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# "The prince and his people": a study of Edwardian propaganda, 1547-1549

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“THE PRINCE AND HIS PEOPLE”: A STUDY  
OF EDWARDIAN PROPAGANDA,  
1547-1549

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
In partial fulfillment of the  
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in

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by

Allison Claire Cooper  
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## ABSTRACT

One of the most important events of Edward VI's reign, the 1549 rebellions, has been intensely studied by historians of the period. However, most monographs of the rebellions pinpoint the enclosure commissions or Edward Seymour's inability to govern effectively as the reasons behind the riots. What is ignored is the intimate relationship between the eastern rebels' language in their petitions and the rhetoric employed in evangelical propaganda from Edward's accession in January 1547 to the outbreak of the rebellions in May 1549.

My research in Edwardian propaganda during Somerset's protectorate reveals a dialogue established between evangelicals and Catholics concerning doctrine and theological analysis based on the scriptures. Somerset's regime used the London printing presses to appeal to the lower orders of society, the common people, for support of the Reformation. The rhetoric employed was designed to appeal positively to the people, emphasizing the commonwealth and universal good. It also linked the people with their king in governing the kingdom and breaking from the pope's tyrannical authority. In addition, the regime used Henrician and Roman Catholic conversion narratives to disseminate evangelical doctrine, most notably through cleric Richard Smyth's two forced recantations, which were printed and sold in Paul's Cross. Other works used include Stephen Gardiner's defense of the Eucharist, John Hooper's response, and Robert Crowley's two confutations of Miles Hogarde, another Henrician Catholic, and Nicholas Shaxton, a former evangelical.

The conclusion of this study draws direct parallels between the 1549 petitions and the rhetorical strategies used in the previous two years. The government's direct patronage of this propaganda and the language that drew the commons into a political partnership with their king helped to spark the rebellions, resulting in a crisis of leadership and legitimacy.

## Chapter 1: Introduction and Historiography

At just nine years old and following the death of his illustrious father, Henry VIII, Edward VI ascended the throne of England. He lacked sufficient authority and maturity to rule on his own. Edward's coronation was held February 20, 1547, but his regency council had already been at work for a month determining the shape of his government and the direction the English Church should take. Henry's religious changes had left many English people, including some of his own councilors, dissatisfied with the state of the church: for many of them, reform had not gone far enough.<sup>1</sup>

Almost immediately following Henry's death, Edward Seymour, the earl of Hertford and soon to be duke of Somerset, emerged as the leader of Edward VI's regency council.<sup>2</sup> He was an able military commander and had served in Henry Fitzroy's<sup>3</sup> household before taking a position in Henry VIII's council at the royal court. His sister was young Edward's mother: he was the natural choice to lead his nephew's regency council until Edward came of age. As a contemporary wrote of him:

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<sup>1</sup> For more detailed information about the English Reformation under Henry VIII, see G. W. Bernard's *The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005). For a comprehensive narrative of the Reformation from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I, see A. G. Dickens *The English Reformation*, 2d ed. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989). David Loades' *Revolution in Religion: The English Reformation 1530-1570* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992) provides a much summarized account of the major events in the Reformation. The history of the Reformation under Edward VI is best explained in Diarmaid MacCulloch's *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> For more information about Edward Seymour's policies as Protector, see M. L. Bush *The Government Policy of Protector Somerset* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975). W. K. Jordan's two-volume biography of Edward VI also provides more extensive biographical information about the Protector. For information about Edward's council, see D. E. Hoak's *The King's Council in the Reign of Edward VI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) and Stephen Alford's *Kingship and Politics in the Reign of Edward VI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). All policy originated in Edward's Privy Council, followed by enforcement and administration of the whole realm. No real biography of Edward Seymour exists, but short biographical accounts are usually presented in discussions of the early years of Edward VI's reign. William Seymour's *Ordeal by Ambition: An English Family in the Shadow of the Tudors* (New York: St. Martin's, 1972) provides a biographical account of Seymour's parents, Seymour himself, his sister Jane and brother Thomas. William Seymour is descended from the family.

<sup>3</sup> Fitzroy was Henry VIII's illegitimate son by Elizabeth Blount, born in 1519. He died in 1536. (DNB)

I do not now mention how God had so exalted him, from being born in a private station, that as the late king's brother-in-law, the brother of a queen, the uncle of the present king, he had no one here superior to him in any degree of honor; and then especially, when appointed lord protector of the realm, he was all but king, or rather esteemed by everyone as the king of the king.<sup>4</sup>

Somerset, his family, and the majority of the council (including Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer) were enthusiastic evangelicals, eager to rid the church of popery and false teachings that were nowhere to be found in the Gospels. But the church had changed, and English subjects were unsure of what to believe and how to practice their faith. Just a few months before, in 1546, Anne Askew was burned at Smithfield for her heretical beliefs. Nicholas Shaxton, a reform-minded preacher, was forced to recant in front of crowds at Paul's Cross in order to save himself from execution. Much was in disarray at Henry's death: an unfinished war with Scotland, the teetering economy, and an ambiguous religious settlement. Edward's age meant that a lengthy regency was in store; the resolution of these problems was both welcomed and feared. The English commons delighted in Edward VI's ascent after the long and fretful lordship of his formidable father – but they also held their breaths in anticipation of what was to come next.

How fast would Reformation occur? And what about those simple people still clinging to their ignorant traditions? Even though their young king had not even been born yet when the Pilgrimage of Grace occurred, the events of 1536 were still fresh in the councilors' minds; they feared a massive uprising and knew that it must be avoided. How would they prevent the English commoners from rebelling against their policies? How could they persuade them that

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<sup>4</sup> C. H. Williams, ed., *English Historical Documents, 1485-1558* (London: Eyre & Spottswode, Ltd.), 415. This passage is taken from "An Impression of Protector Somerset," a letter from Francis Bourgoyne to John Calvin, written in London January 22, 1552. Williams cites *Zurich Letters*, volume II (731-737).



Reformation would provide benefits? Better yet – how could they motivate the commons to clamor for reform themselves?

While Cranmer tackled the problem of slowly introducing evangelical doctrine into the church, Somerset addressed the conundrum of English society as a whole. His new position as king in all but name and his elevated rank following promotion to his duchy opened up new possibilities for influence, patronage, - and manipulation. He had various means of addressing the general public, including royal proclamations. But those obvious pronouncements of government intention were not the best way to convince the commons to reform. It did not take long for Somerset’s attention to turn to the London printing presses.

Under Henry VIII, the presses were forbidden from publishing literature that questioned orthodox teachings and practices (though they were free to attack the pope’s authority and advance, instead, that of their king’s). In 1547, Somerset swept away these censorship laws. The effect doubled the output of the presses compared to that under Henry in his last year.<sup>5</sup> Translations of German reformist works sprang forth, along with stories of Protestant martyrs and English-language attacks on the mass. Somerset’s policy was beginning to take shape and action. The presses would be used to talk to the people, to open a dialogue with them concerning the nature of the church and its relationship to the English kingdom. The regent had entered himself and the council into a new game – that of popular politics.

### **Popular Politics and Evangelical Propaganda**

Historian Ethan Shagan defines popular politics as: “the presence of ordinary, non-elite subjects as the audience for or interlocutors of a political action.”<sup>6</sup> His book, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, is an analysis of how the great mass of English subjects “received,

<sup>5</sup> A list of figures follows on pages 9 - 10.

<sup>6</sup> Ethan Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 19.

interpreted, debated, and influenced the process of religious change” from the 1520s to 1553.<sup>7</sup> In his view, the English Reformation was achieved via a collaboration between the commons and the royal court, each responding to the other.<sup>8</sup> The English people cooperated with ecclesiastical changes imposed from above and were drawn into an active relationship with the ruling elite, as evidenced by the 1549 rebellions.<sup>9</sup> He maintains that popular politics changed over time, from the 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace through the beginning years of Edward’s reign; elite politics was forced to respond to pressures from the lower orders.<sup>10</sup> Shagan’s thesis is not uncontested: previous historiography accepts that the Reformation’s support from the commoners was only limited and that they were slow to accept the religious changes imposed by the government.<sup>11</sup> However, Patrick Collinson addresses the problem with this question: how is it that the commons readily abandoned their religious habits simply by decree of the government?<sup>12</sup>

Shagan’s tantalizing proposal has breathed new life into political discussion of the Edwardian regime. Because of the unusual circumstances of Edward’s reign, the government appealed for support from the common people. Shagan argues that the government was willing to make bargains with the general population; it declared that “support for the Reformation was support for economic fairness and a genuinely responsive society of orders.”<sup>13</sup> Shagan’s principal evidence consists of nine letters sent from various rebellions during the summer of 1549 to Somerset. These letters provide us with a glimpse of the government and commons

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>9</sup> Examined below in chapter four.

<sup>10</sup> Shagan, “‘Popularity’ and the 1549 Rebellions Revisited,” *The English Historical Review* 115, no. 460 (Feb. 2000): 121.

<sup>11</sup> J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1984), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (London: MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1988), 40. Eamon Duffy also explores this question in *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992) and *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, 272.

interacting and negotiating with each other on the question of religion and the general welfare of society.<sup>14</sup> The rhetoric the rebels used in their petitions matches the rhetoric present in government-sponsored Protestant tracts from 1547 to the outbreak of the rebellions.

Shagan's thesis appears unusual because the general assumption amongst contemporary English elites was that the lower orders were not capable of, nor could they be trusted with, independent thought – they were only fit to be ruled.<sup>15</sup> Why did Somerset recognize the ability of the commons to make moral and political decisions?<sup>16</sup> Note that Shagan does not depart from previous historiography entirely – in no sense did the people clamor for religious reformation on a wide scale. Instead, he agrees with J. J. Scarisbrick that the “drive, timing, and organization [of the Reformation] came primarily from above.”<sup>17</sup> There was still a distinct divide between popular and elite culture in which the implementation of policies was left to royal authority.<sup>18</sup> It was the dialogue and interchange between the two that was changing after Edward's accession.

What were Somerset's motivations? Why would a noble want to change and potentially undermine elite power in such an uncertain time? It is clear by 1546 that Somerset was evangelically-inclined. He ceased to hold a traditional mass in his house at that time and reportedly did not take Catholic communion that year. Additionally, the tutors employed in his household (like those for Edward VI) emerged as strong reformists in the coming years. In the last years of Henry's reign, Somerset was close to other evangelically-minded councilors, including William Paget, John Dudley, and Thomas Cranmer. However, there is no record

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<sup>14</sup> These letters are reprinted in his article “Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: New Sources and New Perspectives,” *The English Historical Review* 114, no. 455 (Feb. 1999): 34-63. They are discussed in more detail in chapter five.

<sup>15</sup> John Craig, *Reformation, Politics, and Polemics: The Growth of Protestantism in East Anglican Market Towns, 1500-1610* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2001), 3.

<sup>16</sup> Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions* (Fifth Edition, Pearson Education Limited, 2004), 78.

<sup>17</sup> Scarisbrick, 61.

<sup>18</sup> Craig, 8.

indicating personal concern for the lower orders prior to 1547. It seems that Somerset's policy to conciliate the commoners and appeal to their good will was a result of his appointment as Lord Protector. It is very possible that Somerset felt weak in his position, especially following the highly personal rule of Henry VIII. Additionally, Somerset wanted to push through religious reforms, but as Lord Protector he did not have the authority (or loyalty) to push them through as his own agenda. It is very probable that his desire to reform the church necessitated reaching out to the commoners for their support and even encouragement.

M. L. Bush has argued in *The Government Policy of Protector Somerset* that Somerset was only concerned with appearing virtuous in order to achieve renown and that he had no real sympathy, empathy, or care for the English commons.<sup>19</sup> Shagan disagrees, believing that Somerset courted public opinion from the beginning and employed a strategy of conciliating the English people by devoting the regime to needed, or fundamental, social and economic changes.<sup>20</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch proposes that Somerset, Thomas Cranmer, and their evangelical allies in the Privy Council had to face the reality that, outside of themselves, their chief support and means of success lay with the common people: "people who did not matter in politics."<sup>21</sup> An alliance with the lay community meant success for the Protestant cause.<sup>22</sup> Of

<sup>19</sup> Bush, 5.

<sup>20</sup> Shagan, "Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: New Sources and New Perspectives," 47. It should be added that in response to this article, Bush wrote that his original analysis of Somerset went too far in trying to revise views of Somerset's policies, in light of W. K. Jordan's recent publication of *Edward VI: The Young King*, which presented Somerset as an idealistic liberal social reformer. Bush, "Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: A Post-Revision Questioned," *The English Historical Review* 115, no. 460 (Feb. 2000): 103-112. Jordan, *Edward VI: The Young King* and *Edward VI: The Threshold of Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968 and 1970).

<sup>21</sup> MacCulloch, *The Boy King*, 59.

<sup>22</sup> C. S. L. Davies, *Peace, Print, and Protestantism, 1450-1558* (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1976), 223.

course, it is difficult, or nearly impossible, to determine the religious beliefs of Edwardian people.<sup>23</sup>

As John N. King has discovered in his research of the mid-Tudor period, Edward's reign was a "watershed in the development of Renaissance literature."<sup>24</sup> This development was driven by government interference and Somerset's relaxation of Henry VIII's censorship laws. Evangelical propaganda flooded from English presses, some of it directly inspired by the court, namely Protector Somerset, and some of it even written by Thomas Cranmer.<sup>25</sup> King asserts that Somerset himself initiated the shift from Henry VIII's orthodox press to one of reformist ideas because he was "lacking the enormous power and prestige of the late king . . . [he] encouraged this massive propaganda effort in order to popularize his controversial Protestant reforms . . ."<sup>26</sup> King is correct that Somerset encouraged the mass production and proliferation of Protestant tracts, but I question his assertion that the Protestant calls for reform evident in the literature produced were, in fact, controversial. King's own comments and analysis challenge this view; it seems that the majority of Protestant authors were finding success in their publication of theological works attacking Catholic doctrine. At the same time that Somerset relaxed censorship laws and, sometimes covertly, patronized reforming authors, he denied responsibility for the proliferation of evangelical propaganda when questioned by more conservative clerics, such as Bishop of Winchester Stephen Gardiner, claiming that he could not control public discussion.<sup>27</sup> My idea is to meld Shagan and King's separate analyses, to lend support to Shagan's notion of popular politics by examining Somerset's use of the press and sponsorship of

<sup>23</sup> Nicholas Pocock, "The Condition of Morals and Religious Belief in the Reign of Edward VI," *The English Historical Review*, 10, no. 39 (Jul., 1895), 417.

<sup>24</sup> John N. King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 4.

<sup>25</sup> MacCulloch, *The Boy King*, 86.

<sup>26</sup> King, "Freedom of the Press, Protestant Propaganda, and Protector Somerset," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 40, no. 1 (Nov. 1976): 1, 8.

<sup>27</sup> King, 1, 4-5.

propaganda to address the commons. While Shagan concentrates on the rhetoric in petitions during 1549, I want to examine the rhetoric in propaganda emanating from the court from the beginning of Edward's reign in 1547: I believe that Somerset responded to the demands of Protestant printers and authors to relax existing censorship laws and promote the publication of Protestant propaganda and tracts. Somerset, representing the governing council and the king, used these Protestant tracts for three purposes: first, to stimulate the commons into desiring reform; second, to manipulate the commons into obedience to his policies; and third, to legitimate his and Edward VI's rule. The tracts produced in early 1547 demonstrate the rhetoric that would become the foundation for future Protestant tracts and attempts to control the common population. To analyze these attempts, I will be examining English-language pamphlets and books to discover their intended effects upon the population. The sources chosen reflect the dialogue between Roman and Henrician Catholics and evangelicals, with an emphasis on how these debates were presented to the commons.

There were two levels of evangelical propaganda: one directed towards clerics and the nobility to promote reformist doctrine and a second directed towards the commons, to promote the idea of 'commonwealth' and the good of society using Protestant teachings.<sup>28</sup> Both were employed during Somerset's Protectorate. Evangelical writings proposed that the lower orders could achieve significant advantages, notably the sense of belonging – to their community, to the universal Protestant faith, but also to the government and governing circles.<sup>29</sup> J. Andreas Lowe argues that these authors wrote for a specific audience, using Latin for scholars or 'learned' arguments; vernacular, the use of which was growing tremendously during this period, was used for the simpler English subjects. He also explains that sixteenth-century polemical authors were

<sup>28</sup> King "Protector Somerset, Patron of the English Renaissance," *The Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America*, 70 (Third Quarter, 1976): 316.

<sup>29</sup> Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, 273-274.

motivated to write to encourage people of either faith to maintain their beliefs, or to persuade people to return to their faith. English polemicists sometimes operated as translators, explaining the theological ideas of their German counterparts in ways that less educated commoners could understand. They also adapted continental arguments to their own context.<sup>30</sup> King explains that Latin was used “to promote Protestant doctrine and changes in the church” while English was “directed towards the commons, to promote the commonwealth and the good of society using Protestant teachings.”<sup>31</sup> It can easily be argued that English was employed to promote changes in the church as well, but in a language to which the general public could relate and understand. Theological arguments and discussion once limited to the universities now moved to the streets.

