

CROMWELL ASSOCIATION

handbook



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THE CROMWELL ASSOCIATION

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THE CROMWELL ASSOCIATION was founded in 1935 by the late Rt. Hon. Isaac Foot and others to help to preserve the memory of Oliver Cromwell, the great puritan statesman, and to encourage study of the history of the Commonwealth protectorate and its leaders. It is not a political organisation and its aims are principally historical and antiquarian. The Association has at present over 300 members. It is anxious to extend its membership in order to widen its influence and increase its work.

Since the Association has come into existence it has:—

1. Put up commemorative tablets at Dunbar, Edgehill, Naseby, Preston, Worcester, the Huntingdon Grammar School, and elsewhere, to mark the sites of Cromwell's victories or famous episodes in his career.
2. Helped to constitute a Cromwellian Museum at present housed in the Old Grammar School, Huntingdon. It arranges for lectures to be given, leaflets issued, etc., as required on Cromwellian subjects.
3. Established an Annual Service held on September 3rd each year, by Cromwell's Statue outside the Houses of Parliament, when the address is given by a distinguished Cromwellian.
4. Formed a non-profit making company to own and care for Cromwellian pictures and relics given or bequeathed to the Association.
5. The Association has also formed a small reference library from which books can be borrowed on written application, enclosing postage, from the Hon. Secretary, to whom communications and enquiries can be made.

The minimum annual subscription is 10/-.

The Idea of a Protestant Foreign Policy

by Roger Crabtree
NOTA IJUSSA

(This essay won the first award under the Essay Competition arranged by the Cromwell Association for students of the University of East Anglia.)

Note: Quotations are modernised in spelling and slightly modified in punctuation.

In English historiography 'the idea of a Protestant foreign policy' may be referred to the concept of Oliver Cromwell's diplomacy as being inspired more by religious than by commercial or geo-political considerations. As such it implies condemnation. With the eccentric exception of Carlyle, historians writing since the middle part of the nineteenth century have called Cromwell's foreign policy Protestant principally as an aid to pointing out, and explaining, its deficiencies. This interpretation has had for its theme that Cromwell's view of the European situation was anachronistically orientated towards that of Elizabeth's day, or at least of the Thirty Years' War, when religious antipathies were more relevant to national interests. In consequence the words 'Elizabethan' or 'anachronistic' have been used here as virtual synonyms for 'Protestant'. Gardiner made the identification explicitly: "His mind still worked on the lines of the Elizabethan period, when the championship of Protestantism was imposed on Englishmen by interest as well as by duty."¹ The idea is that Cromwell, pursuing this 'chimera', was led to neglect real problems, such as the trade-rivalry of the Dutch and the danger of French domination of the continent, for involvement in a Spanish war destructive of English commerce, and an alliance with France detrimental to the balance of power. Protagonists of this view have also been able to apply it to Cromwell's attitude to Baltic affairs: his insistence that the main trouble there was caused by Imperial ambitions, as part of a Catholic conspiracy to extirpate Protestantism, impelling him to attempt to form a Protestant league against the Habsburgs analogous to those of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; so, again, his apparent inability to distinguish Charles X of Sweden from Gustavus Adolphus blinded him to the position as it really was, Sweden not Austria being now the main threat to stability in the area. Several assumptions are implicit in the theory — that Cromwell's Protestantism was of an order that permitted him to subordinate his country's interests to some other-worldly end; or, alternatively, that he mistakenly thought the two could still be reconciled, that while he could effect a reasonable conjunction or compromise between spiritual zeal and worldly wisdom at home, a similar resolution escaped him abroad, and, finally, that he did commit errors of judgement in foreign affairs of a kind which require some such explanation. It is the intention in this essay to question the validity, in its own terms, of the whole argument and propose instead that the idea of a Protestant foreign policy may best be understood to have been conceived, and to some extent practised, exactly as its chief exponent claimed all his public actions were: "if any whosoever think the interest of Christians and the interest of the nation inconsistent, I wish my soul may never enter into their secrets . . . And upon these two interests, if God shall account me worthy, I shall live and die. And I must say, if I were to give an account before a greater tribunal than any earthly one, and if I were asked why I have engaged all along in the late war, I could give no answer but it would be a wicked one, if it did not comprehend these two ends."² . . . "if it did not comprehend these two ends . . ." — how could Cromwell think that his war with Spain was justifiable in this way? Here is the major difficulty in reconciling these words with his actions. Allow, as most of his modern critics do,

that he envisaged the expedition to Hispaniola as conveniently agreeable to the requirements of profit and piety and patriotism, the interesting question arises why, when the project met with disaster, he persisted in a war which most historians have thought to be ill-advised.³ To say that he was "on this point a belated Elizabethan"⁴ is not an answer; at best it pushes the problem back a stage. Instead part of the solution may be found in reconsidering what was involved in the conflict. The beginning of the commission of General Venables⁵ presents the official English view: "Whereas we are resolved through the blessing of God, to send an army into America, for securing and increasing the interest of this commonwealth in those parts, and for opposing, weakening, and destroying that of the Spaniards, who under a pretence of the pope's donation claims all that part of the world, as belonging unto him, and thereupon hath not only exercised inhuman cruelties upon the natives, and prohibited all other nations to have any trade, commerce, or correspondence with those parts; but hath, contrary to the laws of all nations, by force of arms, expelled the people of these islands from several places in America, whereof they were the rightful possessors, destroying and murdering many of their men, and leading others into captivity; and doth still continue all manner of acts of hostility upon us, and the people aforesaid in those parts, as against open and professed enemies; thereby threatening the ruin and destruction of the English plantations in those parts, when he shall have opportunity for the same."⁶ It was not all just verbiage — even the seemingly empty phrase "resolved through the blessing of God" was possibly significant in the context of the breakdown of negotiations: was Cromwell thinking England had again been meddling "with an accursed thing"? Whether so or not, he had proposed on this, as on that previous occasion, quite reasonable terms for an accommodation, reasonableness obscured by the Spanish ambassador's famous complaint that his master's two eyes were being asked for.⁷ Trade to the Spanish Indies was not really in question: what was demanded was freedom of access to English settlements in the West Indies⁸ — and the refusal of this is the major grievance referred to in Venables' commission. As for the question of religious toleration for English merchants residing in Spain, there was nothing revolutionary in the proposal: the nineteenth article of the Anglo-Spanish treaty of 1630 had made provision for the discreet exercise of Protestant worship; the problem was what constituted discretion and who was to determine whether its bounds had been exceeded: Cromwell's request for the omission of the words "modo ne dent scandalum" from the concessionary clause was only an attempt at regularising a situation productive of difficulties and misunderstandings. In implicitly suggesting that the English should be arbiters in their own cause, he was after all being no more obdurate than the Spanish were in insisting on the Inquisition retaining the function: the English merchants had no financial interest in being scandalous; arguably the Inquisition had in judging them to be such. If this was a narrowly Protestant policy, it was not in any case peculiar to Cromwell: the pro-Spanish Merchant Adventurers made complete freedom of worship a condition of their residence in Bruges in September 1649,⁹ the Council of State — not then dominated by Cromwell's party — complained in March 1651 of the Inquisition's molesting English merchants at Malaga,¹⁰ and, in November 1652, the Rump had included an article extending the existing toleration in the draft of a commercial treaty offered to Cardenas.¹¹ There seems little reason therefore, to suppose Cromwell insatiable or extraordinary in his requirements of Spain; the freedoms sought were moderate, limited and quite consistent with God's and England's interests; as even the opponents of the Spanish war saw them to be. Their immoderate rejection might have been enough to precipitate an adventure like the West Indies expedition even if an agreement with the Spanish was ultimately

being sought — there is a possible analogy here with the gunboat diplomacy which reduced Portugal to terms. This last however would presuppose that war in Europe was not apprehended as a likely consequence, which is at variance with the extravagant expressions in Venables' orders, Blake's instructions vis-a-vis Portugal being tied more closely to the issue of the negotiations then in progress with that country. Gardiner, and many historians have followed him, assumed Cromwell to have been captivated by the idea of a separate war in the Indies, something he found quite inexplicable, except on the assumption of "his admiration for Elizabethan methods which led him to suppose that the existing Spanish Government would be as ready as that of Philip II to put up with a system which kept peace in Europe whilst war was being waged in America."¹² This exegesis requires some modification. In the first place there was more room for doubt about the outcome than hindsight allows for. There was a precedent — more recent than Elizabeth's activities — for assuming aggressive action would not necessarily entail formal war: the English conquest of parts of French America and Blake's attack on the French fleet sent to succour Dunkirk in 1652. True there was then a naval war and a trade embargo, but perhaps Spain was too preoccupied to resent an injury in this way? Sir Benjamin Wright writing to Thurloe from Madrid in April 1655¹³ thought an attack on *Hispaniola* would lead to war, 'though not one south of the equator, unless "they find themselves here so weak, and so environed with enemies on all sides, that they must pass by and put up any thing that you will do against them." Nor was it a desperate hope: Spain was very much in this position, as witness Philip IV's humiliating necessity to keep on good terms with the Dutch.¹⁴ James Wilson from Cadiz about the same time¹⁵ told Cromwell that an attempt on the West Indies would not be provocative "so far as may be judged by the disposition of these people", if Cuba and the "galleons" were left alone. Probably the general view was that war was likely, but not inevitable, and that it was the scale and objectives of the attack which made it so, rather than its official character. Since the whole operation was meant to rely heavily upon the surprise factor the government could scarcely canvass this sort of opinion when it was relevant: it is significant only as shewing that a separate war policy, if mistaken, was not ludicrously inapposite. Indeed long after real war began Lord Jermyñ imagined that Cromwell and Spain were in treaty, which "gives some apprehension of an agreement between them, that may import, that the war beyond the line should induce no consequence of a breach on this side", and involve instead an alliance in Europe against France and the Stuarts.¹⁶ More important than this question — which is basically not susceptible of resolution — is how far the likelihood of war with Spain was taken into consideration when the West Indies expedition was decided upon. There is no real evidence that Cromwell was unduly surprised by the Spanish reaction. Thurloe merely states¹⁷ that "O. himself was for a war with Spain, at least in the West Indies, if satisfaction was not given for the past damages, and things well settled for the future", and again, "so it was resolved . . . to send a fleet and land forces into the West Indies, where it was taken for granted the peace was already broken by the Spaniard contrary to the former treaties; and not to meddle with anything in Europe, until the Spaniard should begin, unless the American fleet should be met with, which was looked upon as a lawful prize." If this last phrase is a true rendering of the grounds of the decision, a naval war in Europe was thought possible, and the possibility deliberately accepted, even welcomed. At least the chances of a trade embargo were realistically assessed: English merchants were warned not to venture capital too deeply in Spain some six months before the breach occurred.¹⁸ It is true that the argument that Spain's "necessity of our trade" would require peace was used in debate in the Council,¹⁹ but other reasons were urged why the

