6

The causes of the war stated

Why, then, did the English think they were fighting their fellow Protestant republic from across the North Sea? How did they explain this conflict which had already taken on epic proportions in their imaginations?

There could be no question, argued Donald Lupton, that the "Dutch were the first offenders, so 'tis just and fitting on our parts to repulse the injuries and affronts offered us." The war had its origin in "the wicked thoughts" of Admiral Van Tromp, who as "a vassal of the Orange family" was "by consequence a Cavalier in grain, and enemy to the Commonwealth of England."[1] The English were sure that the Dutch had taken on the cause of the despised Stuart family. The official *Declaration of the Parliament* catalogued a litany of Orangist-inspired Dutch actions in favor of the House of Stuart. English newspapers frequently reported naval cooperation between the Dutch fleet and Royalist pirates. One Dutchman was even reported to have said that "the rod is growing in Holland to revenge that innocent blood of the king." A republican poet found "the Hogen of a royal mind / Inclin's to monarchy," advising him to "beware / thou dost not put thy foot into a snare."[2]

Not surprisingly, the Dutch martial aim was thought to be the subversion of the English state. "The States of the Netherlands have proclaimed open wars against England," reported the *French Occurrences*, "and utterly

1 [Donald Lupton], *England's Command on the Seas* (London, 1653), pp. 96–97; *Mercurius Politicus*, 11–18 August 1653, p. 2655. Richard Lyons, chaplain to the generals of the fleet, was sure the English had won the war when Van Tromp's Orange flag was destroyed in the battle of the Texel. *Mercurius Politicus*, 28 July–4 August 1653, p. 2627.

2 *A Declaration of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England, Relating to the Affairs and Proceedings Between this Commonwealth and the States General of the United Provinces of the Low Countreys, and the Present Differences Occasioned on the States Part* (London, 1652), Thomason: 9 July 1652, p. 4. The literature on Royalist/Dutch cooperation is vast; see for example *French Occurrences*, 5–12 July 1652, p. 57; *Mercurius Politicus*, 15–22 July 1652, p. 1742; *Mercurius Politicus*, 10–17 March 1653, p. 2297; George Wither, *The Dark Lantern* (London, 1653), p. 29; J. W., *Brandy-Wine in the Hollanders Ingratitude* ([London], 1652), Thomason: 30 July 1652, p. 7; *The Examiner Defended, In a Fair and Sober Answer To the Two and Twenty Questions which Lately Examined the Author of Zeal Examined* (London, 1652), Thomason: 14 September 1652, p. 18.

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disown it for being a commonwealth." The Dutch, Marchamont Nedham informed his compatriots, "have no other ground of quarrel but that you are a republic." The goal of the Dutch, agreed the poet J. W., could only be "to subvert our state." "Down with your Parliament they now cry," testified another pamphleteer, "this is the time to set their poor distressed Lord and master in his royal saddle and restore him to his disjointed throne." The States General were said to have "concluded upon a thundering, terrible, roaring, desperate, and uncharitable vote to do their utmost to ruin England, and not to be at peace with them, until they changed both the power and government." The Dutch "would with all their hearts help you to a monarch again," explained the *Mercurius Politicus*.[3] It seemed as if the Hollanders were indeed "foolishly charmed with the magical spells of monarchy." They had appealed to all the European "princely powers" for aid against the English, appearing in the guise of "lovers of monarchy."[4]

Why had the Protestant and republican Dutch suddenly taken on the cause of monarchy and tyranny? For Englishmen and women in 1653 the answer was not far to seek. Though the Dutch might once have been in the vanguard of the Protestant struggle against the forces of Spain and Popery, their early religiosity was now lost; they had succumbed to their own forms of idolatry.[5] The Dutch, it seemed, now worshiped "idols of gold and silver." This prompted the New Englander William Hooke to proclaim to Cromwell that "gain is their God."[6] It was this indifference to religion which made the United Provinces into a new Tower of Babel. "The Dutch," opined the *Mercurius Britannicus*, "are a mercenary rascality of Jews, Moors, and Spaniards." They are "in plain English a gallimaufry of all religions; except only what's true and pure," observed the author of *Amsterdam and her Other Hollander Sisters*, "they account the best religion which brings most gains to them, for toleration, were it the Turks' Alkoran,

3 *French Occurrences*, 16–25 August 1652, p. 96; J. W., *Brandy-Wine*, pp. 5–6; Marchamont Nedham, (translator and compiler), *Of the Dominion or Ownership of the Sea* (London, 1652), sigs. c1v–c2r, d2r; *The Parliament of England's Message to the Queen of Sweden* ... (London, 1652), Thomason: 24 November 1652, pp. 6–7; *French Occurrences*, 7–14 September 1652, p. 124; *Mercurius Politicus*, 26 August–2 September 1652, p. 1835; Paulucci to Sagredo, 8/18 July 1653, *CSPV*, p. 99; [Marchamont Nedham], *The Case Stated Between England and the United Provinces in this Present Juncture* (London, 1652), pp. 14, 21. Many of these claims appeared verified with the publication of the Dutch tract *An Answer to the Declaration of the Imaginary Parliament of the Unknowne Common-wealth of England* ... (Rotterdam, 1652), Thomason: 10 October 1652. The Rump immediately had it suppressed – see *Weekly Intelligencer*, 26 October–2 November 1652, p. 645.