Due to his leading position in government and his policy of banishing censorship laws, Somerset was able to extend his personal and governmental patronage on a much more massive scale than any Englishman before. He also managed to surpass his predecessors in manipulating the press in support of his policies against traditionalist or conservative opinions.<sup>32</sup> During the last seven years of Henry’s reign, an average of sixty-nine books and pamphlets were published compared to an average of 131 per year during the three years of Somerset’s protectorate. Of the 394 total works printed, 274 were religious in nature; of those 274, 114 are what King describes as “noncontroversial” and 160 spread “controversial” religious doctrines. There were twenty-four editions of government-authorized texts (the 1549 Prayer Book and Cranmer’s *Homilies*).

<sup>30</sup>J. Andreas Lowe, *Richard Smyth and the Language of Orthodoxy: Re-Imagining Tudor Catholic Polemicism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 9, 235.

<sup>31</sup> King, 316.

<sup>32</sup> King, *English Reformation Literature*, 106. I use the terms ‘conservative’ and ‘traditional’ interchangeably, to refer to those opponents who believed in either papal supremacy or adhered to Henry VIII’s reforms, including his own supremacy over the church. These opponents objected to further religious changes as long as Edward VI was still a minor. Stephen Gardiner was the most vocal of these conservatives.

Only one pro-Anglo-Catholic tract was published during the three years: Richard Smyth's *A Brief Treatise Setting Forth Diverse Truths*.<sup>33</sup>

By John King's calculations, three out of four books printed under Somerset concerned religion. One out of every ten works advocated Protestant changes in the church, including a vernacular liturgy and communion service in both kinds (wine and bread).<sup>34</sup> Eighty-eight of the 123 dedications to Edwardian nobility were addressed to Somerset, his immediate family (including his wife), and Edward VI.<sup>35</sup> Many historians, including M. L. Bush, maintain that there was no organized campaign of evangelical or government propaganda.<sup>36</sup> Some of these same historians also claim that the works flowing from the presses were not propaganda at all.<sup>37</sup> But even if the campaign was disorganized, the government had a clear intention to influence the population using printed works – a printed government pulpit.

The mid-Tudor reformers ushered in an era of literary achievement and new genres: King identifies these genres as courtly and popular interludes, allegory and satires, millennial prophecies, and biblical paraphrases, amongst others.<sup>38</sup> The anti-papal allegories were the first sign that the Reformation would advance under Edward's regime. These works emphasized the triumph of true religion over the false dribble streaming from Rome; they also signaled the victory of the king over the tyranny of the pope.<sup>39</sup>

In what follows, I examine the language used by polemicists and analyze their individual relationship to the court or to the nobility on the council. My thesis is not concerned with

<sup>33</sup> King, "Freedom of the Press, Protestant Propaganda, and Protector Somerset," 2-3. Richard Smyth is the focus of chapter two.

<sup>34</sup> King, *English Reformation Literature*, 89.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Lake and Maria Dowling, *Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth-Century England*, (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 78.

<sup>37</sup> J. Andreas Lowe, 235.

<sup>38</sup> King, 17.

<sup>39</sup> Roy C. Strong, "Edward VI and the Pope," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 23, no. ¾ (Jul.-Dec., 1960): 312, 313.



doctrine: it is about the language and the secular ideas proposed. This is government-sponsored rhetoric designed to manipulate and subtly direct English commoners.<sup>40</sup>

While some work has been done analyzing Protestant literature and evangelical attempts to convert the wider population (and more examination is needed), I want to concentrate on the government's rhetorical and literary response to Catholics and Henrician conservatives. Reginald Pole, Stephen Gardiner, and Richard Smyth had loud voices during the reign and the government attempted to silence or harness them in various ways, influencing the English population in the process. Chapter two provides a brief narrative of the events leading up to and during Edward VI's reign that provide necessary context to understand Somerset's propaganda efforts. Chapter three concerns the greater Catholic opposition to Edwardian changes in the church. It begins with the problem of Edward's and his uncle's legitimacy, specifically Cardinal Reginald Pole's very vocal oppositions. It then examines Richard Smyth's two recantations, the first at Paul's Cross and the second at Oxford. This chapter investigates the government's use of conservative clerics to further its own reformist-minded ideas in order to influence the commons. Chapter four analyzes Stephen Gardiner's *A Detection of the Devil's Sophistry*, followed by John Hooper's *An Answer to my Lord of Winchester's Book*. Again, the emphasis is on dialogue and debate between the groups and how the government tried to exploit the disputes as publicly and influentially as possible. Chapter five concludes the research by exploring the 1549 rebellions and the effects the rhetoric used for the previous two years had on the rebel's commands and interaction with the government via petitions to Protector Somerset himself. Chapter six sums up the argument for propaganda's appeal to the lower orders of society and briefly considers the aftereffects on Mary's and Elizabeth's reigns.

<sup>40</sup> All primary sources used can be found in the *English Short-Title Catalogue*, which chronicles all published works found in England from the years 1473-1800.

## Chapter 2: Edwardian Background

Doctrinal alterations began immediately following Edward's accession. In the religious injunctions of 1547, Somerset ordered that every parish church must possess copies of the English Bible and Erasmus' *Paraphrases of the New Testament*.<sup>1</sup> This policy aimed at spreading lay reading of the Gospel and 'gospelling' literature to introduce greater lay "freedom" into the church.<sup>2</sup> "Liberty" was the key term in letters between Somerset and William Paget (former secretary to Henry VIII, Edward's current secretary, and one of the most experienced statesmen in England). For them, the term retained the Latin definition as freedom from arbitrary and excessive control: "liberty consists of privileges granted to individual citizens by the state."<sup>3</sup> This label emphasized lay roles in promoting Reformation, but also continued the zeal to banish popery from the kingdom. The principle that Somerset emphasized was that the lay community must have the freedom to read the Bible on their own and make decisions individually concerning the lessons they learned from the Gospels. Edward's regime also campaigned against purgatory and the veneration of saints. After the indecisive final years of Henry VIII, there was now a general assumption that determined movement towards true Reformation would proceed under Edward VI's guidance.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The full text of the injunctions can be found in Paul Hughes and James Larkins' *Tudor Royal Proclamations: Vol. 1, the Early Tudors (1485-1553)* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), #287, 393.

<sup>2</sup> John N. King, "Robert Crowley: A Tudor Gospelling Poet," *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 8, American Literature Special Number (1978): 224. 'Gospelling' literature refers to the trend to explain the Bible as simply as possible to the lay reader; it also refers to fictional dialogues that sometimes operated as parables teaching Gospel lessons.

<sup>3</sup> King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 83.

<sup>4</sup> Ben Lowe, *Commonwealth and the English Reformation: Protestantism and the Politics of Religious Change in the Gloucester Vale, 1483-1560* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 5. It should be noted here, as Diarmaid MacCulloch notes in *The Boy King and Thomas Cranmer, A Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996) that the term "Protestant" was not in use until after Mary's reign; instead, the term "evangelical" is more appropriate to describe religious reformers during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI. However, I will use the two terms interchangeably.

Somerset and Thomas Cranmer were committed to presenting church reforms as kingly and godly.<sup>5</sup> As Ben Lowe argues, “a combination of prophetic message, socio-economic circumstance, and political viability served to create a situation in the 1540s and 1550s that caused some powerful men and women to join the Reformation.”<sup>6</sup> The godly boy-king’s fight against the tyrannical antichrist in Rome was powerful imagery to inspire English society to participate in the struggle and counter popery in the kingdom. The government was involved in a systematic attempt to expel Catholic doctrine from the English church.<sup>7</sup> Learned men, led by Thomas Cranmer, determined English Reformation doctrine; royal authority implemented the changes.<sup>8</sup> Somerset’s primary supporters were evangelicals who expected his rule to push through not only church reforms, but also social reforms which would dramatically impact the entire country and commoner’s way of life.<sup>9</sup>

What should be remembered, though, is that Somerset’s *aims* were not unusual: preventing social upheaval and distress. It was his *methods* that were so alarming to the rest of the council. The rhetoric employed in government-sponsored tracts was downright dangerous: “dangerous precisely because it aroused expectations which could not be fulfilled.”<sup>10</sup> The language used in evangelical propaganda had tremendous effects on the larger population “but halfly reformed.”<sup>11</sup> Paget warned him in July 1548: “think, Sir, that you supply the place of a king and to every wise man every letter, every word, every countenance of yours, is enough to

<sup>5</sup> Stephen Alford, *Kingship and Politics in the Reign of Edward VI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 132.

<sup>6</sup> Lowe, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Nicholas Pocock, “The Condition of Morals and Religious Belief in the Reign of Edward VI,” *The English Historical Review*, 10, no. 39 (Jul., 1895), 437.

<sup>8</sup> J. Andreas Lowe, *Richard Smyth and the Language of Orthodoxy: Re-Imagining Tudor Catholic Polemicism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Scott Lucas, “The Consolation of Tragedy: ‘A Mirror for Magistrates’ and the Fall of the ‘Good Duke’ of Somerset,” *Studies in Philology*, 100, no. 1 (Winter, 2003): 49.

<sup>10</sup> C. S. L. Davies, *Peace, Print, and Protestantism, 1450-1558* (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1976), 267.

<sup>11</sup> Ethan Shagan, “Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: New Sources and New Perspectives,” *The English Historical Review* 114, no. 455 (Feb. 1999), 50.

cause the dull horse to enter the fire, and the quick horse to be too busy . . . remember . . . how the words of a king or cardinal might have moved you and so think yours move other men . . .”<sup>12</sup> Paget’s advice was important because of Somerset’s plans to use the printing presses to such a wide extent and to allow them to operate with vast freedom.

Ethan Shagan states that, “Somerset’s government operated in new and novel ways, using rhetoric that came dangerously close to envisaging a political partnership between government and commons.” Of course, this rhetoric maintained the traditional view of the ‘society of orders’ and obedience from all sectors of England, combining reforms within the nation with those of religion. The eastern rebels of 1549 co-opted gospelling literature to argue in support of their economic and social demands. “The language of evangelical Protestantism became the political *lingua franca* between government and people.” Somerset’s social policy was important, especially in light of the fact that ‘good works’ were rejected as a means of attaining grace. Shagan maintains that “social reform was seen as a way of living true to the gospel.”<sup>13</sup> Promises and encouragement of reform were linked with winning support for the religious changes the regime was aiming to implement.<sup>14</sup> Reforming preachers, especially those chosen to preach in Paul’s Cross, quickly seized and exalted the government line.<sup>15</sup> Protestant propaganda and social ideas essentially aimed at reforming the abuses in the commonwealth.<sup>16</sup>

J. J. Scarisbrick writes that, “like Protestantism, anti-papalism was more a consequence than a cause of the Reformation. . . . Papal authority in England was at risk not so much because

<sup>12</sup> Barrett L. Beer and Sybil M. Jack, *The Letters of William, Lord Paget of Beaudesert, 1547-1563* (Camden Misc Vol. XXV, London: Royal Historical Society, 1974), 18.

<sup>13</sup> Shagan, 36, 38, 42.

<sup>14</sup> M. L. Bush “Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: A Post-Revision Questioned,” *The English Historical Review* 115, no. 460 (Feb. 2000), 109.

<sup>15</sup> Allan G. Chester, *Hugh Latimer: Apostle to the English* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954), 171. Hugh Latimer and Thomas Lever are described by King as Somerset’s “pulpit spokesmen.” *English Reformation Literature*, 28.

<sup>16</sup> Joan Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 283.

it was vexatious or offensive to national pride or whatever, as because it did not matter very much in daily life.”<sup>17</sup> Edwardian propagandists depicted popery as spiritual blindness and equated transubstantiation with cannibalism.<sup>18</sup> Somerset’s influence sparked the publication ploy that treated the Bible as literature to be explained to the lay reader; this trend also lent itself to Somerset’s desire to make the Bible accessible to as wide an audience as possible.<sup>19</sup> He wrote to Pole in 1549 that “. . . if we should forswear and neglect our duties therein the common people would pluck him in pieces, to whom the name of the Pope is as odious as the name of the devil himself.”<sup>20</sup> Protestants also attacked the superstitious and mystical elements of the mass. They used an overwhelming moral tone, particularly when fictional (Platonic) dialogues were employed. Many works also show nationalistic sentiments.<sup>21</sup>

Evangelical literature spread from the royal court to London, towns, and rural areas.<sup>22</sup> The main setting for the dissemination of evangelical ideas and literature was Paul’s Cross, the outdoor public pulpit and courtyard of St. Paul’s Cathedral. Here, all the orders of English society could gather, their king amongst them, to listen to preachers such as Hugh Latimer or to peruse and buy reformist books or cheaper pamphlets. Propaganda was not *just* printed: it was also an oral and visual tradition. The location of Paul’s Cross and the all-encompassing cross-section of its audience made it one of the most important venues of government propaganda.<sup>23</sup> Print and bookshops surrounded the pulpit. Tessa Watt argues in *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* that “print itself appears to be inclusive rather than exclusive, addressed [its’

<sup>17</sup> J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1984), 59-60.

<sup>18</sup> Catharine Davies, *A Religion of the Word: The Defense of the Reformation in the Reign of Edward VI* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 22, 25.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen Gresham “William Baldwin: Literary Voice of the Reign of Edward VI,” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 44, no. 2 (Spring 1981): 106.

<sup>20</sup> Pocock, ed. *Troubles Connected with the 1549 Prayer Book* (Camden Society, 1884), xii.

<sup>21</sup> Gresham, 112.

<sup>22</sup> King, “Robert Crowley: A Tudor Gospelling Poet,” 224.

<sup>23</sup> King, *English Reformation Literature*, 132.

audience] both as ‘readers’ and as ‘hearers’ . . .”<sup>24</sup> making Paul’s Cross a fully functioning platform, ready to be taken advantage of. Watt cites Margaret Spufford in relating that people were taught to read *before* they were taught to write, and “it is likely that many more rural people could get through the text of a broadside ballad than could sign their names . . .”<sup>25</sup> The most influential media combined print with non-literate forms of idea-sharing. St. Paul’s Cross combined printing presses and a public pulpit, ensuring that religious reforms were related to the populace in every form available; it closely intertwined both forms of communication. In addition, literacy slowly increased (though this would not have been noticeable during Edward VI’s reign) and books became more affordable.<sup>26</sup> Cities naturally became the initial converts to protestant influence due to the “high literacy rate demanded by a commercial center.”<sup>27</sup>

### **The Importance of the Commonwealth**

English society as a whole (nobility, clergy, and commons) *was* the commonwealth. The propaganda produced by the presses stressed the importance of Christian virtues of resignation and obedience to the monarch and local authorities within that commonwealth. Each person had his or her set place.<sup>28</sup> During Edward’s reign, ‘commonwealth’ ideology was revived (originally promoted by Thomas Cromwell in the 1530s), forming the necessary connection between economic, social, political, and religious reforms.<sup>29</sup> The Edwardian spiritual campaign was

<sup>24</sup> Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 3.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 261. A range of historiography is available about the printing press and its role in revolutionizing literacy in early modern Europe. For an introduction, see Elizabeth Eisenstein’s work *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>27</sup> David Loades, *Revolution in Religion: The English Reformation 1530-1570* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992), 57.

<sup>28</sup> C. H. Williams, ed., *English Historical Documents, 1485-1558* (London: Eyre & Spottswode, Ltd.), 26-27.

<sup>29</sup> Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 275. For more about ‘commonwealth’ ideology, see Thomas More’s *Utopia*; also Ben Lowe’s *Commonwealth and the English Reformation: Protestantism and the Politics of Religious Change in the Gloucester Vale, 1483-1560*; Catharine Davies’ *A Religion of the Word: The Defense of the Reformation in the Reign of Edward VI*; G. R. Elton’s *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government* Vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

heavily dependent on this idea of ‘commonwealth’ and actively linked it to anti-papalism and Reformation.<sup>30</sup>

But there was no clear sense of direction regarding exactly *how* the commonwealth should be reformed.<sup>31</sup> The intention was that people would be easily persuaded to become Protestant (while still missing some traditional elements of the mass or Catholic calendar) because concern for the common good was appealing to all in the kingdom. The Reformation created enthusiasm for a purer ‘living’ church based on the Gospel and inspired common people to create the best society with just laws.<sup>32</sup>

The concept of commonwealth was appropriated for Protestant use. John Hales, a member of the enclosure commissions of 1548-49, linked social equity and religious reform.<sup>33</sup> Robert Crowley, a rising evangelical polemicist, argued in a tract to parliament that the wealthy had distinct obligations to their social inferiors.<sup>34</sup> The main aim was to preserve social harmony and political stability within the established society of orders.

Shagan and other historians have recognized that the language of commonwealth and the language of evangelical Protestantism were inseparable from 1547-1553. The commons used both when appealing to the government.<sup>35</sup> Ben Lowe explains that the sixteenth-century commonwealth was rooted in “organic societal relationships amongst the estates.” This relationship was replaced by a compound idea of commonwealth, which reflected the fact that more people were encompassed within the practical application of government under a single

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<sup>30</sup> Shagan, 276.

<sup>31</sup> Paul Slack, *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 23.