war could not be destructive if it broke out. On this basis then it would seem that Cromwell, while not definitely resolved on war, was not ignorant of or averse to the possibility — it may be that he was simply allowing events to guide him and that Thurloe's "at least in the West Indies" is a reference to irresolution rather than to crude Elizabethanism. This would be consistent with his behaviour on other occasions: his first attempting to come to terms with Charles I, with the Presbyterians, the Levellers, the Rump, then, in each case when he saw divine providence at work in their obstinacy, switching over to the offensive. At home, however, his ability not to know where he was going produced in the end something like a stable government, and a settlement roughly consistent with the interests of the country as a whole. By whatever kind of coincidence, or tortuous self-deception, even — for it is unwise to reject any possibility on *a priori* grounds — of heavenly guidance, waiting on events seemed to work. Sagredo, an extraordinary ambassador from Venice, attributed this success in part to "Fortune", explaining: "I call the effect of Fortune that opportunity which came as it were towards him, to make the path to greatness easy for him."²⁰ However stupid the Spanish war has appeared to those who came after him, Cromwell himself lost no faith in his 'dispensations'. How then could he think that his policy was in England's interests?

One objection is easily disposed of: the contention of Slingsby Bethel that Cromwell made an "unjust war with Spain and an impolitic league with France, bringing the first thereby under, and making the latter too great for Christendom; and by that means broke the balance betwixt the two crowns of Spain and France, which his predecessors, the long-parliament, had always wisely preserved"²¹ — an accusation echoed by Ludlow in his memoirs in remarkably similar language: "This confederacy was dearly purchased on our part; for by it the balance of the two crowns of Spain and France was destroyed, and a foundation laid for the future greatness of the French, to the unspeakable prejudice of all Europe in general, and of this nation in particular, whose interest it had been to that time accounted to maintain that equality as near as might be."²² (Incidentally, neither takes account of Cromwell's scoffing reminder, "I could instance how it was said, 'We will have a war in the Indies, though we fight them not at home'",²³ which throws an interesting sidelight on 'Elizabethan' attitudes.) It proved a popular criticism echoed throughout the eighteenth century — particularly trenchantly by Bolingbroke²⁴ and the authors of the *Old Parliamentary History*²⁵ — and survived into the present.²⁶ The objection is not so much that Mazarin's France was not Louis XIV's (though it is interesting historiographically to see how popular the idea was when France represented a threat to this country and how it gradually went out of fashion when that threat receded) — the anachronism is a deeper one. In Cromwell's day it was generally regarded as an act of folly to ally with a weak state against a strong one, if it could be avoided. Not everyone thought like this of course. Sir Benjamin Rudyerd, in a speech apprehensive of growing French power, argued in 1641²⁷ that "Our aptitude is rather to balance, which being rightly used may make the King that great arbiter of all the affairs of Christendom, by withholding or opposing . . .", but this was an exceptional and to some extent an archaic view. There was a strong feeling that switching sides was unwise; Ormonde thought that it devalued the credit of the defaulting party²⁸ and Clarendon refers to "The old mistaken and unhappy maxim that the Crown of England could balance the differences which fell out between the princes of Europe by its inclining to either party," as having "made the ministers of that State too negligent in cultivating the affections of their neighbours by any real obligations . . ."²⁹ The accent was on what one could get from one's ally in the way of military³⁰ and financial³¹ support, even of territory,³² rather than on

diminishing the strength of an enemy. For this purpose powerful friends were sought, the arguably reasonable implication being that it was safer to make sure of being on the winning side, thus neutralising any possible threat thence. De la Court made the point negatively in 1622³³ when he said that, because it was not in France's interest to make war on the United Provinces, the Dutch had no need of a French alliance, that because Spain was weak a Spanish alliance was superfluous too, and that "we are to take care that we do not suffer ourselves for fear of a war with *England*, to be inveigled into an alliance jointly to carry on an offensive war against any nation . . ." Parenthetically this idea is helpful in putting the Anglo-Dutch negotiations of 1653 and 1654 into perspective — the English propositions of a close union and alliance being a natural demand for a stronger power to make of a weaker. As respects the Anglo-French alliance, on the other hand, Thurloe adduces in its favour France's ability to harm England both in the Mediterranean and with regard to Charles II³⁴. On the French side Bordeaux concurred; he found it astonishing that Cromwell should hesitate to close: "I can hardly believe," he wrote in June 1655,³⁵ "that the lord protector doth know himself so ill, that the power of the king, and the weakness of Spain, can cause him to hope any advantage from a war with the one, and from a strict league with the other . . ." Even the great shibboleth of English foreign policy, the Baltic 'balance', was not a sophisticated attempt to keep Danish and Swedish power equal. Divided control of the Sound was an *ad hoc* solution: the usual feeling seems to have been that the one essential was the preserving free access to the Baltic and that this was the best way of doing it — analogous rather to arguments against monopolies than to Slingsby Bethel's fear of Sweden and France dividing "the western empire betwixt them."³⁶ In Cromwell's fear of a Dutch-Danish-Polish-Austrian combination overwhelming Sweden, in his opponents' complementary worry about the growing commercial power of that country, there was only the faintest prevision of the later theory. Surely, if it had been otherwise, those who spoke against the Spanish war in Richard's parliament would have made something of the danger of French aggrandisement?

Instead they concentrated on the commercial disadvantages of the war. Here the question to be considered is whether there was any justification for incurring whatever losses took place, or whether, on this count, Cromwell must be charged with fanaticism in continuing to fight. In doing this some provisional estimate of the damage must be arrived at. Apart from the financial cost which must be treated in conjunction with the advisability of the war as a whole, criticisms come under two heads: the destruction of English shipping and the disruption of the two-way trade with Old Spain. Estimates of the number of ships lost vary between about 1,200 and something over 2,000.³⁷ None of them comes from a source friendly to Cromwell's government and all may be suspected on that ground alone. Richard Baker was concerned with making a case against the release of a captured pirate when he spoke in 1657 of a loss of 1,800 ships. Bampfield in Richard's parliament made the number 1,500 only. (February 1659). Next month Haslerigg, arguing the same point, revised the figure to "at least" 1,200. Obviously there was no very reliable source of information behind all this. Three other guesses may be discounted: Barwick wrote to Hyde a few days after Haslerigg's speech and that was probably his source for the same figure; Slingsby Bethel in 1668 referred his estimate specifically to that of Bampfield; and the anonymous author of a pamphlet entitled "Awake O England, or the People's Invitation to King Charles" (1660) need not be taken very seriously (over 2,000 was his figure). More confidence may be placed in Garroway's contention in the Cavalier parliament, "We lost sixteen hundred ships in the last *Spanish* war, great and small," for it contains its own corrective — but he too was arguing a case. Interestingly the numbers suggested