4 *Faithful Post*, 1–8 April 1653, p. 697; *French Occurrences*, 12–19 July 1652, p. 80; *A Remonstrance from Holland*, (London, 1652), Thomason: 24 December 1652, p. 4.

5 *Amsterdam, and her Other Hollander Sisters put out to Sea, By Van Trump, Van Dunck, & Van Dumpe* (London, 1652), Thomason: 12 July 1652, pp. 8–9; *Flying Eagle*, 25 December–1 January 1653, p. 35.

6 *Mercurius Politicus*, 30 September–7 October 1652, p. 1924, William Hooke to Cromwell, 3 November 1653, Bod., Rawl. A8, p. 14. See also Abraham Woofe, *The Tyranny of the Dutch Against the English*, dedicated to Oliver Cromwell, (London, 1653), pp. 4, 41–42.

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that's their best God that brings the most gold." The chief characteristic of the Dutch Church was that "it can sail with all winds, and wind and turn in what coast or port the mariners will have her." Andrew Marvell, who was at this time working for John Milton and the Rump, eloquently imagined Dutch religious culture using the language of worldly materialism. "Amsterdam, Turk–Christian–Pagan–Jew, / Staple of sects and mint of schism grew, / That bank of conscience, where not one so strange / Opinion but finds credit, and exchange / In vain for Catholics ourselves we bear; / The Universal Church is only there," sneered Marvell.[7]

The religious and ideological apostasy of the Dutch was naturally manifest in their political actions. The Dutch had "made Reason of State their God, and the rule of all their actions." Another pamphleteer denounced the Dutch for their "Machiavellian policy" and their "subtle and knavish" actions as befitted "Staten Heeren."[8] Although many Rumpers admired Machiavelli's republican pronouncements, very few advocated elevating Reason of State above the law of God and nations. Marchamont Nedham, who admired Machiavelli's "very solid judgement and most active fantasy," roundly condemned his advocacy of Reason of State as "many pernicious sprinklings, unworthy of the light" and as "contrary to the law of God, or the law of common honesty and of nations." "Violation of faith, principle, promises, and engagements upon every turn of time and advantage," concluded Nedham, "ought to be exploded out of all nations that bore the name of Christian."[9]

Repeated Dutch successes in employing their theory of Reason of State had made them into a proud and grasping nation. It was common parlance throughout Europe that the "Dutch are so ambitious that they would fain give laws to all the world," wrote one correspondent to the *Mercurius Politicus*, "but they hope now that they have met with a nation who will not be baffled by them." The Dutch, thought one naval correspondent, failed to salute the English because "their spirits [were] heightened with the presumption of their own strength." Consequently all England prayed before the war began that their fleets would "find a Providence with them, that can

7 *Mercurius Britannicus*, 26 July–2 August 1652, pp. 26–27; *Amsterdam and Her Other Hollander Sisters*, pp. 3–4; *Mercurius Democritus*, 23 February–2 March 1653, p. 362; Andrew Marvell, "The Character of Holland," in Elizabeth Storry Donno (editor), *Andrew Marvell: The Complete English Poems*, (London, 1972), lines 67–76, pp. 113–114.

8 *Mercurius Politicus*, 24 June–1 July 1652, pp. 1693–1694; *The Dutch-mens Pedigree: Or A Relation, Shewing How They Were First Bred, and Descended from a Horse-Turd, Which Was Enclosed in a Butter-Box* (London, 1653), Thomason: 8 January 1653; *French Occurrences*, 9–16 August 1652, p. 84; *Amsterdam and her Other Hollander Sisters*, pp. 9–10.

9 *Mercurius Politicus*, 24 June–1 July 1652, pp. 1690–1692; *Mercurius Politicus*, 22–29 July 1652, pp. 1758–1759; Thomas Peters, *A Remedie Against Ruine: A Sermon Preached at the Assizes in Lanceston Cornwall, March 17 1651* (London, 1652), Thomason: 17 July 1652, p. 12.

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easily bring down [the Dutch] pride."[10] "The Lord hath a great controversy with Holland," argued the *French Occurrences*, "both for their pride, and blasphemous title of High and Mighty, which is only to be given to God." Indeed pride had made the Dutch into "the high and imperious States," making "Mr. Hans ... somewhat too imperious."[11] Each calamity which befell the Dutch, each English victory, was interpreted as God taming the Netherlandish pride. The loss of three Dutch ships in a Mediterranean storm convinced another writer that "the Lord is now stretching forth against that nation for their pride, their treacherous and bloody actions." Slingsby Bethel and his fellow Merchant Adventurers knew that the victory off Portland meant that it had "pleased the Almighty to restrain the enemy in his pride."[12]

This Dutch insolence was particularly insufferable in English eyes because the United Provinces owed their very existence to English benevolence. Poems, newsbooks, sermons, broadsides and almanacs all evoked the memory of Sidney and Vere and the heroic Elizabethan defense of the United Provinces against the ostensibly invincible Spanish army. "A foot of ground cannot be called yours," insisted the *French Occurrences*, "that owes not a third part to the expense valor, or counsel of the English." The Dutch are "of all mankind most unthankful to contend with us English," William Lilly told his readers in his almanac for 1653, "our very forefathers by their blood and valor having advantaged these Dutch men's progenitors from the condition of poor muddy fishermen and boores, into their present greatness of this time."[13]

It was the perceived ideological and religious lassitude of the Dutch, not the ineluctable law of supply and demand, which made the Dutch into dangerous economic rivals. It was a commonplace in the 1650s that only

[10] *Mercurius Politicus*, 22–29 July 1652, p. 1749; *Mercurius Politicus*, 19–26 August 1652, p. 1824 (from Brussels); *Bloudy Newes from Sea* (London, 1652), Thomason: 6 July 1652, pp. 4–5.

