdia, to suggest the possibility of a union; but Elizabeth, sensing that England would not condone another Catholic marriage after the unfortunate experience of Mary, and because she apparently was not personally motivated toward the Spanish monarch, evaded the issue. Evasion avoided the unpleasant effects of an outright rejection and was to become a political tool in leading erstwhile enemies to hope for a marriage alliance throughout the reign.

During the first ten years of Elizabeth's reign, in addition to Philip, the heir apparent to the Swedish throne and the two younger sons of the Holy Roman emperor also vied for her hand. Religion, however, was given as the reason for the failure of the suits of the Austrian archdukes although in the case of the three suitors the issue was allowed to drag on for years. It is doubtful whether Elizabeth ever entertained serious thoughts for any of them. At home there were others, but she remained aloof. It is possible that Burghley, interested in the diplomatic effects of marriage, may have had a hand in advising her against a domestic union. Both national responsibility and per-

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sonal preference seemed to conspire against her taking a husband. Religion was not the only deterrent, however, for Elizabeth was determined not to marry anyone sight unseen. Even when she found a man to whom she was personally attracted, the course of events so shaped public opinion as to once again place the prospect beyond her grasp. Robert Dudley, whom she created Earl of Leicester, was already married. When his wife died, probably by her own hand, rumor spread to the effect that he had arranged for her murder. Although Elizabeth defended her suitor, marriage was thenceforth out of the question.

Lord Burghley was opposed to the marriage with Leicester from the beginning. In September, 1559, he confided to the Spanish ambassador, Alvarez de Quadra, that he had contemplated retirement in the event that the union took place. By the summer of 1561, however, the crisis had passed and Elizabeth seemed reconciled to the prospect of becoming a bride, if such should ever eventuate, as a queen fulfilling her national duty rather than as a result of her personal desires. Henceforth, the marriage problem was to be interwoven with political expediency. The promise of her hand,

\[\text{Ibid.},\ 77.\]
followed by delaying tactics designed to keep the other party in a state of expectancy and hence avoid conflict, was to become a leading strategy.

In 1563 Burghley reopened negotiations for a match with the Archduke Charles of Austria but once again the issue turned on the question of religion. A sense of urgency accompanied the proceedings, for Mary Stuart's husband, Francis II of France, had died leaving her eligible for remarriage. Elizabeth's serious illness in the previous year emphasized Mary's claim to the throne of England. Burghley was strongly in favor of the match, particularly when the emperor agreed to accept the religious stipulations posed by Elizabeth of permitting his son to practice his religion only in private. Elizabeth, however, continued to demur and there is strong reason for doubting her intention from the beginning.

In 1560, fearful of an English alliance with the Hapsburgs, Catherine de Médici came forward with a rival in the person of her son, the Duke of Anjou. He was a mere youth and Elizabeth does not appear to have given the matter serious consideration; but once again she kept negotiations open as long as possible in order to prevent a rapprochement between France and Scotland.
Thus far, Lord Burghley, although he had generally favored foreign matches, had successfully concealed his opposition to Leicester. In time, as an anti-Leicester faction became increasingly evident in the council, his attitude could not remain hidden. In public he stayed aloof from party squabbles and remained on good personal terms with the Earl. In the privacy of his study, however, he drew up a list of advantages between a marriage to the Archduke and one to Leicester, the result being a damning indictment of the latter.

In 1567 the Earl of Sussex acted as intermediary in another effort to open negotiations with the emperor but religion again proved the deciding factor, leaving Sussex, the Duke of Norfolk, and Burghley, the leaders of the Spanish faction, despondent.

After the Scottish rebellion of 1569, the need for an heir became more pressing since it was evident that there were many who would support Mary's claim in the event of Elizabeth's death. A successor to the throne would alter this scheme and, it was hoped, reduce the likelihood of assassination, preserve the loyalty of the people, and thereby extinguish the aspirations of the Scottish queen. Whether a marriage and a royal

\[Ibid., \text{II}, 7-18.\]
heir could have wrought so much is highly doubtful, but it served as a continual goad to such men as Burghley and caused them to urge Elizabeth to marry at times when their experience must have indicated that the prospect was hopeless.

In 1570 there was reason to believe that a marriage to another of Catherine de Medici's sons was expedient since the religious war had ended that year, leaving France free to annoy England. Catherine was still anxious to prevent an alignment between England and the Hapsburgs and, in order to pursue this policy, was again willing to offer one of her sons to Elizabeth in marriage. Negotiations began in the fall of 1570 with a view to a union with the Duke of Anjou and continued throughout 1571. Burghley wrote to Walsingham in Paris stressing Elizabeth's apparently serious intent. Shortly thereafter the French court initiated negotiations.

The first indications of disagreement between Lord Burghley and Lord Leicester concerned the commitments of the two participants. Elizabeth desired an arrangement with the French based on the articles of marriage which had sufficed for her sister, Mary, to Philip of

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5 Read, Lord Burghley . . . , 51.
Spain with the exception that Anjou should be denied the right to practice his Catholicism in England. The letters which Burghley and Leicester wrote to Walsingham reporting this item, however, reflected their divergence. Leicester, knowing Walsingham's Protestant sentiments and desirous of preventing the marriage probably still with an eye to his own prospects with the queen, couched his letters in such terms as to emphasize gratification at the queen's adherence to religious scruples. Burghley, on the other hand, urged Sir Francis not to stress the religious element in his dealings with Catherine.6 Previously, Burghley had been associated with the Spanish party at court, and clearly a marriage alliance with France conflicted with a pro-Spanish policy; but it seems as though he feared the succession problem more than the likelihood of a war with Spain. On the other hand, Leicester was not known for his strong religious convictions and his letter was clearly intended to serve as a means of gaining Walsingham's allegiance in an effort to prevent the marriage, and especially to reduce Burghley's influence at court. This view is substantiated by reports from the French ambassador to London, La Mothe

6 Ibid., 52.
Fenelon, early in 1570 when Leicester apparently informed him that he had urged the French match on Elizabeth after ascertaining that it was her intention to wed only a man of royal blood. On another occasion, Leicester is reported by the same source as having charged that Burghley was opposed to any marriage, preferring to remain king himself. The latter statement was without foundation although Burghley and the Spanish faction would have preferred the earlier Hapsburg match in the interests of Anglo-Spanish harmony. Furthermore, Fenelon was not a disinterested party and he could be expected to emphasize French interests. Leicester, on the other hand, sought to reduce Burghley's popularity.