roughly balance the number of prizes taken in the Dutch war — a fortunate, and perhaps genuine, coincidence for those who condemned both war with Spain and the peace with the Dutch. However, after making allowances for these doubts, the losses were still heavy, there being numerous references to ships sunk or captured in the letters of Thurloe's informants and others. In fact this may have been one reason why the war was persisted in. Most of the damage was done by privateers from the Spanish Netherlands and by ships holding Charles II's commission. Baker thought the latter alone chiefly to blame, "the subjects of this commonwealth, who have gone to the enemy, taken up commissions, and assisted them like parricides . . ." The permanent elimination of this threat was a legitimate war aim — naval war with France or Spain the only way to bring these royalists to battle. War with Spain had the additional advantages of offering the chance to gain control of the privateering bases in Flanders. Dunkirk in particular was long a thorn in England's side: Sir John Suckling, writing to the commons of Charles I's third parliament³⁸ spoke of the merchants "daily damnified by the spoil of Dunkirkers" in the war then in progress. Between 1655 and 1660 complaints of ships lost and navigation threatened nearly always refer to the activities of Dunkirkers and Ostenders.³⁹ In 1698 the loss of Dunkirk was described by a critic of Ludlow's *Memoirs*⁴⁰ as "too sadly lamented in these last wars with France". Later during the war of the Spanish Succession over 900 ships were seized by Dunkirk privateers, more than the number taken by those of Brest and Calais, the great French base, put together.⁴¹ In this context it is not surprising that Cromwell was praised, even by some of his opponents, for acquiring the town. Modern prejudice against the holding of fortified outposts in foreign countries has obscured the genuine advantages. What objection can be urged after all? It was true enough that the English could not hold territory in Flanders indefinitely without the assistance of the United Provinces or France or Spain in a war with any other of those powers: but it is difficult to imagine such a conflict. The place was envisaged not as a bastion against, but as a gateway into, Europe, a base for operations in support of an ally, and as such the military problems holding it entailed were commensurate with those of a bridgehead, not a fortress. Even from the point of view of the "balance of power", an English presence there was a better guarantee for the Dutch than a French, or a Spanish one soon to be replaced by the French. Thurloe,⁴² who is really the only authority on Cromwell's motives in this, says that a footing on the continent, by way of Dunkirk, Ostend and Nieuport, was aimed at for a variety of reasons: to secure England against invasion by Charles II, to restrain the French from making a separate peace with Spain, to make France vulnerable to England in the event of its contracting alliances of a prejudicial nature, to encourage Flemish and French Protestants, to make it easy to interfere in the Protestant interest, to be a "bridle on the Dutch" — there being English harbours on both sides of the Channal — and finally "It seemed of great importance to have this interest in Flanders, in point of safety to our own trade, which was at all times disturbed, and greatly prejudiced by the Dunkirkers and Ostenders, in whose hands soever they were." That Cromwell recognised the peculiar strategic significance of the Flanders seaboard is shown by his asking a Flemish port as a condition of alliance with Spain and refusing to consider an alternative in French territory.⁴³ Given the assumption that the West Indies expedition was envisaged as possibly provoking war, the whole policy makes sense — success in the Indies would lead to peace; failing that, a useful objective could be pursued in a European war against Spain waged in concert with the French. Short-term shipping losses were irrelevant if one of the chief potential dangers to commerce were removed.

The loss of the rich trade with Spain was another matter. Contemporaries were

agreed that this would be a disaster. Bullion came from Spain, the fine Spanish wool necessary now that English wool had become coarser — an indirect result of the enclosures — cochineal and indigo used as dyes, wines, fruits, olive oil, silk, tobacco, iron. In return there was the best market for English fish and the new draperies, this last of increasing importance with the decline of cloth exports to north-west Europe, and a significant vent for hats, glass and earthenware. Commerce with the Spanish Netherlands was also important. One branch which was particularly vulnerable was the importation of Bruges thread into England where it was made into lace and sent back again. Furthermore Spain was in a good position to interfere with England's trade in the Mediterranean. But, as the government believed, it could not afford a complete cessation. Thurloe's answer to Scott and Bampfield and Lloyd's complaints on this score was the bland assertion that "You export as much commodity, and import as much from Spain, as ever you did."⁴⁴ Five months before this, in September 1658, Bordeaux wrote from England to Mazarin⁴⁵ that "the war has not been hitherto so burdensome to England as not to yield as great advantages by continuing it as by coming to an accommodation; for it is proved by the registers of the Custom-house that the exports and imports of merchandise have been as great since the rupture as they were before the war began." A pamphlet published in 1661⁴⁶ appealed to the customs figures to prove the reverse, but the writer was neither so well-informed as Thurloe, nor so unprejudiced as Bordeaux.⁴⁷ Wars in the period were not incompatible with trading relations and official bans could be circumvented. The Dutch had successfully evaded an embargo on the carrying of Portuguese and French goods to Spain.⁴⁸ Whatever the Spanish king might say, his subjects considered their own profit first — as late as March 1658, Antwerp was still refusing to prohibit English goods.⁴⁹ A letter of intelligence written in November 1655 put the case succinctly: "The king of Spain has made a prohibition to bring any English merchandize in his estates although he can hardly be without."⁵⁰ Some of the methods which suggested themselves whereby his deficiencies could be supplied involved sending ships with Dutch papers,⁵¹ under a Tuscan flag of convenience⁵² and suspending the Act of Navigation as it applied to fish exports.⁵³ The ruses seem to have worked fairly well, or even to have been dispensable with. Morrell wrote to Thurloe from Paris on April 22nd 1656⁵⁴ to say that he had had an audience with Lestrade, Mazarin's favourite, and that the latter "grew inquisitive, whether Spain and we were enemies. I replied yes. Said he, have your merchants trade there? Yes we have. I find they fear our closing with Spain yet." Morrell had no objection to alarming the French, and the progress of the embargo was irregular and dilatory: it was only two days earlier that the placards banning English goods had been published at Cadiz. Yet it is interesting as bearing out the calculation that war need not automatically prevent commerce. In November of the next year Longland reported from Leghorn that many English ships were still trading with Spain.⁵⁵ Any shrinkage of the Spanish market could also have been compensated for, in part at least, by an increase in the profit of cloth exports to Portugal and the Mediterranean — made possible by the favourable terms of the 1654 Anglo-Portuguese treaty and by the removal of the threat of French privateers. The first alternative was mentioned explicitly, the second implicitly, when the Hispaniola project was being debated:⁵⁶ "it is said that a full trade with Portugal (which we can have as we will) will be near as good as the other." This sounds odd but the discrepancy in population between Portugal and Spain in the seventeenth century was much less than it is now. Market requirements for cloth were almost identical. Major-General Haynes in June 1656⁵⁷ hearing that "the peace with the crown of Portugal is over", hoped that it would prove "welcome news to our clothing towns now their trade with Spain is shut up." — the last

presumption was legitimate early in the war when ways of circumventing the embargo cannot have been fully put into operation. Two other points are worth making: Ultimately good trading relations with the Portuguese were inconsistent with friendship with Spain,⁵⁸ and the balance of trade with Portugal was, or soon became, more favourable than that with Spain — though this was due to the comparative paucity of the import trade.⁵⁹ On the other hand imports were much less affected by the breach. There is no question but that wines and fruits continued to be brought to England from Spain — their prices were discussed in parliament in October and November 1656,⁶⁰ duties on Spanish products (wine and tobacco) in January 1657,⁶¹ an act regulating wine prices was passed in June 1657,⁶² and in April 1659⁶³ there was a vote to ban all Spanish goods. Their importation was unlikely to have been by way of English or Spanish shipping so much as by the Dutch, in contravention of the Act of Navigation. The export of merino wool from Biscay was already almost a Dutch monopoly⁶⁴ — probably one way or another they were now bringing it to England. Samuel Lamb, arguing for a bank in January 1659,⁶⁵ mentions with disapproval "the practice suspected to be now used, to employ Dutch shipping as much as ever to bring home Spanish goods, by colourably making bills of sale of them in trust to the freighters, to secure them against the act for increase of navigation." A surprising variety of people⁶⁶ attributed 'the decay of trade' to the Dutch rather than to the Spanish war as such. Fears were expressed that besides expanding their carrying trade they would usurp the market for English-style cloth in Spain — a possibility which to some extent carried its own remedy with it: if the Dutch could imitate English cloth so successfully, it was going to be difficult to enforce a discriminatory embargo against the genuine article. For many Spanish exports, besides wool, alternative sources existed: olive oil could come from Portugal, France and Leghorn,⁶⁷ silk from the United Provinces, the Levant or directly from the East, wines from France and Portugal, iron from Sweden, raisins from the Levant, tobacco from English colonies in the West Indies — something the government wished to encourage. Dyes were more of a problem — indigo was another colonial product, but cochineal, a brilliant red pigment made from the crushed bodies of South American beetles, was irreplaceable. However, even had the cloth industry been completely deprived of the dye,⁶⁸ the result was unlikely to have been catastrophic; the sophisticated colour-range of the new draperies included crimson, but also black, 'sad grey', 'stone grey', 'liver', 'mussel', 'beaver', 'partridge grey', azure, pink, peach, gold and silver.⁶⁹ All this is not to suggest that the war did not produce any dislocation of trade nor cause hardship to some, (it would certainly have added to insurance rates and freight charges for instance) only that its effects have been exaggerated, perhaps grossly.