<sup>32</sup> Ben Lowe, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Shagan, “‘Popularity’ and the 1549 Rebellions Revisited,” 130. The enclosure commissions were intended to address the problem of enclosed land which deprived the poorer orders of society means of income and produce. In 1549, the commissions were a major instigator to the rebellions, discussed further in chapter four.

<sup>34</sup> Bush, *The Government Policy of Protector Somerset* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1975), 71.

<sup>35</sup> Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, 280-281. This point is especially evident during the 1549 rebellions, discussed in chapter five.

authority.<sup>36</sup> The earlier beliefs about mutual obligation were not gone, but they were replaced with a greater sense of government duty to concentrate on the health of the commonwealth and ensure the overall stability of the kingdom.<sup>37</sup> The term commonwealth could also be regarded as a rhetorical slogan “conferring legitimacy on almost any public activity” – including rebellion.<sup>38</sup>

The dominant perception of commonwealth ideology and rhetoric was the interdependence between the estates of the body politic. The reformist-minded authors used the ideal in an attempt to maintain control over the populace.<sup>39</sup> Commonwealth rhetoric linked the church with civil society. A member of the reforming church was automatically a member of the commonwealth. The “royal supremacy implied the identification of church and civil commonwealth” together.<sup>40</sup> The theory of obligation and submission was used to convince subjects to remain passive: the need was more acute with the religious changes.<sup>41</sup> The 1549 rebellions, however, are the only example in sixteenth-century England in which dissension between the orders was not only a major element, but the cause: the commons felt that their social, political, and economic superiors were not fulfilling their obligations to their tenants and subjects.<sup>42</sup>

The commons were not highly regarded by the gentry, but these simple and sometimes irrational people *were* feared.<sup>43</sup> Commonwealth rhetoric became part of the government’s embarrassment in the summer of 1549. Thomas Cranmer and Protector Somerset had spent the previous two years making the connection between evangelical religious reform and social

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<sup>36</sup> Ben Lowe, 200.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>38</sup> Slack, 6.

<sup>39</sup> Whitney R. D. Jones, *The Tudor Commonwealth: 1529-1559* (London: The Athlone Press, 1970), 14.

<sup>40</sup> Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions* (Fifth Edition, Pearson Education Limited, 2004), 9.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.



reform – in 1549, the commons did too.<sup>44</sup> At least the hierarchical relationships also prevalent in Protestant literature stuck to the commons as well – the normal social hierarchy was preserved in these rebellions, but they felt that those towards the top of the pyramid were neglecting their obligations to the lower orders.<sup>45</sup> Many learned individuals hoped and believed that the Gospel would triumph under their boy-king Josiah and create the godly, just society envisioned for centuries. The bane of their current society was ‘covetousness’. “Real economic tensions combined with ideological conviction to push social issues for the first time into the forefront of politics” in an explosive way.<sup>46</sup> While many nobles were appalled at the force and focus of the rebellions, Somerset and some of his followers seemingly encouraged them; Hugh Latimer especially wished for the rioters’ success.<sup>47</sup>

Catharine Davies argues in *A Religion of the Word* that the central problem of the English commonwealth was that of authority. True religion depended on order and a godly prince responsible for that order.<sup>48</sup> “The society of orders was a widely shared belief system in which a healthy commonwealth could only be maintained through the estates of the realm acting in concert within a divinely ordained hierarchy.” This ideology could and would be used in defense of the commonwealth to justify rebellion.<sup>49</sup>

Historians are also divided about the significance of the so-called “Commonwealth Men.” No group took this name for themselves. Hugh Latimer, Thomas Lever, John Hooper, Robert Crowley, and Thomas Becon are most intimately linked with the Commonwealth Men, but each

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>45</sup> C. S. L. Davies, 279.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 261-262.

<sup>47</sup> Latimer’s sermons referring to the rebellions are examined in chapter five.

<sup>48</sup> Catharine Davies, 127.

<sup>49</sup> Shagan, “‘Popularity’ and the 1549 Rebellions Revisited,” *The English Historical Review* 115, no. 460 (Feb. 2000), 129.

operated independently of his like-minded fellows.<sup>50</sup> Some of these preachers, in government-service, went further in their exhortations for social reform than the government could, or was willing, to go.<sup>51</sup> The Commonwealth Men were not philosophers; they did not fully grasp the complexity of social and economic problems, or even their causes. They were men proud of their country, advocating what they felt were the best remedies.<sup>52</sup> These men also felt that Protector Somerset was solidly on their side. But, in 1547-1548, the chantry resources were disposed of to pay the governments' foreign policy debts, i.e. the Scottish war, instead of going to benefit the populace by endowing schools or hospitals. "This betrayal of the idealism of men like Latimer, Lever, and Hooper was seriously to weaken the moral strength of Somerset's government. . . ."<sup>53</sup>

Jennifer Loach argues that the evidence for the Commonwealth group and Somerset's encouragement of it is tenuous.<sup>54</sup> Catharine Davies, on the other hand, shows that the Commonwealth Men had a coherent response to the social and economic problems of the day, even if they did not coordinate their efforts. She argues that they used similar polemical and rhetorical devices rather than doctrinal considerations.<sup>55</sup> The most famous men espousing commonwealth ideas had similar backgrounds and interests: humanistic education, social and economic concerns, Protestant beliefs (moderate-radical), and most were close to Somerset and

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<sup>50</sup> G. R. Elton, 241.

<sup>51</sup> Beer, *Rebellion and Riot: Popular Disorder in England during the Reign of Edward VI* (Kent State University Press, 1982), 24.

<sup>52</sup> Williams, 228.

<sup>53</sup> W. K. Jordan, *Edward VI: The Threshold of Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 201.

<sup>54</sup> Jennifer Loach, *Edward VI* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 62.

<sup>55</sup> Catharine Davies, xvi, 6.

his seat of power. They argued for universal profit rather than personal gain, or greed.<sup>56</sup> They believed in what they (and Somerset) were doing, because it was dictated by the Gospel.<sup>57</sup>

These efforts to spread government propaganda needed agents to tailor the works to the population. This was where the all-important state printers came into play. The most important men in government service were Richard Grafton, Edward Whitchurch, Walter Lynne, John Day, William Seres, and Reynold Wolfe. Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch operated under government influence and protection in Paul's Cross. Walter Lynne operated as Thomas Cranmer's printer, and therefore was also under government protection.<sup>58</sup> These openly Protestant printers were encouraged by Somerset and held patents royal for their services.<sup>59</sup> In 1545 Grafton and Whitchurch became printers attached to the household of Prince Edward. Grafton soon operated as sole printer and was appointed King's Printer throughout Edward's entire reign.<sup>60</sup> He was the main source of government propaganda, though the government did employ him in more secret endeavors to shape public opinion.<sup>61</sup>

Soon after Edward's accession, William Seres and John Day grasped the new opportunities afforded by his regime.<sup>62</sup> Day printed five of Robert Crowley's tracts between 1547-48.<sup>63</sup> Seres' earliest books were not published until 1548, in partnership with Day and Anthony Scoloker. He was a servant in William Cecil's (himself Somerset's servant) household

<sup>56</sup> Jordan, *Edward VI: The Young King, the Protectorship of the Duke of Somerset* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 416.

<sup>57</sup> Ben Lowe, 204.

<sup>58</sup> King, 94-95.

<sup>59</sup> King, "Freedom of the Press, Protestant Propaganda, and Protector Somerset," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 40, no. 1 (Nov. 1976), 7.

<sup>60</sup> DNB Richard Grafton.

<sup>61</sup> King, "Robert Crowley: A Tudor Gospelling Poet," 222. For example, Grafton's name was left off the publication pages of some of Crowley's first tracts (Grafton worked in conjunction with John Day at times).

<sup>62</sup> DNB John Day.

<sup>63</sup> King, 221.

by late 1548.<sup>64</sup> Seres and Day operated more clandestinely as government printers, but were no less important. Day moved his services to Lincolnshire after Edward's death and Mary's accession, continuing to promote reformed teachings in opposition to the Marian regime. Cecil continued to be his patron.

Another printer who enjoyed Somerset's patronage was Reynold Wolfe. Wolfe owned a printing press in St. Paul's Churchyard and published Somerset's vernacular account of his latest expedition into Scotland in 1544. In 1547 Wolfe became King's Printer (in addition to being another of Cranmer's official printers) in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, but would become one of the most important figures in the development of the vernacular evangelical book market.<sup>65</sup> He was picked in May 1547 to publish the government's first major piece of propaganda – cleric Richard Smyth's retraction of his pro-Catholic piece from earlier in the year, *A Brief Treatise Setting Forth Diverse Truths*.

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<sup>64</sup> DNB William Seres.

<sup>65</sup> DNB Reynold Wolfe.

### Chapter 3: The Royal Legitimacy and Richard Smyth's Recantations

*But you do not choose to acknowledge this to be a danger, though, nevertheless, make light of it as you will, for a King to be schismatic is the greatest danger that ever befell any Prince since Kings commenced receiving the Christian faith . . .*

Cardinal Pole to Somerset, 7 September 1549

#### **The Royal Legitimacy**

Somerset obviously was not without his opponents. Historians have maintained that Somerset did not have the necessary talent or skills to handle the various temperaments of the men on the council, evangelical or conservative; he was not aided by the fact that he personally had no royal authority or divine right to rule over them.<sup>1</sup> One of the privy councilors, first earl of Southampton Thomas Wriothesley, opposed Somerset's elevation to the Protectorate and reportedly told the duke that he [Wriothesley] held his place by a better authority than Somerset held his.<sup>2</sup> Wriothesley was a traditionalist and supported the Henrician settlement, opposing further changes until Edward came of age. He had also participated in Anne Askew's persecution, perhaps even operating the rack.

It was not only Somerset's authority that was questioned however: On September 7, 1549, Cardinal Reginald Pole wrote to Somerset from Italy, calling into question not only the king's age, but his title, owing to the fact that he was born in schism:

I will now conclude my discourse and warning about dangers as although they are evident to all other persons, you comprehend and esteem them so little, notwithstanding the very loving notice given by me to you (a thing which perhaps few others in my position would have done) of the peril there was, owing to the doubt raised by the most sage and consummate jurists in canon law, with regard

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<sup>1</sup> Susan E. James, *Kateryn Parr: The Making of a Queen* (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1999), 347.

<sup>2</sup> Gilbert Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850), 25. The conflict between Wriothesley and Somerset is also mentioned in *Calendar of Letters, Dispatches, and State Papers relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain, preserved in the archives at Vienna, Semancas, and elsewhere* Vol. IX Edward VI, 1547-1549, eds. Martin A. S. Hume and Royall Tyler (Hereford: HMSO, 1912), where Van der Delft wrote to Charles V that Wriothesley would not consent to provisions made outside of Henry VIII's will (report dated June 16, 1547), 100.

to the King's title, he being born of a schismatic and excommunicated King, and still persevering in augmenting the causes of the schism, and therefore being in his own person justly excommunicated. . . . And here your good Secretary says that I call in question the King's title, as if I was the first to raise this doubt . . .<sup>3</sup>

Pole claimed that he was not the first to challenge the king's legitimacy.<sup>4</sup> In fact, on Edward's accession, Mary, Queen Dowager of Hungary (and Charles V's sister), wrote to the Imperial ambassador that she would "make no mention at present of the young Prince, as we are ignorant as yet whether or not he will be recognized as King . . ."<sup>5</sup> Further, Charles V himself wrote to his ambassador that "we went no further than this with regard to the young King, in order to avoid saying anything that might possibly prejudice the right that our cousin the Princess (Mary) might advance to the crown of England."<sup>6</sup> It was difficult enough to rule effectively with a minor king; Pole and other opponents were not making it any easier by questioning Edward's right to sit on the throne at all. Somerset wrote to Pole in 1549 concerning Edward's minority, stating:

As to your terrors, first you object that the king's majesty is a child; it is truth, in age; but then you must add, endued with such grace, so much aided by the providence and gift of Almighty God, so . . . strengthened with faithful, true, loving, and well-agreeing councilors and subjects; that, as it may well appear by the success of things hitherto, either to defend his own or to repress the injuries of others, no prince of any age this many years before hath been more able.<sup>7</sup>

Pole had been outlawed from England in 1539, due to his refusal to accept Henry VIII's supremacy over the church; his mother was executed by Henry in 1541. From November to December 1549, Pole was only narrowly defeated in a tight campaign to become the next pope after Paul III's death. Following this high point, he hit a career low as a result of the conclave

<sup>3</sup> *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy* vol. 5: 1534-1554, ed. Rawdon Brown (Ontario: TannerRitchie Publishing, 2005), 262.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 263-265.

<sup>5</sup> *CSP Negotiations*, letter dated February 6, 1547, 15.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>7</sup> Nicholas Pocock, ed., *Troubles connected with the Prayer Book of 1549* (Oxford: Camden Society, 1884), vii-viii.

from 1549-1550.<sup>8</sup> He was not without powerful and popular supporters in England though, despite his removal from the kingdom for over a decade. In late 1548, Somerset agreed to receive letters from Pole if he agreed to be regarded as a private citizen, i.e., not a Roman cardinal. Hugh Latimer felt that if Pole could be harnessed and used for the government pulpit, he could be persuasive in guiding London and the commoners towards the reforming religion.<sup>9</sup> It is unclear why they felt Pole could be turned into a willing government speaker: in 1548 he was very close to Pope Paul III. But this line of thinking shows that Somerset was actively recruiting agents to manipulate and direct English society as a whole. A possible reason may simply have been a ploy to placate the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, who was questioning the religious innovations in England. Somerset's open communication with Pole (revealed to Charles' ambassador) would possibly have prevented Charles from acting aggressively against England if it was possible that Pole was offering advice and counsel.<sup>10</sup>

Pole was cautious: he opposed Stephen Gardiner's imprisonment. He also questioned Somerset's authority and ability to protect King Edward, stating that the king's legitimacy was in danger due to his birth during England's schism and to his reformed faith.<sup>11</sup> Thomas F. Mayer states in his biography of Pole that the difference between the two men (and anyone else Somerset felt was a threat) was "that they had two incompatible political agendas. Somerset expected Pole as a private person to sue for pardon, and Pole thought it his role as a public man

<sup>8</sup> Thomas F. Mayer, "When Maecenas was Broke: Cardinal Pole's 'Spiritual Patronage'." *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 27, no. 2 (Summer 1996), 429.

<sup>9</sup> Latimer said of Pole in 1549 that "I never remember that man, methink, but I remember him with a heavy heart: a witty man, a learned man, a man of a noble house; so in favor, that if he had tarried in the realm, and would have conformed himself to the king's proceedings, I heard say, and I believe it verily, that he had been bishop of York at this day." C. H. Williams, ed., *English Historical Documents, 1485-1558* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd., 1967), 426.

<sup>10</sup> *CSP Negotiations*, 396.

<sup>11</sup> Mayer, *Reginald Pole: Prince & Prophet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 169-170.

to advise the government on religious policy.”<sup>12</sup> Pole also believed that the title ‘supreme head’ of the church could only belong to God. He blamed Somerset’s policies and religious changes as the cause of the rebellions and continuously pointed out the dangers of a boy-king.<sup>13</sup> In 1549, the western rebels called for his restoration from exile and addition to the royal council. When Mary took her turn on the throne, he would finally return to England’s shores.<sup>14</sup>

Unlike other conservatives, such as Stephen Gardiner, Pole was a true Roman Catholic: he refused to accept the royal supremacy. He attacked Somerset for referring to Henry VIII as the “most prudent Prince and of very famous memory,” and commented that this belief “in you, who have the protectorship of the young King and of the whole realm in your hands, is the more perilous and may prove more detrimental to the kingdom than all the other dangers collectively.”<sup>15</sup> Pole believed in a strong central church, separate from the king’s authority. He believed that Henry VIII’s changes were arbitrary and that a kingdom without a strong stable church would fall into ruin and chaos.

As Diarmaid MacCulloch, D. E. Hoak, and Lacey Baldwin Smith explain, Edward Seymour’s assumption of the “Protectorate,” a position found nowhere in Henry VIII’s will, was a “natural outgrowth” of the expectations of a royal minority, despite Henry’s refusal to name a leader to the council before his death or in his will.<sup>16</sup> Ethan Shagan argues that Somerset was a chief councilor, modeled after Thomas Wolsey; but Somerset was more insecure in his position. Edward could not forcefully back his uncle while still a minor. This was yet another reason why, as Shagan asserts, Somerset catered to the commons, making himself appealing to them and

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>14</sup> DNB, Reginald Pole.

<sup>15</sup> *CSP Venetian*, 264.

