

History Unit 2 Elizabeth
Lesson 16 of 30

How threatening were Catholic plots after 1570?



The Ridolfi Plot, 1571

Aims

The Ridolfi Plot was an attempt to restore Catholicism to England. Ridolfi was a Catholic Italian who conspired with the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots, the King of Spain and Pope Pius V to murder Elizabeth I and replace her with Mary.

Plan

The plan was then for Mary to marry the Duke of Norfolk. King Philip II of Spain promised to send Spanish troops to England to help with the plan. Elizabeth had a large intelligence network of spies throughout Europe. They uncovered details of the plot before it took place.

Consequences

Afterwards, Ridolfi was banned from ever returning to England. Parliament also demanded the execution of the Duke of Norfolk and Mary. Although Elizabeth agreed to the execution of the Duke of Norfolk, she refused to do the same for Mary. She hesitated as Mary was both an anointed Queen and a Catholic. If Mary was executed, Elizabeth I feared that Catholics at home and abroad would rise up against her.



The Throckmorton Plot, 1583

Aims

The Throckmorton Plot was an attempt to restore Catholicism to England by removing Elizabeth I from the throne and replacing her with Mary Queen of Scots. The plot was supported by France, Spain and the Pope. The plot is named after Sir Francis Throckmorton, a young Catholic, who passed information about the plot between Mary and the others involved.

Plan

The plan was for the French Duke of Guise to invade England and receive financial support from Spain. Mary would then be freed and Catholics in England would rise up against Elizabeth. The plot was eventually uncovered by Elizabeth's 'spymaster' Sir Francis Walsingham who had been intercepting letters between those involved.

Consequences

Afterwards, Throckmorton was executed and Spanish ambassadors were expelled from England. Francis Walsingham became determined to find evidence to put Mary on trial for treason. She was put her under closer surveillance and her letters were monitored closely.



The Babington Plot, 1586.

Aims

The Babington Plot was another plot which focused on restoring Catholicism to England by removing Elizabeth I from the throne and replacing her with Mary Queen of Scots. It was supported by both King Philip II of Spain, Pope Pius V and France. It is named after Sir Anthony Babington, an English Catholic who had links with France and communicated with Mary about the plot.

Plan

The plan was for the French Duke of Guise to invade England with a military force and remove Elizabeth I. However, before the plot took place, it was discovered by Francis Walsingham who had been intercepting letters between Mary and Babington. These letters contained a coded message from Mary approving the plot.

Consequences

Afterwards, Babington was executed. Now that Walsingham had evidence of Mary's involvement in the plot, Elizabeth I had little choice but to agree to Parliament's demands and put Mary on trial for treason.



Comprehension Questions

1. How did Elizabeth I and Parliament respond to the Ridolfi Plot?
2. What were the consequences of the Throckmorton Plot?
3. What were the consequences of the Babington Plot?
4. Why were Elizabeth's government so effective at uncovering all of these plots before they took place?

Challenge question: Explain how the Catholic plots in the 1570s and 1580s threatened Elizabeth I.

One way in which the Catholic plots in the 1570s and 1580s was...

For example...

This threatened Elizabeth I because...



Extension task information

When thinking about the similarities between the plots you could consider...

- The aims of the Catholic plots...
- Those involved in the Catholic plots...
- The consequences of the Catholic plots...



Glossary

Catholicism - The religion of England before Henry VIII's break with Rome and during the reign of Mary I.

The Duke of Guise - A French cousin of Mary Queen of Scots.

King Philip II of Spain - The Catholic King of Spain.

Mary Queen of Scots - The Catholic Queen of Scotland and second cousin to Elizabeth.

Pope Pius V - The Head of the Catholic Church.

The Duke of Norfolk - English nobleman who wished to marry Mary Queen of Scots.

Francis Walsingham - Elizabeth's 'spymaster' who oversaw Elizabeth's intelligence network of spies in England and abroad.