How can this exaggeration be accounted for? Modern critics may have been over-influenced by their reading of a 'separate war' policy, and by the complaints of contemporaries. Many at the time were prejudiced by their political opinions, but genuine anxiety understandably existed. Bordeaux, though he thought the losses were bearable, makes it clear that the merchants bitterly opposed the war.⁷⁰ Paradoxically, his unconcern about the contradiction renders an explanation of it unnecessary to the present argument, though one may be ventured. Certain interests, who were vocal and influential, were disproportionately affected. Those involved in formulating the Navigation Act — which *may* include the Eastland and Levant Companies — and the anti-Dutch lobby — which included almost everyone except Cromwell and some of his 'courtiers' — could not have approved the modifications of the policy which the war made necessary. The Spanish merchants themselves were an interesting case: trade to Spain was 'open', but obviously it was now, in a sense, more open. Men who had ventured capital too

deeply to pull out quickly were badly hit by the confiscation of their goods; their only hope of redress lay in peace. Since these would be the bigger merchants, they were peculiarly liable to resent the irregular way in which trade was being carried on — sometimes in foreign bottoms, probably, often by adventurous interlopers seizing their opportunity. Many people, royalists, republicans, protagonists of the Navigation Act, important merchants, had the same interest in promoting a campaign to heighten apprehension as much as possible. The formidable shipping losses helped them: when examined, most of the contemporary laments about the ruin of clothiers seem to have had these as their basis. Bampfield, sitting for Exeter (an important centre for the production of cloth for Spain and Portugal) in Richard's parliament said ⁷¹ "the consequences of that war have been the decay of our trade in *all* parts . . ." (my italics) — words susceptible of interpretation as referring to privateers rather than to the embargo, as most of these complaints were. A royalist put it explicitly:⁷² "The trade of the West of England is almost ruined since the war with Spain, most of their vessels being taken and carried to St. Sebastians by Spanish frigates which wait daily about Land's End." — *not*, as has been assumed, by the closure of the Spanish market to them, or the cessation of the supply of Spanish wool, for which there is little evidence. And if this was where the war was felt most grievously, Cromwell's policy is comprehensible: Dunkirk and Ostend once conquered would prevent much of this sort of thing in the future — albeit no provision could be made for St. Sebastians. Right or wrong, the calculation was made on *secular* grounds.

Against this background of sizeable but supportable losses directly related to a specific war aim, must be seen the reasoning behind Cromwell's persistence in the war. One positive gain, which historians have often been content to gloss over, was the preservation of an independent Portugal⁷³ — a positive boon for England as it was a country easily bullied into making substantial concessions, a negative one as its survival was a better guarantee against Dutch expansion in America than Spain proved during the 'captivity'. The picture is one of long-term gains set against immediate disadvantages — not the least of which was the crushing financial burden that the war brought with it. Cromwell may have made mistakes — his contention⁷⁴ that the war in the West Indies would pay for itself is an obvious idiocy; that much of the 'Elizabethan' theory may be retained — but the *whole* policy was answerable to the conditions of the period. However, this interpretation is incomplete without an understanding of how it can be related to what is known of Cromwell's personality. The most important source for Cromwell's thinking on the Spanish war is the report, in the handwriting of Edward Montagu, of the debate which took place in the council in July 1654.⁷⁵ One passage may be quoted: "We consider this attempt, because we think God has not brought us thither where we are but to consider the work that we may do in the world as well as at home, and to stay from attempting until you have superfluity is to put it off for ever, our expenses being such as will in probability never admit that. Now Providence seemed to lead us hither, having 160 ships swimming: most of Europe our enemies except Holland, and that would be well considered also: we think our best consideration had to keep up this reputation and improve it to some good, and not lay up by the walls. Thence we came to consider the two great crowns, and the particular arguments weighed, we found our opportunity point this way". The consideration of the two great crowns, the weighing of the particular arguments, these problems had been discussed earlier;⁷⁶ again the starting-point was what to do with the fleet released from the Dutch war. This was a difficulty in its own right — its maintenance was necessary for national security; parliament would be reluctant to vote money for it except for some tangible purpose. Maintaining a diminished number of ships was not an answer: men of war and

merchantmen no longer had easily interchangeable roles, and, once laid up, the usual fate of seventeenth century ships was to lie rotting (and their crews would go to add to the ground-swell of discontent at home). But 'Providence' is the clue to Cromwell's attitude in this as in all things. Oliver's dispensations had led him to believe that the Stuarts by a special dialectic both were and ought to be on the losing side, and he carried this idea over into his foreign policy. No one has described his fighting the Stuarts as an Elizabethan or anachronistically Protestant policy — yet his diplomacy abroad, as well as at home, can be referred to this end. The first reason for a peace with France (and by contextual implication for a war with Spain) given in that earlier council meeting was "The hindering of a peace between the two crowns", feared by the Protectorate, greatly hoped for by Charles II as an aid to his restoration. Thurloe at the accomplished Restoration⁷⁷ confirms this as the order of priority; numbering the grounds of the alliances of the time he begins: "I. To deprive his majesty of foreign assistance in his restitution: hence it was that the alliance with France was preferred to that of Spain . . .". In fact, the only people in a position to restore Charles II were the French and the Dutch. When Oliver came into the Protectorate, reports were coming home⁷⁸ that the Orange party, the pro-Royalist, pro-French party in the United Provinces, was gaining ground as a result of the war with England. France had apparently welcomed Charles and his court. Only Spain, weak and useless as an ally, was positively estranged from the Stuarts, had been the first power to recognise the Commonwealth, was now the first to recognise the new government. We were "deeply engaged in a war with the Portuguese . . . And not only this, but we had a war with Holland . . . At the same time also we were in a war with France."⁷⁹ The whole thing must have seemed wrong. For a moment the Stuarts seemed likely to regain abroad the credit they had lost at home, in spite of all God's witnesses against them. Yet to disrupt this pattern forcibly would have been untypical. Every major decision Cromwell had made to this point in his career he could represent as having been forced upon him, as being entailed in the natural procession of events. He believed in acting in accordance with that procession, that close study of it would reveal the trend of God's will, that the consummation of that will was inevitable, but that one had the freedom to move with it or against it. Though there were inconsistencies in his position as it can be gleaned from his letters and speeches, it was analogous to that of a man swimming in a river: the river would reach the sea, whatever he did — this was the factor of historical determinism in his approach — the man would be carried to the sea or drowned, whatever he did, the current was so strong — that was the concept of personal predestination, but he had freedom to point himself up river or down, freedom to will but not freedom to act to save himself — the force of the current was infinite, the strength of the man finite. Thus, when drowning stands for damnation and the sea for heaven, the doctrine of predestination and the feeling of personal moral responsibility were uneasily reconciled.⁸⁰ Confronted by a current which apparently changed direction and stopped trying to drown the Stuarts en route, Cromwell could only wait and try to discern what must be its mainstream and what were deceptive eddies. What signs were there that God was working to deprive the Stuarts of useful allies abroad? How could he associate himself and his country with this inevitable process? The Dutch were applying for peace. The prospect of a French-Orangist alliance to restore Charles II — likely enough to Cromwell — and to Thurloe (who, for all his sagacity, was at the mercy of his informants in the last analysis) receded. It had been the Rump's war. That institution had miraculously brought its own destruction to pass. *He*, Cromwell, had not dissolved it; it had *made* him do so by breaking faith in repudiating the promise not to vote its perpetuation. Apart from Cromwell's kindly feelings

towards another Protestant republic — he distrusted that sort of subjective reaction — here was an objective indication that something was wrong with the Dutch war. But he proceeded cautiously. No armistice was granted. Only when good conditions were obtained and the Orange party, godless by virtue of their association with the Stuarts, were excluded from holding office in Holland, was peace renewed. Commercial matters were not neglected — this was the second part of the doctrine of dispensations — swimming against the current was arduous, swimming with it was easier, an inevitability rather than a reward, material benefits seen as a probable indication of righteousness.⁸¹ Now the next step was to fight France or Spain. This is not apparent to our generation but it made sense in Cromwell's peculiar terms and hence, indirectly, in ours. The dispensations suggested another war — the persecution of Huguenots in France (so the government was told) and in Savoy, Spain's maltreatment of English merchants and colonists, the '160 ships swimming', the necessity of preventing a Stuart restoration. As yet the choice of whom to fight was not obvious. So Oliver waited again, pursued parallel negotiations with each of the crowns, considered the relative profit of a war with either. The signs pointed to a Spanish war — as we have seen in the way negotiations with Spain broke down. But this was not enough. The crucial test was whether such a war was likely to involve material blessing for England. In many ways it was decided that it would. Above all politically, and providentially, it would be a good thing if the Stuarts looked for help from Spain rather than from France. In the council debate recorded by Montagu in April 1654, a French alliance was regarded as "Discountenance to our rebels in Scotland and fugitives." Thurloe⁸² enumerates the disadvantages of unfriendly relations with France in this respect: that crown had close ties of blood and marriage with the Stuarts, they had Protestant subjects to employ on Charles' II behalf (this was not a completely fanciful notion: Lord Jermyn was pursuing the possibility in 1652.⁸³ Admittedly he was being fairly fanciful in his own right.) and their friendship with the Scots was dangerous (again there had been signs towards the end of the Civil War of French diplomacy operating in this direction). On the other hand he says "It was foreseen that the excluding the king out of France would cast him upon Spain, which some thought a difficulty, but the protector an advantage. 1. Because his being in the hands of the Spaniards would make his return more difficult, the religion and interests of that crown being hated generally, both by the English and Scots, and affected only by the Irish. 2. And in case the Spaniard by the help of the Irish, had by a war attempted the restitution of the king; it was conceived to be the likeliest means of uniting the several divided interests of the kingdom together in that quarrel." Another reason given⁸⁴ for welcoming the move was that while the Spaniard had "no interest here but the papist; the presbyterian party, whom O. was desirous enough to engage in his affairs" had "ever shewed the greatest aversion to the Spaniard." So the resolution mirrored that effected at home: the Irish Catholics, the levellers and the republicans were heavily suppressed there, the Scots and the English Presbyterians were to be accommodated if possible. Out of the possible menace of a grand alliance of Orangists, their Brandenburger and Danish relations, the Scots, the French, the presbyterians, Charles has been removed and left to make what headway he can with unsympathetic Spaniards and republicans! Soon enough in the eyes of the government this alternative pattern was seen to be forming: "The Spaniard, cavalier, papists and levellers, are all come into a confederacy . . . The commonwealths men look also for a sudden turn, and hope they shall play next."⁸⁵ Now, said Cromwell of Spain⁸⁶ "that is the party that brings all your enemies before you: It doth: for so it is now, that Spain hath espoused that interest which you have all along hitherto been conflicting with — Charles Stuart's interest. And I