<sup>16</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 8.



presenting himself as not only the king's protector, but *their* protector.<sup>17</sup> Shagan identifies a conscious "effort to appeal downward for support from those outside the political establishment, creating a powerbase independent of the court."<sup>18</sup>

Henry had statutory authority to name his successor and the regency council for his son in the event of his minority. There had, however, never been a regency council without a singular leader before. The nobles pressured Henry to name the leader of this council, but he simply refused to do so.<sup>19</sup> Smith argues that Henry's will as it stood January 28, 1547, was not a "deathbed statement."<sup>20</sup> Despite his long life and failing health, Henry and many others thought that he had years to live; his final illness and quick deterioration were unexpected. As his affliction dragged on and he slowly lost the ability to move and speak, Henry did not have time to amend his will; but he did put it in Edward Seymour's care. This gesture was a sign to the nobles that he was (finally) officially recognized as Edward VI's guardian and protector. Further, it was reported that "He seems . . . to be quite assured of his Government, and I notice that all the members of the Council treat him with great reverence and obey him implicitly."<sup>21</sup>

At previous coronations, the Archbishop of Canterbury alone would place the crown on the anointed monarch; at Edward's coronation, Somerset joined Thomas Cranmer in placing the crown on the boy-king's head. This seemingly innocuous modification of the centuries-old ritual added a secular element. As John King explains, this act "denied that the king's temporal

<sup>17</sup> Ethan Shagan, "Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: New Sources and New Perspectives," *The English Historical Review* 114, no. 455 (Feb. 1999): 36.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>19</sup> The most obvious explanation of his refusal is that by naming a leader, that person would immediately be courted for favorable opinions in preparation for Edward's reign, diminishing Henry's own power.

<sup>20</sup> Lacey B. Smith, "The Last Will and Testament of Henry VIII: A Question of Perspective," *The Journal of British Studies* 2, no. 1 (Nov. 1962): 16-18.

<sup>21</sup> *CSP Negotiations*, 102-103.

authority is in any way subordinate to ecclesiastical control.”<sup>22</sup> Many perceived, probably including Henry himself, that Edward’s legitimacy was only secure in a Protestant settlement of religion.<sup>23</sup> Reverting to Roman authority could encourage calls for Mary’s legitimacy over Edward’s, or her right to lead the council as Edward’s regent in place of the duke of Somerset.<sup>24</sup> After Henry’s death, many conservative nobles and English exiles hoped that the return to Rome would be inevitable. In February 1547, Cardinal Pole wrote to Pope Paul III about his hopes that Henry’s death was an opportunity for the papacy to regain England.<sup>25</sup>

Somerset immediately recognized that he and the council were facing significant opposition. They needed a powerful way to counter this force – and Richard Smyth fell into their laps at the perfect time. Smyth was not so powerful that he was untouchable, but he was just important enough that any statement he made about doctrine and the state of the kingdom would be notable.

### Richard Smyth’s Recantations

“*The holy Prophet David (good christian audience) saith right truly: Omnis homo mendax. That is to wit: Every man is a Liar of his own corrupted nature . . .*”

Richard Smyth, *A Godly and Faithful Retraction*

In January or February of 1547 the printing presses released *A Brief Treatise Setting Forth Diverse Truths*. It was written by Richard Smyth, a cleric and professor of Divinity at Oxford. His treatise challenged the Protestant belief in *sola scriptura* and supported the inclusion of extra-scriptural teachings into church doctrine. This was his second work; just the year before he had published *A Defense of the Blessed Mass*, which defended the sacrament of

<sup>22</sup> John N. King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 166.

<sup>23</sup> W. K. Jordan, *Edward VI: The Young King, the Protectorship of the Duke of Somerset* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 41.

<sup>24</sup> In fact, Mary was not told about her father’s death for some days because the council feared that she would press her own candidacy as regent.

<sup>25</sup> *CSP Venetian*, 189.

the Eucharist. Both works were well within the expected requirements in order to be published under Henry VIII – but *A Brief Treatise* gained recognition under Edward VI, not Henry.

On May 15, at St. Paul’s Cross in the shadow of the great cathedral, Richard Smyth stood, by order of Protector Somerset, Thomas Cranmer, and the Privy Council to recant these two works in front of a massive audience encompassing commoners, nobility, and the king, who recorded the event in his journal. As he stood, fires burned both of his books, filling the air around him with smoke. Reynold Wolfe was waiting to record Smyth’s recantation and print it in order to sow it amongst the English population. Somerset felt confident that this spectacle would help persuade the commons towards the reforming religion and undermine the conservatives’ power.

There is no doubt that the bishop of Winchester, Stephen Gardiner, was also in attendance, regarding his colleague with disgust and contempt as Smyth trod over the traditional beliefs and teachings of the Roman Church. He said that “Smyth was a man with whom he had no familiarity, nor cared for his acquaintance . . .”<sup>26</sup> As Smyth, for the time being, fell in with the government line, Gardiner was just about to begin his constant questioning and defiance towards the reforming council.

Richard Smyth gained his Doctorate of Divinity in 1536, the same year that he became Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford.<sup>27</sup> Despite his high position at Oxford, Smyth’s first printed work did not appear until 1546. He was a regular fixture at evangelical recantations in the 1540s.<sup>28</sup> He was one of the commissioners at Anne Askew’s trial in 1546 and was central to

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Ellen A. Macek, “Richard Smith: Tudor Cleric in Defense of Traditional Belief and Practice,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 72, no. 3 (Jul. 1986): 387, who cites Strype, *Mem.*, I, 244.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 384.

<sup>28</sup> J. Andreas Lowe, *Richard Smyth and the Language of Orthodoxy: Re-Imagining Tudor Catholic Polemicism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 30-31.

the conservative cause during Henry's reign.<sup>29</sup> His *Defense of the Blessed Mass* (1546) went through three print-runs within the year.<sup>30</sup> He was forced to recant publicly in Paul's Cross on May 15, 1547; Reynold Wolfe printed it in order to reach a wider audience.<sup>31</sup> Smyth recanted again on July 24 of the year, this time a written recantation from Oxford.<sup>32</sup> By Spring 1548, he had to vacate his lectureship at Oxford to the continental reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli.<sup>33</sup> Smyth challenged Martyr to a disputation to take place in front of the students at Oxford. Martyr insisted that it be held with full knowledge of the government, with royal referees present, and also insisted that both sides avoid scholarly terminology in order to be more clear to the diverse audience expected. A date was fixed, but Smyth was arrested (and released) beforehand; he fled from Oxford in fear. The disputation never took place. He fled to Scotland in 1549,<sup>34</sup> was pursued across the border to St. Andrews<sup>35</sup> before he went to the Low Countries in March 1549.<sup>36</sup> His 1550 book *De Votis Monasticis* (a Latin text directed towards a clerical or learned audience) was banned in England.<sup>37</sup> By the time of his death, the number of his printed works exceeded that of the bishop of Winchester's by far.<sup>38</sup>

Ethan Shagan's research has brought to light the end result of Somerset's emphasis on bombarding the public with theological propaganda, designed to appeal to its desire for religious debate, but also designed to influence its actions and the way it saw themselves in connection to their sovereign and the nobility. The publishing and disseminating of Richard Smyth's

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>31</sup> King, "Freedom of the Press, Protestant Propaganda, and Protector Somerset," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (Nov. 1976), 5.

<sup>32</sup> The Paul's Cross recantation was printed as *A Godly and Faithful Retraction*; the Oxford recantation was printed as *A Plain Declaration made from Oxford*.

<sup>33</sup> DNB, Richard Smyth.

<sup>34</sup> Macek, 387.

<sup>35</sup> Lowe, 43-44.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 6.

recantation is the appropriate starting point for understanding Somerset's attempts to influence the populace and establish the partnership between regime and people.

Smyth's polemical career concentrated largely on traditional aspects of the church, advocating papal supremacy and doctrinal teachings that were not found in the Bible.<sup>39</sup> In 1546, Smyth wrote his first tract, *Defense of the Blessed Mass*, to show his compliance with Henry VIII's supremacy over the church. This and his *Brief Treatise* defended the sacrament of the Eucharist.<sup>40</sup> They were burnt by order of the regency council during his two public recantations, at Paul's Cross and to his students in Oxford.

In his works, Smyth used plain reasoning to illuminate the dangers of reform.<sup>41</sup> He most likely began writing to counter growing reformist sentiments introduced into England from books printed in the German states. In 1546, 1547, and 1550, Smyth tried to warn the people that their souls were endangered if they did not combat evangelical doctrine.<sup>42</sup> His writing habits correspond with conclusions made by historians: he used Latin to attack his fellow evangelical scholars and vernacular English to appeal to the common people. J. Andreas Lowe argues that he made use of the English language in order to reach a wider audience.<sup>43</sup>

This recantation, or "show trial," was used to broadcast royal power and the governments' line concerning religion.<sup>44</sup> Lowe reports that only a thin veil of humility disguised Smyth's distaste at the proceedings. Smyth sought to toe the government line just enough to get

<sup>39</sup> Macek, 384. On May 24, 1547 (just a few days after Smyth's recantation), a proclamation was issued intended to put a stop to and punish "seditious rumors" concerning changes in the traditional mass. James Hughes and Paul Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), no. 281.

<sup>40</sup> Lowe, 32-33.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> David Loewenstein and John Marshall, eds., *Heresy, Literature, and Politics in Early Modern English Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 12.

himself out of serious trouble.<sup>45</sup> He certainly did not “believe” in his recantation. The recantations display his accomplished use of language particularly well, but earned him the scorn of both evangelicals and conservatives.<sup>46</sup>

Reynold Wolfe published the recantation under the title *A Godly and Faithful Retraction*. The recantation no doubt propagates the ruling elites’ own intentions towards reforming the church in England. As their first act towards increasing the desire for reform, they chose a conservative Oxford professor to address the general public. Choosing a Roman Catholic cleric to write some of the first explicitly Protestant arguments was a stroke of genius on behalf of the government. The commoners were intended to believe that this highly educated Catholic priest was questioning Rome’s teachings. The rhetorical devices employed were designed to grab the audiences’ attention: to scare them but also to enlist them into an alliance with the king. Smyth’s recantation began: “Ought not every good man and woman to be sorry for my fall in this my Book, and to rejoice with me acknowledging the truth of this matter of man’s Traditions, Precepts, Ordinances, Rites, Ceremonies?”<sup>47</sup> Smyth was *with the people* in discovering and acknowledging the truth. He asked *them* for mercy for spreading his false doctrine. His plea was that he was not the only one to have erred and that he should not be seriously punished.<sup>48</sup> He trusted that he had obtained the king’s and the council’s mercy<sup>49</sup> and confessed that he was being made to admit his mistakes by the king and his council, so everyone knew that this was a government-sponsored recantation. Smyth also declared that his recantation was to be made as

<sup>45</sup> Lowe, 36-37.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>47</sup> Richard Smyth, *A Godly and faithful retraction made and published at Paul’s Cross in London, the year of our Lord God 1547, the 15 day of May, by Master Richard Smyth Doctor of Divinity and reader of the king’s majesty’s lecture in Oxford, revoking therein certain errors and faults by him committed in some of his books* (London: Reynold Wolfe, 1547), 4. Spelling modernized, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar retained.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 4.

public as possible, to the commoners, and that he was speaking to influence them. This cannot be more explicit.<sup>50</sup> There was no subtlety in this action to manipulate the population.

Smyth continued to say that the pope's authority "is justly and lawfully abolished in this Realm . . ." <sup>51</sup> and that the Bishop's laws are not above the Prince's when the Prince's laws are contained by God<sup>52</sup>:

. . . I say and affirm that within this Realm of England and other the king's Dominions, there is no Law, Decree, Ordinance or Constitution ecclesiastical in force and available by any man's authority, but only by the king's majesty's authority or of his Parliament.<sup>53</sup>

Introducing the parliamentary element addressed the role of the people in furthering reformist doctrine. Smyth's retraction combined social arguments with doctrinal discussion. A partnership of king and commons was promoted in the same sentence advocating justification by faith alone and denial of the papal supremacy. It is in this printed retraction that the attempt to bring the commons into a partnership with the Court and its reformers was at its most explicit. Smyth painted a picture of the king and his people as being bound *together* in breaking from the Pope's authority. He stated that:

[I] do profess and acknowledge first that the authority as well of the Bishop of Rome, whose authority is justly and lawfully abolished in this Realm as of other Bishops and other called ministers of the church, consists in the dispensation and ministration of God's word, and not in making Laws, Ordinances, and Decrees over the people beside God's word *without the consent and authority of the Prince and people.*<sup>54</sup>

Further:

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 24. Smyth's exact wording was that his recantation was to be "set forth to the people."

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 7-8. Emphasis my own.

. . . I say and affirm that no Bishop nor none of the Clergy assembled together have authority to make any Laws or Decrees besides God's Law over the people *without the consent of the Princes and the people*: and if they do make any such, no man is bound to obey them.<sup>55</sup>

The king's authority trumped the church's 'independent' authority. These passages drew the people into a more active role in government itself, aside from reforming the church. They must consent to any laws made by the church and could persuade the prince not to accept any such laws; if such laws were passed without their consent, they did not have to obey.

Using phrases like "the prince and his people" shows that the Catholics were acknowledging Protestantism's aims to pull the ordinary mass of people into active dialogue and participation, a position they already knew to be dangerous and potentially disruptive. It also shows that Somerset was not secretive in his motives to persuade the commoners towards religious reforms. He was explicit with everyone in the kingdom once *A Godly and Faithful Retraction* was published.

Smyth's words were intended to portray the pope as a false authority over the church. He went on to say that:

. . . the king's majesty for the time being may either of lawful and just cause, or of his mere goodness without any cause dispense or absolve any man from being bound to [traditions]. And the said person with whom the superior powers have dispensed with all and so made free from them, may use his said liberty without any danger of sin or scruple of conscience, either to the king's majesty which gave liberty, or to him which has obtained the liberty or Dispensation.<sup>56</sup>

Not only was the pope a false authority over the church, he had no authority over individual kingdoms:

And where in my foresaid book of Traditions, I said that Tenths of Benefices be due only to them that do preach and teach the Scripture, and also that he that

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 8. Emphasis my own.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 20. Emphasis my own.



serves not the Altar nor preaches not the Gospel can not justly live by the Tenths, but is in conscience bound to restore the profits and fruits taken thereby: Which my sayings as it lie in words and sentences is *seditionous and slanderous* to the king's majesty's proceedings and the Laws and Orders of this Realm, which have granted Tenths and Tithes to many Lay persons: Therefore this my saying as it may be taken, I justly by the words and sentences as they be put, I will not nor intend to defend nor answer the same: but I require that I may put them and declare them gently, that I meant not in these my sayings of any Lay men, to the derogation of the Laws and Statutes of this Realm: but I meant only of Curates and Priests which receiving their Tithes, do not their duties accordingly.<sup>57</sup>

The government (king) is the sole authority. The king decides how priests are to perform their duties.

Smyth's doctrinal retraction has even more significance than his proposed partnership between king and commons. On the subject of extra-scriptural teachings set forth by Christ's apostles, Smyth stated that: "I do think, affirm, and confess that doctrine to be not true, but a vain, unlawful . . . burden to Christian consciences: and that those Canons pretended to be of the apostles making and gathered of Saint Clement not to be made of the apostles."<sup>58</sup> He went on to call these doctrines: "false and Tyrannical . . . very dangerous and . . . onerous to the consciences of christian men."<sup>59</sup> "Tyrannical," "dangerous," – these words were chosen to grab the public's attention. Somerset and Thomas Cranmer deliberately scared their entire audience with words designed to inflict a potential for bodily harm: ". . . it is a false, untrue, and devilish doctrine and ungodly usurpation upon the holy Scripture contrary to the true, pure and Catholic doctrine of Christ's church."<sup>60</sup> The true, 'Catholic' church is that dictated by the king and the Gospels; the Pope is the real 'devilish' antichrist.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 21.

Smyth's forced retraction relates explicit Protestant arguments that reflected the intentions of Edward VI's advisors, meaning that Smyth did not necessarily (or almost positively) believe what he was stating and may well have been reading from a prepared document.<sup>61</sup> In July of 1547, Smyth was forced again to explain himself, this time in a tract titled *A Plain Declaration Made at Oxford*. Again, Reynold Wolfe acted as printer and distributor. This issue featured a commentary by Smyth before and after the reproduction of *A Godly and Faithful Retraction*. In his commentary, Smyth attacked critics who believed that he was forced to retract his opinions or that the recantation that was printed never even took place<sup>62</sup>, stating that he was "very sorry that they so did mistake me."<sup>63</sup> He said that he made his recantation at Paul's Cross "according to my bounden duty and promise . . ."<sup>64</sup> He added that he would:

. . . read unto you my retraction which I declared at Paul's cross, unto the which I agreed and consented to freely and willingly without any manner of force or compulsion. . . . For in this my retraction I do not deny the holy Sacrament of the altar nor the sacrament of baptism, nor finally any other things comprised *in the body of holy Scripture* as necessary matter of our belief.<sup>65</sup>

Here, Smyth adhered to his belief in the only two sacraments listed in the Bible, but conveniently neglected to mention the other five his ordination required him to perform. Further, he claimed that he now taught only the true faith and believed it to be true.<sup>66</sup> He also wrote that:

that we be justified by only faith in Christ, is no new invented saying or proposition, but many times used of by best and most ancient doctors . . . the most

<sup>61</sup> Most likely, Somerset and Cranmer told Smyth which points he was to refute. Lowe, 36-37. For an alternate view, see Macek's previously cited article.

<sup>62</sup> Although Smyth himself propagated these rumors in letters to continental conservatives and friends.