Burghley was not blind to Leicester's designs and, realizing that he was in opposition to the marriage sought to secure the latter's support and also reduce Walsingham's ardent Protestantism. He hoped that the ambassador would adopt a temporizing attitude on the religious issue. Sir Francis, temporarily disposed to

7 La Mothe Fenelon, Correspondance, iv. 22-23, quoted in Conyers Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1925), 1, 102.

8 Ibid.

9 Read, Lord Burghley . . . , 52.
Follow Burghley's lead, conveyed Elizabeth's reply to Catherine without mentioning the religious difficulty. His position was based on the belief that a Catholic match would have the effect of winning Elizabeth away from even her lukewarm adherence to the Protestant faith. 10 There is another possible explanation for Walsingham's decision. In his correspondence to Sir Walter Mildmay, a fellow Puritan and the royal exchequer, it appears that Walsingham was momentarily misled into interpreting the pleasant reception of Elizabeth's interest in the marriage plans by the French court into believing that Charles IX could be brought around to a more favorable attitude toward the Protestants than prevailed despite the earlier Pacification of St. Germain. 11

Burghley considered the advantages and disadvantages of the marriage in January, 1571, and ascertained, to his own satisfaction, that the former outweighed the latter. Significantly, political factors predominated in his assessment. His major fear was that, once married, Anjou might see in a union with Mary

10 Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham . . . I, 109-10.
the opportunity to unite Scotland, France, and England and be tempted, on that account, to shorten Elizabeth's life by assassination with the help of his brother, the king of France. On the other hand, the marriage with Elizabeth would reduce Mary's threat to the throne by reason of the likelihood that it might result in the birth of a successor, and state revenues would benefit by the income which the Duke might expect to receive from France.

In April, Catherine's emissary to Elizabeth was confronted with the religious issue which could no longer be concealed. Thereupon, Burghley was instructed to advise Walsingham of their queen's adamant position. Sir Francis was now faced with the problem of presenting the news to Catherine and, at the same time, keeping the hope of a marriage alive. Unfortunately, Walsingham's religious views were such as to leave him unprepared to make concessions to Anjou's religious tenets. The problem was further complicated by the need to retain amicable relations with France, the ex-

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13 Ibid., 129.  
14 State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, cxviii, no. 1138, quoted in Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham . . ., I, 133.
press purpose of his mission.

Even Lord Burghley's position, based on political expediency and involving the minimization of religious differences, was becoming increasingly tenuous as the queen persisted. By July, 1570, it was evident that he had resigned himself to the belief that Elizabeth did not intend to marry although he was not assured that this reluctance was occasioned solely because of the religious problem. He wrote to Walsingham accordingly.

I am in doubt whether to write or not, for to write nothing were to discomfort you and to write something with uncertainty cannot comfort and yet in extremities the lesser is to be admitted. I assure you that I cannot assure you from hence what is to be looked for by the Q. Majesty's manner of answers at this time. She is not unwarned how dangerous it were if in her default the matter taketh not success, and she seemeth to concede and pretendeth that she seemeth, that if the manner of religion may be granted there will be no other difficulty; but whether she is persuaded that therein the breach will be on that side and so she to escape the reproof, I cannot tell. God direct the matter for I have done my uttermost and so hath other Councillors here. My Lord Keeper hath earnestly dealt in it and so hath my L. of Sussex; My Lord of Leicester hath in my dealings also joined earnestly with me and among the rest of the Councillors I know none directly against it. 15

The letter served to indicate to Walsingham that it was futile to further pursue the negotiations and advised that Anjou would have nothing to do with the

marriage even if Elizabeth met his religious demands. The ambassador also reported the disadvantages of the match to the rivals Burghley and Leicester who, he knew, would normally oppose each other as a matter of principle. Consequently, he worded his replies to each one in such a manner as to avoid giving offense. To Burghley, he advanced an argument in favor of a league without the necessity of a marriage alliance, justifying his position on the basis that English interests were best served by provoking strife between her most powerful neighbors. To Leicester, he stressed the commercial advantages which would accrue from friendly relations with Spain, although he claimed to prefer the "spiritual fruits" that the French alliance promised.

Aware that they were the two councillors on whose advice the queen chiefly depended, Sir Francis sought to draw them to the same conclusion with opposing arguments but it was clear that Leicester's position, probably largely by the latter's design, was closer to his own. Thus, where Walsingham and Leicester viewed

16 Leicester and Walsingham had both invested in Drake's voyage which ended at Plymouth in September, 1580. Corryers Read, "Walsingham and Burghley in Queen Elizabeth's Privy Council," English Historical Review, XXVIII (January, 1913), 444.

17 Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham . . ., I, 144.
the marriage as a compromise with popery, Burghley viewed it as an indispensable preliminary to a league. It is also possible that the latter saw in the marriage a possible weakening of Leicester's influence with the queen which would be a decided advantage since the Earl's importance was largely due to his close contact with Elizabeth.

