

WAS THOMAS CROMWELL A MOREAN ? ★

« THOSE TWO MIGHTY OPPOSITES, THOMAS CROMWELL AND THOMAS MORE. » ¹

Although much progress has been made in revising the traditional views of More the Catholic martyr and of Cromwell the strict adherent of Machiavelli, the two statesmen are still considered to be representatives of two conflicting ideologies. R.W. Chambers played up this conflict, depicting More as the last great medieval man, the « consistent opponent of the new ideas which found literary expression in *The Prince*, and were embodied in the person of Thomas Cromwell. » ² Much has been made of the Cromwell-Machiavelli question, with T.M. Parker concluding in 1950 that Cromwell was the « purest example » of Machiavelli's « drab outlook upon the world. » ³

But a « drab outlook » did not separate More from Cromwell, and if, indeed, Cromwell was a « Machiavellian, » it was not, *pace* Parker, because of a « cynical view of politics. » ⁴ For what the two men shared was a belief in the possibility of improving the social and economic life of this world, through public institutions guided by human intelligence and effort. Whether Cromwell read *The Prince* or not has been the subject of controversy for years, with A.G. Dickens wisely deciding that the question was irrelevant, for anything that book had to teach, Cromwell could have learned first-hand during his years in Italy (from 1503 to 1514) ; no one seems to have raised the issue of Cromwell's acquaintance with Machiavelli's *Discourses*. ⁵ Whether Cromwell had read More's *Utopia* has seldom, if ever, been asked, but in any case, that fact itself is not so necessary to this discussion as is Cromwell's use of More's ideas. For, whether or not Cromwell had read any of More's many works, he was not only acquainted with their ideas but espoused many of them himself. In philosophy of reform, in theories of justice and the law, and in specific plans for social and economic reform, the two men were much more in agreement than is generally believed. The last years of More's life notwithstanding, both men believed, most of all, in the necessity and feasibility of improving, through law, their world, Cromwell attempting to translate into action some of the ideas of More.

Counsel to the government, which in those days meant counsel to the prince, is the first problem that appears in the *Utopia*; Morus and Peter Giles are trying to convince Raphael Hythloday that he should apply his vast experience and knowledge of the world to government service, and Morus laments, « What a distant prospect of happiness there will be if philosophers will not condescend even to impart their counsel to kings ! »⁶ (Indeed, the real More is described as having « steadily worked toward the goal of royal service. »⁷) Heretofore most of the advisors of English kings had been clerics and scholastics,⁸ but More did not have clerical philosophers in mind as the best possible government advisors. When Hythloday sees « no room for philosophy with rulers, » Morus answers :

That is true -- not for this academic philosophy which thinks that everything is suitable to every place. But there is another philosophy, more practical for statesmen, which knows its stage, adapts itself to the play in hand, and performs its role neatly and appropriately. This is the philosophy which you must employ. (*Utopia*, p. 99/11-16)

Thus Morus espouses the idea of professional politicians advising the king.

More could hardly have chosen more accurate words to describe Cromwell and his advisors; indeed, being able to adapt himself « to the play in hand » was Cromwell's forte. He himself was not Parker's « happy Philistine, »⁹ and, even more significantly, he was responsible for promoting great numbers of scholars to government, for which he earned the praise of Bishop Hugh Latimer.¹⁰ Never before had so many men come to influence in the government solely on the basis of their merits as scholars; now learning was not only for « the ivory tower but for the market place. »¹¹ Cromwell even entrusted a special secretary, Anthony Bellasis, with recruiting « learned pens. »¹² Two of these (not recruited by Bellasis) were those members of the Padua group, Thomas Starkey and Richard Morison. Learning of the possibilities for men of talent in Henry VIII's court, they both wrote to Cromwell, Starkey in 1535 and Morison in 1536, offering their services, explaining their motives, and even sending samples of their writing.¹³ Their quest was not for honor or money (although Morison constantly seemed to be in need of the latter), but, as Starkey wrote, « Our prince is set on the restitution of the true common weal, and I think I could in some part help thereunto if you will set forward my purpose. »¹⁴ Morison, likewise, offered to « come to England if I can serve my country. »¹⁵ Cromwell

maintained them both, along with other poor scholars.¹⁶ Reginald Pole's humanist group at Padua was thus well-represented in the government of his royal cousin, Henry VIII; Starkey had even asked Pole to come back to England to use his learning in the service of the government, « where it will bear fruit. »¹⁷ Pole's Paduan tutor, Niccolò Leonico Tomeo, who had once paid tribute to Starkey's learning,¹⁸ was corresponding with More in 1525, and, after having read *Utopia*, wrote, « Would that in some place or other there might really exist a true republic of philosophers. »¹⁹ Ten years later Thomas Cromwell was doing his best to realize that Morean wish.

More and Cromwell, then, shared a belief in the power of law to help save society from the effects of human inadequacies. Reform in *Utopia* was political and social, not moral and religious.²⁰ Like Cromwell's reforms (which were, nevertheless, coated with religious defenses and explanations), More's were concerned with *this* world, with human society. The bettering of society had to come through law and not through individual conscience reformed through « pious exhortation. »²¹ Thus More and Cromwell were optimistic that reform was possible. Furthermore, they were both realistic about the politics of power; they knew that reforms had to come from above -- from the highest authorities in the land -- else they could not be enforced.²² Reforms initiated from below would have no chance of succeeding. Hence More wrote *Utopia* in Latin, for the educated people, while Cromwell framed his reforms in the authority of king and parliament. And, as both knew, simply to advise the king was not enough. Being a councillor or a judge was not as effective as working directly with laws and institutions; both men's careers bear this out.