say," it doth not detract at all from your course, nor from your ability to make defence of it, that God by His providence hath so disposed that the King of Spain should espouse that person." In the rest of his discourse he associated the opponents of the war with Charles' party: and according to Ludlow⁸⁷ he specifically accused him and his followers of "clandestine correspondances" with the Spanish. But these combinations were less to be feared than the other — it was the 'presbyterian' party which restored the Stuarts in the final analysis. The parties ranged against the Protectorate were at present an unnatural grouping — if it was providence, it was also sound politics. As for the modern notion that Cromwell would have been better off not having a war at all, it is by no means certain that any firm and lasting agreement could have been made with France respecting the Stuarts and the trade rivalry between the countries, without England fighting Spain. This contingency was in large part implicit in the negotiations. The point where the policy is most difficult to justify on material grounds is at its inception. Here it is important to insist that a European war was envisaged from the beginning — that is the decision to be assessed — and in the absence of further evidence relating to his motivation at the time, it is legitimate to guess that Cromwell was leaving the decision to fate, that he wanted a real war with Spain and that he convinced himself it might not follow the West Indies expedition in order that he could accept it as another dispensation when it did. Perhaps this is unfair: there was a faint chance of it not occurring. But however unsatisfactory this way of reaching a decision (or rather of executing it) may seem, it must not be allowed to obscure the genuine advantages of the war. These may now be collected: 1. France was committed to hindering a Stuart invasion; 2. the Stuarts were placed in an untenable position; 3. Portugal was secured; 4. the elimination of the privateering threat from Flanders was worked for, and partly achieved; 5. French cooperation in the Mediterranean was secured; 6. a basis for English expansion in the West Indies was established; 7. Dunkirk's acquisition became an insurance policy against a separate peace by France, against a future Dutch war, against any untoward happenings in the Spanish Netherlands, where England had vital strategic interests. On the other side losses were not so great as is often assumed. Above all a profitable peace might have been made had Cromwell lived longer.⁸⁸ In this rough way the dialectic was working again — war was suggested by signs; once entered into it was found to be, if not so advantageous as predicted, at least not hurtful enough *on balance* for Cromwell to think God was witnessing against it. This was his idea of a Protestant foreign policy, not crudely fanatical, not oblivious of political and economic considerations, but in fact dependent on these for its spiritual force.

The same process is evident in other aspects of his diplomacy. Blake's aggressive trip round the Mediterranean neatly fulfilled the "interest of Christians and the interest of the nation". And the dual requirement was also met by the peace which was made with the United Provinces, although it has been heavily criticised: "The negotiations that ended in the peace of 1654 illustrate to what lengths Cromwell would go in his neglect of English economic interests for the sake of the Protestant chimera" writes one modern historian,⁸⁹ condemning his advocacy of a union between the countries and quoting Slingsby Bethel⁹⁰ with approval on "suddenly making a peace with Holland without those advantages for trade, as they who beat them, did intend to have had." The same writer continues to complain, among other matters, that Cromwell did not support those English merchants who wanted direct trade with Antwerp without paying dues to the Dutch at the mouth of the Scheldt. The argument will not bear much examination: Slingsby Bethel and his colleagues condemned Cromwell for not pushing the union plan as a *sine qua non* — dropping it shewed a commendable grasp of

realities. Two main points were conceded to England: there was to be no trading with each other's enemies and the supremacy of the English flag was acknowledged — thus prejudicing the disputed Dutch right to fish in 'English' seas. That some of the limited gains in the treaty were not secured and many issues left debatable was unavoidable. Any further requirements — free trade up the Scheldt was a preposterous demand as striking at the root of Amsterdam's prosperity — would either not have been observed, if granted, or, refused, have prevented the conclusion of the peace.⁹¹ English naval stocks were in no shape for this eventuality. Here especially Cromwell's Protestant policy displays more attention to common sense than the secular criticisms of his opponents. The puritan Protestant league to include the United Provinces, Denmark, Sweden, France and various German princes was an ideal: we need not censure Cromwell's dreams except so far as they impinged on his actions. In practice he took realities both as a test and as a guide.

Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in his Baltic policy. If we take his public utterances as our standard, we are compelled to conclude he was fighting the Thirty Years' War all over again: "Look how the House of Austria on both sides of Christendom, are armed and prepared to destroy the whole Protestant interest . . . Who is there that holdeth up his head to oppose this danger? A poor Prince — indeed poor; but a man in his person as gallant, and truly I may say as good, as any these last ages have brought forth; a man that has adventured his all against the Popish interest in Poland . . ."⁹² This ability to see a Habsburg round every corner, Cromwell's undoubted affection for Charles X of Sweden, the "poor Prince", are misleading. It is essential to distinguish between his predilections and his conception of his duty; knowing he could be led astray by enthusiasms he disciplined them by reference to hard facts — the whole process being comprisable within his religious outlook. In consequence his Baltic policy can be explained without relating it to religious principle at all — though this was precisely why it was a Protestant policy in Cromwell's own terms. He was not inveigled into an alliance with Sweden. Initially⁹³ he was prepared for an *ad hoc* understanding against the Dutch and Danes to open the Baltic to English shipping. When the reason for this departed with the cessation of hostilities with the Dutch, his aim was to reconcile Sweden and Denmark and prevent either being in a strong enough position to close the Sound. Meadows' mediating embassy to Denmark in September 1657 was the result. As he himself puts it⁹⁴ his role in the treaty of Roskilde, concluded in spring of the following year, was hardly pro-Swedish: "The English mediator had two parts to act in this scene; one was to moderate the demands as far as he could in favour of the sufferer, without disobliging the Swede by a too notorious partiality," — the other was to watch that nothing was concluded against English interests. When it was moved that the whole kingdom of Norway be united with Sweden, he comments:⁹⁵ "This entrenched upon England as giving the Swede the sole and entire possession of the chief materials, as masts, deal, pitch, tar, copper, iron, etc. needful for . . . the equipage of our ships, too great a treasure to be entrusted in one hand. The mediator in avoidance of this was the first who insinuated the proposal of rendering Scania and Bleking to the Swedes . . . safe for England, because by this means the Swede is become master of one bank of the Sound as the Dane is of the other." The "temporary success of the peace of Roskilde"⁹⁶ endured, at least in its main territorial clauses, for the next three hundred years and is still with us. Meadows wrote truer than he knew when he said that, apart from some small adjustments, "the Roskilde treaty is renewed and reconfirmed, and remains to this day the standard and measure betwixt these two Northern crowns." Meadows' version is borne out by other references to Cromwell's attitude.⁹⁷ The alternative criticism — of failing to act in concert with the Swedes against Dutch trade in the area — has been dealt with

in an article by Michael Roberts: there he argues that England dare not risk war with the Dutch (owing to the depletion of naval stores) and that in any case it was questionable whether such an agreement could have been effected at all. But the Swedish-Danish struggle was only one facet of the imbroglia. There was the Swedish-Polish war to be considered as well. In the context of Swedish belligerence the idea of directing the Swedish armies southwards was quite sensible. Cromwell was certainly prepared to ally himself with the Swedes against Austria, though one may wonder how significant he intended England's contribution to be. The drawback to this might appear to be that a Swedish conquest of Poland and monopoly of the southern Baltic seaboard was dangerous for the Eastland Company — but these campaigned for a *more* vigorous policy in support of the Swedes.⁹⁸ In the long run there was no chance of Sweden raising tolls exorbitantly: England was an important customer for Danzig, whoever possessed the place. Besides, Sweden may have been expansionist in its motions, but it was fundamentally weak and over-extended; if we allow that everything was Habsburg and papist to Cromwell of which he disapproved (though if the presence of an Imperial army in Jutland was an anachronism, no one seems to have informed Vienna of the fact) then forget it, and look at the actual situation, it will be seen that the combination of Danes, Dutch, Brandenburgers, and Poles would ultimately have overwhelmed the Swedes. It does not matter much whether they were Habsburg puppets — they were not — the net effect would be the same. Meadows⁹⁹ explained the sending of an English fleet in the spring of 1659 — a course Cromwell was considering when he died — in these terms: "it was not with any intention as some vainly suggested to assist Sweden in the conquest of Denmark; that had been impolitic and irrational, for 'tis evident the conservation of Denmark is the common interest as well of England as of Holland, neither was there at that time the least fear or danger of any such supposed conquest. The elector had an army in Jutland of near thirty thousand men, Brandenburgers, Poles and Austrians, and could have had as many more if either the country could have supported their numbers, or the service required them". He contends that, properly united, their forces "had been sufficient not only to have beat the Swede out of the Danish isles and dominions, but out of Sweden itself . . . England though sorry for this second rupture with Denmark, thought it not their interest to see Sweden overset and sinking under the mighty weight of so powerful a confederacy."