To Walsingham's undoubted relief, the marriage plan failed but an alliance, the Treaty of Blois, was signed in April, 1572. Though not much was to come of the arrangement, England and France agreed to support each other militarily if attacked by a third power. One evil portent, however, was the first apparent sign of irritation by Burghley toward the ambassador as a result of the apparent alacrity with which he had seemed ready to dismiss the marriage. Catherine was still not ready to abandon the possibility of providing Elizabeth with a husband and advanced the cause of a younger son, the Duke of Alencon. But both the alliance and marriage schemes were adversely affected by the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in August, 1572. The following year, Walsingham was recalled and appointed to the privy council. In later years, his position.

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18 Diggles, p. 129, quoted in Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham, I, 116.
on the marriage issue never led to personal animosity with Burghley although it revealed a basic difference between their political philosophies which colored conciliatory affairs until his death.

It cannot be concluded that Walsingham and Leicester had, themselves, precluded the marriage for it appears that the blame lay with Elizabeth. Nevertheless, in view of Walsingham’s ability to influence the Earl, it was no longer difficult to understand why Sir Francis was the real leader of the opposition to Burghley’s policy. Adept in the skills of diplomacy, he had almost succeeded in alleviating himself from all appearance of opposition to the match and with a less perceptive statesman than the latter it might have passed unnoticed. All the time, however, his outlook was in direct opposition to Burghley. In view of Elizabeth’s frequently independent attitudes, it is always difficult to assess the impact which councillors and high ranking officers made on her. The knowledge of opposing factions, although not yet confined to the privy council, must have caused her to demur even if she had had serious intentions. The result indicates that factions perpetuated the policy of offering the royal hand in times of trouble and, using it purely as a weapon, withdrawing it when the emergency had passed.
This, of course, was not the intention of the councilors and officers, but it could be construed as a result of their factionalism.

Throughout the 1570's the marriage issue remained and Elizabeth continued to turn it to her advantage. The next opportunity presented itself in 1578 when she sought to escape the perplexities occasioned by the Prince of Orange and the Dutch rebels to whom she had extended loans albeit in the knowledge that they would not be repaid. To the grief of many of her advisers, she showed signs of breaking with the rebels on the basis that they appeared to offer Philip impossible terms for surrender. Although she bore no affection for Spain, Elizabeth was opposed to a rebel element which constituted the usurpation of authority. Her withdrawal of direct support of the rebels was occasioned by the appearance on the scene of the Duke of Alencon who had entered the Dutch conflict with the sole intention of carving out a patrimony for himself. Furthermore, without aid from his brother, Henry III of France, there was no danger that his actions would

19 Neale, 213.

be mistaken by Spain as a threat from their neighbor.  

It was generally recognized that English policy was not in the hands of three leading councillors and the queen herself. The Spanish ambassador, Bernardino de Mendoza, commented in a dispatch dated March 31, 1578:

Although there are seventeen councillors with the two secretaries, Hatton and the new ones, the bulk of the business really depends upon the Queen, Leicester, Walsingham and Cecil, the latter of whom, although he takes part in the resolution of them by virtue of his office, absents himself on many occasions, as he is opposed to the Queen's helping the rebels so effectively and thus weakening her own position. He does not wish to break with Leicester and Walsingham on the matter, they being very much wedded to the States and extremely self-seeking, as I am assured that they are keeping the interest of the money which the Queen has lent to the States. They urge the business under cloak of preserving their religion, which Cecil cannot well oppose. Nor can he afford to make enemies of them, as they are well supported. Some of the Councillors are well disposed towards your Majesty, but Leicester, whose spirit is Walsingham, is so highly favored by the Queen, notwithstanding his bad character, that he centers in his hands and those of his friends most of the business of the country.

Parts of the statement, such as the interpretation of Walsingham's religious motivations and the accusations pertaining to the interest on the Dutch loan, are

21 Neale, 214.

22 Mendoza to Philip, March 31, 1578, Calendar of State Papers, Spanish, 1568-1579, p. 486, quoted in Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham . . . . I, 370-71.
untrue but the report offers an otherwise revealing picture of the small group of actual policy makers and the general recognition of factions which were now quite apparent. During the year, Leicester had quarreled with Burghley over a minor difference involving coinage and it was clear that the former was anxious to find a cause on which he could emphasize his general opposition to the conservatives.\textsuperscript{23} Another reason for his dislike of Burghley rested in his recent marriage to the daughter of Sir Francis Knollys. Although the match had been kept a secret, Burghley had learned of it and rejoiced inasmuch as it removed his long standing fears of a match between Elizabeth and Leicester.\textsuperscript{24} Leicester's opportunity to avenge himself by thwarting Burghley's plans came with the queen's courtship with Alencon.

Upon his return from an unsuccessful diplomatic venture in the Low countries in October, 1578, Walsingham was informed of the courtship. His reaction was one of opposition although, predictably, Sussex and Burghley were both in favor of the union.\textsuperscript{25} Walsingham

\textsuperscript{23} Read, Lord Burghley ..., 206.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 206.
\textsuperscript{25} Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham ..., 206.
ham aligned himself with Leicester as he had during the Anjou negotiations. It is highly questionable whether the latter's motives were the same, however, since his marriage removed the hope of gaining Elizabeth's hand. The religious issue was also relegated to the background since Alencon was not an ardent Catholic. 26

Walsingham, a member of the war party which, because of its Protestant sentiments, favored continued monetary support for the Dutch rebels, viewed the marriage problem as being responsible for Elizabeth's failure to send 100,000 pounds to the rebels as she had previously promised. 27 This belief also placed him in opposition to Burghley who, as lord treasurer, was mindful of the need for fiscal frugality. In later years, Leicester was to accuse the lord treasurer of failing to grant sufficient money for the English expedition to the Netherlands and delaying the approval of additional funds when they were requested. 28 It is therefore not surprising to find Walsingham echoing similar sentiments in 1578 since it was understandable

26 Neale, 216.
27 Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham ..., II, 5.
28 Read, English Historical Review, XXVIII, 57.
that Burghley and Elizabeth would tend to withhold support from causes which they considered dubious.