[11] *French Occurrences*, 12–19 July 1652, pp. 79–80; *Amsterdam and her Other Hollander Sisters*, 12 July 1652, pp. 4–5; *A Dangerous and Bloudy Fight Upon the Coast of Cornwall Between the English and the Dutch, On Thursday Last.* (London, 1652), Thomason: ca. 24 October 1652, p. 8; *A Remonstrance from Holland*, pp. 3–4.

[12] *Mercurius Politicus*, 23–30 September 1652, p. 1907; *Mercurius Politicus*, 27 January–3 February 1653, p. 2203; petition of Slingsby Bethel, Alex Baron, Dan. Farrington, and Wm. Johnson for Merchant Adventurers, 24 March 1653, *CSPD*, p. 230. There are far too many examples of this rhetoric to be given full justice here.

[13] *French Occurrences*, 19–26 July 1652, p. 69; *French Occurrences*, 26 July–2 August 1652, p. 75; *Mercurius Britannicus*, 19–26 July 1652, pp. 2–3; *Ad Populum: Or, A Low Country Lecture to the People of England* (London, 1653), Thomason: 27 August 1653, sig. A1v; J. W., *Brandy-Wine*, p. 2; *A Declaration of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England, Relating to the Affairs and Proceedings of this Commonwealth and the States General of the United Provinces of the Low Countreys and the Present Differences Occasioned on the States Part* (London, 1652), Thomason: 9 July 1652, p. 3; *Amsterdam and her Other Hollander Sisters*, p. 7; William Lilly, *Merlini Anglici Ephemeris* (London, 1653), Thomason: 16 November 1652, sig. A5v.

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true religion and good government served to tame man's natural insatiable desires. It is well known, observed William Sclater the preacher of St. Peter-le-Poer in London, that men are "full of savage and unreclaimable desires of profits, lust, of revenge; which as long as they give ear to religious precepts, and to good laws, sweetly teach'd with eloquence, and persuasion of the makers, so long is society and peace maintained." For Bulstrode Whitelocke, one of the Rump's foreign-policy specialists, and the Nominated Parliament's ambassador to Sweden, Dutch political and religious failings had made them guilty of the sin of Tyre. "The nature of man, being corrupted, is most apt to be high minded, most subject unto pride," Whitelocke wrote in January 1653 drawing the parallel between the Anglo-Dutch War and Ezekiel 28.5, "and nothing is more apt to puff up the mind of man in pride, than the abundance of worldly riches."[14] The negotiation process had proven beyond doubt that if the English were not wary they "should be wholly eaten out by the people of the United Provinces." This would not, of course, be the result of superior Dutch economic techniques but because "their whole trade is but defrauding."[15]

It was this corruption, this covetousness, the English believed, which led the Dutch to challenge English control of the Narrow Seas. "All in general are against the English," reported the *The Resolution of the Hollanders*, "swearing, that their former name and reputation as masters and lords of the sea must and shall have an end, and they must not think always to keep possession of that which ought to be free and common to all." The Dutch commander Witte De Witt was said to have taken an oath "to make the Netherlanders sole commanders of the Narrow Seas."[16] But, this was not a purely local struggle; Dutch ambition and covetousness was not limited to the North Sea. "The subject of the Dutch intentions and practices," explained the author of the *Seas Magazine Opened* was "to engross all trade through Europe and the other parts of the world into their own hands." The "unlimited desires" of the Dutch, Viscount Lisle was instructed to inform Queen Christina of Sweden, made it their "constant and first design" to "engross to themselves the trade of the world." Indeed once the Dutch had engrossed "the trade of Christendom into their own hand" they would not hesitate to "administer laws to the most kings thereof." There could be no question that the

[14] William Sclater, *Civil Magistracy by Divine Authority*, Preached at Southampton Assizes, 4 March 1652 (London, 1653), Thomason: 30 October 1652, p. 8; Whitelocke, *Annals*, January 1653, BL, Add. 37345, f. 255.

[15] Thurloe's "Review," PRO, SP 103/46, f. 239v; *Amsterdam and her Other Hollander Sisters*, 12 July 1652, pp. 6–7; Whitelocke, *Annals*, 7 May 1654, BL, Add. 4992, f. 85.

[16] *The Resolution of the Hollanders* (London, 1652), Thomason: 20 July 1652, pp. 4–5; *Dutch Intelligencer*, 8–15 September 1652, p. 16; *French Occurrences*, 28 June–5 July 1652, pp. 57, 60; *Faithful Scout*, 10–17 June 1653 (hopelessly mispaginated).