Here as elsewhere it is possible to find reasons, sometimes excuses, for Cromwell's policy. The exercise is not a work of supererogation because it is impossible to understand a policy by condemning it — no course of action ever impressed itself upon a man's mind as being desirable on account of the objections which could be raised against it. For Cromwell the idea of a Protestant foreign policy was simply the consummation of God's will, and as a part of this, the benefiting a nation devoted to that will. He might believe he knew what was to be done — but he was suspicious of himself and little tied to preconceptions, 'Elizabethan' or otherwise. It is possible to see his foreign policy as perhaps he saw it himself — looking for a sign as to which way to move but testing that sign strictly in accordance with profane principles. In this context a distinction between spirituality and materialism represents a false dichotomy. Of course there are *a priori* reasons for suspecting the application of the principle: could God's and England's interests really always be identical? The end of this essay is only to suggest that in his diplomacy in the Baltic, in the Dutch treaty, in the Spanish war and the French alliance Cromwell's motives were neither anachronistic nor fanatical. The success of his policies is another question: I have merely proposed ways in which he can be justified in secular terms, as an aid to understanding his Protestantism.

REFERENCES

Abbreviations

TSP — Thurloe State Papers (1742).

CSPD — Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Commonwealth and Protectorate series.

1. S. R. Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, (1903) II, 88.
2. The appellation is from M. Prestwich, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Protectorate*, *Journal of Modern History*, XXII. Other exponents include C. V. Wedgwood and J. Buchan in their biographies of Cromwell.
3. T. Carlyle, *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, (1888 ed.) Speech VIII, April 1657.
4. An odd exception is F. Harrison, *Oliver Cromwell*, (1899) who regarded it as a justified attempt to secure the "free commerce of the ocean."
5. J. Buchan, *Oliver Cromwell*, (1934), 413.
6. TSP III, 16. Dated August 18, 1654.
7. *Ibid* I, 759-763. Mr. Thurloe's account of Spain and France.
8. *Ibid*.
9. *Ibid* I, 129.
10. *Ibid* I, 175.
11. Gardiner op. cit. II, 184.
12. S. R. Gardiner, *Oliver Cromwell*, (1962 ed.), 168.
13. TSP III, 366.
14. *Correspondance de la Cour d'Espagne sur les Affaires des Pays-Bas au XVII e Siecle* ed. H. Lonchay (Brussels 1933), IV, passim.
15. TSP III, 389-90.
16. *Ibid* I, 692-3. To Charles II, Paris February 4th 1656.
17. *Ibid* I, 759-763. Mr. Thurloe's account of Spain and France.
18. *Clarke Papers*, ed. C. H. Firth, (1899) III, 52. Army newsletter, September 1655. Bordeaux to Mazarin April 8 and 29, 1655, quoted Gardiner op. cit. III, 390. Other references to warnings include TSP III, 637, IV, 21, 47, and *Correspondance de la Cour d'Espagne*, IV, 497.
19. *Clarke Papers*, III, 205-6.
20. E. Momigliano, *Cromwell*, 309-10.
21. *Harleian Miscellany*, (1810 ed.) VII, 349.
22. *Ludlow Memoirs*, ed. C. H. Firth, (1894) II, 2-3.
23. Carlyle, op. cit. Speech V, September 1656.
24. Bolingbroke, *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, (1752) I, 258-9.
25. *Old Parliamentary History*, (1751-62) XX, 473.
26. D. A. Bigby, *Anglo-French Relations 1641-1649*, (1933) 31.
27. *Ibid*.
28. *Nicholas Papers*, (1920), IV, 8-9. May 1657.
29. Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, (1958 ed.) IX, s. 170.
30. Vide Whitlocke's *Relation of the Swedish Embassy to the House*, *Old Parliamentary History* XX, 341: "They (the Swedes) have store of men, arms and shipping, to join with us upon any occasion, and whereby both you and they may be strengthened against your enemies, and be more considerable throughout the world."
31. Cromwell's negotiations with Spain and France bear this out.
32. E.g. Cromwell's asking Spain for a Flanders port and the question of Swedish Bremen being pledged to England.
33. *The True Interest and Political Maxims of the Republic of Holland*, (London 1746 ed.) 232, 235, 242-3.
34. *Somers Tracts*, (1809-15 ed.) 329. Concerning the Foreign Affairs in the Protector's Time.
35. TSP III, 468. Gardiner points out that Venables' commission was dated the same day (August 18, 1654) that the news of the French relief of Arras reached England.
36. *Harleian Miscellany* VII, 350.
37. CSPD XI, 245. Petition of Richard Baker 1657 (?) — 1,800 *Burton's Diary* (1828) III, 402, Bampfild; February 1659 — 1,500. *Ibid* IV, 364, Haslerigge; April 1659 — at least 1,200. TSP VII, 662, Barwick to Hyde; April 1659 — over 1,200. *Harleian Miscellany* VII, 103, Royalist; 1660 — over 2,000. *Ibid* VII, 229, Royalist; 1661 — 1,200. *Ibid* VII, 353, Slingsby Bethel; 1668 — 1,500. Anchtel Gray, *Debates of the House of Commons*, (1769) II, 213, Garroway; 1673 — 1,600.
38. *Somers Tracts*, IV, 113.
39. Vide TSP, CSPD, passim.
40. *Somers Tracts*, VI, 442.
41. J. S. Bromley, *The French Privateering War*, in *Historical Essays presented to David Ogg*, (1963), 214.
42. *Somers Tracts*, VI, 331. Concerning the Foreign Affairs in the Protector's Time.
43. TSP I, 705. A Paper in the Handwriting of Mr. Thurloe — a draft of the first part of Mr. Thurloe's Account of Spain and France — but this statement is not repeated there.
44. *Burton's Diary* III, 487.
45. M. Guizot, *History of Richard Cromwell*, (London 1856 ed.) I, 234-5.
46. *Harleian Miscellany* VII, 229.
47. M. Ashley, *Financial and Commercial Policy under the Cromwellian Protectorate*, (1962 ed.) 143-4, argues for Bordeaux's objectivity on this point.
48. TSP II, 74. Letter of intelligence from the Hague, February 1654.
49. *Ibid* VII, 15.
50. *Ibid* IV, 110.
51. *Correspondance de la Cour d'Espagne* IV, 579, September 1657.
52. TSP VI, 607. Longland, November 1657.
53. CSPD XI, 7, June 1657. *Burton's Diary* I, 296, January 1657.
54. TSP IV, 693.
55. Vide 52.
56. TSP III, 206.
57. TSP V, 165. Quoted by Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution* (1961), 158.
58. Vide V. H. Shillington and A. B. Wallis Chapman, *The Commercial Relations of England and Portugal*, 207-8, for Spanish intolerance of trade with her "rebels" in 1694.
An undated paper (c.1645) entitled *Brief Considerations concerning the Trade that may be expected hereafter between England and Portugal*, State Papers Foreign 4, f68, refers to the other side of the coin — Portuguese interruption of Anglo-Spanish trade.