<sup>63</sup> *A Plain Declaration Made at Oxford the 24 day of July, by Master Richard Smyth, Doctor of Divinity, upon his Retraction made and published at Paul's Cross in London, in the year of our Lord God 1547, the 15 day of May.* (London: Reynold Wolfe, 1547): 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4. Emphasis my own.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

part of all which I have read of the ancient doctors do confess and teach. And therefore it may after this sort justly and truly be set forth published and taught also among us Christian men, although this saying has been eviltaken and depraved of some as false and erroneous. And if a man in deed should think thus, that believing well (of a man might do so) and doing evil or doing nothing at all according to his belief and profession having time and space thereto, yet he should be saved, he surely thinks foolishly and madly and so as never learned man wrote or thought that was a Christian man and in his right wits. For Scripture is plain: he that loves God keeps his commandments.<sup>67</sup>

This statement reflects the idea also prevalent on the continent that Christians could still be unified under one faith. It can also be somewhat foreshadowing future Catholic reforms. The word “reform” is not found in Smyth’s retraction, yet another ploy directed at the commons. Instead, Smyth asserted that everything he had said concerning the falseness of extra-scriptural teachings and doctrinal practices was “true, catholic, and a necessary doctrine . . .”<sup>68</sup> Smyth was being used to persuade the commons that the government, not the pope, represented true religious faith and practice.

*A Plain Declaration* was also significant in that this was where Smyth clarified that he *retracted* his statements, as opposed to recanting them. Smyth’s use of the word ‘retraction’ is significant because it implies that he was taking this step voluntarily. It also seems as if Smyth has taken the initiative to state that his previous teachings and beliefs were wrong. The term ‘recantation’, especially following Anne Askew’s execution and Nicholas Shaxton’s public recantation to spare his own life, would have denoted the strong arm of the government falling on this poor priest. He wrote:

. . . where as I said I made a retraction and not a recantation, it was but an excuse of my doings. For as much is commonly signified and meant by Retraction as by recantation. And because that all men for the most part which heard me so say do gather and take hereof (as I am credibly informed) that I did stick still and stand to

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 31, 33.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 33.

mine old doctrine in all things: And that the retraction sent abroad in my name was either none of mine or else that I was compelled and forced to agree unto it: I am very sorry that they did so mistake me.<sup>69</sup>

Smyth continued to say that:

Neither my fame nor estimation of myself, neither friendship of my dear friends, nor any other things shall make me ashamed of truth. I remember what the Lord of truth does say: He that is ashamed of me before men, I shall be ashamed of him before my father which is in heaven.<sup>70</sup>

Smyth's retraction was important in that it was coming from a Catholic cleric espousing reformist doctrine. Edward VI recorded the recantation in his journal, which was ordinarily devoted to significant political events: "Doctour Smith of Oxford recauntid at Poulis certain opinions of the masse . . ." <sup>71</sup> This attention demonstrates the weakening of the catholic establishment in England and that encouragement by the ruling elite and their young king.<sup>72</sup> By publishing Smyth's retraction, Somerset portrayed Catholics as waking from their superstitions and embracing true teachings. Having a Catholic cleric, no less the professor of Divinity at Oxford, endorse the reformation of the Church was designed to influence the commons to accept religious debate and desire to learn more about what was stated in the Bible.

In many ways, Smyth's retractions can be seen as the foundation stone for the arguments discussed by Protestant propaganda to come. Its early date and forced publicity demonstrate the government's intentions regarding religious debate. The recantation stated explicitly that the Prince and the people are together in breaking from the tyranny of the Pope. It also maintained that the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church were "not fit to be taught, preached, or

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 2-3.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

<sup>71</sup> J. G. Nichols, ed., *The Literary Remains of King Edward the Sixth* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1964), 214-215.

<sup>72</sup> Lowe, 35.

defended.”<sup>73</sup> Instead, “the Scripture of the old and new Testament written by the inspiration of the Holy ghost concerning our belief, is to be believed, accepted and taken as an undoubted truth, not to be altered, reformed, or changed by any man . . .”<sup>74</sup> Smyth then named several Catholic “superstitions,” including kneeling and fasting, as extra-scriptural traditions.<sup>75</sup> Smyth also addressed the question of the mass, whether it was a reenactment of Christ’s sacrifice or a memorial, specifically calling it a remembrance and stating that he was not ashamed to retract his written works.<sup>76</sup> In fact, it was “blasphemy” to believe that Christ’s body could be sacrificed again and again when he “was but once offered, once gave up himself for the redemption of our sins on good friday on the cross.”<sup>77</sup>

So here we have the various foundations for Protestant arguments in one, relatively short, and highly touted Anglo-Catholic retraction. First, Edward VI is working with his people to create a better kingdom; second, *sola scriptura* should be the only basis for religious teachings; third, the pope’s tyranny has resulted in superstitious teachings that do not add anything to the religious experience; and fourth, the mass is only a memorial of Christ’s sacrifice, negating the miracle of transubstantiation.

Although Shagan concentrates on Protestant tracts and Somerset’s proclamations concerning enclosures, the same influences that sparked the 1549 rebellions are found in Smyth’s retraction. The people were drawn in to his argument by the appeal above all of the partnership emphasized between Edward VI and the commons, by the use of rhetoric meant to convey

<sup>73</sup> Smyth, *A Godly and faithful retraction*, 13.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-16.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-28. Stephen Gresham writes in “William Baldwin: Literary Voice of the Reign of Edward VI,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (Spring 1981): 101-116, that “even a cursory glance at the publications of the period reveals that the Protestant attack was most frequently aimed at the nature of the Mass.” (112). The reformers were careful to make sure that Smyth recanted that portion of his work because it was so important to their own doctrinal changes.

<sup>77</sup> Smyth, *A Godly and Faithful Retraction*, 27.

urgency and danger. This appeal would become the fundamental basis for the other two arguments consistently made throughout the rest of Somerset's Protectorate (but not yet explicitly stated here): the appeal to social order and the obligations between the nobility and the commons.

*Of Unwritten Verities* (1548) was written by Smyth but published by Thomas Reynold without the author's name listed.<sup>78</sup> It was the only Catholic publication produced in London during Edward VI's reign.<sup>79</sup> *Of Unwritten Verities* was a recantation of Smyth's recantations, arguing that church laws should be made by councils and not kings.<sup>80</sup> He also claimed that the people wanted traditional religion.<sup>81</sup> He also said, contrary to his very public recantations, that extra-scriptural teachings could not be denied:<sup>82</sup> “. . . whereby might follow great danger unto the people.”<sup>83</sup> “For the pretence of such unwritten verities, and yet of making of laws, to bind king's and princes and their people: and yet that both powers, that is to say, spiritual and temporal, were in the clergy, began not in the clergy and now is but in their predecessors.”<sup>84</sup> Smyth tried to harness Protestant techniques. He said that the people approved Roman teachings.<sup>85</sup> The Roman teachings must be upheld in order to maintain unity amongst the people.<sup>86</sup> He also appealed to the people to believe their true faith, no matter what the king decreed.<sup>87</sup> He then admonished Protestants for appealing to the people for popular support:<sup>88</sup>

<sup>78</sup> “Unwritten Verities” referred to extra-scriptural traditions the Roman Church taught and followed that could not be found in the Bible, and therefore were constantly attacked by evangelicals.

<sup>79</sup> King, *English Reformation Literature*, 90.

<sup>80</sup> Smyth, *Of Unwritten Verities* (London: Thomas Raynalde, 1548), 9, 11. Again, Ellen Macek has a different interpretation: she believes *Of Unwritten Verities* is an example of Smyth conforming to Edwardian reforms. See page 397 in her article, cited above.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. For more about this viewpoint, see Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

for the pretence of such unwritten verities, and yet of making laws, to bind kings and princes and their people: and yet that both powers, that is to say, spiritual and temporal, were in the clergy, began not in the clergy and now is, but in their predecessors.<sup>89</sup>

Smyth's argument was that the government was giving the common people 'power' in order to get the church reforms they sought.

Smyth's 1548 and 1550 works were not as popular as his recantations, though the major reason for this was that his latter writings were banned and could only be distributed covertly throughout England. The government's first strike against Catholicism was clearly a successful start. Smyth was not prepared to martyr himself for his beliefs, tarnishing his own reputation amongst conservatives and weakening the Catholic resolve amidst the wider English population. Somerset now felt confident that he could proceed at a faster pace with reformation. His next aim was to assert Edward VI's authority as king and supreme head of the church. For this he would employ Walter Lynne to translate *The Beginning and Ending of All Popery*. His next conservative target would be the outspoken bishop of Winchester, Stephen Gardiner. To counter Gardiner, Somerset would attempt the same tactic as with Smyth – extreme government force. This time it would have entirely different results.

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 13.

## Chapter 4: Battling the Devil's Sophistry

As printing flourished after Edward's accession, more and more authors found employment via government-sponsored presses, even if they were not *actually* patronized by the government. One such author was William Baldwin, who had his works published by Edward Whitchurch, but it is unclear whether he held government protection (though there were reports that he participated in court productions for Edward VI), or was just able to take advantage of employment opportunities. Nevertheless, Baldwin's most famous work was dedicated to Edward VI and entitled *Canticles, or Ballads of Solomon* (1549). It was a compilation of classical and humanistic verses meant to educate the populace in classical philosophy, but also aimed to promote evangelical Christian belief. It was very popular, with twenty-four editions produced by 1620. All of Baldwin's writings were tinged with anti-papal sentiments.<sup>1</sup>

Another important author was John Bale, who did appear to benefit from government patronage. His writings, particularly *The Examinations of Anne Askew*, contributed enormously to John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, composed in 1563. He had also written a scathing attack on Stephen Gardiner and his zealous persecution of evangelicals in 1543 (published in Antwerp and Wesel). He was forced into exile during Henry VIII's reign for his beliefs, but returned to England after Edward's accession.<sup>2</sup> The *English Short-Title Catalogue* records that Bale had two publications in 1547, five in 1548, and two in 1549.

Anthony Scoloker was yet another author (and printer) who took advantage of the new opportunities afforded by Somerset's lifting censorship and encouragement of evangelical tracts. Scoloker translated several German works into English, all supporting the reformation of the church, although some of the works advocated much more radical reform than would ever

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<sup>1</sup> DNB.

<sup>2</sup> DNB.



materialize in England.<sup>3</sup> Though not the focus of this study, Scoloker's translations reflect how important continental works could be for the English Reformation. When censorship was initially lifted, there were few vernacular works ready to go into immediate publication. Translations provided the initial fodder for the presses until English-language works became available. Somerset also aimed to put these translations to government use.

### **The Beginning and Ending of All Popery**

Many of the first works that were produced from English presses were translations of German books. One of these was *The Beginning and Ending of All Popery*, commissioned by the government and translated by Walter Lynne. The preface to the work denounced the pope's authority over secular kingdoms and exalted Edward VI's legitimacy, defending Protestantism as truly of God, meaning that Edward's embrace of the reformed faith made him 'of God'. *The Beginning and Ending of All Popery* was dedicated first to Edward VI "immediately next under god," and then to "his most dear uncle, Edward duke of Somerset . . ."<sup>4</sup>

Lynne was born in Antwerp and only moved to London in 1540. He did not enter the book trade until Edward's accession and the unprecedented increase in book production as a result of Somerset's efforts and relaxation of the censorship laws. On December 1, 1547, Lynne was granted a seven-year patent to be sole printer of *The Beginning and Ending of All Popery*. He was more a publisher than a printer, frequently employing colleagues, such as John Day, in his print house. He had his own bookshop in St. Paul's Cross, the perfect location to reach a wide audience. Because of his continental contacts and experience, Lynne was a natural choice to translate German and French works; translations became his primary occupation. He

<sup>3</sup> DNB.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Lynne, translator, *The Beginning and Ending of All Popery (being taken out of certain old prophecies more than 200 years ago, here faithfully set forth to the amendment of this present world, out of the German by Walter Lynne)* (London: John Hereford and Walter Lynne, 1547), 2. Modernized spelling; grammar retained.

dedicated many of his works to Edward VI and Somerset, but interestingly Somerset's wife, Duchess Anne, received the most dedications. Finally, as stated before, Lynne was appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury's official printer.<sup>5</sup>

Lynne continued in his preface to describe how the Roman papacy came to exist, as a direct creation of Satan "for he did subtly invent and diligently instruct all his faithful children the bishops of Rome . . . to write and false interpret . . . Scripture . . ."<sup>6</sup> He praised the current time period, because the Lord has made sure that people "know more than did the ancient and gray bearded fathers in the time of blindness and ignorance."<sup>7</sup> He also lauded Henry VIII for allowing the English Bible to be printed and distributed to the people, so that they could learn the scriptures for themselves. He asked that Edward "cease not therefore (most gracious prince) to set forward this godly work that your father began."<sup>8</sup>

He explained that the German author simply related what scripture said about the beginning of Christ's church; "These figures are not of the authors own invention, and of late days invented: but they were found in ancient libraries . . ."<sup>9</sup> Lynne wrote as if he was educating Edward in the real truth found in the Gospels: the king was not yet presented as the young Josiah, an image that only emerged later in 1547 and especially in 1548. At this time, Edward, like Richard Smyth, was discovering the truth at the same time as the people:

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<sup>5</sup> DNB, Walter Lynne. The duchess also patronized Thomas Becon, Nicolas Denisot (a former member of Marguerite de Navarre's court) and William Samuel. Attempts were made during Anne Askew's trial in 1546 to implicate Anne as a heretic, but Askew refused to admit to Lady Seymour's support. The duchess received twelve dedications total during Edward's reign. As an aside, the first three Seymour daughters (Anne, Margaret, and Jane) published a Latin elegy to Marguerite de Navarre in June 1550 (she had died in December of the previous year). They were no doubt influenced and aided by Nicolas Denisot, who tutored them and would have introduced them to Marguerite's Protestant writings. Patricia Demers, "The Seymour Sisters: Elegizing Female Attachment," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 343-365. Also see Charles G. Nauert's *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe* 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) for more information about women and humanistic study.

<sup>6</sup> Lynne, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 4.

The Spirit of the living god, the giver of all goodness, instruct you in all godly knowledge, that for the time of your reign in this world, your highness may use the sword to you committed, to the honor of god, and wealth of his members, living here under your dominion. And then no doubt you shall enjoy the kingdom, that shall continue forever.<sup>10</sup>

Lynne's translation is an example of continental works being appropriated for English use. *The Beginning and Ending of All Popery* served two purposes: Lynne's preface focused on Edward VI as the legitimate, sole ruler over the kingdom, while the body of the translation recounted the abuses and corruption of the Roman Catholic Church.

Jennifer Loach argues in her biography of Edward VI that the religious changes should be seen as an attempt to consolidate royal authority over the church and removing Rome's jurisdiction, establishing lay control.<sup>11</sup> Before the end of his first year, Parliament passed laws and approved penalties on anyone who said or wrote that the king was not or should not be supreme head of the church; it was also illegal to say that church authority should be returned to the Pope. In addition, it was unlawful to say that the king should not be king.<sup>12</sup> Further, public (preaching or writing) defense of Catholic doctrine and ceremony was prohibited.<sup>13</sup> These laws were passed to counter conservative opponents and to secure Edward's legitimacy and (hopefully) peaceful rule. Richard Smyth's recantations occurred before these laws were passed and therefore served as a starting point in examining the direction the regime would take in battling its opponents. The translations can also be seen as an attempt for Edward's regime to show that belief in the royal supremacy was not uniquely English.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>11</sup> Jennifer Loach, *Edward VI* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 47.

<sup>12</sup> *Statutes of the Realm Vol. 4, Part 1: 1547-1585* (Ontario: TannerRitchie Publishing, 2007), 99-100. 1° Edw. VI. C. 12.

<sup>13</sup> John N. King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 86.

Within the kingdom, Stephen Gardiner was the most outspoken opponent of the reformist changes in the church; he was also close to many of the councilors, having served in overseas diplomatic missions with Somerset, and had frequent contact with them. The question of the Eucharist became Gardiner's primary theological preoccupation through the whole of Edward's reign.<sup>14</sup> Gardiner tried to counter religious innovation with four arguments: first, that religion should remain unchanged from that settled before Henry's death until Edward reached adulthood; second, he argued that further doctrinal changes were adverse to the wishes expressed in Henry's will; third were technical and legal objections; and fourth were his theological objections, namely that the Eucharist was a miracle and transformed into the body of Christ.<sup>15</sup> His outspokenness against the regime earned him the nickname 'Wily Winchester'; but the primary reason Gardiner was hated was because the evangelicals needed a scapegoat.<sup>16</sup> He was imprisoned because of the constant questioning of Edward's legitimacy and the validity of the religious changes being enacted, not simply because of his conservatism.

### **Stephen Gardiner and John Hooper**

*The said bishop was a troublesome man; and that he would trouble all the rest if he were named among [the regency council].*

Henry VIII

In 1546, Stephen Gardiner published *A Detection of the Devils Sophistry*, a polemic attacking evangelical interpretations of the sacrament of the altar as a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice and advocating transubstantiation. Under Henry VIII's regime, Gardiner's work fell into perfect harmony with accepted religious beliefs. He had been educated at Cambridge and was schoolmates with Thomas Wriothesley and William Paget. His first jaunt at court was

<sup>14</sup> DNB, Stephen Gardiner.

