

History: Unit 2

Lesson 11 of 30

How did the key foreign powers react to the settlement?



How did the Reformation affect Europe?



How did the Reformation affect Europe?

Protestantism began in 1517 in what is modern day Germany. The ideas spread unevenly to different parts of Europe, including Scotland, France and the Netherlands (which at the time was controlled by Spain). These countries did not 'turn' Protestant, but religious divisions emerged within them. When Henry VIII broke with the Roman Catholic Church in 1533, he borrowed from these Protestant ideas to create the Church of England. Again, this didn't mean everyone in England turned Protestant. The majority remained Catholic.



How did the Reformation affect Europe?

Europe's most powerful countries were Catholic. The Habsburg family controlled Spain as well as the Holy Roman Empire and the Austrian Empire during the 16th century. Different members of the Habsburg families ruled these countries, but they remained strongly Catholic. Their mission was to stop the spread of Protestantism in Europe in what was known as the **counter-Reformation**.



How did Elizabeth's religious policy affect relations with European powers?



Relations with France

In 1562, the French Wars of Religion began between Catholics and Protestant Huguenots within France. Elizabeth was worried this could influence religious conflict to take place in England. Nonetheless, Elizabeth agreed to help the French Protestant **Huguenot** cause in the hope that she could negotiate to take back control of the port of **Calais** in northern France. Calais had been lost during **Mary I's** reign (1553-1558).

However, by 1564, the Protestant Huguenots and Catholics had made peace. Therefore, hope of regaining Calais was lost. Elizabeth's relations with French Catholics worsened due to her support of Protestant Huguenots.



Relations with Spain and the Spanish Netherlands

The Netherlands (a country north of France) was under Spanish control during the 16th century, and was known as the **Spanish Netherlands**. **Philip II** was a strict Catholic and did not want to allow Protestantism to spread in the Netherlands. Due to Elizabeth's actions with supporting Protestant **Huguenots** in France, he banned the trading of cloth between England and the Netherlands for a year. This was a **trade embargo**. He was worried that English **merchants** could spread Protestant ideas there.

Elizabeth was equally worried that Spain and France would form a Catholic alliance against her.



Relations with Spain and the Spanish Netherlands

The Netherlands disliked being under Spanish control. In the 1550s, **Philip II Spain** placed tighter controls on the Netherlands by attempting to reorganise the government and Church. He wanted to root out any Protestant 'rebels' in the country, and used the **Spanish Inquisition** to investigate people who were suspected of being Protestants.

This led to the **Dutch Revolt** in 1566 (people from the Netherlands are Dutch and speak Dutch). The revolt was led by Dutch Protestants. In 1567, the Spanish **Duke of Alba** was sent to crush the rebellion with an army of 10,000 Spanish soldiers. After this, the Council of Troubles was set up to continue to root out opposition, and many Dutch Protestants were put to death. Many Dutch Protestants escaped and fled to England.



Relations with Spain and the Spanish Netherlands

Elizabeth was concerned about the **Duke of Alba's** army being located in the Netherlands, which was in easy reach of England. Elizabeth wanted to avoid war as much as possible due to the financial issues she faced.

However, she wanted to make it difficult for Spain in terms of governing the Netherlands, in the hope that they would withdraw their troops. She therefore gave unofficial support to the Dutch rebels. From 1567, she allowed Dutch **'sea beggars'** (pirates) to shelter in English ports and stole Spanish gold from Spanish ships that were passing through the channel on their journeys back and forth from the Netherlands with supplies. This was a risky strategy and served to worsen relations with Spain. Spain later became involved in Catholic plots against Elizabeth in England and supporting Mary, Queen of Scots in her attempt to claim the English throne.



Glossary

Spanish Netherlands - The name of the Habsburg-controlled Netherlands between 1556-1714

Huguenots - French Protestants

Trade embargo - a ban on trading, importing or exporting products from a particular country

Spanish Inquisition - An institution that was responsible for maintaining Catholicism in Spain and Spanish-controlled areas and persecuting heretics

Dutch Revolt - A Protestant revolt against Spanish Catholic control that began in 1566



Questions - let's test your understanding!

1. Where did Protestant ideas spread to during the European Reformation?
2. Why was Spain so powerful during the 16th century?
3. How did English relations with France change after the French Wars of religion in 1562?
4. Why did Elizabeth become involved with the Spanish Netherlands in the 1560s?
5. How did Elizabeth's involvement with the Spanish Netherlands affect her relationship with Spain?

Challenge yourself: What is your assessment of Elizabeth's decision to become involved with the Spanish Netherlands? Was this the right choice? Why/why not?