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unlimited desire of the Dutch was now making a fair bid to "be Masters of all."[17]

The epic nature of the Anglo-Dutch struggle and the manifest corruption of the Dutch led learned English to make a very telling comparison. "Reflecting upon the late affairs," wrote Marchamont Nedham, "methinks I see the old game betwixt Rome and Carthage (the two great commonwealths of the elder times) revived again." The English/Romans were of course "the more gallant people, such as in all their actions stood on points of honor," while the Dutch/Carthaginians were "base and sordid, such as steered all their counsels by the card of profit" and "crafty over-reaching wits, infamous for their breaches of faith and promise." The result of this new Punic War was historically predictable. "Carthage overcome," wrote Andrew Marvell, "would render fain unto our better Rome."[18]

Worshipping Mammon rather than God brought predictable results in both the antique and modern worlds. "If you trust in worldly riches," warned Whitelocke, "you will bitterly provoke God to anger against you." "Holland never knew when she was rich enough," crowed Nicholas Culpeper in his almanac for 1653, "and now she is beaten unto better manners." As soon as the Dutch "threatened Mare Clausum out of date / to make, and sacred rights to violate," one popular poet explained that "gaping after gain / themselves a prey unto the sea became." The moral was only too clear. "Do not wonder at their wicked and traitorous and unjust wringing of all trade out of other men's hands," advised one popular broadside distributed in London in the summer of 1653, "Nay do not wonder at their barbarous and inhumane cruelties, since from Hell they came, and thither without doubts they must return again."[19]

The most spectacular example of Dutch corruption and perfidy – the Amboyna massacre – still exercised the consciences of many in England. Pamphlet after pamphlet retold the tale of the horrible massacre of Englishmen in the Spice Islands. There could have been no motivation for

[17] *The Seas Magazine Opened: Or, The Hollander Dispossessed* (London, 1653), Thomason: 15 August 1653, pp. 1, 9; instruction to Viscount Lisle, March 1653, Bod., Rawl. A2, pp. 367–368; *Mercurius Politicus*, 24 June–1 July 1652, pp. 1701–1702; newsletter from The Hague, 28 October/7 November 1653, Bod., Rawl. A7, pp. 263–264; *Amsterdam and her Other Hollander Sisters*, p. 7.

[18] *Mercurius Politicus*, 25 November–2 December 1652, pp. 2053–2054; Marvell, "Character of Holland," p. 115, lines 141–142. It is important to note that the image evoked is that of the first Punic War, a war in which Carthage was tamed but not eviscerated. Nigel Smith is working on an annotated edition of this Marvell poem and has kindly let me see a draft of his introductory essay. The less classically minded Abraham Woofe compared the struggle to that against Spain in 1588. The actors were different, but the ideological stakes were the same: Woofe, *Tyranny of the Dutch*, p. 41.

[19] Whitelocke, *Annals*, January 1653, BL, Add. 37345, f. 257r; Nicholas Culpeper, *An Ephemeris for the Year of Our Lord, 1653* (London, 1653), Thomason: 16 November 1652, sig. F1r; *Mercurius Politicus*, 10–17 March 1653, p. 2297; *Several Proceedings*, 15–22 November 1653, pp. 234–235; *The Dutch-mens Pedigree.*

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this action but "a covetous desire to engross the whole East India trade to themselves." "Witness that bloody and unparalleled butchery of the English at Amboyna in the East Indies," one pamphleteer demanded of his readers, where the Dutch "torments upon the brave English did exceed those of Pizarro or any other Spaniard in the West Indies." This served as proof that the Dutch were still unrepentant and unreformed. Each new tale of Dutch atrocities, which were manifold indeed during the war, only confirmed the moral turpitude of the Dutch. A Dutch massacre of Englishmen in North America proved that "Amboyna's treacherous cruelty" was now "extending itself from the East to the West Indies." Dutch torture of a naval captain preparatory to an attack on Guernsey seemed "to forspeak some new Amboyna design."[20] Unfortunately the corrupt Caroline regime had never sought reparations for the bloody massacre. Now, however, God was calling in His debts. "The time is come," insisted *Mercurius Politicus*, "that God will reckon with the insufferable pride and cruelties of that society." "The ghosts of the slaughtered English at Amboyna call upon us of the commonalty to revenge their murder," proclaimed William Lilly in his extremely popular *Ephemeris*. After one English victory, *A Perfect Account* announced that "God is making inquisition for the innocent blood they shed at Amboyna."[21]

The English in the 1650s, then, were encouraged to believe that they were fighting the Dutch not because the Dutch were their economic rivals, but because they had ceased to be a bulwark against irreligion and tyranny. Although the Dutch still claimed to be a republic, they had taken on the cause of the English royal family. Although still claiming to be a Protestant nation, the Dutch had become the font of heresy, schism, and irreligion. As a result of this political and moral depravity, not because of the inevitable working out of the laws of supply and demand, the Dutch had sought maritime hegemony.