Moreover, More and Cromwell believed that internal reform was not only possible, but also necessary, and that internal concerns should outweigh any external meddlings. Although there were exceptions -- Utopians could conquer unused lands (*Utopia*, p. 127/7-11) -- generally both men did not favor imperialism or war. Hythloday would have told the French king that he had « better look after his ancestral kingdom and make it as prosperous and flourishing as possible ... and have no designs upon other kingdoms since what he already possessed was more than enough for him » (*Utopia*, p. 91/25-29). This statement anticipates by seven years Cromwell's well-known (and perhaps never-delivered) speech to the Parliament of 1523, at which More was Speaker. Seeming to echo Hythloday, Cromwell wrote of France's « insatiable appetite to extend their bound, » but of the « most lamentable cries,

and sorrowful wringing of hands, » which would occur if England should go to war. ²³ He adeptly conceded that war might be necessary, but that the king should not go in person to fight it, for it would be an irreplaceable loss to the country if he were to die. Scotland, the future minister felt, would be a more important gain than France, since it was part of the same island. What he was really saying about a war with France was that a subsidy would hurt the poor people the most, and that in the end, not armed confrontation but « brains and money » would win victories, ²⁴ an idea employed by Edward IV and Henry VII, and by More's Utopians : they are shameless bribers, and

They boast themselves as having acted with valor and heroism whenever their victory is such as no animal except man could have won, that is, by strength of intellect. (*Utopia*, p. 203/21-24)

Peace and no bloodshed were the conditions under which progress and reform could be made. When, at the opening of the 1529 Parliament, Chancellor More made his speech about the need for reform in the realm, Cromwell was listening ; for with the August 1529 Treaty of Cambrai peace had come, and it was time to initiate great changes. ²⁵

However, not only were the philosophies of reform that More and Cromwell embraced similar, but many specific reforms that they advocated and got enacted were also similar. In the field of justice, for instance, there were glaring problems, and, as More wrote, « These two evils, favoritism and avarice, wherever they have settled in men's judgments, instantly destroy all justice, the strongest sinew of the commonwealth » (*Utopia*, p. 197/13-15). This sinew was definitely at the breaking point, especially in regard to the relation of crime and punishment. More complained particularly of the folly of punishing theft by death, again saying through Hythloday that

Since the robber sees that he is in as great danger if merely condemned for theft as if he were convicted of murder as well, this single consideration impels him to murder the man whom otherwise he would only have robbed. (*Utopia*, p. 75/7-10)

The death penalty served no purpose, for « the object of public anger is to destroy the vices but to save the persons » (*Utopia*, p. 79/12-13). Likewise, Cromwell's secretary Stephen Vaughan had written to him pointing out that torture and harsh punishment of religious dissenters only encouraged them to flee the realm and perhaps then harm England from abroad, while in the end not changing their beliefs at all. ²⁶ Would not Mary Tudor have been more effective if she had reconsidered the use of torture and death ?

Furthermore, there were technical problems in England's administration of justice, concerning procedure, recipients, and the administrators themselves in an unclear and uncoded system. More may have been a lawyer « above all else » ; ²⁷ he nevertheless criticizes the present legal system in allowing Hythloday to exclude lawyers from Utopia : the Utopians

absolutely banish from their country all lawyers, who cleverly manipulate cases and cunningly argue legal points. They consider it a good thing that every man should plead his own cause and say the same to the judge as he would tell his counsel. (*Utopia*, p. 195/15-19)

In his own life, as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, More often let the defendants present their cases themselves, while he personally heard them, as in the Richard Townely case. ²⁸ Starkey, who had read *Utopia*, also suggested that the number of lawyers be decreased, ²⁹ and Cromwell twice put in his remembrances, in 1535 and 1536, plans to diminish both the number and power of lawyers, « which persons be the cause of great plea and dissention. » ³⁰ The great number of lawyers needed to explain the incomprehensible laws had in turn rendered the laws useless. « The untrained judgment of the common people cannot attain to the meaning » of such laws, More lamented ; « since all laws are promulgated to remind every man of his duty, the more recondite interpretation reminds only very few » (*Utopia*, p. 195/36, 28-30). J.A. Guy suggests that More the chancellor may have been inspired by his own Polylerites in his effort to simplify and make more equitable the English legal system. ³¹ But England's laws were on the whole not any clearer twenty years later, according to Starkey, who noted that because of their ambiguous wording and their infinite interpretations, litigation was protracted far beyond the time necessary to decide a case, to the detriment of all involved, especially poorer litigants. ³² The same year that Starkey was finishing his *Dialogue between Lupset and Pole*, Cromwell was mulling over the very problem of people having to wait in prison so long, neither society nor the accused gaining in the process. ³³ The first actual attempt at codification did not occur until the next century, under Sir Edward Coke ; ³⁴ yet Cromwell tried to improve the availability as well as the quality of justice by creating the Courts of Augmentations and Wards and by reorganizing the Courts of Star Chamber and Requests. ³⁵ That there were pressing problems in the field of justice was obvious to most people, but few except Cromwell were in a position to effect any changes.