Alencon adopted an aggressive policy which surprised the court and the latter soon became convinced that the queen seriously contemplated and desired marriage. The interest of the nation was aroused; the Puritans were averse to the match while the Catholics and crypto-Catholics lent Elizabeth their support. The queen's behavior during much of the courtship was out of keeping with her position as monarch which fact gave rise to the belief that her emotional instability was the result of having reached her menopause.29 Despite her unusual conduct, political considerations finally triumphed although not without causing considerable concern to those who opposed the match.

Alencon's first proposal, in the summer of 1578, had been evaded with the retort that the queen would not make a decision without first having seen her suitor. Significantly, although he was not as anxious for the marriage as he had been in 1571, Burghley still believed that the queen was capable of bearing children; this being one of the criteria for his support of the of the proposed union.30 The line which he adopted in

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29 Read, Lord Burghley . . . , 206.
30 Ibid., 211.
furtherance of the plan at a privy council meeting held in April, 1579, involved the alternatives of a marriage alliance with France or a commitment to belligerent Protestantism throughout Europe. In commenting on the latter choice, he stressed the cost involved in contrast to the former, which would be more likely to appeal to Elizabeth's frugality. In retort, Walsingham argued that even if it was still possible for the queen to give birth to a child, this would be dangerous at her age. Then, in August, he wrote to Burghley expressing his doubt that the French would take kindly to the match.

Alencon, however, was determined to pursue the match regardless of objections and in the summer of 1579 he slipped into England. For thirteen days he courted Elizabeth and it appeared certain that the queen was seriously desirous of marriage. The way was not to be easy and the populace of London began to talk of a revolution. Alencon's marriage designs were construed as a French trick to assassinate Elizabeth through childbirth. As a result, the queen momentarily

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31 Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham..., 76.
32 Read, Lord Burghley..., 215.
allowed her desire for revenge on her critics to out-
weigh her better judgment.\textsuperscript{33} It was the council, how-
ever, which restored her equilibrium for when she rea-
alyzed that it was divided she rejected Alencon.

The difference between Burghley and Walsingham
proved to be based on the same principles as in the
Anjou match, that is, political expediency versus a
foreign policy based strictly on religious principles.
Sir Francis's faction had won the marriage conflict and
avoided the possibility of a repetition of the problems
of Mary's reign although in gaining its victory it
temporarily lost royal favor.

Despite the struggle, the opposition of Walsing-
ham and Burghley had given England time in dealing with
her neighbors. There is no assurance that a marriage
with Anjou would have ensured greater harmony among
the populace than accompanied the Alencon affair when
it was realized that the Catholic match might prove a
reality. Burghley, for his part, must have believed
that Elizabeth was sufficiently strong to prevent a
recurrence of Mary's predicament for he was otherwise
a careful man when assessing the virtues of his mis-
tress' suitors. There is no doubt that he knew Eliza-

\textsuperscript{33}Neale, 239.
beth as well as anyone in court. Above all, the marriage disputations served to prove that factionalism need not be synonymous with poor government. Nor did it necessitate the queen's alignment with the decision of one side over the other.
CHAPTER IV

THE DUTCH REBELLION

If Sir Francis Walsingham was successful in his attempt to keep Queen Elizabeth from marrying the Duke of Alencon, son of Catherine de Medici, over the opposition of William Cecil, the Earl of Burghley, it was not so much a result of aggressiveness as it was of an almost clandestine conspiracy on account of the queen's sensitivity toward the problem.¹ In his attitude toward Spain, however, Walsingham's position was uncompromisingly clear. In 1572, while still serving as ambassador to Paris, he wrote to the Earl of Leicester, "The proud Spaniard (whom God hath long used for the rod of His wrath) I see great hope that he will now cast him into the fire, that he may know what it is to

¹Elizabeth prorogued the parliament which was to meet on October 20, 1579, until the Alencon marriage question had been settled elsewhere. J. E. Neale, Queen Elizabeth I (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), p. 249. Elizabeth's anger was such as to force Walsingham's temporary departure from the court as a result of the outcome. Conyers Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1925), II, 22.
serve against God." Such statements as this helped to make him the champion of the faction in the privy council which demanded war against Spain. The religious motivation in his thinking was further emphasized in 1575 when he remarked, in connection with a proposed Spanish treaty, "Surely hardly will there follow any thorough reconciliation between us unless we can draw to one unity in religion, for Christ and Belial can hardly agree." In an undated letter, he wrote,

What juster cause can a prince that maketh profession of the Gospel have to enter into wars than when he seeth confederacies made for the rooting out of the Gospel and religion he professeth: All creatures are created to advance God's glory; therefore, when this glory is called in question, no league nor policy can excuse if by all means he seek not the defense of the same, yea, with his life.

Walsingham's general policy with regard to the Low Countries, however, is most admirably stated in a letter which he wrote to Leicester in 1572.

First, I conclude that we rest in evil terms with Spain, whereof there must grow redress either by composition or by sword. Redress by composition

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3Conyers Read, "Walsingham and Burghley in Queen Elizabeth's Privy Council," English Historical Review, XXVIII, (January, 1913), 36.