Despite the English confidence, the early phases of the war went badly. English fleets were defeated in the Baltic, in the Mediterranean, and in November in the Channel. Nevertheless the English interpreted this as a period of trial before the inevitable victory. "I see our enemies must deal with us a little at sea, as the old Cavalier did by land," argued the *Mercurius Politicus* in a telling comparison, but one could still be confident that God

[20] *A Memento for Holland: Or a True and Exact History of the Most Villainous and Barbarous Cruelties used on the English Merchants Residing at Amboyna* (London, 1653), Thomason: 2 July 1653, sig. A3r; *Amsterdam and her Other Hollander Sisters*, p. 10; *A Declaration of his Excellency the Lord Admiral Vantrump Touching the Royal Fort of Monarchy ...* (London, 1652), Thomason: 21 July 1652, p. 5; *Declaration of Parliament*, 9 July 1652, p. 4; *The Second Part of the Tragedy of Amboyna* (London, 1653), Thomason: 8 August 1653, pp. 4–5; *Mercurius Politicus*, 6–13 January 1653, p. 2157.

[21] J. W., *Brandy-Wine*, p. 6; *Mercurius Politicus*, 5–12 August 1652, p. 1793; Lilly, *Merlini Anglici Ephemeris*, 1653, sig. A6; *A Perfect Account*, 3–10 August 1653, p. 1078.

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"hath some great design of grace in it to our poor nation." Significantly it was Dr. John Owen, one of the Rump's favorite preachers, who explained the reason for England's confidence in a Thanksgiving sermon. "The rejection of the Gospel by any people or nation to whom it is tendered," he preached in obvious reference to the Dutch, "is always attended with the certain and inevitable destruction of that people or nation."[22]

After a series of naval and administrative reforms, the English fleet soon justified the confidence of those who had stood by their interpretation of God's cause. "Our God in whom we trust hath appeared graciously for and by his servants in defeating this very great fleet of the Hollanders," gushed the *Mercurius Politicus* after the victory off Portland (18 February 1653). "It may well be said of England, as sometimes Moses said of Israel, who is like unto thee," that newspaper confirmed the following week, "O people saved by the Lord!"[23] Three months later the Three Days Battle (2–4 June 1653) confirmed God's intentions. "The signal victory which the Lord hath been pleased to give over our enemies," opined the author of *A Letter from the Fleet*, "may be recorded amongst the chief of those mercies that God hath bestowed upon his saints." "It is a mercy minding us, and sealing to us, all our former mercies," proclaimed an official broadside. Another pamphleteer could assert that "we have still large experience that God's time is best in all the issues of his designs for his people."[24] The final great set-piece battle of the war, the bloody struggle off the mouth of the Texel (31 July 1653) again revealed "God's hand lifted up." The victory, opined another pamphleteer, was but another of "so many eminent discoveries of the will and purpose of God, touching the establishment of our Commonwealth."[25]

How broadly based was this interpretation of the Anglo-Dutch War? How widespread was this view of the Anglo-Dutch War as an ideological struggle, rather than a struggle for lucre? It would have been very difficult indeed for any in England to be ignorant of the goings-on at sea. The sound of battle could be heard in all of the coastal towns. The army regiments stationed throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland were kept informed by official orders and newsletters. Every one of the proliferating number of printed newsbooks devoted a sizeable portion of its coverage to

[22] *Mercurius Politicus*, 9–16 December 1652, p. 2065; *Moderate Intelligencer*, 22–29 December 1652, pp. 2623–2624; John Owen, *A Sermon Preached to the Parliament, Octob. 13. 1652* (Oxford, 1652), Thomason: 30 October 1652 p. 48.

[23] *Mercurius Politicus*, 24 February–3 March 1653, pp. 2261–2262; *Mercurius Politicus*, 3–10 March 1653, p. 2285.

[24] *A Letter from the Fleet* (London, 1653), Thomason: 13 June 1653, pp. 1–2; *A Declaration from the General and Council of State*, (London, 1653), Thomason: 12 June 1653, broadside; *A Perfect Account*, 8–15 June 1653, p. [1013]; *The Particulars of all the Late Bloody Fight at Sea* (London, 1653), Thomason: 6 June 1653, pp. 1–2.

[25] *Several Proceedings*, 30 August–5 September 1653, pp. 79–80; *An Exact and True Relation of the Great and Mighty Engagement Between the English and Dutch Fleets* (London, 1653), Thomason: 6 September 1653, p. 1.

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the great naval conflict. Pamphlet after pamphlet commented on the war and its ideological significance. Almanac writers consciously made an effort to explain the grounds of the controversy with the Dutch to their humbler readership. "I had not wrote thus much," averred William Lilly with only slight exaggeration, "but that I know this little *Anglicus* of mine shall pass into all the habitable parts of the world, whereas the Parliament's declaration of the Dutch proceedings against us sells slowly" thus helping to insure that "the body of this nation should know either the truth, or the true grounds of the present quarrel betwixt us and the Hollander."[26] Unsurprisingly the war and its causes had become "the only argument of discourse" in the Midlands.[27] So deeply had the war invaded the popular imagination that one Reading man could not but dream about the conflict.[28]