One final problem was that all subjects were not receiving equal justice. In discussing treaties, for example, More has Hythloday suggest that « there are at least two forms of [justice] : the one ... fit only for the common sort and ... the other a virtue of kings. »³⁶ Related to this problem was the abuse of sanctuaries, which in More's view only complicated the administration of justice, slowing up prosecution and generally not benefiting society at all.³⁷ Cromwell felt similarly, and early in 1540 introduced legislation in the Lords that would completely exempt from sanctuary protection those accused of murder, rape, burglary, robbery, arson, or sacrilege ; this bill became enacted the same year and sought to take care of those many idle and evil persons « nothing regarding the fear of God nor the punishment of the King's laws. »³⁸ Gradually the connection of the clergy with the administration of justice was being broken, perhaps having begun with the choice of layman More, who himself was aware of injustices in the Church courts,³⁹ to the position of Lord Chancellor in 1529. But the law never achieved the simplicity and comprehensibility found in Utopia, for that kind of law could occur only in a land without private property. Hythloday contrasted Utopia with nations

where whatever a man has acquired he calls his own private property, but where all these laws daily framed are not enough for a man to secure or even to distinguish from someone else's the goods which each in turn calls his own, a predicament readily attested by the numberless and ever new and interminable lawsuits. (*Utopia*, p. 103/39-40 ; p. 105/1-4)

With all the inequities involved in administering property and inheritances, for example, Cromwell would have done just as well to have wished for the abolition of private property, too. At least he took a large step in that direction by abrogating the clergy's extensive hold on property, and by abolishing the jurisdiction that the clergy enjoyed over the laity.

No less fundamental than justice to a good society was education, in which Cromwell believed as strongly as More. More's reputation as an international scholar and opponent of scholasticism has not diminished in the centuries since the days of *Utopia*, but just as important is the fact that he was not « elitist » about education : he believed, in advance of his time, that everybody should have a certain minimum of learning, which would profit the entire commonwealth. In his paradise « all children are introduced to good literature, » and « a large part of the people, too, men and women alike, throughout their lives, devote to learning the hours which ... are free from manual labor » (*Utopia*, p. 159/10-14). Moreover, he was interested in practical learning, learning

which could be translated into positive action by those in a position to influence the governing process. Likewise, Cromwell's « formative years » in Italy accustomed him to the idea of analytic and realistic thinking, as opposed to the scholastic sort.⁴⁰ He had already begun helping scholars to finance their studies when he was a member of Cardinal Wolsey's household,⁴¹ and during his years in power he was constantly being asked to advance learning.⁴² His most famous protégés, Starkey and Morison, were themselves strong believers in an educated nation. Starkey blamed the errors of the times on the « lack of good teachers and instructors, »⁴³ and, furthermore, wanted education specialized so as to suit each person's abilities, as it was in Utopia, with the bureaucratic addition of admission officers for « every craft, art, and science » to ensure that people were making the correct career choice.⁴⁴ Dickens claims that the dissolution of the monasteries did little to harm English education,⁴⁵ but in any case Starkey, not content to approve of their dissolution, wanted to convert them into schools and universities.⁴⁶ Cromwell's men were thus not destroyers of culture and education, while Cromwell himself was eager to promote humanist education as well.

In addition, the Cromwellians saw education as an instrument of social change. Morison believed that everyone should have an education ; impoverished, unemployed, and papally-inclined persons could not be forced to obey the government, but rather needed to be educated in a trade and in the established religion.⁴⁷ In his Injunctions of 1536, Cromwell commanded the wealthier clergy to support poor university scholars,⁴⁸ while at the same time Archbishop Thomas Cranmer abolished the custom of having only the sons of noblemen attend the Canterbury Cathedral School.⁴⁹ As Cromwell's, Wolsey's, and More's own rise to power exemplified, the time was ripe for the advancement of persons on the basis of merit without concern for their birth.⁵⁰ Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, was rebuked by both the king and the Privy Council when he tried to force on them his passionate belief that only nobility should control the realm. Henry refused to allow anyone to dictate to him on the matter of who should serve him,⁵¹ and the Privy Council told Norfolk that its membership would not be restricted to the nobility.⁵² The rebellions in 1536-37, which Norfolk, ironically, had to subdue, were aristocratic, not « proletarian » ; the government, publicizing itself in English, showed a concern for the lower classes which was radical in its day. Social equality was, of course, a long way off (and perhaps is yet to happen). Even Morison admitted that « lords must be

lords, commons must be commons, »⁵³ but he believed that social rank would soon be limited only by one's abilities, people's chances for rising in rank being enhanced by their being able to choose their own occupations. Slowly Norfolk's ideas would have to give way to Cromwell's, but not until after the duke had enjoyed a symbolic victory in the death of his low-born rival.