<sup>15</sup> DNB, Stephen Gardiner.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Riordan and Alec Ryrie, "Stephen Gardiner and the Making of a Protestant Villain," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34, no. 4 (Winter, 2003): 1046. Gardiner himself claimed that he was only counseling the regime, but he was accused of being too free with his advice.

working as Cardinal Wolsey's secretary, intensively involved in the king's Great Matter. After Wolsey's fall from favor, Gardiner moved to become the king's secretary. He was appointed bishop of Winchester in 1531, a sign of great favor from Henry VIII. He was no longer entirely trusted by the king, though, as he constantly defended the church's right to make laws without royal approval. He was replaced as secretary by Thomas Cromwell. In response, Gardiner wrote in defense of the royal supremacy, defending royal authority and power as a result of divine grace and not in any way due to popular consent.

While on a foreign policy mission in France, Gardiner was instructed to apprehend and extradite Cardinal Reginald Pole to England. Gardiner failed and his loyalty once again was called into question. Cromwell's fall and execution facilitated Gardiner's return to royal favor though. In the 1540's, he continued to push Henry to reconcile with Rome and worked against Thomas Cranmer's influence. He was one of Anne Askew's examiners and even investigated Hugh Latimer, later a favorite Edwardian preacher, for supposed heresies. In 1546, Gardiner had an ill-timed dispute with Henry, refusing to exchange lands with the king. Henry's fury led him to strike Gardiner from his son's regency council, ensuring that the conservatives would be far out-numbered when Edward assumed the throne. When Henry's death did arrive, Gardiner confidently believed that his previous convivial relationships with the councilors would continue and that his opinions would be well received. Somerset even told Gardiner that there would be no religious innovations until Edward came of age. Gardiner also hesitated to embrace the vernacular, claiming in a letter to Somerset that Latin and Greek would outlive English as languages of religion: “. . . for the English tongue, itself has not continued in one form of

understanding for 200 years; and without God's work and special miracle it shall hardly contain religion long, when it cannot last itself."<sup>17</sup>

Gardiner did relent finally on the church's authority to make laws without royal approval, stating: "and if we should otherwise take it, we should indeed practice as far as Dr. Smyth of Oxford affirmed fondly in words, that we might make laws. The Convocation order is no order 'til the King's Majesty has authorized and approved it."<sup>18</sup> Somerset questioned Gardiner about the latter's silence regarding Richard Smyth's *Brief Treatise* and recantation.<sup>19</sup> Gardiner responded that "giving this judgment of Smyth, that I neither liked his tractation of unwritten verities, nor yet his retraction, and was glad of my former judgment, that I never had familiarity with him. I saw him not . . . these three years, nor talked with him these three years, as curious as I am noted in the commonwealth."<sup>20</sup>

After Edward's accession, Gardiner immediately complained about the new royal preachers, including Nicholas Ridley, for preaching reformist ideas and advocating the destruction of religious images.<sup>21</sup> He overstepped his jurisdiction and wrote to administrators around the realm, including Edward Vaughn in Jersey, complaining about reports of image-breaking and demanding to know who the perpetrators were and who influenced them.<sup>22</sup> In fact, Gardiner wrote to Vaughn that he had been "here appointed" by the king and sought only to do his duty and "preserve the rest [of images] that stand from like danger."<sup>23</sup> Upon finding out about Gardiner's meddling, Somerset admonished him and attempted to blacken his name by associating him with Richard Smyth, who had recently been forced to recant at Paul's Cross.

<sup>17</sup> J. A. Muller, *The Letters of Stephen Gardiner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), 289. The letter is dated June 6, 1547.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 303. Letter to Cranmer, June 12, 1547.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 293.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 255. Letter is dated February 23-28, 1547.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 272. Letter is dated May 3, 1547.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

Gardiner was imprisoned in the fleet September 25, 1547, for refusing to accept the new injunctions enacted by the Privy Council and Cranmer.<sup>24</sup> In 1548, Gardiner was released to house arrest while the government continued to pressure him to accept their line – to accept and to teach the new doctrines. He was offered a chance to preach in Paul’s Cross and reconcile himself to the government, but he used the public pulpit to defend extrascriptural traditions and clerical celibacy. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London June 30, 1548, for the remainder of Edward’s reign.<sup>25</sup>

Gardiner stated in *A Detection of the Devils Sophistry* that the bread and wine transformed into Christ’s body and blood, writing that “no man can directly deny it, and gainsay it, for so god does indeed and yet not so as the unlearned do take it and think it to be understood.”<sup>26</sup> Gardiner referred to the “gross imagination of the simple people,”<sup>27</sup> and implied that men cannot understand the Bible without the aid of church ministers.<sup>28</sup> He stated: “for if you will not believe more than your own capacity can comprehend, then have you no belief at all of god, which cannot be of man comprehended.”<sup>29</sup> Gardiner insulted the common people further:

. . . but whatsoever things god command you to do, think of them ever, and in many of god’s works be not over curious, whereunto it may be said further . . . a

<sup>24</sup> Gardiner stated that the injunctions and Thomas Cranmer’s *Homilies* conflicted with an Henrician act of Parliament. Muller, 373.

<sup>25</sup> DNB, Stephen Gardiner. Charles Wriothesley also mentions Gardiner’s imprisonment in his *A Chronicle of England during the reigns of the Tudors, from A.D. 1485 to 1559* (Camden Society, 1878), 3. Edward VI himself recorded in his journal that: “Stephen Gardiner bishop of Winchester was, for not receiving the Injunctions, committed to ward,” and later, “Upon St. Peter’s day the bishop of Winchester was committed to the tower.” J. G. Nichols, *Literary Remains of King Edward the Sixth* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1964), 220, 223. Whilst in the fleet, Gardiner peppered Somerset and the council with letters containing his complaints and maladies.

<sup>26</sup> Stephen Gardiner, *A Detection of the Devils Sophistry wherewith he robbeth the unlearned people of the true belief in the most blessed Sacrament of the altar* (London: 1546), 3-4. Spelling modernized, grammar and punctuation retained from the original.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-32.

specially give no credence to your senses, and sensual reasons, to impugn the mysteries of faith, howsoever they press you and prick you . . .<sup>30</sup>

Church doctrine “exceed[s] the capacity of the rude people.”<sup>31</sup>

*A Detection of the Devil’s Sophistry* was concerned with the main component of the mass and Catholic doctrine that Gardiner would go on to continue defending throughout Edward’s reign: the question of transubstantiation. Gardiner stated that, “the church of god testifies and teaches this to be the true belief of the most blessed Sacrament of the altar, that there is present the natural body and blood of our savior Christ.”<sup>32</sup> He further stated that God’s teachings were not taught “by man’s wit” but rather “from god, revealed to the church.”<sup>33</sup> Evangelicals had been duped by the devil into believing false doctrine. Gardiner wrote:

And herein the devil utters his sophistry, and makes us forget that is continually done before our eyes, and by impossibility of our carnal imaginations, in things above our capacity, seduces us, and deceives us, in the belief of god’s high mysteries, and specially in the mystery of the Sacrament of the altar, whereby to hinder us, and deprive us, of our great comfort and consolation . . .<sup>34</sup>

Gardiner firmly believed that common men could not understand scripture or doctrine for themselves, instead arguing that they were to learn from and follow the teachings and interpretations clerics and learned theologians.

In Edward’s reign, John Hooper responded to Gardiner’s work from his self-imposed exile in Zurich, where he had fled to escape persecution from Henry VIII and to further his evangelical education. Hooper was Oxford educated; he had two disputes with Richard Smyth, the first in about 1539 and the second in about 1544. He converted to a Zwinglian form of Christianity early in the 1540’s. He fled to the continent after his second argument with Smyth,

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 38-39.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 120.



settling in Zurich in January 1546 and developing a close relationship with Heinrich Bullinger. He opted to remain on the continent even after Edward's accession and word of the religious reforms reached him. In 1549 he was under intense pressure to return to England and add his voice to those of Hugh Latimer, Ridley, and Thomas Becon in espousing evangelical doctrine and practices. He arrived in London in May 1549 and resided in Somerset's household. He was a very popular preacher; Smyth commented that he was regarded as a prophet amongst the commons. Hooper's work is entitled *An Answer unto my Lord of Winchester's Book*. Hooper's preface stated that he was aiming to counter Gardiner's work because:

it may put in danger the good and simple conscience unlearned . . . when arguments subtle and crafty shall assault his simple and plain faith . . . I have made this answer unto your book to succor and warrant the conscience of the reader, from the snares and sophistications wherewith all you or any other should trouble and unquiet the peace and tranquility of him that resists only under the shadow and protection of god's holy word . . . to declare that it is against your cause and opinion that I write and not against you . . .<sup>35</sup>

Hooper's main concern was to argue that the king's word be taken as law and that no minister of the church, be it a bishop or the pope, had authority over the king. At once, Hooper's work promoted evangelical doctrine and the legitimacy of the king over matters spiritual and temporal. Hooper threw Gardiner's own rhetoric back in his face and argued that "those that will establish the Mass as you do my lord and defend idolatry: Must prove the thing you speak by the Scripture . . . you must not darken the places with glories of your imagination."<sup>36</sup> Hooper presented Gardiner and his fellow conservatives as mortal enemies, "whose final pretence is none other than to bury the soul of man of the joy eternal, and to have him his companion forever, to curse

<sup>35</sup> John Hooper, *An Answer unto my lord of Winchesters book entitled a detection of the devils Sophistry, wherewith he robbeth the unlearned people of the true belief in the most blessed sacrament of the altar made by John Hooper* (Zurich: Augustine Fries, 1547), 1-2.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

the living god and to blaspheme his holy name without end.”<sup>37</sup> He portrayed the commons as a people with “a heart most gentle, humble, and always obedient unto god and godliness, always most ready and prompt to embrace, choose, and elect, the things godly . . .”<sup>38</sup> He admonished everyone to “remember that the original of man’s misery condemnation and death was first wrought by the false interpretation of the Scripture . . .”<sup>39</sup> Hooper implied that extrascriptural traditions were not necessary and asked everyone to “believe no man except he speak the word of god truly and in the same sense that god meant it . . . and let us not doubt but only the Scripture is sufficient.”<sup>40</sup>

Hooper’s work also employed the term “commune wealth” throughout, showing that his mind was already on using evangelical doctrine and teachings to improve the conditions of the kingdom. He wrote, “As in a commonwealth, the final cause of all laws and the commonwealth likewise is to live well.”<sup>41</sup> He defined the function of the monarch to establish religious law and decrees and the roles of the church ministers and the common people in this process:

Now he that considers the face of this commonwealth May see many notable things, and specially for my purpose on which shall prove that princes sustain wrong by such bishops as be within their realms. . . . yet were they never so bold to make any law for the people concerning conscience or to bring any ceremony into the church without the judgment and knowledge of god’s word, and Moses the prince . . . this cause of religion was not brought unto the bishops and priests to be defined. But unto Moses, who counseled the lord and there upon wished his subjects what was to be done such a case. Read the place. This declares that no general council, no provincial assembly, no bishops of any Realm or province, may charge the subjects thereof with any law or ceremony otherwise than the prince of the Land, by the word of god can give accompt to be god and godly. For the people are committed unto the prince to sustain the right of them all, and not only to defend their bodies, but also their souls.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 46-47.

Hooper advocated that “now to remove this pitiful and miserable ruin of the church let all princes for the love of god, and for the restoring of their own princely honor” make their own laws in their own lands.<sup>43</sup> Every commonwealth should have only two governors: God and the prince. Together, they made laws to conserve the commonwealth.<sup>44</sup>

Hooper stated that God abhorred those who were “repugnant unto the law”<sup>45</sup>: the law being the Scripture alone. He continued to advocate the king’s supremacy, stating that:

he that would take upon him to deny the King’s seal in such a purpose and say, it is but a piece of wax it were no less than treason and a very contempt of the King himself. Because the king has appointed that seal to be honorably received and reverently used of all men.<sup>46</sup>

Despite having to flee England because of Henry’s religious beliefs, he praised the king, stating that:

in my days it pleased god to move the heart of the most noble and victorious prince Henry the eighth of a blessed memory to deliver his subjects from the Tyranny of the wicked Antichrist the bishop of Rome with many other godly and divine acts, which brought the light of god’s word into many hearts. Beseeking the eternal and living god that this our most gracious and virtuous Sovereign lord King Edward is successful for may godly perform the thing that is yet to be desired, and leave no more doctrine in the church of England, nor other book to instruct his subjects with all.<sup>47</sup>

Here, Hooper was expressing his hope that Edward VI would further reform in the church and base doctrine on Scripture alone. He went on to say of Edward:

But the merciful lord, which said to perform this old king’s godly intention, by the young virtues and holy servant of god that was crowned king in the ninth year of

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 47-48.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 119. Of course, he may also have been placating Edward in order to receive more favor, but he also genuinely believed in the royal supremacy.

his age. Whose example I doubt not but that our most gracious King will follow.  
Having so godly a governor, and virtuous councilors . . .<sup>48</sup>

Hooper's inclusion of the privy councilors is important, because it shows that their authority was also lawful in place of their king's minority. He ended his discussion of the power of the monarchy by stating "there is nor ought to be in any Monarchy more than one king and all other to be subjects," including the bishops and priests.<sup>49</sup>

His final word against Gardiner's work was this: "What learning is this to say it is the devil's sophistry that a simple and unlearned man should not and is not bound to be certain and sure to know god from an Idol, and Christ's body from a sacrament of his body as the best hope of the world."<sup>50</sup> Hooper managed to survive Somerset's fall from power and continued as one of the royal preachers. After Mary's accession he was imprisoned, tried at the court, and sentenced by Gardiner himself to burn at the stake February 9, 1555.<sup>51</sup>

### Robert Crowley

*The true christians are in this world as lambs in the midst among wolves, all they therefore that be as wolves among lambs are false christians. If you therefore do know the author of this ballad to be such one: then may you justly call him a false Christian, otherwise you slander him.*

Robert Crowley, *The Confutation of Miles Hogarde*

Miles Hogarde was "the first trader or mechanic to appear in print for the Catholic cause [. . .] that had not received any monastical or academic breeding." He is one of the few examples of non-elite opposition to the Reformation and we owe this discovery to Robert Crowley, who reprinted Hogarde's *Abuse of the Blessed Sacrament* in its entirety in his *Answer to the Ballad*

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 137. Throughout evangelical propaganda, one of the main concerns was the ability of common lay people to understand the Bible without the intervention of potentially corrupt church ministers.

<sup>51</sup> DNB, John Hooper.

(*Confutation of Hogarde*). Hogarde participated in heresy prosecutions in the 1540s.<sup>52</sup> He wrote *The Abuse of the Blessed Sacrament* in 1547. It was swiftly suppressed and he was examined by the privy council.<sup>53</sup> Hogarde's work only exists fully in Robert Crowley's *Confutation*. Crowley was Oxford educated. He began working in London in 1546, writing and possibly even proof-reading for John Day. Day, with William Seres, would print Crowley's refutation of Hogarde in 1548. Crowley began producing propaganda after Edward's accession, thanks to the new opportunities afforded by relaxed censorship. His propaganda was underwritten by Richard Grafton, but Grafton's name never appeared on any of Crowley's publications. Crowley has often been associated with the 'Commonwealth Men' due to his passionate views and close relationship with Hugh Latimer and Thomas Lever. Even after the 1549 rebellions, when censorship was reinstated and rhetoric shifted from dramatic social reform to social obedience, Crowley never ceased his social critique of all orders of society. After Somerset's fall, he defended the duke personally, along with his social policies, and clearly had benefitted from Somerset's patronage through numerous of his servants and family friends. In Elizabeth's reign he would continue to commend the duke<sup>54</sup>; he also became a leader of the Puritan movement that began during her reign. John King argues that his writings provide the standard for English Reformation poetry and double as nativist examples of English writing.<sup>55</sup>

Crowley's refutation of Hogarde was scathing and derogatory. He wrote that Hogarde followed 'wily Winchester's' teachings and beliefs, ". . . which under the name catholic faith would still maintain the Romish trust and kingdom of antichrist."<sup>56</sup> Crowley mentioned Stephen

<sup>52</sup> DNB, Miles Hogarde. In his *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009) Eamon Duffy refers to Hogarde as a "plebeian London tradesman." 76.

<sup>53</sup> DNB, Miles Hogarde.

<sup>54</sup> DNB, Robert Crowley.

<sup>55</sup> King, 319.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Crowley, *The Confutation of the misshapen answer to the misnamed, wicked Ballad called the Abuse of the blessed Sacrament of the altar. Wherein, though hast (gentle Reader) the right understanding of all the places of*

Gardiner three times (pages nine, sixty-six, and eighty-nine), each instance referring to his devilish teachings and dark influence that must be stopped.

