

## The emergence of political ideology in early modern Europe

The Peace Treaties of Westphalia (1648) are widely seen as a major watershed in European history. According to most historians they hailed a new international system in which states pursued more secular policies. Consequently the emerging political sphere developed its own culture, vocabulary and principles. *Raison d'état* was no longer theoretical but was widely recognised a leading guideline in the actual making of policy.

The aim of this conference is whether and how this change constituted an actual emergence of political ideology in the early modern age. Using the term *ideology* in a seventeenth century context is hazardous. Traditionally the words has been used to describe 19th and 20th century political movements and like nationalism, liberalism, socialism and fascism. In this sense ideology required a coherent worldview, the aim to change the world or society, a set of ideals and policies, political and social organisations and strategy to influence public opinion. Obviously these characteristics cannot easily be applied to the seventeenth century.

In 1996 Steven Pincus published his *Protestantism and patriotism. Ideologies and the making of English foreign policy, 1650-1668*. The First and Second Anglo-Dutch Wars were, he argued, the result of ideological differences between England and the Dutch Republic. Ideologies were the pre-dominant factor in the shaping of English foreign policies. English historians already described English Interregnum years and the Restoration period in terms of colliding ideological interests. Pincus connected this to the field of international politics. This view, which received support and admiration as well as criticism, introduced a new dimension to the historiographic debate on the nature of seventeenth century European political history.

The logical next step for historical research was to focus on the nature of this phenomenon. Piercing through a thick layer of political, military and diplomatic events, historians aimed to analyse underlying political culture, development of institutions, the process of policy-making, lobbying and networking and ultimately political ideology. There are a number of problems that complicate this research. Obviously the traditional meaning of the term *ideology* was anachronistic. The seventeenth century content of the term requires careful defining.

This conference aims to study the nature and impact of political ideology on European foreign politics and international relations. Three panels will explore this from different angles.

The first panel will focus on the development of national interest. Reason of state in itself claimed to represent national interest. Obviously this often intertwined with the political and economic interests of certain elites. But during the second half of the seventeenth century rivalling political groups increasingly competed for influence, claiming to represent national interest. This meant that the advance of national interest became a political weapon in the competition for power. It also caused the concept to develop autonomously and gain more importance. It grew from mere rhetorics to be the major political objective from which actual political influence was derived.

The second panel discusses the rise of mercantilism in the second half of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. After 1650 economic interests gained political weight on the political agenda. Before governments would sometimes try to advance or regulate trade and shipping, or try to reap the financial profits. Yet, except for the case of the Dutch Republic, the initiative would almost always lie with economic interest groups. But after 1650 governments actively sought to advance commerce. Economic elites managed to deliver their interests to the core of the political system. Economic interest was often associated with national interest.

Panel three will discuss the international balance of power. Although the concept already existed, it was first formulated as a political theory around 1700, based on the emerging coalitions during the Ludovican wars, reaching maturity at the Peace of Utrecht. The Balance of Power became an acknowledged object of foreign policy. The post-Westphalia period also can be regarded as the birth of the realist system of international relations, in which states competed for economic and political power.

The last panel will concentrate on the representation of foreign policy by means of propaganda.

Contact details:

Dr. David Onnekink  
OGC  
Utrecht University  
Janskerkhof 13  
3512 BL Utrecht  
David.Onnekink@let.uu.nl

Dr. Gijb Rommelse  
The Netherlands Institute of Military History  
Alexanderkazerne, building 203  
Van Alkemadeaan  
The Hague  
GA.Rommelse@mindef.nl

## **Conference programme**

**FRIDAY 25 JANUARY 2008**

**13.00 Registration**

**13.30 Welcome and opening**

### **National interest and foreign policy**

Chair: Charles Levillain (Universite de Lille/NIAS, Wassenaar)

**13.45** *The ideology of interests in English foreign policy during the Reign of Charles II*

Stephane Jettot (Sorbonne, Paris)

**14.15** *Pieter de la Courts 'interest' and foreign policy*

Jan Hartman (Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam)

**14.45 Discussion**

**15.00 Tea**

### **Party politics and foreign policy**

Chair: Judith Pollmann (Universiteit Leiden)

**15.30** Party and military historiography

Gary Evans (University of Bristol)

**16.00** Parties and Dutch foreign policy

David Onnekink (Universiteit Utrecht/Universiteit Leiden)

**16.45 Discussion**

**19.00 Conference dinner**

## **SATURDAY 26 JANUARY**

**9.30** Keynote lecture: Steven Pincus

### **Mercantilism and foreign policy**

Chair: Maartje van Gelder (Universiteit van Amsterdam)

**10.30** - *Ideology of mercantilism in Anglo-Dutch relations, 1650-1674*

Gijs Rommelse (The Netherlands Institute of Military History (The Hague):

**11.00** - *Spanish empire & mercantile ideas*

Ana Crespo (Instituto de Historia, Madrid)

**11.30 Discussion**

**11.45 Coffee**

### **The international system**

Chair: Jeroen Duindam (Universiteit Utrecht)

**12.00** - *Balance of power ideology*

Andrew Thompson (University of Cambridge)

**12.30** Temple and William III

Wout Troost (independent scholar)

**13.15: Discussion**

**13.30 Lunch**

### **Representing ideology and foreign policy**

**14.30** Chaline

**15.00** Leopold

**15.30 Discussion**

**15.45** Closing remarks

**16.00** Reception