59. Shillington op. cit. 206-7 for merchants' assertion under Charles II that Portuguese trade was more valuable.
BM Add MS 36785, *London Exports and Imports*, gives a figure for the value of imports from Portugal less than a third that for Spain (1662-3). By 1668-9 the ratio given is less than a sixth.
J. O. McLachlan, *Trade and peace with Old Spain*, (1940) quotes Godolphin as saying in 1712 that the Portuguese trade "brought to England in times of war double the wealth of the trade of Spain in time of peace".
60. *Burton's Diary* I, clxxxvi-vii.
61. *Ibid* I, 325.
62. CSPD XI, 7.
63. *Nicholas Papers* IV, 84.
64. Four-fifths of the quantity exported: TSP I, 200, c. July 1651.
65. *Somers Tracts* VI, 446.
66. Thurloe among them perhaps not surprisingly. *Burton's Diary* III, 487, February 1659. Earlier the same day Serjeant Maynard contributed to the debate his opinion that "it is rather a Dutch war, under the Spaniard's name." *Ibid* 461.
67. McLachlan op. cit. 9. Portugal and Leghorn were suggested by a pamphleteer, 'the Sussex Farmer' during the war of Jenkin's Ear. Vide Add MS 36785 for this and other alternatives.
68. Cochineal was shipped from the Canaries — vide Add MS 32093 f367, an undated remonstrance of merchants trading to the Canaries about the iniquities of the Spanish governor. Wines and fruit were coming in from the same source during the war. In Cromwell's as in Elizabeth's war at least one cargo of the dye was captured.
69. The list is from B. E. Supple, *Commercial Crisis and Change in England 1600-1642*. (1959).
70. Guizot op. cit. 234-5 et al.
71. *Burton's Diary* III, 402.
72. CSPD XI, Mompesson to Nicholas, January 1658.
73. Vide TSP VII, 516. Instructions to Downing c. November 1658.
Also Bischoffshausen, *Die Politik des Oliver Cromwell*, (Innsbruck 1899) 198, for mention in one of the drafts Thurloe made for Clarendon at the Restoration (BM Stowe MS 185 ff 187-200).
74. *Clarke Papers* III, 208.
75. *Ibid* 207.
76. *Ibid* 203-6.
77. *Somers Tracts* VI, op. cit. 329.
78. TSP I, passim.
79. Carlyle, op. cit. Speech II — to the first Protectoral parliament.
80. It would be impracticable to give even a representative selection of references for Cromwell's religious views as he expressed them. For outward dispensations see Carlyle op. cit. Letters LXVII, LXX, LXXIII, LXXXV, CXLVIII, etc.; W. C. Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1949) I 719, II, 82 etc. For fatalism especially frequent references. Freedom of will is implicit in Cromwell's appeals to the Dutch and Scots to repent seeing God's hand against them, and elsewhere. I have attempted to synthesise these elements, believing that Cromwell was a deeply *introverted* man (as his scanty medical history suggests) and must himself have tried to reconcile these different aspects of his belief.
81. The idea was commonly perverted into one of killing two birds with one stone. Examples in M. James, *Social Problems and Policy during the Puritan Revolution* (1930) 22-3. Thomas Gage on the *English-American* (v. him also in TSP III, 59) was a particularly cynical exponent.
82. *Somers Tracts* VI, op. cit. 329-30.
83. Clarendon op. cit. XIII, ss.131-2.
84. TSP I, 759-763, op. cit.
85. *Ibid* V, 45. Thurloe to Henry Cromwell May 1656.
86. Carlyle op. cit. Speech V, to the Second Protectoral parliament.
87. *Ludlow Memoirs* II, 11-2, 1656.
88. Thurloe argues that only internal divisions prevented the government doing this after his death TSP I 759-763 op. cit. Ludlow quotes Vane to the same effect *Memoirs* II, 170.
89. Prestwich op. cit.
90. *Ibid*.
91. Calendar of State Papers Venetian 1653-4 237 — Paulucci the Venetian ambassador thought war might result from insistence on this point.
92. Carlyle op. cit. Speech XVII.
93. Vide his instructions to Whitlocke. *Journal of the Swedish Embassy* (1772) 13-15, 33. 95.
94. P. Meadows, *A Narrative of the Principal Actions occurring in the Wars betwixt Sweden and Denmark* (1677).
95. *Ibid* 58-60.
96. Prestwich op. cit.
97. Vide Van Dorp to De Witt, November 1657, quoted in M. Roberts, *Cromwell and the Baltic*, EHR LXXXVI. Thurloe confirms it, *Somers Tracts* VI, 323.
98. CSPD III, 273-4 July 1650, 1651, 392 September 1651, TSP V, 88 June 1656, for complaints of Polish and Danzig exactions. For the Eastland Company's policy, see R. W. K. Hinton, *The Eastland Trade and the Common Weal in the Seventeenth Century*, (1959) 126-8.
99. Meadows op. cit. 111-14.

CROMWELL'S DAY 1968

The Address given by Lord Foot of Buckland Monachorum at the Annual Commemoration Service, September 3rd, 1968.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While I count it an honour to have been invited to deliver this address here today, I have to confess to an oppressive awareness of how far I fall short of what the occasion demands. I am no historian. I am no sort of authority on Oliver Cromwell or his period and I realise that the only reason why I am here at all is the name I bear and that my father was one of the chief begetters of this Association under whose auspices this annual commemoration service is conducted.

I am also conscious of the fact that I have been preceded in this duty, in previous years, by two of my brothers, both of whom were better equipped for the task than I am. My brother Hugh was able to remind you — and did not fail to do so — that he had at one time been the Governor and Captain-General of Jamaica, a position and title, or course, which Oliver had created, so that he was in a sense indebted to the Lord Protector for a job. My brother Michael really could claim to know something about the subject, although I gather from the reports I received that he did not lose himself in adulation, which was not, I suppose, entirely unexpected or out of character.

The only qualification I can lay claim to is that, like my brothers and sisters, I was, as it were, brought up with Oliver Cromwell. We were surrounded by every kind of reminder of him. It was not only that our family home was littered with portraits, busts and prints of him and of his captains, family and collaterals and that many shelves were given over to a library concerned with the seventeenth century in general and Oliver Cromwell in particular, and that there were mountains of contemporary pamphlets and broadsheets, but the spirit of the man seemed to lurk around the place. My father always referred to him familiarly as Oliver, and it sometimes seemed to me from the way that he spoke of him that he had only recently been in solemn confabulation with the Protector. The name of Oliver had even been bestowed upon the family cat, which sometimes led to some misunderstandings.

But in spite of all this I was never able to feel that I had begun to fathom the complexity of Oliver's personality or to resolve the strange contradictions in his character and actions. He has remained, for me, a figure of mystery. I have no doubt of his greatness, no doubt that he was cast in a larger mould than the ordinary run of mankind. But his life was so full of paradoxes that he has remained an enigma.

This is not however surprising because he was an enigma to his contemporaries and remained so to succeeding generations.

There is here a curious and interesting parallel. Across the Square above us there is a monument to another great man, Abraham Lincoln, and as my father demonstrated in a piece which he wrote about them some years ago, there are a multitude of astonishing similarities between the two men, not only between their careers and the course which their lives took and the revolutionary situations with which each was confronted, but in the cast of their minds and their political methods and attitudes and even in the turn of their language.

But the parallel which I would emphasise this afternoon is that each has confronted his contemporaries and historians with a very similar enigma. Each has been the object of adulation and hero worship and each has been the victim of unbridled denunciation and abuse. The qualities which have been attributed to them by their admirers and the crimes and wickedness of which they have been accused by their traducers are remarkably the same.

I suppose that the chief difference in the treatment they have received from the historians is that the fires of controversy which flamed around Lincoln in his lifetime have burned low, while those that encompassed Cromwell never subsided and every now and again erupt with something of their original heat. That I suspect is partly due to Lincoln's assassination when the Civil War was won, so that he was thereby relieved from the agonising problems of reconstruction. Oliver, if I may put it so without misunderstanding, had no such luck. For eleven years he held the Commonwealth together in such a welter of domestic dissension and strife as is probably without parallel in our history; and not only held the Commonwealth together but, in the while, rebuilt the prosperity of our trade and raised British arms to a pinnacle of fame; and if there are few things on which his friends and enemies are agreed, one of them is that only Oliver could have done it. It was he alone who stood between the Commonwealth and chaos.

It is not my object today (and it would indeed be wholly beyond me) to attempt to unravel even one or two of the skeins which surround the personality of Cromwell but there are two aspects of that personality and of his life which seem to be worth remarking upon in September, 1968. They are aspects of his character which are not, I think, in any substantial dispute.

No-one doubts his supreme capacities as a soldier, or that he was one of the great Captains of the world. But what was remarkable about him as a soldier was not only, or mainly, that he was never defeated in the field, but that the army which he led was his own creation. He recruited it, he modelled its methods and training, he inspired it, he developed its tactics; it was essentially *his* army and the principles upon which this most feared fighting instrument in Europe was forged are too well known to those of you here to need any reminder from me. The quotations are familiar. He recounted more than once how the army had been made.

"I raised such men as had the fear of God in them and made some conscience of what they did."

"I had rather have a plain russet-coated Captain that knows what he fights for and loves what he knows than what you call a gentleman, and is nothing else."

That was Cromwell's Army. It was recruited by commitment and disciplined by conviction.

Only a week or so ago we saw another army in operation. It was the army of the Soviet Union and its satellites which occupied Czechoslovakia. Through the agencies of the press and radio and television we were able to observe how it conducted itself and form some opinion of its qualities. We were able to observe, for example, the raw ignorant Russian conscripts, themselves apparently bewildered by it all, with little or no conception of what they were there for except to cow and terrorise the civilian population. So unable were many of them to find any answer to the arguments and taunts and contempt of the Czechs, their supposed prisoners, that after a week or so many of them had to be withdrawn as demoralized.

I would suggest that those of Oliver's critics who denounce him as a ruthless dictator in the mould of Hitler or Stalin or Breznev might usefully reflect upon the contrast between the make-up of the armies which marched into Prague and those that fought at Edgehill, Dunbar and Preston.

The other quality of Oliver's which is not seriously disputed (except only in his attitude to the Papists) is his devotion to toleration of opinion. In what other army in history did people of different persuasions engage in long and solemn theological and ideological debates on the nature of man and the nature of society? In Cromwell's army such debates were an accepted practice and were carried on with

respect for all differing opinions and often in the interludes between battles. Perhaps the most remarkable of these debates was with the Levellers at the Council at Putney in 1647, extending over several weeks, and over which Oliver himself presided. Under Cromwell no opinion was suppressed or proscribed and no-one was persecuted for his opinions.

How does all this compare with the treatment extended by the Soviet leaders toward their Czech allies in the recent negotiations at Bratislava and Moscow? These were supposedly an ideological discussion between equals, but the representatives of the Czech State were brought to the negotiating table in manacles and at the gun point and found themselves under the explicit threat that if they did not betray their beliefs and their people, then their country would be ground into submission and they themselves liquidated.

These contrasts suggest to me that it may not be altogether unprofitable, in this twentieth century, to ponder again upon the complex character of Cromwell. For myself I have no doubt that it is right and becoming that we should once a year, on the 3rd of September, the anniversary of his death and the victories of Dunbar and Worcester, meet together here at the foot of his statue to honour his name and revere his memory.

Speeches at the Unveiling of the Coat of Arms at Cromwell House, Huntingdon on November 16th, 1968

Professor A. N. Worden, Director General of Huntingdon Research Centre.

