

The story of piracy in Spanish America begins with Treaty of Tordesillas. But its origins laid in the comercial and political rivalry between Spain and European states. However first challengers of Spain's monopoly weren't pirates but more interlopers. Spanish's bullion from Peru and other products from West Indies was according to law exchangeable only for Spanish merchandise and only by Spanish subjects. This state was in the second half of the sixteenth century attacked by attempts of England - one of the rising modern national states. From this point of view the Pirate zone in New world was a important stage of international warfare among European realms-states.

Apart off this international turmoil stood, but not too far, rejection of Catholicism by Henry VIII. and later again by Elizabeth I. This issue was in the air for more than fifty years. Not even assaults of Spanish Armada could shut down voices of protestants in England in such twilight. The religious struggle should be considered like one of many episodes which defined the emerging nation states.

Centuries of legendizing created myths about Francis Drake and John Hawkins. But for the first time in the Carribbean they were more icons of the early modern spirit of enterprise than pirates. Hawkin's trade passion for 'negros' ironically stands in front of amity between english pirates and maroons. Settlement of African runaways were not only occasional source of spies but the necessary help for Elizabethian sea dogs.

We have to keep in our minds that England in the age of Elizabeth I. was a weak nation state with small naval force. This state was substituted by services of privateers which kept letters of marque even during peacetime. Interests of joint ventures put together and motivated different social classes. Private money and public issues were involved in policy - the experience not too different from events of these days