

# The role of queen elizabeth 1 history essay



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Queen Elizabeth I survived the hard reign and become the most famous leader in the history of British government. She was a courageous leader who applied every bit of her wisdom to overcome challenges which faced her leadership. However, Christopher Haigh in his book asks some questions about the famous queen Elizabeth I, with accordance to her leadership and gender. The first question Haigh is asking is about her skills in the application of powers in the leadership. He however answers his question by analyzing her role in both the Britain and in the running of the British government thus he develops the thesis ' the role of Queen Elizabeth 1 in the British government and nation'.

In addition, the second question that he is asking is about the relationship of her gender and leadership in the British government. The queen having been the only woman leader in the world at her time she must have faced social problems especially when relating with male counterparts in the leadership. However, Haigh answers the question by analyzing her reactions to the resistance of male leaders and also to the proposals of male leaders as well thus he develops the thesis ' her relationships with the statesmen of her time.'

More over, religion, parliament, royal court, and nobility also brought about challenges to the leadership of Queen Elizabeth 1 but to every challenge she applied her wisdom to contain the challenges. With accordance to these sources of challenges to her leadership, Haigh develops other thesis which are; ' her response to the religion', ' her response to parliamentary delegates about her marriage', ' her response to suitors', ' transformation of royal

courts', ' Queen Elizabeth 1 and military actions between Britain and other states'.

Historically, at the period of the leadership of Queen Elizabeth 1, Britain had the best structured government in the world but rather one of the most complicated government systems in comparison with others. The governing system was a combination of monarchy government and democratic government structures. The government was divided into various groups so as to enable comprehensive leadership in the country. First of all, there were national governments such as parliament and Privy Council which served the entire nation. Secondly, there were regional government bodies such as north and council of the marches and lastly there were minor government bodies which included county and community governments.

The central government of England also known as the national government consisted of the monarch, Privy Council and the parliament all which fell under the monarch. Those three bodies worked together in ruling the nation, raising revenue, make laws and also dealt with national and international affairs. In most cases, the queen was always at the centre stage of any activity which was carried out by any governing system in Britain. She was the final decision maker to any bill or law that was passed by the governing structures since the apprehension of her signature was the final step into the passing of the laws and bills.

The Privy Council acted as the administrative government body of England but it could not carry out its administrative role in the whole England and Wales thus it was assisted by both the council of north and marches. The

council of the north resided in York and assisted in the administration of the northern England and council of marches resided in Wales thus it assisted in the administrative role in the southern England and also patrolled some counties of the English border. However, Queen Elizabeth 1 initiated the settling of the Privy Council in Ludlow, Wales which helped to centralize the role of the Privy Council which enabled it to take administrative charge in the whole of England. However, the councils of both, north and marches were also a part of the localized government since in the Tudor England local governments were necessary.

However, the queen was the most senior person in England thus her commands and laws were to be observed and obeyed by everybody in England. In order to ensure that her laws were obeyed, she established royal representatives who were deployed in every county in the country. The most royal representatives were, the sheriffs, justices of the peace and later the lord lieutenants were also established. More also, she initiated the hierarchy of government systems in the cities and towns where various officials were to oversee matters related to the local governments but the most senior official was the mayor.

However during the times of the queen Elizabeth 1, nobility and gentry had much influence. British considered wealth which at the time was land as the greatest source of power. The few individuals, who possessed large tracts of land in the country, were considered to be wealthy and powerful thus they were masters to the tenants and laborers who worked on them. In addition, gentry and nobility was a position of high responsibility and served as the aids of the monarch at governing the lands on which they presided.

On the other hand, tenants and laborers could present their grievances to their lords who were supposed to take action on them. However, in cases where matter was complicated it was forwarded to the monarch for further considerations. More also, some lords took their work seriously and some served the nation by establishing health, religion and education facilities. For instance, the Warwick hospital was established by lord Earl of Leicester. Tenants and laborers of those lands also owed loyalty to their lord and were expected to respond quickly to the calls of their lords.

In addition, some lords had large number of subordinates who were loyal to them and it was a threat to the country because it was feared that emergence of rebellion by lords would have emerged to civil wars. However this is the reason to why Tudor monarch feared the defiance of the lords who had the ability to command loyalty of large proportion of the population. Queen Elizabeth took precaution when she was in power on the consequences of disagreements with the lords. In order to maintain peaceful ruling on the lords she applied her knowledge of the aristocratic political and religious views which influenced the views of tenants and laborers.