My Lord, Hemingford, Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the Huntingdon Research Centre I should like to extend a warm welcome, and I wish it could have been a warmer one, to all of you here today. Unfortunately, indisposition has hit us rather hard and we are sorry that Lord and Lady de Ramsey, Lady Renton and the Lady Mayor of Huntingdon and Godmanchester are unable to be with us. However, we are very glad to have Lord and Lady Hemingford, Sir David Renton, the Lady Mayor of Saint Ives, and the many officials, Society representatives and residents from this area, including of course members of the Thackray and Fisher families who once owned Cromwell House, and also our distinguished guests from other parts, including Mr. John Bush, a direct descendant of Oliver Cromwell, and the President and other members of the Cromwell Association who, together with the late Dr. Powley, Curator of the Cromwell Museum, have done so much to make today's event possible.

I should like now to introduce the President of the Association, Dr. Maurice Ashley, or Mr. Maurice Ashley as I think he prefers to be known, notable contributor to the literature concerning the 17th Century, and other aspects of historical research, biographer of Cromwell, former editor of *The Listener*, and Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Oxford. In this last context, I trust he approves, especially as Oliver Cromwell himself and some later occupants of Cromwell House were at another place, of our use of bleu fencé for the new writing on the wall.

Dr. Maurice Ashley, President of the Cromwell Association.

This is a solemn occasion, ladies and gentlemen, when we in the reign of Queen Elizabeth II commemorate once again the birth of a great British statesman.

Oliver Cromwell was born nearly 370 years ago, towards the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, on the site of this house in Huntingdon which we are marking with a coat of arms.

I must first of all pay tribute to the memory of the late Dr. E. B. Powley who

devoted much of the last months of his life, to preparing, for our ceremony, today. Dr. Powley was largely instrumental in establishing the Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon of which all Cromwellians and, I hope, all Huntingdonians are justly proud. He was an unselfish worker in the cause of rehabilitating Cromwell's memory. If, as I am informed, the detail of the coat of arms is not entirely correct, I myself must take the blame for not having had it checked by a heraldic expert; as I am no expert on heraldry, myself, and possibly Dr. Powley was not either. However, I believe the coat of arms is similar to that erected on the Museum and, if necessary, we can have the detail adjusted. In any case we have reason to be grateful to Dr. Powley's spirit of dedication and adventure.

I have also to thank Professor Alistair Worden, the owner of this house, not merely for giving us permission to erect the memorial to Cromwell, but also for contributing very generously to the expenses involved. Throughout he has shown much kindness and generosity to us Cromwellians, and indeed I think it is true to say that he himself is a Cromwellian at heart. I was delighted to discover that one of his sons, Blair, is engaged on serious research into Cromwellian history at the University of Oxford. We welcome his presence here today as a representative of the younger generation of Cromwellians. I will tell you the odd story of this occasion in so far as I know it. Naturally Cromwell's birthplace was already marked with a plaque before the war. This was done before I myself became an active member of the Cromwell Association and I have no doubt it was carried out under the inspiration of Mr. Isaac Foot and Mr. Russell-Smith, the joint founders of the Association in the nineteenth-thirties. During the turmoil of the last war that plaque somehow disappeared and it was because of its disappearance that Dr. Powley put forward his plan for having a somewhat more elaborate memorial to mark the site. Afterwards the old plaque was rediscovered, I believe, in a ditch. And thus if may not have been vandals or Royalists who were responsible for spiriting away the old plaque.

Oliver Cromwell once said that he was 'by birth a gentleman living neither in any considerable height nor yet in obscurity.' At that time the more distinguished member of his family was his uncle, Sir Oliver Cromwell, who lived in the palace of Hinchinbrooke near here, where King James I often used to hunt stags. The great Oliver was named after his uncle. But his father was hardly obscure as, at one time he had been member of parliament for Huntingdon, just as Sir David Renton is today. Though today we have learned that genes and chromosomes are what make us what we are — and certainly Oliver Cromwell had no reason to be ashamed of his genes and chromosomes — I still incline to believe that we enjoy freedom of will and are the masters of our own fates. Cromwell at any rate thought that the world had a meaning and life had a purpose. And he served his country to the best of his ability. I should not be President of the Cromwell Association if I did not feel sure of that.

When I today watch the great flow of busy traffic forcing its way through Huntingdon and admire the excellent railway service provided to the town, I think to myself that this has always been an important part of England, through which King James I rode on his way from Edinburgh to London in 1603, four years after Cromwell was born. Though it is now a valuable place for business and industry — and the house outside which we stand has become an important medical research centre, which is no mean achievement on Professor Worden's part — Huntingdon has never been unmindful of its great past. It has carefully preserved the grammar school where Oliver Cromwell and Samuel Pepys were educated and which is now the Cromwell Museum. So in this town the ancient and the modern meet. I hope that this marking of Oliver Cromwell's birthplace

will be another important addition to the attractions of the town, which is the site of so many wonderful reminders of England's historic past.

Lord Hemingford, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Huntingdon.

Professor Worden, Your Worship, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We shall all agree that it is indeed appropriate that the Arms of Oliver Cromwell should be unveiled, here at his birthplace, by his latest successor as Member of Parliament for Huntingdon. How appropriate also that, but for her illness, this ceremony would have taken place in the presence of the Mayor of Huntingdon and Godmanchester! I hope you will think it appropriate too that the Chairman of the County Council should be here to express the thanks of the County to the Cromwell Association and to the Huntingdon Research Centre. The Research Centre for medical research has done an immense amount for the Borough and the County, not least by bringing here hundreds of men and women spreading light and learning.

This, however, is a very English occasion; not only because of the weather but because the ceremony is tinged with that lack of logic which is so English a characteristic. For Huntingdon was a Royalist borough; and, when the Cromwell Association, as recently as the beginning of this century offered a statue of Oliver Cromwell, the offer was declined by the Mayor and Corporation. (My grandmother, who lived at Hemingford Abbots, wanted to see the unveiling of the statue at St. Ives, but she was a Royalist; so she hired a room at "The Golden Lion" and watched it from behind lace curtains.) Now, in Huntingdon, the arms of one who was unquestionably a traitor to his King (though not to his Country) are to be unveiled by a former Minister of the Crown who is now a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council.

Honour is to be done by Her Majesty's personal representative in this county to one who was unquestionably a regicide. And others here who are keen Parliamentary voters are most loyal subjects of the Crown.

But Oliver Cromwell's record and character are packed with surprise and paradox. He was a practical mystic. A selfless and devout servant of God, he was an opportunist. A superb leader of men — especially in keeping order — he failed in all his attempts at constructive reform. He was a despotic democrat. The champion of Parliament, he dismissed successive Parliaments as arbitrarily as Charles I had done. Yet his statue stands not only at St. Ives but also in the grounds of the Palace of Westminster.

His Commonwealth and his system of local government by major-generals were cast aside with relief, within a few months of his death. Yet his most virulent critic cannot deny his lasting impact on the history of Great Britain. No wonder we are proud of him!

His record refutes those lines of Shakespeare's:

*"The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones."*

The evil that he did is now buried, except perhaps in Ireland: the good he did lives on. The struggle of the seventeenth century was between King and People, between law and order on the one hand and liberty on the other. Today we have achieved a balance. Today we see liberty as the best nursery of law and order, and law and order as the surest safeguard of liberty. We loyal servants of the Crown can therefore honour Cromwell and are delighted that his Arms are to be unveiled by Sir David Renton.

Sir David Renton, K.B.E., Q.C., Member of Parliament for Huntingdon.

My Lord Lieutenant, Your Worships, Professor Worden, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Oliver Cromwell started his public life as one of the two Knights of the Shire for the old County of Huntingdon and, as Dr. Ashley and Lord Hemingford have mentioned, it is because I have been Member for the past 23 years of that same constituency and still am, that I have been asked to perform this ceremony of unveiling his coat of arms over the door of his birthplace.

It has been pointed out by Lord Hemingford that all my constituents are now loyal subjects of the Queen and for the sake of the record I must remind you that in 1647 at the end of the first civil war Cromwell made a three-hour speech in the House of Commons in which he stressed the need for the Monarchy. I have never made a speech as long as that but Cromwell with his raucous country voice, which must have often resounded in the fields round Huntingdon, and his powers of obstruction and opportunism soon became a great Parliamentary figure, and this was one of the foundations of the national greatness and power which he later achieved.

The other feature of his life which led to his achieving that national position was his courage and success as a cavalry leader. He was always in the thick of the fight and never lost a battle. He had the ability to direct the strategy of a battle while he himself was fighting in the midst of it, just like a good master of hounds who is hunting hounds himself seems to know where everyone is and who everyone is and what is going on all round him.

But before Cromwell was ever a great Parliamentarian or military leader came his life at Huntingdon, having been born in this house and brought up here, and for his education he had only to stroll for a couple of minutes down the High Street. These were the foundations of his greatness and so it is as a son of Huntingdon that we honour his memory today and take pride in the fact that one of the greatest founders of our destiny as a nation was born here.

Huntingdon is proud of Cromwell and all that he achieved, and it is with pride, albeit with humility too, that I unveil this coat of arms in his memory.



Guests at the unveiling ceremony of the Cromwell Coat of Arms

Photo: by courtesy of the "Hants Post"

John Westwood