Crowley personally insulted Hogarde and his acquired knowledge, writing: “You are too young (Miles Hogarde) to decide the matter. You know not on which side your bread is buttered.”<sup>57</sup> Crowley looked down on Hogarde’s low position in society and insulted him for it, while at the same time advocating lay biblical education. Crowley also wrote that: “You would rather we should believe that good is evil and evil good, black white and white black, that light is darkness and darkness light, and that god is bread and bread God.”<sup>58</sup> The latter statement obviously refers to Hogarde’s belief in transubstantiation.

Both Hogarde and Crowley addressed King Edward’s role. Hogarde wrote that: “Lord grant that our head, King Edward VI, may bury the dead God which is [] and act in his stead, thy supper not mixed [] abuse popish.” Crowley refuted:

Lord grant that King Edward which over us the chief primacy under Christ Jesus hath truly to defend the catholic faith which from the apostles did whole ensue and all heresy and popishness to subdue that we may live under his highness so in the catholic faith which is most true that to the honor of god all things may grow I wonder how much you durst be so bold as to pray for the king’s majesty that his highness should do as you have told and deed before god of grate iniquity which is that the dead god pixte he may bury you show yourself a true subject in this which doth point your king to such an office.<sup>59</sup>

It also appears that Crowley looked down on Hogarde’s opposition not only because of his conservatism, but because of his lower rank in society, commenting “but we know you well enough.”<sup>60</sup> Crowley was very hierarchical in his reforms, vigorously supporting action from the

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*Scripture that Miles Hogarde (with his learned counsel) has wrested to make for the transubstantiation of the bread and wine. Compiled by Robert Crowley (London: John Day and William Seres, 1548), 1, 89.*

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 5. It is also interesting to note the early use of this expression.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 33.

top of society, emanating from the king and Somerset, to provide and instruct the lower orders. Despite his clear disdain for Hogarde, Crowley reserved his greatest animosity for the formerly evangelical cleric, Nicholas Shaxton.

### **The Confutation of Nicholas Shaxton**

*Would God you would with Peter lament your weaknesses and seek Christ again by repentance, and desperately hang yourself with Judas, so that your bowels break out to the great ignominy of all the children of your whorish mother.*

Robert Crowley, *The Confutation of Nicholas Shaxton*

Nicholas Shaxton was arraigned for heresy in 1546 along with Anne Askew. He made a full recantation of his evangelical position. “. . . the government made the most of their coup by printing copies of Shaxton’s recantation and ordering Shaxton to preach publicly his abjuration.”<sup>61</sup> He believed in sacramentarianism: the radical belief denying that bread and wine could become the body and blood of Christ and instead asserting that the Eucharist was only a signification.<sup>62</sup> Crowley refuted Shaxton’s recantation in 1548, perhaps making his harshest stance against this former evangelical. Through Crowley’s confutation it is clear that he is trying to salvage the evangelical reputation and he admonished Shaxton for not accepting martyrdom for his beliefs, as Anne Askew did.

Crowley’s answer to Shaxton shows evidence of the dialogue Somerset was promoting and the desire to learn from Scripture. Crowley wrote: “If you can by the Scriptures defend your articles and prove them to be catholic and Godly: I shall with all readiness embrace them and revoke all that I have written to the contrary.”<sup>63</sup> He wanted Shaxton to answer the charges and

<sup>61</sup> John Craig, *Reformation, Politics, and Polemics: The Growth of Protestantism in East Anglian Market Towns 1500-1610* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2001), 160-161.

<sup>62</sup> David Loewenstein and John Marshall, *Heresy, Literature, and Politics in Early Modern English Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 11.

<sup>63</sup> Crowley, *The confutation of xiii articles, whereunto Nicholas Shaxton, late bishop of Salisbury [ ] subscribed and caused be set forth in print the year of our Lord 1546 which he recanted in Smithfield at London at the burning of mistress Anne Askew, which is [ ] set forth in the figure following* (London: John Day and William Seres, 1548), 6.

admit that he was wrong to recant. Shaxton, Crowley implied, and should have died for his beliefs.

Crowley also acknowledged the underground trade in Catholic polemics: “And because the copies of your articles be not commonly to be sold: most men think them in manner extinguished forever.”<sup>64</sup> He was afraid that Shaxton’s recantation would give evangelicals a bad reputation. Shaxton’s articles belonged to the antichrist’s school of thought: “Not for any displeasure that I had conceived towards you, or any other, by whose means you should be willed or (as it may be thought) required to set them abroad to the world . . .”<sup>65</sup> Crowley wanted to blame Shaxton’s actions on the devil and catholic influence. He complained that Shaxton had “embrace[d] that idolatrous whoredom of your abominable mother, the great whore of Rome . . .”<sup>66</sup> He was also aware that Shaxton had continued preaching Catholic traditions and even defended the bishop of Winchester. Crowley wrote, “I am not ignorant of your behavior since your recantation . . .”<sup>67</sup> and proceeded to denounce Shaxton and Gardiner for their actions.<sup>68</sup>

Crowley argued that “if fire were set on the other side of you, it should not be hard to persuade you to the contrary of your former words.”<sup>69</sup> He was disgusted by Shaxton’s shameless pursuit of life as opposed to religious devotion. Interestingly, Smyth’s recantation echoed an element of Shaxton’s made just a few months before: “Despise not a man that turns himself aware from his sin, neither cast him in the teeth withal, but remember that we are all poisoned

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 32.



with corruption.”<sup>70</sup> Crowley also mirrors Hooper in his description of Gardiner and Gardiner’s influence in Shaxton and Askew’s trial, referring to his “devil’s sophistry...”<sup>71</sup>

Furthermore, Edward VI deserved obedience and tribute. Crowley claimed that even Christ submitted to the king’s authority.<sup>72</sup> He said that the prince’s laws advanced God’s teaching.<sup>73</sup> Crowley wrote: “Wherefore it is a thing to be marveled and wondered at, that the bishops with such fury and fierceness (like mad men) burn and flay up the king’s people (as they do) for things not certain nor necessary to be known, but opinionable matters and disputable.”<sup>74</sup> ‘The *king’s* people’ – he had the authority, he held jurisdiction over his subjects, and he alone. Not the bishops and certainly not Rome. Shaxton was wrong in casting his fault upon the king.<sup>75</sup>

Crowley attested that Shaxton had “offended” the multitude and complained that the Catholics were still encouraging people towards the traditional (false) religion.<sup>76</sup> Crowley said that the people perished for lack of knowledge and that the Catholic Church served to keep the people in fear.<sup>77</sup> In his writings, Crowley addressed nearly every issue of importance to the government: Edward’s legitimacy, the king’s authority over the church, *sola scriptura*, and the role of the lay community in government and church laws. By the end of 1548, tracts such as these had been flooding from English presses for almost two full years. 1549 would introduce new tensions to the English population – but was the government and its people prepared to handle them peacefully?

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 147-148.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 105, 154.

## Chapter 5: The 1549 Rebellions

*And believe not, my Lord, that things accomplished according to our wishes by force of arms, rather than by popular consent, can be of long duration; and consider that although the victory may now remain on your side, yet you are the loser, not only because civil and intestine war exhaust the strength of a kingdom, and render it the prey of any invader, but also, as although your authority may remain, you can never be sure of the people, who, if denied their just demands, will always rise against you and side with anyone who may promise them assistance . . .*

Cardinal Pole to Somerset, 7 September 1549

The majority of the literature produced during Edward VI's reign can be broadly described as Protestant propaganda. What at times can be less clear to see the degree to which it was also *government* propaganda. Protestantism and government policies were interconnected from 1547 to the end of Edward's reign. Concerns for proving Edward's legitimacy were tied closely to Protestant ideals of a Godly state; in the same vein, weakening the authority of Anglo-Catholic clerics was bound with rhetoric declaring the pope the true antichrist and downgrading Rome's importance in the religious sphere. The most abundant propaganda during the period were debates and repartees between those Anglo-Catholic clerics and Protestant authors. Richard Smyth's recantations are the starting point to identify the government's policy direction and its future intention of dealing with opposition to their religious policies; Stephen Gardiner provides a less successful example of government coercion. John Hooper and Robert Crowley represent the evangelical interest in suppressing the Catholic voice with scholarly arguments and vitriolic attacks. So far, I have examined how Somerset and other elites attempted to influence the lower orders. In addition, by May 1549, the Act of Uniformity had passed through Parliament and proclamations were issued silencing disputes on the Eucharist: no debate could be held

unless it was based exclusively on the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> Now, it was time to assess if the commoners were accepting the message.

The sixteenth century witnessed the decline of religious houses, pre- and post-Reformation, many of which were meant to help shelter and protect the poor. This action exacerbated existing social problems. Responsibility for the poor shifted from the sphere of religion to that of “secular social policy” from the moment of the Act of Supremacy and the dissolution of the monasteries.<sup>2</sup> As Ben Lowe explains, “. . . [the Reformation] ushered in many ideas about obligation and duty to the Christian commonwealth that would have attracted many people who felt the traditional Catholic institutions were not accomplishing much to rid the nation of economic or social injustice, at a time when the economy was becoming increasingly volatile and fragile.”<sup>3</sup> Reports reached Somerset stating that religious reform was being met with cooperation and even enthusiastic approval. On January 11, 1549, Henry Cornish wrote to the duke from his administrative position in Jersey: “. . . I also beseech your grace for some comfortable words for their embracing the Gospel, to encourage those the Lord has called, for many wild tales are brought hither that this world will pass and the images and superstitions be restored.”<sup>4</sup> At least in some parts of the country, government propaganda had been effective enough that change back to the traditional ways was frightening and unwelcome.

On July 22, 1548, John Hales, one commissioner to examine and determine the legality of enclosures of commonly-held land, wrote to Protector Somerset that he felt the people in his

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Hughes and James Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), Proclamation #296, 410.

<sup>2</sup> Ben Lowe, *Commonwealth and the English Reformation: Protestantism and the Politics of Religious Change in the Gloucester Vale, 1483-1560* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 31-33, 137; W. K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England, 1480-1660: A Study of the Changing Pattern of English Social Aspirations* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1959), 149.

<sup>3</sup> Lowe, 107-108.

<sup>4</sup> H. M. C., *Report on the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Bath preserved at Longleat*, Vol. IV: Seymour Papers, 1532-1686, ed., Marjorie Blatcher (London: HMSO, 1968), 107.

current circuit were well-disposed to the new order of things, meaning the religious changes.<sup>5</sup> Somerset felt so confident that on June 4, 1549, in the midst of reports of rebellion, he wrote to Reginald Pole, expressing his hope that the cardinal would at last perceive the abuses of the Roman Church. He exhorted Pole to take advantage of Edward VI's mercy and return home, sending him a copy of the new Book of Common Prayer for his perusal.<sup>6</sup> Diplomatic dispatches also provide evidence that religious reform in England was popular in some areas. The imperial ambassador wrote March 7, 1547, that "at present the common people, unrestrained by reason of the late King's death, publicly and undisguisedly confess their sentiments quite contrary to our religion, of which they make all sorts of farces and pastimes. . . They blame more than any other the Bishop of Winchester, who is entirely out of credit . . ."<sup>7</sup>

Susan Brigden notes that ". . . the evangelical preachers, using Gospel parables to address contemporary ills in society, did call upon the rich with a new urgency to succor the poor, and did warn with special vehemence of the sin of covetousness. And their audiences may, contrary to the preachers' intent, have interpreted the message as socially egalitarian."<sup>8</sup> Hugh Latimer's most famous Sermon on the Plowers (January 18, 1548) supported the royal injunctions issued in July 1547: religious reforms ordering homilies to be read from the pulpit, that all bishops and clerics accept the royal supremacy, stipulated that "superstitions" should be removed from the church along with shrines and idols, ordered that all churches must have at least one copy of the English-language Bible and Erasmus' *Paraphrases*; he announced that visitations of the

<sup>5</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, 1547-1580*, ed., Robert Lemon (Ontario: TannerRitchie Publishing, 2005), 9.

<sup>6</sup> *CSP Domestic*, 17.

<sup>7</sup> *Calendar of Letters, Dispatches, and State Papers relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain, preserved in the Archives at Vienna, Simancas, and Elsewhere, Edward VI: 1547-1549*, Vol. 9, eds., Martin A. S. Hume and Royall Tyler (London: HMSO, 1912), 50.

<sup>8</sup> Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 410.

churches would take place to ensure that these orders were being followed.<sup>9</sup> Latimer began his sermon:

The butterfly is not covetous, is not greedy of other men's goods, is not full of envy and hatred, is not malicious, is not cruel, is not merciless. The butterfly glories not in her own deeds nor prefers the traditions of men before God's word; it commits not idolatry nor worships false gods. . . . In times past, when any rich man died in London, they were wont to help the poor and scholars of the universities with exhibition. When any man died, they would bequeath great sums of money toward the relief of the poor. . . . But now I can hear no such good report, and yet I inquire of it and hearken for it. But now charity is waxed cold; none help the scholar nor yet the poor. . . . And now that the knowledge of God's word is brought to light, and many earnestly study and labor to set it forth, now almost no man helps to maintain them.<sup>10</sup>

Latimer was trying to explain that extrascriptural teachings were false and unnecessary. Yet, good works were still needed – not as a gateway to salvation, but because good works were a Christian's duty. He compared the enclosing of land to the enclosing of the soul, preventing religious reform from spreading.<sup>11</sup> His style of preaching and his message rose to a fever pitch in 1549.

Hugh Latimer was invited to preach seven court sermons in 1549, all of which spoke positively on behalf of the Lord Protector's policies: it is clear that his sermons were part of the government's propaganda efforts. Several editions of each of his sermons were printed soon after they were given (though, interestingly, Katherine Brandon, duchess of Suffolk, funded the printing of his sermons from 1548 onwards).<sup>12</sup> But there is also evidence that Latimer sincerely believed in Somerset's social and religious policies. In his first 1549 sermon before Edward VI (March 8), Latimer claimed that “. . . if the King's honor, as some men say, standeth in the great

<sup>9</sup> Hughes and Larkin, 393-403.

<sup>10</sup> Allan G. Chester, *Hugh Latimer: Apostle to the English* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954), 34-35. Two editions of this sermon were printed in 1548. *ESTC*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>12</sup> *DNB, ESTC*. Five editions of his first sermon were issued, followed by three of his second sermon. The rest were printed after 1549.

multitude of people, then these graziers, enclosers, and rent rearers are hinderers of the King's honor."<sup>13</sup> In his second sermon, Latimer explicitly argued that the duke should treat all social orders equally, in legal matters at least:

Would Solomon, being so noble a king, hear two poor women? . . . Yea, forsooth. And yet I hear of many matters before my Lord Protector and my Lord Chancellor that cannot be heard. . . . The saying is now that money is heard everywhere; if he be rich, he shall soon have an end of his matter. Other are fain to go home with weeping tears for any help they can obtain at any judge's hand. . . . I beseech Your Grace that you will look into these matters. Hear them yourself. View your judges, and hear poor men's causes. And you, proud judges, hearken what God saith in His holy book. . . . Hell will be full of these judges if they repent not and amend.<sup>14</sup>

Latimer knew that the lower orders did not receive fair trials, especially if nobles were also involved, and was arguing for a truly just society.

It is hard to judge how successful Edward's government was in terms of converting the masses and proving their king's legitimacy. Mary's accession to the throne initiated the return to Roman Catholicism. Were the English commons eager to return to their traditional religion, or was the issue of Mary's legitimate claim to the crown (based on Henry VIII's will) their primary concern? How important is it that secular concerns for legitimacy may well have triumphed over religious questions after Edward's death? Can these concerns be traced to Edwardian publications? These questions will probably never be satisfactorily answered. What has been shown in this study is that government concerns *were* presented to the English commons, with help from a new technology, and expected to influence them favorably towards government policies and beliefs. Secular issues were never far removed from the religious, but in some works social or economic concerns did come to the fore and did use Protestant doctrine as an underlying force for support.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 86-88.

The 1549 rebellions provide the appropriate end point for this study.<sup>15</sup> They mark the end of the first phase of Edwardian propaganda, which urged quick social and religious changes. They are also the first chance to take a step back and attempt to answer the question: how successful was the government's propaganda campaign?<sup>16</sup> The rebellions officially began in May 1549, the result of enclosure commissions begun by Somerset and carried out by his protégé, John Hales.<sup>17</sup> Hales had previously reported to Somerset that the countryside had accepted religious change and clamored for more. This seems to have been true for southeastern England, closer to London, rather than for western England (the sight of very different rebellions at this same time). The southeastern rebellions concentrated on enclosed land, which deprived the lower orders of means of production and sustenance; commoners were angry at their noble landlords for not responding quickly enough to the commissions to tear down their hedges and fences so that common land could be enjoyed by all in the community. The commons took it upon themselves to tear down the hedges and fences, sparking riots. Soon afterwards in western

<sup>15</sup> For more detailed information about the 1549 rebellions, see Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCulloch's *Tudor Rebellions* (Pearson Education Ltd., 2004). Also see Barrett L. Beer's *Rebellion and Riot: Popular Disorder in England during the Reign of Edward VI* (Kent State University Press, 1982) and Andy Wood's *The 1549 Rebellions and the Making of Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Ethan Shagan's *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) of course provides detailed information about the rebellions in addition to the petitions issued from the rebels. Some articles relevant to the discussion of popular politics and the 1549 rebellions include J. D. Alsop's "Latimer, the 'Commonwealth of Kent' and the 1549 Rebellions," *The Historical Journal*, 28, no. 2 (Jun., 1985) and the series of related articles: Shagan's "Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: New Sources and New Perspectives," *The English Historical Review* 114, no. 455 (Feb. 1999), M. L. Bush's response, "Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: A Post-Revision Questioned," *The English Historical Review* 115, no. 460 (Feb., 2000) and George Bernard's response, "New Perspectives or Old Complexities?" *The English Historical Review* 115, no. 460 (Feb. 2000), followed by Shagan's follow-up, "'Popularity' and the 1549 Rebellions Revisited," *The English Historical Review* 115, no. 460 (Feb., 2000).