4Ibid.
may seem scarce sure. . . . Redress by the sword, comparing our forces with theirs may appear at first sight void of all possibility. But, if you consider the opportunity that this present time offereth, that doubt to man's judgement may soon be avoided, though victory (as well as other things else are) is in the hands of God; . . . . there is great appearance that the price of Spain may be so presently daunted, as we need not fear their malice. The remedy perhaps may seem more dangerous than the disease, for, in seeking to abate the pride of Spain we may advance another, whose greatness will contain no less danger. . . . The Princes of Germany, who can be content to be parties in the enterprise, do foresee that if the whole Low Country be united to the crown of France, it would grow too great. They mean to capitulate with him to content himself with Flanders and Artois which once pertained to the Crown. And as for Brabant and the other parts, which once pertained to the Empire, they mean to reduce them to their old state, committing the government thereof to some prince of Germany, which in reason cannot be but to the Prince of Orange. Holland and Zealand [sic] they wish were united to the Crown of England. . . . If these then may take place . . . two mischiefs may therefore be avoided. First, the malice of him that is mighty and hath goodwill to revenge; secondly, greatness of another who perhaps otherwise may grow a dangerous neighbour. . . . I do not doubt that your Lordship will do what you may so do deal with her Majesty as that some of the Count's requests may take place. . . .

The letter is particularly interesting for, although addressed to Leicester, it emphasized the differences between Walsingham and Burghley. The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in France was a contributory factor to Burghley's opposition since he did not relish a plan

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5 Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham . . . . , I, 153-54.

which might result in French occupation of the Netherlands. It was with this fear in mind that Elizabeth had sent Sir Humphrey Gilbert to Flushing with a company of volunteers and instructions to prevent French occupation.7

Since 1568, the northern provinces of the Low Countries had been engaged in intermittent warfare with their Spanish overlords. In 1575, the privy council debated whether to give aid to the Dutch rebels. Although there was general support, Burghley favored secrecy in order to avoid arousing Spanish animosity. Despite his tacit approval, there is reason to doubt Burghley's sincerity for his policy of procrastination resulted in nothing being accomplished. England's position in Europe, although far from being secure, was relatively safe and neither Elizabeth nor the conservatives in the council, led by Burghley, were desirous of arousing any antagonisms. The separation of the two factions on this topic was exemplified in March when Bernardino de Mendoza, the Spanish envoy, arrived in England. Elizabeth, seeking to create an impression of goodwill toward Spain in order to avoid an altercation over the Netherlands, was angered as a result of

7Black, The Reign of Elizabeth . . ., 156.
Walsingham's outspoken attack on the ministers and his mission.

In March, 1576, Luis de Requesens, governor of the Netherlands, died, whereupon the oppression which had existed in Holland and Zeeland since 1562 was relieved. His decease was followed by a mutiny among the Spanish troops. William of Orange, leader of the rebels, taking advantage of the resultant lack of opposition, drafted the Pacification of Ghent which united the seventeen provinces for the first time in nine years. Faced with the imminent arrival of Don John of Austria, the new governor, and additional troops, the Estates-General appealed to England and France for aid. Henry III of France saw in the offer a means whereby he could rid himself of a troublesome brother, the Duke of Alençon. Elizabeth, viewing Alencon's intervention as an attempt to extend French territory, sought to forestall Dutch approval by sending 20,000 pounds to the Estates and promising to loan a further 100,000 pounds for

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3Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, 1575-1577, no. 668, quoted in Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham...I, 154.

9With the accession of the Duke of Anjou to the throne as Henry III, the former Duke of Alencon took the Anjou title; but for the sake of avoiding confusion the Alencon title will be used throughout this paper.
assistance in forming a Dutch army. At the same time, she sent an envoy to Don John. His instructions were drafted by Burghley and are indicative of the latter's attitude toward the approaching conflict. Don John was to be advised that unless he came to terms with the Estates on the basis of their ancient privileges, Elizabeth would "aid them with all the might and power we can." If, on the other hand, the Estates refused to accept reasonable terms she would join with Spain against them. There was no religious bias in her message, simply a desire to maintain order and thus ensure the continued use of ports without fear of capture. In April, 1577, Don John came to terms with the Estates. Although the queen accepted the situation, she urged the Estates to make more use of the Prince of Orange. There is little doubt that she would have preferred the rebels as neighbors.

Lord Burghley brought temporary unanimity to the council by siding with Walsingham in advocating support of the Dutch. He feared that Don John ultimately in-

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11 Ibid.  
12 Ibid.  
13 Read, Lord Burghley ..., 179.
tended to invade England and place Mary Stuart on the throne. Even if this did not eventuate, Burghley saw the establishment of a Spanish government in a completely subjugated Netherlands as a menace to English trade.\(^{14}\) Elizabeth, however, continued to reject active opposition on the grounds that she would be supporting rebels against their lawful sovereign; antagonizing her Catholic neighbors, and shedding the blood of Englishmen in a foreign quarrel.\(^{15}\) Furthermore, Walsingham, still dissatisfied with Burghley's position, maintained that it was too conservative and charged him, together with the councillors who shared his views, with being pro-Spanish.\(^{16}\)

Once again it was a French offer of assistance to the Estates which caused Elizabeth to act. Upon learning that Alencon had repeated his proposal on more liberal terms than before, she proffered a loan of 100,000 pounds for the formation of an army and immediately sent 40,000 pounds. Further plans were delayed by the arrival in London, in March, 1578, of Bernardino de Mendoza, a Spanish diplomat whose task was to

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 185.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 186.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 188.
ameliorate opposition directed toward Don John. Walsingham wrote to Burghley concerning the Spaniard's arrival: "When anatomy shall be made and the particulars of the matter looked to, I fear it will prove an offer of abuse to gain time." Mendoza's instructions were not, however, explicitly designed with the end in view which Sir Francis feared. In fact, he was strictly forbidden to do anything which would give the queen cause for complaint. Instead, he was to try and quiet any fears which she might entertain toward Spain. As an aid to the accomplishment of his task, he was empowered to promise concessions in the Low Countries ranging from the withdrawal of Spanish troops to the reinstatement of provincial governments; even offering to replace Don John as governor if such a move would remove suspicion.