Another important government structure during the times of Queen Elizabeth 1 was the courts structure in Britain. The Great Session or Assizes were the highest courts in England and were held twice each year. Also, there were Quarter Session Courts which were held four times in each year. Those courts handled the serious cases which could not have been handled by other low courts such as Petty Sessions, Manor Courts and in some cases Town Courts. However the individual's choice of courts depended on the individual's wealth.

There were also special courts such as the Star Chamber which dealt with the highest ranked personalities in the country. However in most cases these courts dealt with cases which involved wealthy individuals and also consisted of privy councilors. There was also a court of chancery which had the ability to deal with criminal cases which could not have been handled at low courts. More over, there was also the court of the poor cases which was known as the court of requests. Religious affairs and other cases which were of moral justices were handled by the church courts. The role of queen in the court affairs was to approve the judges who appointed at the high courts and also dealt with the high treason which carried a death sentence.

The queen used her wisdom to unite people who were of catholic and protestant faiths in England. Earlier during the reign of Mary 1, Roman Catholic faith was dominant in the country and the Catholics took the advantage to persecute and execute minority Protestants who were in the country. The actions of Catholics resulted to the displacement of their counterparts, Protestants from the country and settled in the neighboring countries.

This ended after the death of Mary 1 and the coronation of Queen Elizabeth 1 which triggered the coming back of earlier displaced Protestants into the country. However, the coming of the Protestants was viewed to be aimed at carrying out revenge attacks against those who belonged to the catholic faith. To combat the oncoming religious crisis in the country, Queen Elizabeth 1 was made the supreme head of the church in 1559. For a long time, she remained silent on the matters relating to the religious crisis. This resulted to some sort of automatic reconciliation whereby many Catholics

converted to Protestants for fear of the attacks which made the population of Catholics to massively decline.

She also did not insult the catholic faithful but made sure that they did not lose the positions that they held in the government. In 1569, she was faced by a hard test of her authority during the procession of revolts. Two catholic men who were under her authority were sworn into her government which resulted to public anger against her. However, the Catholics remained loyal to her though they were in a small number which she tolerated throughout her reign. Her action, not to take revenge against Catholics, earned her respect from the British which is memorable to many generations. It was her first test of courage on authority in which she emerged victorious.

Also, her response to parliamentary delegates who insisted on her getting married portrayed her courage when she was a young woman. The parliamentarians wanted her to get married to a fellow Briton in order that she may give birth to a male child who could inherit the throne. Her response to them showed that she understood their petition against her to be facilitated by gender discrimination. At this time, there was no gender equality in the parliament and that was the reason to why parliamentarians were not royal to her throne. They wanted the head of the throne to be a man and that's why they dictated that the inheritance of the throne be taken by the male child. She however responded in a respectful manner in which she made them know that she was the head of the throne and marriage was a God's given gift rather not a dictated thing to be done.

Queen Elizabeth 1, like other male leaders in other states went into military action against other states. She was the head of state thus the commander in chief of the armed forces according to the constitution of England during her reign. In the year 1588, execution of Mary Stuart, the queen of Scots, prompted Spain into attempting to attack England. The invasion led to the engagement of the royal navy who won the battle and made England to emerge as the country with the most prominent naval force in the whole world.

Also, the queen led to the starting of the trading culture between England and other states in the world. Industrialization took place with the establishment of the British East India Company which was inaugurated by the queen. Historically, the queen was coronated at a time when the economy of Britain was performing poorly but the starting of industrialization marked the positive economic growth in the country.

The queen had a charismatic character which enabled her to be tolerance and endurance as well. She maintained a good relationship between the fellow statesmen and her. She is believed to have always responded positively to every matter that she acted upon which made statesmen to trust her and remain loyal to her authority. Internationally, she is said to have had a bad relationship with her cousin, Queen Mary of Scotland but she tolerated the bad relationship wisely until when she was executed. Also, she also responded wisely to the foreign men who had proposed to her when she was a young lady who ensured that a good relationship was maintained between England and other states.



In this book, Haigh attempted to show the kind of leadership which is desirable in today's world. He used the leadership of queen elizabeth1 as an exhibit of the world's best leadership in history. Many leaders face challenges during their reigns which put them to the tests of leadership skills thus using the example of the leadership of Queen Elizabeth 1, he advises the leaders on the priorities to be considered when faced with challenges. He concludes by saying that Elizabeth 1 cannot only be considered as a leader of England abut also as a savior who resisted human conflicts from happening when she stood between the religious groups, Catholics and protestants.