Nevertheless, social and economic inequality remained a reality, and the government could not ignore it or its implications for a society based, in theory, upon law and order. In the face of poverty, disease, illiteracy, and other disturbing problems, the government could choose to be callous, but both More and Cromwell firmly wanted it to be charitable and compassionate. Throughout his writings More stressed charity, seeing it, and not faith, as the highest Christian virtue.⁵⁴ His philosophy of compassion inspires Hythloday's remark that the Utopians « judge it cruel that a person should be abandoned when most in need of comfort » (*Utopia*, p. 189/36-67). In his *Dialogue of Comfort*, he denounced the inhumanity of « casting out comfortless » the retainers who had fallen ill during the term of their service ; people were being exploited for their labor value, and then when they could no longer be used, they were left poor and helpless.⁵⁵ In *Utopia* there was no such problem ; the government took care of all those unable to work, the labor of their youth earning them security, rather than poverty. *Pace* Elton,⁵⁶ a similar philosophy is at work behind Cromwell's reforms, and the draft of a proposed poor law written during the years of the Secretary's rise to influence reads much like More :

... some have fallen to such misery through the default of their masters which have put them out of service in time of sickness and left them wholly without relief or comfort.⁵⁷

Cromwell himself was known to have fed more than two hundred persons at his door every day, and Morison praised him strongly as a benefactor of poor scholars -- « who known to you will not have felt a few of your benefits ? »⁵⁸

But the Cromwellians had more in mind than just personal charity, an idea which certainly did not derive from their own age. Rather, the *state* was to be made an instrument of care and charity for the common weal ; the whole idea of a common weal was, in fact, to be emphasized. Vaughan appealed to Cromwell in 1534 to « help the common causes of the realm, »⁵⁹ and the latter was, by then, in a position to influence the realm's social and economic events.

For the economic problems of the times were particularly difficult and everywhere apparent. More correctly identified two of the major reasons for the great deal of begging and unemployment as enclosures and price increases, especially in wool, grain, and meats (*Utopia*, pp. 67-69). In *Utopia*, Hythloday was convinced that economic inequality did not *have* to exist, but, rather, that « commonwealths » of the time were « nothing else than a kind of conspiracy of the rich, who are aiming at their own interests under the name and title of the commonwealth » (*Utopia*, p. 241/27-29). The rich, by their greed, swindled the poor publicly as well as privately, inventing tax laws which harmed those people who deserved the most from the commonwealth, but got the least. Furthermore, contrary to common belief, a king would not be more powerful if the gulf between his wealth and that of his subjects were greater, or, in the words of Hythloday, « It is not consistent with the dignity of a king to exercise authority over beggars but over prosperous and happy subjects » (*Utopia*, p. 95/11, 32-33). Arthur S. MacNalty suggests that, had More been given time, he would have « in his wisdom and humanity ... devised a sound system of poor relief. »⁶⁰ But although More's name was never attached to any of the poor legislation that emerged, his specific ideas as well as his spirit of reform were incorporated into the plans of the Cromwellians, who enacted the first serious poor-relief measures and laid the groundwork for the first really comprehensive poor laws.

The economic welfare of the country was one of Cromwell's most important concerns, even up to his last months when, as usual, he was overwhelmed with pressing business.⁶¹ But he was in a position to understand and make the necessary changes in the economy -- he had engineered, for example, the *valor ecclesiasticus* -- and his advisors and other reformers trusted in his ability and desire to do the job.⁶² At the heart of many complaints about poverty and idleness were enclosures. Repeated attempts at making and enforcing anti-enclosure laws had been ineffective ; at least five proclamations were made before 1535 on the problem.⁶³ In 1534 the government adopted a new tactic -- limiting the number of sheep one could possess to two thousand.⁶⁴ The preamble of the Act shows concern and pity for those who have taken to crime because economic conditions beyond their control have prevented them from earning an honest living :

... whereof a marvelous multitude and number of the people of this Realm be not able to provide meat ... but be so discouraged with misery and poverty that they fall daily to theft, robbery and other inconvenience, or pitifully die for hunger and cold.⁶⁵

The preamble goes on to accuse greedy landowners of coveting profit at the expense of so many other persons. This Act was a step in the right direction, but it was only after overcoming much resistance from the Lords (who had a great deal of vested interest in enclosed lands) that Cromwell succeeded in getting an enclosure act (27 Henry VIII, c. 22) which dealt with the causes as well as with the symptoms of the evil. The act made sheep farming less profitable by setting a maximum on the number of sheep one could own, and it distinguished between « legitimate » and « anti-social » pasturing, which no previous acts had ever done.⁶⁶ No further enclosure legislation was enacted during the reign, and this particular law was still being used a century later. Sheep grazing did not stop, nor would its elimination have been beneficial to the country, but at least further enclosures, and consequent price rises, were discouraged. For the enclosure movement and the resultant decline of agricultural production had encouraged grain-hoarding as well as the formation of confederations of grain-growers, who set high prices for their grain, which was, because of scarcity, already expensive. Thus before the enclosure law, the government had to issue several proclamations forbidding hoarding and price-raising,⁶⁷ but after the enclosure act was passed no more such proclamations were made until Edward VI, whose proclamation simply confirmed and enforced earlier statutes and proclamations.⁶⁸

