The Role of Lord Burghley’s Pamphlet Discourse

Pamphlets for War:

Qualities of Queen Elizabeth I

She was quickly able to command unquestioned strike awe, even terror into her servants’ hearts, personality so commanding and forceful as to “by projection of an intensely royal presence, a through his logical rhetoric and his determination to maintain peace and order.

Introduction:

England Under Elizabeth I

“By projection of an intensely royal presence, a through his logical rhetoric and his determination to maintain peace and order.

Qualities of Queen Elizabeth I

• She had a sense of need for compromise, which likely stemmed from a vision of conformity. She also grew up during the Reformation and watched how her country shifted between Catholicism and Protestantism.
• Diplomacy helped England stay away from civil war. Because of her vision for conformity, she took charge of all the politics of her reign. She felt her presence was needed to successfully run the country, especially during a turbulent reformation.
• She had to appease religion while being head of the Anglican church. Because she was a religious leader, she had to find a balance between being the head of the Anglican church and the head of the country.

Findings: Why did Cecil write the pamphlet?

• THE BLOODY QUESTION: “If the pope or any other by his appointment and authority do invade this realm, which part [side] would you take?” (O’Connell).
• This question was important because it revealed a person’s loyalty to either the pope or to country. If they did not choose their country, they could be tried for treason.
• In response to the execution of Edmund Campion, a Jesuit who taught sedition in England.
• The pamphlet was also a strategy for unity: Lord Burghley sought unity and understanding between other countries for the sake of Britain’s success during a turbulent era.
• Propaganda for their cause and a response to other religious propaganda that was published at the time.

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Findings: The Rhetoric

Lord Burghley used logic to explain to his readers the dilemma. In this example, he explained that there were many Catholics with the intention to overthrow the crown:

“And though it is very well known, that both their intentions and manifest actions were bent, to have deposed the Queens Majestie from her Crowne, and to have traiterously let in her place some other whom they [knew], where by if they had not been specially resisted, they would have committed great bloody slaughters and slaughterers of her Majesties faithful subjects, and ruined their native country. Yet by Gods power given unto her Majestie, they were so speedily vanquished, as some few of them suffered by order of law according to their [deserts], many and the greatest part upon confession of their faults were pardoned.”

Here we are able to see Lord Burghley’s sense of urgency through words like “traiterously” and “bloody slaughters” which indicate a need for something to be done. This kind of language was meant to communicate the difficult nature of his dilemma. Still, Lord Burghley was sure to mention the mercy bestowed on those who confessed, which offered a tone of legitimacy and order to his writing.

Meet the Author: William Cecil, Lord Burghley

September 13, 1520-August 4, 1598

Lord Burghley was an English statesman and a chief advisor to Queen Elizabeth I for most of her reign. He was very devoted to Elizabeth and to England, which earned him several powerful positions. Lord Burghley saw civil war as almost apocalyptic for the country, which influenced how he collected and distributed information. Much of Lord Burghley’s work, like “The Execution of Justice,” was meant to validate and protect England from critics.