Fasts and Days of Humiliation were held in Parliament, City, and nation in order to celebrate victories and to entreat God to prevent defeats.[29] Each of these special days allowed preachers to disseminate the message to those who did not or could not read the newsbooks, newsletters, or pamphlets. Indeed all of the available evidence suggests that the clergymen did in fact expound upon the same themes as the printed commentaries. Early in the war John Donne informed Lord Conway, that "all their service by land would produce nothing but beans and peas, a reward fitter for their horses than them," ... "and that the spirit now was to move upon the waters." "Strange! that Ephraim should join with Syria to vex Judah their brother," John Owen preached in a widely disseminated sermon, "that the Netherlanders, whose being is founded merely upon the Interest you have undertaken should join with the great Anti-Christian interest, which cannot possibly be set up again, without their inevitable ruin." John Goodwin, the influential Independent divine, wrote a hymn on the subject of the Dutch War which both explained the outbreak of the war, and proclaimed that God had sided with England. "Mammon their God inflam'd their zeal / and set them all on fire," Goodwin wrote of the Dutch, but "the great spectator of the fight / and righteous judge of nations / at last gave sentence of the wrong / He gave large reparations." The Essex clergyman Ralph Josselin preached on Isaiah 24 and Daniel 4.37 at one public fast, informing his

[26] Lilly, 1653, *Merlini Anglici Ephemeris*, sig. A6v.
[27] John Langley to Sir Richard Leveson, 4 May 1653, SRO, D593/P/8/2/2.
[28] Diary of George Starkey, 11 August 1652, Bod., English Miscellaneous MSS E118, f. 73r.
[29] *CJ*, 1 September 1652, p. 173; *CJ*, 27 January 1653, p. 251; newsletter from Westminster, 26 February 1653, Worcester College Library, Clarke MSS 24, f. 121; *CJ*, 15 March 1653, p. 266; Whitelocke, *Annals*, 14 June 1653, BL, Add. 37345, f. 280r; Whitelocke, *Annals*, 23 June 1653, BL, Add. 37345, f. 280v; *Weekly Intelligencer*, 21–28 June 1653, p. 892; *Several Proceedings*, 23–30 June 1653, p. 3089; *CJ*, 6 August 1653, p. 297; Whitelocke, *Annals*, 9 August 1653, BL, Add. 4992, f. 25; Whitelocke, *Annals*, 17 August 1653, BL, Add. 4992, f. 28r.

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parishioners that God was using the war to punish the Dutch for their pride and sin.[30]

It is necessarily difficult to assess how many people accepted this interpretation of the war; however, there is a fair amount of evidence to suggest that a wide variety did understand the Anglo-Dutch War as an ideological struggle. In London, where the pamphlets, newsbooks, and sermons almost certainly had their greatest effect, there was widespread support and interest in the conflict. The London magistracy and the Gathered Churches were successful in gathering voluntary contributions for the relief of maimed and wounded seamen. In the metropolis "immense applause is lavished on Cromwell" as a result of the victory off the Texel, reported the Venetian resident.[31]

The evidence on attitudes toward the war outside London is rather thinner on the ground; but, where it does exist, it suggests a similar worldview. "I perceive the Dutch affairs fly high," wrote one correspondent from Scotland, "the hand of our God is in all their revolutions, and he will bring forth his own glory." The Dutch "had a form and power of godliness at the time of the revolt from Spain, and when they were refuges to our English persecuted saints ... they were once a tom-hedge to keep out the Romish boar from England," admitted one West Country minister, "but the work is done, and the hedge is rotten, fit for the fire ... Their belly is their God, their godliness is their gain." In Bristol as in London, collections were taken for the relief of wounded seamen, in the confidence that they were advancing "the mighty work of God in the great deep against the insolent Dutch." "We joy exceedingly here at the news of our victory at sea," wrote one inhabitant of Manchester pleased that "we should overcome those insolent Hollanders that rely upon the arm of the flesh."[32]

There can be little doubt, then, that most in England who engaged in or supported the first Anglo-Dutch War explained this conflict as a continuation of the struggle against crass materialism and tyranny rather than as a struggle for trade routes. However, it is possible that these men merely adopted the language of liberty and godliness, while really pursuing worldly ends. Is there any evidence to support this proposition?

Certainly the ubiquity of the language of godliness in the declarations of

[30] John Donne, Jr. to Lord Conway, [July 1652], PRO, SP 46/95, f. 376; Owen, 30 October 1652, p. [29]; *Moderate Publisher*, 8–15 April 1653, pp. 804–805 (prints Goodwin's hymn in full); Josselin, *Diary*, 13 October 1652, p. 287.

[31] *Mercurius Politicus*, 3–10 March 1653, p. 2282; Paulucci to Sagredo, 12/22 March 1653, *CSPV*, p. 42 (this letter makes it clear that the contributions were viewed as a test of support for the war); Paulucci to Sagredo, 7/17 August 1653, *CSPV*, p. 110.

[32] *Mercurius Politicus*, 1–8 July 1652, pp. 1715–1716 (Scotland); *Perfect Diurnall*, 7–14 March 1653, p. 2558 (Edinburgh); *Mercurius Politicus*, 5–12 August 1652, p. 1798 (West Country Minister); *Mercurius Politicus*, 24 February–3 March 1653, p. 2273 (Bristol); *The Moderate Publisher*, 25 February–4 March 1653, p. 743 (Bristol); *Mercurius Classicus*, 6 August 1653, p. 4 (Manchester).

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government, in newsbooks, sermons, almanacs, and private correspondence makes it hard to accept that this was merely a rhetorical stance employed to obfuscate more material motives for fighting the Dutch. Indeed, if the war was fought for trade, it is hard to believe that the English would have castigated the Dutch for having forsaken God for Mammon. Closer examination of the evidence makes it even more difficult to believe that the English fought the Dutch for profit.