But there still remained the problem of idleness and vagabondage. In the 1539 « Official Account of the Reformation, » the « States of the Realm » described themselves as having « by a law, provided to avoid idle people and vagabonds, to cherish and sustain the poor impotent, and live so that the works of charity are observed better than ever. »⁶⁹ Under Cromwell, they had certainly tried. More had railed against the idleness of three major groups of people -- the nobility, clergymen, and women (*Utopia*, pp. 63, 131). In words which he perhaps later regretted, he cautiously allowed a fool in *Utopia* to say that friars « are the greatest vagabonds of all » (*Utopia*, p. 83/23-24). With noblewomen being perhaps the only « idle women, » there were actually two basic groups of « vagabonds, » those who did not work simply because they had no desire to, and those who were ill or who were left jobless due to circumstances beyond their control. Cromwell, like More, had solutions for both of these groups, although *ex officio* he was more concerned with the economic plight of the latter than with the moral position of the former. Numerous proclamations had been made to enforce statutes against vagrancy, one simply saying that vagabonds

must leave London and return to their place of origin,⁷⁰ but both statutes and proclamations had been, for the most part, ineffective.⁷¹ It was not laws against non-productive use of time that were going to solve the idleness problem, but rather the constructive offering of employment to those unable (or unwilling) to find it themselves.

It is in the area of public employment where Starkey's and Morison's advice sounds so much like More's, and where Cromwell was most receptive to reform -- and most thwarted in it. Starkey suggested that every child, from the age of seven, should be brought up in a trade or in letters, with none being allowed to engage in the service of the nobility as a career.⁷² One of his specific suggestions was for the government to employ more people in the linen industry, a proposal which Cromwell was working on during his last year.⁷³ Another of his proposals could have been taken directly from *Utopia* : « And as to articles of export, the Utopians think it wiser to carry them out of the country themselves than to let strangers come to fetch them » (*Utopia*, p. 185/10-12). Starkey wrote that forcing English merchants to use English shipping would help solve the problems of unemployed mariners.⁷⁴ If he had lived two years longer, he would have seen his -- and More's -- suggestion made into law as the nation's first navigation act.⁷⁵ Likewise, Morison, in his *Remedy for Sedition*, understood the need to train the poor for jobs : « it should be much better to find a way, that none might have will to rebel, than to truss up rebellious people. »⁷⁶ The rebels of the northern uprising blamed Cromwell for their economic problems, when in fact he was at that very time working on poor relief legislation comprehensive enough to be effective, and his defender, Morison, was symbolic of what a poor but talented person could become.

The Poor Law enacted in 1536⁷⁷ is considered the first realistic and comprehensive attempt to deal with poverty, yet had Cromwell been able to push through a different draft, the results might have been revolutionary. The original author of this draft could have been William Marshall, a disciple of Marsiglio of Padua and a pamphleteer for Cromwell. He had also been associated with More ; the latter made an intercession for him to have the office of Secretary of Compter in 1529.⁷⁸ Guy, as noted, credits St. German with the draft.⁷⁹ In any case, the draft distinguished between those who were unemployed by choice, those who would like to work but could not find a job, and those who were physically unable to work, and dealt with each group accordingly. It proposed that work projects in a certain area be proclaimed a week in advance, and all unemployed able-bodied persons in that area be requi-

red to report for the job, which would bring them « reasonable wages » as well as « meat and drink »⁸⁰ The punishments for refusal to report were comparatively light, as Elton has shown, and vagabonds were given two chances to become a part of the working force. The drafter of the bill was obviously more concerned with employing people and making them useful than with punishing them. This aspect of the bill solved two problems at once by offering employment, while working to solve some of the realm's physical problems, such as bad roads and destroyed towns. Begging was discouraged; begging children were to be apprenticed, and the impotent poor were to be maintained at the public expense, partly by a graduated income tax and partly by alms collected at the parish church. Those too ill to work would have medical attention, in the hope of curing them so that they would be able to work again.⁸¹ The stress is again on the positive. The most innovative aspects of the draft were, first, the full-time censors, appointed by the Council, whose job it was to seek out and employ or punish vagabonds, and to find the impotent and sick poor and have them brought to hospitals, and secondly, the graduated income tax, which was to finance the public works. This latter revolutionary arrangement most likely doomed the bill, which met great opposition in parliament, for, as More had said, « all gatherynge of money ... is the only thyng that withdraweth the heartes of Englyshmenne fro the Prince. »⁸² Elton sees « not the slightest link between this draft and More's *Utopia*. »⁸³ Yet it was, like *Utopia*, not a long sermon on poverty, but a practical, administrative measure which dealt with the cure and prevention of the problem. Inspired by statesmen from More to Starkey,⁸⁴ the economic plan was not enacted until near the end of Elizabeth's reign, and then not even in so complete a form as was this draft. A truly Cromwellian statement of intent to remedy an ever-increasing problem, this remedy had to be postponed because of the changes in religious institutions taking place.