The envoy was not only unsuccessful in allaying English fears but he misjudged the loyalty of Elizabeth's councillors. In a letter to his sovereign written six weeks after his arrival in England, Mendoza confided,

17 Ibid., 189.
I can certainly assure you that the Earl of Sussex is sincerely attached to his Majesty's interests, and Cecil also, although not so openly. But if he and Sussex, who is a man of much valor and understanding, are properly treated, they will both be favorable and their good disposition will be strengthened when they see it rewarded. It will be necessary, if they are to be entertained, to give them something more than jewels... I have attempted and am attempting, by every means possible, to manage this, and the present is the best opportunity which has ever occurred, if his majesty will be pleased to award something to Sussex, Cecil, and the Controller [Sir James Croft].

It is conceivable that the peace policy which Sussex and Burghley were both known to favor, and the willingness of the former to accept the terms without religious toleration, might have led Mendoza to believe that they were amenable to bribery.

In August, 1578, Walsingham and Lord Cobham, a former ambassador to Spain, were sent to the Netherlands in order to effect a pacification between the Estates and Don John. They explained to the governor that the 100,000 pounds loan promised to the rebels was the result of fears that a French invasion was imminent and could be prevented in no other manner. They were unsuccessful in seeking to secure Don John's acceptance of the terms advanced by the Estates. Their mission, virtually impossible from the beginning, received a

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19 Froude, 128.
20 Read, Lord Burghley..., 190, n. 83.
crippling blow when Elizabeth, seeking to strengthen her diplomacy and prevent the Estates from raising more money, repudiated her loan to the Dutch. Burghley and Walsingham were as one in condemning her action, the former advising the queen that the Estates would side with France. 22 From the outset Elizabeth had intended to discredit Walsingham's mission. She wanted the Estates to be weak and, at the same time, to ensure that a check remained against Don John. This was accomplished by means of an agreement with the Duke of Alencon whereby Elizabeth consented to his designs in the Netherlands and subsidized his campaigns with the understanding that he act under her orders. 23 The subtlety of her action was lost on her ministers who saw only a humiliating loss of faith in the eyes of the Dutch rebels. To Walsingham who normally cared little for Elizabeth's diplomacy but was vitally concerned for a possible Protestant union, the action was a major setback. Alencon added to this frustration by proving to be an inadequate soldier and the result was an unnecessary drain on the English treasury.

In December, 1581, the subject of Alencon's subsidy

22 Froude, XI, 128.
23 Ibid., 129.
was raised in the privy council. The two factions divided over the relative advantages of a royal match with Alencon and the approval of the subsidy. Burghley suggested the possibility of coming to terms with Spain as Mendoza had desired, but the opposition was so great that the project was withdrawn. In a letter dated December 25, 1581, the Spanish envoy reported to Philip:

The Treasurer [Burghley] proposed in a meeting of the privy council that it would, under the circumstances, be advisable to seek the friendship of your Majesty, tranquillizing affairs in the Netherlands and confirming the alliance with your Majesty. The object of this was to sound the other Councillors on the subject. The Lord Chancellor [Bromley] approved the idea, as did also the Admiral [Lincoln] and Sir James Croft the Comptroller, all of whom agreed with Cecil, whilst Leicester, Hatton, Knolly, and Walsingham were of a different opinion.

The outcome was a decision in favor of a direct payment to Alencon, a victory for Walsingham and Leicester who at least realized that the struggle in the Netherlands would be continued.

The exposure of the Throgmorton plot in 1583, although not directly connected with problems in the Netherlands, serving to strengthen Walsingham's faction. He had long warned that conspiracies designed to assassinate Elizabeth were afoot. Without positive evidence,
however, Sir Francis was viewed as a mere publicity seeker. Because exposure verified his earlier warnings, it became evident that his views in regard to other affairs could no longer be taken lightly. In the Netherlands controversy, the issue involved the pursuit of Burghley's policy of masterly inactivity or Walsingham's admonitions in favor of immediate involvement. Fuel was added to the conflict when the Prince of Orange was assassinated in July, 1584, one month after Alencon's death.26 The way was open for Elizabeth to intervene directly, action which she did not desire but which seemed imperative if the Duke of Parma, Don John's successor, was not to overrun the Low Countries and seriously expose England to an attack on her flank.

At a meeting of the council held on October 10, 1584, Burghley stressed that a failure to intervene in the Netherlands might make it necessary to fight the Spanish on English soil. Information uncovered by Walsingham and his agents indicated that there was little likelihood Spain would stop at a conquest of the Low Countries. Furthermore, Spain would be supported by both the Pope and the Empire, whereas England's only

26 Alencon's death was not vital to English interests at the time since he had already retired from the Netherlands.
ally was a Netherlands devoid of its strongest cities. The future looked particularly gloomy if such a war also cost England many of her foreign markets. Facing all conceivable exigencies, including the possibility of employing mercenaries to defend the Scottish border, Burghley presented a depressing case. His personal view was still not clear, but if he favored one policy more than the other it was non-intervention.