Bulstrode Whitelocke, who was the most active member on the Rump's committee for foreign affairs, was always reminding his children that the pursuit of wealth was far less important than seeking after God. None of the ancient philosophers valued wealth, Whitelocke reflected, and for good reason. "Riches are *Impedimenta Fortuna*, the baggage of fortune," he lectured during the Dutch War, "or rather the great removers to our voyage to eternity, they imp[ede] the wings of the soul from soaring heavenwards, and are as clogs and shackles to hinder men's race to everlasting happiness."[33] God has informed his people "not to look after merchants, as to grow great and rich by the wealth of other nations," the religious radical and one the greatest of Hollandophobic propagandists, John Canne, explained, "but to break their power and strength in pieces." "The Lord gave their men of war into our hands, not their merchant ships," Canne reminded his brethren after the Three Days Battle, "speaking here I say, as it were from heaven, that it is not prizes, of the enemy's goods, our hearts or hands should desirously be upon: But to destroy Babylon, stain the glory of kings and kingdoms, and lay low the high and great mountains of the earth."[34]

Not surprisingly an investigation of the strategy and tactics of the English Commonwealth, of the attitudes and concerns of the merchant community, during the war reveals that seventeenth-century Englishmen were more conversant with the ideas of John Canne than those of Robert Brenner and Charles Wilson. Immediately after the outbreak of hostilities in the summer of 1652, the Dutch ambassadors could report that English people "are all disobliged no care [is] taken for the increase of trade" – a strange mood indeed for the outset of a trade war. No doubt mercantile concerns were not assuaged when reports came in that General Blake had captured a whole fleet of Dutch herring busses but released them "in regard they are too low a subject for the resolution of our gallant navy."[35]

[33] Whitelocke's sermons on the evils of the pursuit of wealth are scattered throughout his papers in the British Library and at Longleat. Here I have drawn on the following: Whitelocke, *Annals*, BL, Add. 37345, ff. 253v–254r (meditations on 1 Timothy 6.17); Whitelocke, *Annals*, 26 September 1652, BL, Add. 37345, ff. 224v–225v (on Psalm 4.2); Whitelocke, *Annals*, 12 November 1653, BL, Add. 4992, f. 55r (on Matthew 13.45, 46).

[34] John Canne, *A Voice from the Temple to the Higher Powers* (London, 1653), Thomason: 13 June 1653, p. 39.

[35] Newsletter from The Hague, 25 July/4 August 1652, PRO, SP 84/159, f. 127r (reporting the contents of the Dutch ambassadors' letter); *Mercurius Politicus*, 5–12 August 1652,

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The records of two of the great trading companies – the Levant Company and the East India Company – reveal that the war was certainly not fought on their behalf. Before the war broke out, the Levant Company could proudly claim that they had achieved their economic goals. The Company's merchants "have managed their trade so warily, supplied the foreign markets so fully, and sold so cheap, as hath almost wholly beaten out their corrivals in trade (French, Venetians, and Dutch) who would not omit to supply our defects, if they could find any," the Levant merchants smugly informed the Rump's Committee on Trade and Foreign Affairs. The state's lack of interest in the Levant trade during the war, soon put an end to that prosperous state of affairs. It was the Rump which begged the Levant Company – unsuccessfully – to send out ships against the Dutch. By the end of the summer, Dutch and French attacks forced the Levant Company to report that it was "altogether incapable of setting out ships by letters of mart." The Company sent letter after letter to the Council of State begging for a convoy to allow them to maintain a presence in the Mediterranean. These complaints fell on deaf ears; the Council of State was concerned to humble the Dutch, not to seize their trade. Soon the Company gave up all pretences of maintaining its economic activities, and signed over its remaining ships for state service. This was not out of any hope to advance its own trade – it knew that it was the war which had "wholly disabled" it as Turkey merchants – but because the "war is national."[36]

The East India Company fared little better. Although it had loudly complained about Dutch unfair trading practices, the Company's merchants clearly hoped that the Rump would be able peacefully to negotiate for reparations. After the outbreak of the war, the directors of the Company were shocked that the Commonwealth expected them to give over trading in order to help the naval effort. "It is a national war," the Company's deputy protested, "not concerning them as the East India Company." Indeed Colonel Robert Thompson, whose brother Maurice was a director of the East India Company, later complained that the Council of State had done precious little to protect the Company's assets in the East.[37] If this was

pp. 1790–1791; *Mercurius Britannicus*, 26 July–2 August 1652, pp. 29–30; Whitelocke, *Annals*, 31 July 1652, BL, Add. 37345, f. 215.

36 Levant Company to committee on trade and foreign affairs, 21 May 1652, PRO, SP 105/144, f. 44; Court minutes of Levant Company, 24 July 1652, PRO, SP 105/151, f. 81r; Levant Company to Council of State. 6 August 1652, PRO, SP 18/24 Pt. II, f. 36r; Levant merchants' petition, 29 July 1653, *CSPD*, p. 58; Levant Company to Council of State 29 July 1652, PRO, SP 105/144, f. 48r; Levant Company to Council of State, 5 August 1652, PRO, SP 105/144, f. 49r; court minutes of Levant Company, 21 January 1653, PRO, SP 105/151, f. 93r. The Company ceased petitioning for convoys largely because it no longer made any pretence of sending out ships. I have profited greatly from discussions with Trevor Dickey.