The reverse problem -- excessive wealth -- was even more difficult to legislate against, but Cromwell, like More, recognized that people were impoverishing themselves by their extravagance. Hythloday, in accents reminiscent of More's other assaults on pride (*superbia*), said that

avarice and greed are aroused in every kind of living creature by the fear of want, but only in man are they motivated by pride alone -- pride which counts it a personal glory to excel others by superfluous display of possessions. (Utopia, p. 139/5-9)

Nor was this extravagance limited to a social class: « Not only the servants of noblemen but the craftsmen and ... in fact all classes alike, are given to much ostentatious sumptuousness of dress and to excessive indulgence at table » (*Utopia*, p. 69/30-33), and it was suggested that people be legally restricted to a certain amount of land and income (*Utopia*, p. 105). This was partially attempted in the enclosure act of 1535, which, as previously explained, restricted grazing land to two thousand acres per farm.⁸⁵ A sumptuary law did appear in 1532, and was re-enforced in 1534 by a proclamation.⁸⁶ The 1532 « Act for Reformation of Excess in Apparel » ascribed to extravagance, as More had, « the utter impoverishment and undoing of many inexpert and light persons inclined to pride, mother of all vices. »⁸⁷ It was not completely Morean in that it restricted persons to a certain degree of clothing in keeping with their socioeconomic status (« states, pre-eminences, dignities, and degrees »), and thus accentuated, rather than obliterated, class differences. But the egalitarianism of apparel in *Utopia* had one major exception which, interestingly, is almost repeated in the 1532 statute: the priests in *Utopia* wore beautiful, multicolored coats, anything similar to which was not allowed for the rest of the population (*Utopia*, p. 239/19-29), just as only the king of England was allowed to wear purple. The differences in apparel allowed by More and Cromwell were significant statements of their realization that no matter how equal in a society one's opportunities for economic prosperity might be, there would still exist certain differences, especially intellectual ones, between people.

Starkey and Morison are the best examples of those who, because of their intellectual powers, were able to become directly involved in governing the realm. Zeeveld sees the two men as the heirs of the « More-Pole tradition » of humanist-scholars employed in government service, and Franklin Baumer finds evidence of Starkey's having read *Utopia*.⁸⁸ Again it is useless to decide whether or not Starkey actually had read it -- or whether the exiled Pole was only trying to harm Cromwell's reputation by associating him with Machiavelli, since Morison, who most probably had read the Florentine's works, had written under a pseudonym and therefore was not susceptible to attacks. But some points about Starkey, one of Cromwell's chief pamphleteers, deserve attention. Like More, he believed that, despite the built-in limitations of the job of advising a king, people with abilities and experience to offer should nevertheless welcome the opportunity to benefit the common weal in whatever way possible, in planning for the best under the circumstances:

Like as there is some respect to be had of time for the abstaining from the entreaty of matters of the common weal, so there is much more of taking the time when it is, and taking occasion when it offereth itself.⁸⁹

Also like More (and Marsiglio of Padua, from whom he derived many of his ideas), Starkey believed that the state was a « natural phenomenon », and that the active, civic life was more natural than the contemplative one.⁹⁰ This led to their belief in the power of the laws. Not that laws by themselves are perfect ; they had to be « perfected by Christian polity. »⁹¹ The man who developed the idea of the *via media* had an honest desire to serve the king, for neither money nor honors (neither of which he got).⁹² With Morison he represented the Morean ideal of intellect serving the country -- practical intellect listened to and advice put into action. As previously discussed, many of Starkey's suggestions were enacted, or at least seriously considered by the government.⁹³ More's words of encouragement to a would-be advisor prophecy the *via media* philosophy that would soon dominate the religious settlement, thanks to Starkey :

You must not abandon the ship in a storm because you cannot control the winds. On the other hand, you must not force upon people new and strange ideas which you realize will carry no weight with persons of opposite conviction. (*Utopia*, p. 99/34-38)

Indeed, Cromwell's advisors were worthy successors to the intellectual tradition of More, with the added attributes of practicality and applicability.

But to return to More and Cromwell. Of all the ideas they shared, most pervasive was their hatred of pride. More described pride as the sin which, above all others, impedes human progress :

This serpent from hell entwines itself around the hearts of men and acts like the suckfish in preventing and hindering them from entering on a better way of life. (*Utopia*, p. 243/39 ; p. 245/1-2)

Cromwell had occasion enough to be proud, and show it, but he wisely avoided the ostentatious display that had made Wolsey so hated, and was content to serve his prince without trying to maintain factions. Elton gives several examples of Cromwell's preference for promoting peace and justice over the advancement of his own interests and those of his supporters.⁹⁴ Indeed, he ascribes Cromwell's fall to his being « insufficiently ruthless, »⁹⁵ not punishing dangerous enemies when he had the opportunity.⁹⁶ Cromwell did not hate Gardiner and Norfolk as they hated him ; Norfolk's noble pride was insulted by the influence that the shearman's son had over the king. Dickens says that Cromwell pre-

ferred to use « hospitality and persuasion » with the noble and powerful ;⁹⁷ he undoubtedly knew that an excessive show of pride would only endanger the revolution he was so carefully trying to bring about. Thus he allowed himself to take a lot of abuse (which, indeed, he got) ; his « low birth » prevented him from wasting time and energy defending his « dignity » and position. Norfolk's pride, however, destroyed one of the commonwealth's greatest destroyers of pride -- Thomas Cromwell.