To meet the pressing need for an agent in the Low Countries, Elizabeth chose William Davison, a tested diplomat. A Walsingham supporter insofar as the factions were concerned, it was to him that Sir Francis wrote indicating his interpretation of Burghley’s statement: "I find in those whose judgement her Majesty reposeth greatest trust so coldly affected unto the cause as I have no great hope in the matter." The council decided in favor of intervention.

The dissatisfaction which Walsingham expressed in his letter to Davison increased and, fearful that Burghley might succeed in turning the queen’s intentions away from intervention, Sir Francis actually con-

27 Read, Lord Burghley, 307-08.
28 Read, English Historical Review, XXVIII, 55.
sidered setting spies on the lord treasurer in the hope
that they might succeed in discrediting him and reduce
his influence at court until the crisis had passed.
Such extremes proved unnecessary, however, for by the
end of January, Walsingham regretted his indiscretion
and sent Burghley an apologetic note.\textsuperscript{29} Nevertheless,
discord within the council continued and there was no
denying the presence of two distinct factions.

Also in January, 1585, Elizabeth approached
Henry III in the interests of a joint venture against
the Spanish. Fearful of opposition within his court,
however, Henry declined. Elizabeth, too, began to
show signs of fear when the Guise contenders for the
French throne made an alliance with Spain. Regardless,
the Dutch were promised English support in return for
the towns of Briel, Flushing, and Enkhuizen, which
were to be held as security until such time as the
debts incurred in the impending conflict were repaid.
Elizabeth, always capable of wavering at such times,
caus\textsuperscript{29}ed delays which Walsingham attributed to Burghley's
influence. The latter antagonized the war faction by
showing irresolution and, at a council meeting held
on March 18, argued strongly against intervention. He

\textsuperscript{29}Read, \textit{Lord Burghley} . . ., 311.
charged that the war was being fought on the basis of
an anticipated Spanish attack on England which, he
held, was an unsubstantial cause for intervention in
the Netherlands.30

Walsingham finally prevailed, but only after the
Dutch had renewed their pleas for assistance in July,
1585. By that time, the Duke of Parma had taken Antwerp
and nothing stood in the way of his taking all of the
Netherlands. In August, Elizabeth further illustrated
her indecision by appointing Leicester to lead an army
of 5,000 foot and 1,000 horse, then changing her mind
concerning the choice of commander.31 The war faction
considered that Burghley was behind the delays and
sought to discredit him, going to the extreme of having
one of his former secret agents write letters detailing
all criticism which had been levelled against him. They
apparently sought to frighten Burghley into compliance
with their position and the ruse proved temporarily
successful. Walsingham and Leicester both accused him
of supporting one policy before the council and another

30Read, Lord Burghley . . . , 311.

31Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, 1584-1585,
p. 707, quoted in Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham . . . ,
III, 107.
Dutch envoys offered Elizabeth sovereignty over the Low Countries but she declined in the belief that to comply would make war inevitable. It was still conceivable that Spain, if not aggravated, would be reluctant to fight. After irritating delays and the reappointment of Leicester as commander, the force departed in December. Burghley appeared to agree with the queen's decision, probably on the basis of an earlier belief that war was inevitable and had best be fought in the Netherlands. The opinion that he became reconciled seems somewhat inadequate, however, when it is realized that he was soon secretly negotiating for a treaty with the Duke of Parma. Furthermore, Leicester's absence deprived Walsingham of his court influence and Burghley set about strengthening his following in the privy council. The latter's sincerity in upholding a pro-war policy is rendered more doubtful in view of a letter written by the French ambassador to Mary Stuart on February 24, 1586. It advised that Leicester had incurred the wrath of Elizabeth because

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32 Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham...*, III, 120.
33 Neale, 298.
34 Read, *English Historical Review*, XXVIII, 55.
she feared that he was seeking self-aggrandizement.35

The lord treasurer was accused of deliberately seeking to cause the army to suffer from lack of money, although the charge was never proven. Nor can Leicester be exonerated completely from similar charges, for one of his first acts upon arrival in the Netherlands was to raise his own pay and that of his officers.36 He did not improve matters by accepting the title and office of supreme military and civil authority, arousing Elizabeth's wrath as a consequence. She justifiably feared that his action would be mistaken as a sign that England sought to add the Low Countries to her territory. The struggle against Parma was little more than a fiasco as a result of Leicester's incompetence and a general lack of provisions. The only person to distinguish himself was Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Francis's son-in-law and Leicester's nephew. In a letter addressed to his father-in-law in December, 1585, he described the privations undergone by the troops as a result of inadequate supplies: "We want

35Ibid., 56. There is reason to question whether Burghley's motives were, in this instance, designed to oppose Leicester and the war or present himself as being somewhat friendly toward Mary Stuart in the event that Mary should acquire the English throne.

36Neale, 301.
supplies exceedingly. . . . I can no way take upon me to answer, if I be not increased at the least by four hundred men more than yet I have. . . . The treasurer Lord Narrie here pays our Zeeland soldiers in Zeeland money, which is five per cent loss to the miserable soldier." 37 Early in 1586 he recorded: "Here are no news but that your Walsingham's band is of very handsome men, but unarmed, and merely spending money and time to no purpose." 38

A consideration of the arguments supporting intervention in the light of events prior to Leicester's departure for the Low Countries tends to substantiate Walsingham's policy. Any statement based on the chaotic results of Leicester's expedition is invalidated because of the inability of the parties concerned to foresee both Leicester's folly and Elizabeth's indecision. Even the belief that Burghley realized the crown's indecision prior to the expedition fails to justify the non-intervention position although it might alleviate the councillor of some of the blame for what transpired. 39

38 Ibid., 327.
39 Read, Lord Burghley . . ., 309.
Although the war faction was undoubtedly correct, it was just as well that intervention did not occur before the death of the Prince of Orange. Credit for this delay must be attributed to the factionalism existing within the council. On this occasion it was a beneficial factor since earlier efforts would almost certainly have involved England in a war which she could ill-afford and which showed every likelihood of extending for a number of years.