37 General Court of the Fourth Stock of the East India Company, 28 July 1652, *Cal. EIC*, p. 181; Colonel George Thompson, "Notes Upon the Dutch War," Bod., Clar. 47, f. 184r. This suggests that it was not the Thompsons and their interloping friends who were directing the war effort.

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a war fought to seize trade routes, the Council of State seems to have been kept in the dark.

The interdependence of European commerce in this period also makes it unlikely that this was a war fought for the benefit of merchants. London, Norwich, and Yarmouth all had sizeable Dutch communities, while Amsterdam and Rotterdam had large English communities.[38] There are numerous indications that merchantmen were seized by their former trading partners. Indeed there is every reason to believe that English merchants invested heavily in the Dutch East and West India Companies, making it unlikely that they had agitated for this war in order to increase their profits. It should come as no surprise, then, that when a Dutch merchant fleet evaded the English navy and returned safely to Amsterdam there was "on the Exchange and in the City generally" a "great appearance of joy for it."[39] It was precisely because this was not a war for trade that the English Commonwealth had such great difficulty in "trying to induce the richest capitalists and the wealthiest of the city companies to furnish a public loan" to finance the war.[40]

In fact, the Rump and Nominated Parliaments did everything possible to hurt trade during the war. Merchant ship after merchant ship was seized by the state and converted into a man-of-war.[41] Desperate for sailors to man their ships, the Rump was willing to resort to extreme measures. Henry Hatsell recommended "a general embargo until the ships which the state intend to set forth be manned," apparently unaware that the war was being fought to protect that trade he was proposing to stop. Fortunately this measure proved unnecessary as the Rump was able to press men from all imaginable places. "We have so fleeced this river," reported one observer, "that unless it be States-watermen or some others that be protected, there is not an able man to be found." Not surprisingly this activity made it very difficult to conduct trading voyages. As merchantmen approached London,

[38] For one discussion of the close mercantile ties between the two nations see John Stoye, *English Travellers Abroad, 1604–1667*, revised edition (New Haven, 1989), pp. 172–173.

[39] Newsletter from Yarmouth, 22 July 1652, PRO, SP 84/159, f. 125 (for indication of merchant familiarity); newsletter from London, 27 May 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 439; Bordeaux to de Brienne, 24 February 1653, PRO, PRO 31/3/90, f. 615r (for another example of English merchants' concern for the safety of a Dutch merchant fleet). The case of the Bonnel family, with bases in Dublin, London, Stockholm, and Rotterdam was surely not unique. I discuss Toby Bonnel below.

[40] Paulucci to Sagredo, 5/15 February 1653, *CSPV*, p. 25. Paulucci argues that this was in part because the capitalists could not be sure that they would receive a return on their investments. Surely if this had been a war for trade routes they would have been less reticent.

[41] Newsletter from Westminster, 7 November 1652, Worcester College, Clarke 24, f. 47; Bordeaux to de Brienne, 20/30 December 1652, PRO, PRO 31/3/90, f. 535v; day's proceedings, 9 March 1653, *CSPD*, p. 204; Blake to Commissioners of the navy, 1 December 1652, BL, Loan 29/241, f. 169r (complaint about the quality of the merchantmen in the navy).

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the pressgang raided the ships, leaving them "not as many men as would bring in their ships." "Here is such an extraordinary great pressing," wrote the Canary merchant John Paige to his trading partners, "that it's a difficult thing to get out a ship."[42] Nor did the navy make an attempt to protect English trade routes. Although it is true that the English did blockade the Dutch coast, the aim seems to have been to bring the United Provinces to its knees rather than to destroy its trading assets. No effort was made to send a great fleet to the Mediterranean, to the coast of India, or to the West Indies. Instead England concentrated on defeating the main Dutch naval force in set-piece battles.[43]

The Anglo-Dutch War, even the hostile Venetian resident Paulucci was forced to admit, reflected an English ideology "which made them consider themselves stronger than all the rest, from their successes in the civil war." This did not always follow a logical, rational course. He explained to the Venetian ambassador in Paris that "the English look at things in their own way not that of others."[44] For the English, the United Provinces had ceased to be a nation favored by God because they had forsaken the Lord for Mammon and had abandoned true republicanism for alliance with profane monarchy.

[42] Henry Hatsell to William Rowe, 7 December 1652, PRO, SP 18/26, f. 12; newsletter from London, 18 March 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 204r; Newsletter from London, 25 March 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 205; Newsletter from London, 1/11 April 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 223r; Paige to Paynter and Clerke, 12 March 1653, Steckley, p. 88; Paulucci to Sagredo, 9/19 April 1653, *CSPV*, p. 58

[43] This point depends on my reading of a vast array of materials. This view is given some support by Bernard Capp's useful summary of the war, *Cromwell's Navy* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 78–83.

[44] Paulucci to Sagredo, 31 December/10 January 1652/3, *CSPV*, p. 5; Paulucci to Sagredo, 10/20 November 1653, *CSPV*, p. 147.

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