To make the earthly world more livable, to give intellectual reformers more influence and access to government -- these were the goals of Thomas More and Thomas Cromwell who, despite their obvious differences, believed and acted similarly in regard to many of the most important issues of the time. Parker's assertion (quoted above, p. 5) that the latter had a « cynical view of politics » cannot be accepted in view of Cromwell's attempts and successes at reform. Morus, responding to the *sermo* of Hythloday, concluded his discourse with a sigh of pessimism : « I readily admit that there are very many features in the Utopian commonwealth which it is easier for me to wish for in our countries than to have any hope of seeing realized » (*Utopia*, p. 245/39 ; p. 247/1-3). But through Cromwell's efforts England really did try to imitate some of those « very many things, » and was pushed closer to her own Utopia. Roger Ascham, secretary to Morison in 1550-53, wrote that the opposite of a Catholic was a Machiavellian, and that both were dangerous.⁹⁸ Somewhere between those extremes were More and Cromwell, but is it necessary to classify the two reformers ? Where Elton calls Cromwell both « victim and victor » of his reforms,⁹⁹ he could have been referring to More, who had been just as much an inspiration to the new order as he was a martyr to it.

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NOTES

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1. R.W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (New York : Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1935), p. 292.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 360.
3. T.M. Parker, « Was Thomas Cromwell a Machiavellian ? » (*The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 1, 1950), p. 75.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
5. See G.R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 169 ; A.G. Dickens, *Thomas Cromwell and the English Reformation* (London : The English Universities Press, Ltd., 1959), p. 15 ; R.B. Merriman, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1902), vol. I, p. 10.
6. Thomas More, *Utopia*, ed. Edward Surtz and J.H. Hexter (The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More, vol. 4 ; New Haven : Yale University Press, 1965), p. 87/13-15. References henceforth to be given in the text.
7. J.A. Guy, *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1980), p. 7.
8. Edward IV was the first to change this trend ; he had many lay, university-trained persons in his secretary's office (J. Otway-Ruthven, *The King's Secretary and the Signet Office in the XVth Century* [Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1939], pp. 77-79). But More himself was the first lay Lord Chancellor, and Cromwell the first lay King's Secretary, in decades.
9. Parker, « Was Thomas Cromwell a Machiavellian ? », p. 74.
10. W. Gordon Zeeveld, *Foundations of Tudor Policy* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 112.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
12. *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, ed. J.S. Brewer *et al.* (London, 1862-1932, reprinted 1965), xii II 885, 996, 1175 (henceforth cited as *LP*).
13. *Ibid.*, viii 213, x 372.
14. *Ibid.*, viii 213.
15. *Ibid.*, x 372.
16. *Ibid.*, ix 103, x 565.
17. *Ibid.*, viii 218 ; luckily Starkey was not alive twenty years later.
18. Zeeveld, *Foundations*, p. 57.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 53 (from F.A. Gasquet, *Cardinal Pole and His Early Friends*, London, 1927).
20. *Utopia* pp. 157-63 ; Martin Fleisher, *Radical Reform and Political Persuasion in the Life and Writings of Thomas More* (Geneva : Librairie Droz, 1973), p. 8.
21. J.H. Hexter, « Thomas More : On the Margins of Modernity » (*The Journal of British Studies*, vol. 1, 1961), p. 35 ; J.H. Hexter, *The Vision of Politics on the Eve of the Reformation* (New York : Basic Books, Inc., 1973), p. 104.
22. Fleisher, *Radical Reform and Political Persuasion*, pp. 124, 140.
23. Merriman, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell* I, 30 ff.
24. *Ibid.*, I, p. 46.
25. Edward Hall, *Chronicle*, 764, in « Thomas More, Councillor » (in G.R. Elton, *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics & Government*, vol. I, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 153.
26. *LP* v 574.
27. Guy, *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More*, p. 93. Cf. J.H. Hexter, who maintains that More had an absolute « aversion » to committing his time to the practice of law (« Thomas More and the Problem of Counsel, » in *Quincentennial Essays on St. Thomas More : Selected Papers from the Thomas More College Conference*, ed. Michael J. Moore, Boone, N.C. : Albion, Appalachian State University, 1978), p. 58.
28. Margaret Hastings, « Sir Thomas More : Maker of English Law ? » in *Essential Articles for the Study of Thomas More*, ed. R.S. Sylvester and G.P. Marc'hadour (Hamden, Ct. : Archon Books, 1977), p. 112.
29. Thomas Starkey, *A Dialogue Between Lupset and Pole*, ed. K.M. Burton (London : Chatto & Windus, 1948), p. 72.
30. *LP* ix 725 (ii), x 254.
31. Guy, *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More*, pp. 122-23. Apparently the Duke of Norfolk, also a villain in the Cromwell story, was an obstacle to any Utopian reforms. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
32. Starkey, *Dialogue*, p. 113.
33. *LP* x 254.
34. G.R. Elton, « Reform by Statute » (*Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. LIV, 1968), p. 179.