Factionalism in connection with the Dutch rebellion revealed the religious and political conflict within the privy council much as it had done in regard to the marriage conflict. Burghley, always cautious, sought to gain Spanish amelioration by means of negotiation. If this was not possible, England must at least avoid the risk of involvement in a costly war resulting from his defending another state, especially when the war could occasion financial embarrassment at home in the form of drastic expenditure, and abroad in the form of trading deprivations.

Walsingham, still seeking unity among the Protestant states and hoping to unite the dissenting elements in England, saw the war as a crusade not solely in defense of the rebellious Dutch, but against the Spanish supported spread of Catholicism in Europe. England was
The conflict thus served to reveal that privy council factionalism transcended such issues as the royal marriage or the protection of Continental interests. It was rooted in the opposing views of England as a political nation, or a religious bastion.
CONCLUSION

Throughout the period of Tudor rule the extent of privy council jurisdiction was dependent on the strength of the monarch. Thus, conciliar government predominated under Henry VII and Henry VIII but declined during the minority of Edward VI when it became the tool, first of Somerset then of Northumberland. Under Mary, it suffered as a result of poor relations with the queen and was dominated by two of her confidants. The accession of Elizabeth brought a further change, for the queen, although generally in harmony with the people, was not a strong monarch. The means adopted to overcome the deficiency involved the intelligent distribution of offices and, in regard to the privy councillors, the encouragement of factionalism.

Elizabeth ensured that the number of members of the privy council would be kept at a low number. Henry VII and Henry VIII had practiced the same policy although it was less evident inasmuch as the "inner ring", whose membership was indiscernible from the whole council, was the de facto privy council. The wisdom of a small body rested with the relative ease with which it could
be managed and the tendency of individual members to assume responsibility for their policies, thus depriving the members of anonymity and encouraging responsible government. Previous to Elizabeth, factions had generally indicated inefficient government such as the chaotic situation which had existed under Edward VI. The men who served in her privy council, however, were loyal. This was not necessarily directly the result of a fear of the queen, for unless supported by a faction she could do little harm to men such as Burghley. If she sided with one group to the destruction of the other, there was no longer a check on the membership of the victorious party. On many occasions Leicester would have welcomed a move designed to cause Burghley's fall; but the result would have been a direct threat to Elizabeth's position as monarch. Burghley's loyalty was virtually assured by reason of his desire for stability in government, as well as the recognition that any steps taken in the direction of a usurpation of royal power would almost certainly invite the overthrow of the usurper. With Burghley's loyalty ensured, Elizabeth had little to fear from the other councillors who either supported or opposed him, but who, as long as an opposition faction existed, were not dangerous.

Historians have generally attributed the skilful
operation of English policy to Elizabeth's ability to
lull her foes into a state of protracted expectancy
which often lasted until new avenues permitted a
strengthening of the national position. The view has
been accompanied by an assumption that it was invari­
ably the result of a deliberate action in association
with an acute sense of foresight. It is not the pur­
pose of this paper to minutely examine Elizabeth's per­
sonal policies, but there seems to be sufficient con­
trary evidence to make the opinion seem inadequate.
Although unusual in many ways, Elizabeth was at heart
a woman and, as such, she was subject to the emotional
problems common to the sex. Thus, the Alencon match,
far from following a course which was planned by a
designing queen, supports an argument in favor of a
scheme which failed as a result of Elizabeth's emotion­
al involvement. Otherwise, there is no satisfactory
explanation for her obstinacy in the face of a hostile
parliament and almost a revolt of the London populace.
The costly delay in sending troops to the Low Countries
following the death of William of Orange also indicates
indecision, since such action had more likelihood of
success if it had been able to fill the leadership void
without delay. Instead, the Duke of Parma was permit­
ted to conquer the important city of Antwerp.
Throughout the Elizabethan period parliamentary power was rising, and its ability to confront the queen and contest her decisions was increasing. This was seen to best advantage in the question of her marriage to Alencon. Although the councillors sat in both houses, it is evident from the hostile tone adopted by parliament as opposed to the line followed by the relatively passive privy council that the former was seeking a stronger voice in government. By 1601, Elizabeth was no longer able to feel secure in the face of strong parliamentary opposition and under her successor the trend became increasingly evident.

The advent of court favorites, countered by the Stuart parliaments, was nevertheless evident during Elizabeth's reign in the form of predominant persons within the council acting as key advisers. Thus, Burghley, Walsingham, and Leicester, although present in the same privy council, acted independently in the presentation of policy to the queen. Factionalism was giving way to individual advisers even before the close of the reign as Burghley, outlasting all his key rivals, established what has been termed Cecilian rule.

Therefore, factionalism evidenced the presence of a relatively weak crown bolstered by a method which admitted an inability to rule by council without the pre-
sense of checks within that body. It was a transi-
tional period following the strong conciliar rule of
Henry VIII and preceding the time when parliament was
sufficiently powerful to reasonably oppose the crown.
Walsingham's faction seemed to die with the secretary,
but it had lasted long enough to act as a warning that
the Puritan element, when inadequately represented in
government by royal appointment, would find its own
channel if sufficiently aroused. The privy council con-
tinued to exist, but it was no longer the body which
had served under Henry VIII or even the group of indi-
viduals who held office under Elizabeth.
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