35. G.R. Elton, *Reform and Renewal* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 141-42.
36. *Utopia*, p. 199/11-15. Priests in Utopia, being so few and so holy, were never brought to court for their crimes. *Ibid.*, p. 229/24-25.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 81/10-11. Treating sanctuaries in *Richard III* (ed. R.S. Sylvester, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1963, pp. 29-32), More has the Duke of Buckingham speak of their abuses, saying that « Ye shall find it much better to lack both [the disadvantages and the advantages of sanctuary], than to have both. » In More's own first year as Chancellor, parliament did enact legislation to deal with sanctuary abuse by felons and murderers (21 Henry VIII, c. 2, in Guy, *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More*, p. 122).
38. *LP xv 438* ; 32 Henry VIII, c. 12. Cromwell's statute was much more radical and comprehensive than the earlier one.
39. J.J. Scarisbrick, « Thomas More : The King's Good Servant » (in *Thought*, vol. LII, no. 206, September 1977), p. 259.
40. Dickens, *Thomas Cromwell*, p. 14.
41. *LP iv (III) 5446, 5946*.
42. For example, that of Thomas Wynter, *LP vi 314*.
43. Starkey, *Dialogue*, p. 130.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
45. Dickens, *Thomas Cromwell*, p. 29.
46. Starkey, *Dialogue*, p. 169.
47. Richard Morison, « A Remedy for Sedition, » in Zeeveld, *Foundations*, p. 218.
48. Dickens, *Thomas Cromwell*, p. 88.
49. Zeeveld, *Foundations*, p. 194.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 193. This refers to Richard Pace's forward-looking statement in *De Fructu*, p. 12 (in *LP ii II 3765*).
51. *LP xii 1118*.
52. *Ibid.*, xii 636.

53. Zeeveld, *Foundations*, p. 211.
54. More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, in Fleisher, *Radical Reform and Political Persuasion*, p. 118.
55. *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation* (in *Utopia*, p. 319, Commentary to p. 62).
56. G.R. Elton, « An Early Tudor Poor Law, » (*The Economic History Review*, 2nd series, vol. 7, 1953), p. 66.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 57. Cf. Guy, who ascribes the draft to Christopher St. German (*The Public Career of Sir Thomas More*, pp. 151-55). I do not attempt to resolve the controversy. What is important here is that the socioeconomic ideas were Morean ; that Cromwell (*pace* Guy) could recognize « good ideas when he saw them, » in that he kept a copy of the plan, reinforces the link between More and Cromwell.
58. Stowe, *Survey of London* (in Dickens, *Thomas Cromwell*, p. 38 ; trans. from Latin by Lin E. Welden) ; G.R. Elton, *Policy and Police* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 192.
59. *LP vii 1515*.
60. Arthur S. MacNalty, « Sir Thomas More as Public Health Reformer, » (in *Essential Articles*), p. 127.
61. *LP xiv I 655*.
62. *Ibid.*, xi 1481.
63. P.L. Hughes and J.F. Larkin, eds., *Tudor Royal Proclamations* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1964), no. 75 (6 Henry VIII), nos. 110 and 113 (18 Henry VIII), and nos. 121 and 123 (20 Henry VIII) ; henceforth referred to as *TRP*.
64. Henry VIII, c. 13.
65. *Ibid.*
66. Elton, *Reform and Renewal*, pp. 103-106.
67. *TRP* no. 121 (20 Henry VIII), nos. 125 and 127 (21 Henry VIII -- these are attributed to More), and no. 151 (26 Henry VIII).
68. *Ibid.*, no. 373 (5 Edward VI).
69. *LP xiv I 402*. 70. *TRP* no. 131 (23 Henry VIII).

71. 3 Henry VIII, c. 3 ; 6 Henry VIII, c. 2 ; *TRP* no. 132 (23 Henry VIII), no. 138 (24 Henry VIII), no. 163 (27 Henry VIII), and no. 183 (30 Henry VIII).

72. Starkey, *Dialogue*, p. 142. 73. *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 140 ; *LP* xiv (1) 872.

74. Starkey, *Dialogue*, p. 159. 75. 31 Henry VIII, c. 14.

76. Morison, « A Remedy, » in Zeeveld, *Foundations*, p. 218.

77. 27 Henry VIII, c. 25.

78. Elton, « An Early Tudor Poor Law, » p. 65 ; *LP* iv III (app.), 133.

79. See above, n. 69.

80. « An Early Tudor Poor Law, » p. 58. 81. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

82. More, *Richard III*, p. 5. 83. « An Early Tudor Poor Law, » p. 66.

84. Starkey, *Dialogue*, p. 160 ; Elton, « Reform by Statute, » p. 174.

85. 27 Henry VIII, c. 22.

86. 24 Henry VIII, c. 13 ; *TRP* no. 143 (25 Henry VIII).

87. 24 Henry VIII, c. 13.

88. Zeeveld, *Foundations*, p. 16 ; Franklin L. Baumer, « Thomas Starkey and Marsilius of Padua, » (*Politica*, vol. 2, 1936), p. 191.

89. Starkey, *Dialogue*, p. 38.

90. Baumer, « Thomas Starkey and Marsilius of Padua, » (from Marsiglio, *Defensor Pacis*, I ii), p. 194 ; *Utopia*, p. 227/16-17.

91. Zeeveld, *Foundations*, p. 144.

92. *LP* viii 575, ix 1160. 93. See above, notes 37 and 38.

94. *LP* xiii II 935, xi 1216.

95. G.R. Elton, « Thomas Cromwell's Decline and Fall, » (in *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics & Government*, vol. 1), p. 201.

96. Elton, *Policy and Police*, 16 ff. 97. Dickens, *Thomas Cromwell*, p. 170.

98. Zeeveld, *Foundations*, p. 240. 99. Elton, *Policy and Police*, p. 425.