<sup>16</sup> As stated previously, some historians do not regard the publications during Edward's reign as propaganda or a campaign, but this study aims to show that the government *did* try to manipulate the commons and upper levels of English society using printed works – it is not the purview of this study to determine how *organized* this campaign was, except to say that the effort and intention was clearly present.

<sup>17</sup> The first royal proclamation announcing enclosure inquiries was issued June 1, 1548; it contained an appeal to the poor to aid the government in examining enclosures. It also criticized the elite for procuring "by the ungodly and uncharitable means . . . a great multitude of . . . droves and flocks," and driving peasants from the land to live as vagabonds. The last sentence of the proclamation calls for "the wealth and benefit of the whole realm." Hughes and Larkin, 427-429. The second enclosure proclamation was issued April 11, 1549, enforcing the 1548 statutes against withheld common land. Both proclamations exhibit 'commonwealth' language, appealing to universal good over individual profit and concern for the poor. Hughes and Larkin, 451-453.

England, riots also began, also the result of the enclosure commissions. But these rebellions took a different direction after leadership was assumed by Anglo-Catholic clerics, who denounced the religious changes and demanded a return to the traditional beliefs and practices of Henry VIII. They also petitioned for Cardinal Reginald Pole to be readmitted to the kingdom and take part in the governing circles of Edward's court. The southeastern rebellions maintained commons' leadership; their petitions to Protector Somerset echoed the evangelical language and rhetoric that had bombarded them for the previous two years.

Richard Smyth's recantation, in which he stated that "the prince and his people" were together in breaking from Rome's false authority and establishing true religion and just laws in their own country, may well have been on the southeastern rebels' minds when they sent their petitions to Protector Somerset, first acknowledging his good rule and the godly intentions of their young king, then demanding *further* religious reform and the execution of the king's laws (regarding the nobles' enclosed land).

Somerset was not only dealing with peasant rebellions in two regions of England, however: within London, members of his own council were questioning his handling of the situation and his ability to govern effectively. Many felt that he was being too lenient towards the rebels and that he "willed the decay" of gentlemen and nobles.<sup>18</sup> Contrary to previous rebellions under Henry VIII, there was a high level of interaction between the rebelling commons and the government.<sup>19</sup> Somerset's policies were also attacked because he decided and implemented many of them without even consulting the nobles, who would be greatly affected by having their enclosed land removed from them.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Ethan Shagan, "Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: New Sources and New Perspectives," 34.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 41. Henry never negotiated with rebels, while Somerset seemed to make dialogue with them a major part of his policy.

<sup>20</sup> J. D. Alsop, "Latimer, the 'Commonwealth of Kent' and the 1549 Rebellions," 383.



If the majority on the council hated Somerset's social policy, they absolutely detested his overt encouragement of the commons and his degradation of the nobles' power and estates via conciliatory statements to the rebels and his initial refusal to quell the uprisings with force.<sup>21</sup> Paget thought that "the common people [had become] too liberal in speech, too bold . . . too wise and well-learned in their own conceits . . ." <sup>22</sup> The root of the problem was Somerset's attitude towards liberty, of the subject to speak and write about government policy. William Paget, former secretary to Henry VIII and Somerset's current secretary, said that "Somerset wrongly endeavored from the start to please every camp."<sup>23</sup> He feared "danger wonderful to the king's majesty; certain and undoubted ruin and destruction to the whole realm and to yourself joined with an infamy."<sup>24</sup> Paget also wrote that the duke erred by seeking popularity with the masses. He stated that the king's subjects no longer respected the nobility and gentry. Somerset had alienated the landed class. Paget warned as early as December 25, 1548 that Somerset was in danger if he did not amend his ways and appeal for support to the nobles.<sup>25</sup> Somerset's critics may have been right in thinking that it was his measures, arousing unrealistic expectations, rather than quiet submission, which produced peasant rebellion in 1549.<sup>26</sup> The Imperial ambassador wrote to Charles V that "the Protector declared to the Council as his opinion, that the peasants' demands were *fair and just* . . ." <sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup> A. F. Pollard, *England under Protector Somerset: An Essay* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), 256.

<sup>22</sup> D. E. Hoak, *The King's Council in the Reign of Edward VI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 182.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>24</sup> Barrett L. Beer and Sybil M. Jack, eds., *The Letters of William, Lord Paget of Beaudesert, 1547-1563* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1974), 23; the letter is dated 2 February 1549.

<sup>25</sup> Beer, "A Critique of the Protectorate: An Unpublished Letter of Sir William Paget to the Duke of Somerset," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (May, 1971): 280.

<sup>26</sup> C. S. L. Davies, *Peace, Print, and Protestantism, 1450-1558* (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1976), 274.

<sup>27</sup> *CSP Negotiations*, 395. Emphasis my own.

## The 1549 Rebellions and Popular Petitions

The western rebellions centered around Devon and Cornwall.<sup>28</sup> Though they were quickly harnessed in opposition to Edwardian religious changes, there were still social and regional elements that played an important role in these rebellions. “The articles of us the commoners of Devonshire and Cornwall in diverse camps by east and west of Exeter” contained sixteen requests, the first twelve religious in nature, advocating reimplementing of Henry VIII’s six articles, the Latin mass, and demanding that Cardinal Pole be allowed back into England and “to be first or second of the king’s council.”<sup>29</sup> The western rebels also demanded that gentry in their region reduce the number of their household servants, in accordance with the amount of land they owned. They recognized the injustice and extreme wealth disparity between rich and poor and wanted the government to mandate restrictions on noble households. But the majority of their demands called for reestablishing traditional religious practices in their region. Somerset wrote to the marquis of Dorset and the earl of Huntingdon that “whereas in the most parties [sic] of the Realm sundry lewd persons have attempted to assemble themselves, and first seeking redress of enclosures, have in some places by seditious priests and other evil people set forth to seek restitution of the old bloody laws . . .”<sup>30</sup>

Evidence provided from Devon and Cornwall shows that the commons mainly protested the religious changes and the action and competence of their nobility. Barrett Beer suggests in *Rebellion and Riot: Popular Disorder in England during the Reign of Edward VI* that the

<sup>28</sup> The Imperial ambassador wrote on May 28 that “the peasants in the West have risen and taken the parks that certain lords has attempted to enclose unfairly, adding them to their property, and have made common land of them.” *CSP Negotiations*, 383.

<sup>29</sup> Beer, *Rebellion and Riot: Popular Disorder in England during the Reign of Edward VI*, 64. Beer reprints the Devonshire and Cornwall articles, along with Kett’s demands from Norfolk. Thomas Cranmer’s response to the Devon commoners can be found in C. H. Williams, *English Historical Documents, 1485-1558* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd., 1967), 361.

<sup>30</sup> Nicholas Pocock, ed., *The Troubles Associated with the Prayer Book of 1549* (Westminster: Nichols and Sons, 1884), 1.

western rebels recognized that the government was trying to amend existing social norms, but that it lacked confidence in either the gentry, the crown, or both to effect these changes.<sup>31</sup>

On May 30, Pole wrote to a colleague south of Rome that religious matters in England “were going from bad to worse.”<sup>32</sup> The eastern rebels varied from their western counterparts both in their demands and in their sentiments towards their superiors. These riots began when strong feelings grew against the slow process of enclosure reformation and the commoners decided to take matters into their own hands. Richard Fulmerston wrote to Somerset on May 8 that “last Sunday at a town nearby called Frowme there assembled 200 persons, the chief being weavers, tinkers and other artificers, and plucked down the hedges and fences of diverse enclosures.”<sup>33</sup> In June, inhabitants in the county of Norfolk began pulling down hedges to release common land. The riots quickly grew, fueled by belief that Protector Somerset’s enclosure commissions would protect them, even believing that Somerset’s policies gave them authority to act *directly* against offending persons. They thought their actions were lawful.<sup>34</sup> The demands sent to the government from Norfolk included twenty-nine articles. Twenty-four of these were concerned with social issues while only five addressed religious concerns. Articles eight and twenty, both religious, showed that the rebels were evangelically inclined and wished for further execution of laws in accordance with the Edwardian religious changes proposed in the 1549 prayer book. Article eight read as follows: “We pray that priests or vicars that be not able to preach and set forth the word of God to his parishioners may be thereby put from his benefice, and the parishioners there to choose another or else the patron or lord of the town.” The rebels were arguing for the ability to remove clerics who did not hold mass in the towns in which they

<sup>31</sup> Beer, 73.

<sup>32</sup> George B. Parks, “The Parma Letters and the Dangers to Cardinal Pole,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 46, no. 3 (Oct., 1960): 306.

<sup>33</sup> *Bath Manuscripts*, 109.

<sup>34</sup> Beer, 82-83.

were beneficed (a common complaint against Catholic clergy) and asked permission to appoint a new preacher who would fulfill his duties. In addition, article twenty asked that preachers “teach poor men’s children of their parish the book called the catechism and the primer.” The Norfolk rebel leaders wanted their children educated in the evangelical faith.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, several letters passed back and forth between Protector Somerset and various rebelling groups in Norfolk and the east. Ethan Shagan reprints these correspondences in his article “Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: New Sources and New Perspectives.” The first of these letters, taken from the Yelverton MS XIX in the British Library, was from Somerset to the “Commons assembled in Norfolk” and called on them to obey their “Sovereign Lord” and proclaimed that their actions were contrary to Scriptural teachings. Somerset also reminded them that they “must consider that as we be by gods calling your Sovereign Lord and chief head and Governor” the rebels must obey and cease their activities at once. But, Somerset then softened his tone and told the rebels that he wanted them to submit their grievances to the next Parliament so that they could be redressed and satisfied. This tone was hardly one of an angry sovereign, but of one who commiserated with his subjects and even supported their aims.<sup>36</sup>

Somerset’s second letter to the Norfolk commons blamed priests for the uprisings, commenting:

Can the madness and fury of such naughty and corrupt members of the commonwealth so far enter into your stomachs as you will be content to serve their turns to undo yourselves lose the most plentiful fruits of the earth which by the goodness of god you should now gather together to live in winter withal? . . . Shall neither fear of god obedience to your prince nor love to your natural country and yourselves move you to know your duties? Shall you show to be inferiors to brute beasts?<sup>37</sup>

Somerset wanted to find fault elsewhere than in the commoners themselves.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 105-109. These articles are reproduced in full.

<sup>36</sup> Shagan, 53-55.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 56-57.

The fourth letter Shagan prints is from Somerset to the commons in Oxfordshire. In it, Somerset wrote: “Knowing of late that you have made divers unlawful assemblies such as by the king’s Majesty’s laws might be extremely punished we thought in consideration that the king’s Majesty deal first mercy to his subjects and next . . . justice . . .”<sup>38</sup> In his sixth letter, to those assembled in Suffolk, Somerset acknowledged that their grievances were “for the most part founded upon great and just causes,” and used conciliatory language in relating to them that their “reasonable demands in the end have purged your faults in the beginning . . .”<sup>39</sup> He also promised the rebels in Hampshire that no gentry or justices would bother them and “they shall not once molest you being quiet subjects with word or deed.”<sup>40</sup> In his last letter to Essex, Somerset referred to the nobles as “men of corrupt and dissolute lives.”<sup>41</sup> These are examples of Somerset’s overt encouragement of the rebels.

The royal proclamations (written by Somerset in the name of Edward VI) issued through the summer of 1549 also reflect Somerset’s lenient attitude towards the rebels. The first act, entitled “Ordering Punishment of Enclosure Rioters,” was issued May 23. It was the only one that would advocate punishment of the eastern rebels. It was followed by another proclamation June 14: “Pardoning Enclosure Rioters; Ordering Martial Law against future Rioters.” July 8 witnessed yet another proclamation announcing that statutes against enclosures would continue to be enforced. On July 11, a proclamation was issued “Declaring forfeitures by Western Rebels.” It argued that the western rebels were “showing themselves not only to contemn and disobey his most royal majesty, his laws, ordinances, and most godly proceedings, but also to levy war against his highness . . .” Somerset then ordered that if the western rebels did not

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 59-60.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 62. Two letters, from Somerset to Thetford and to St. Albans, have not been quoted in this study but are printed in Shagan’s article.

disperse they would forfeit all their goods and lands. Somerset clearly took a harsher rhetorical line with the western rebels because they were not evangelically-inclined and were rebelling *against* government policies. Two more proclamations pardoning the eastern rebels were issued July 12 and July 16.<sup>42</sup>

The rebels tailored the rhetoric of their grievances to meet the perceived policies of the regime, while Somerset tailored the rhetoric of his responses to match the perceived motivations of the commons.<sup>43</sup> Somerset and the commons both used rhetoric which exaggerated their ideological common ground and the possibility that they might work together to oppose economic abuses by the landed classes. Each did so for clear political purposes – Somerset to disperse the rebels and the commons to win concessions – and each had significant success.<sup>44</sup> There was tension between the godly and the scriptural authority and the reality in England. Shagan’s evidence shows that the letters the rebelling groups sent to Somerset show the two negotiating about religion and the welfare of society. The rhetoric they used in their petitions, written by more educated rebel leaders, matches the rhetoric present in government-sponsored evangelical tracts from 1547 to the outbreak of the rebellions.

What more can be said about Somerset’s reign and the effects his propaganda had on the population? It is clear from the petitions Ethan Shagan reprints in his article that the same influences that sparked the 1549 rebellions can be found in the retractions and propaganda of 1547. The people were drawn into the argument for a reformed commonwealth by the appeal above all of the partnership emphasized between Edward VI and themselves, by the use of rhetoric meant to convey urgency and danger. It is important to recognize though, in examining the rebels’ demands, that *not once* did anyone call for Somerset’s removal from the

<sup>42</sup> All of these proclamations can be found in their entirety in Hughes and Larkin’s *Tudor Royal Proclamations*.

<sup>43</sup> Shagan, 41.

<sup>44</sup> Shagan, “‘Popularity’ and the 1549 Rebellions Revisited,” 126.

protectorship. It seems that by 1549 Somerset's efforts to legitimize himself and his nephew had paid off – the changes in religion were still opposed by some, but their authority as rightful rulers in England was not seriously questioned, even by the rebelling groups.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

By August, mumblings within the council alerted Somerset that his regime was in serious danger. The rebellions were not easily suppressed, and he had to send the royal army to various locations, under the direction of numerous noblemen, in order to suppress the uprisings fully. Finally, John Dudley, earl of Warwick, succeeded in reestablishing control over the countryside. The Privy Council reinstated censorship, an action that John King believes signaled the failure of Somerset's original policy of granting limited freedom of the press to Protestants.<sup>1</sup> Somerset himself ordered printers to submit all English publications to his secretaries (William Petre, Thomas Smith, and William Cecil) for approval.<sup>2</sup> Propaganda began to shift away from strong, forceful messages of urgent religious and social reformation to a rhetoric of obedience to social superiors and the obligations of a subject to his sovereign.<sup>3</sup> After the end of the rebellions, Paget wrote to Somerset 28 August, 1549 that:

this winter season to the conservation of the state of the realm here at home, for what avails it to seek to win foreign realms, and to lose your own wherein you dwell, or to seek to be conquerors of other dominions abroad, and to be made slaves and bond in your own country of your own subjects. Bring the subjects into the obedience wherein you found them and that must be done by force and terror, and then may you command, then may you consider what is expedient for the commonwealth, and do it honorably, then may you use them as you shall think convenient, and then may you ask of them such aid, as wherewith you may the better be able to maintain the war . . .<sup>4</sup>

Shagan states in his second article on the subject, "'Popularity' and the 1549 Rebellions Revisited," that Somerset never truly accepted an alliance with the lower orders, but he successfully conveyed the *impression* that he did. The duke did not have to think that they were

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<sup>1</sup> John King, "Freedom of the Press, Protestant Propaganda, and Protector Somerset," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (Nov., 1976): 8. The Imperial ambassador records that Somerset once told him, in 1547, that "I know very well that whatever is done ill will be laid on my shoulders, and consequently I shall strive my utmost in all things to do what is best for God's service." *CSP Negotiations*, 206.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis 1558-1569* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 25.

<sup>3</sup> Though most of this shift occurred after Dudley's seizure of power.

<sup>4</sup> Beer, *Letters of William, Lord Paget*, 78.



fitting partners: he just made the decision that he had more to gain than to lose by appealing to the commons.<sup>5</sup> Did Somerset make a mistake in his choice of rhetoric? Ben Lowe argues that the propaganda produced a ‘language of expectation’ which contributed to the rebellions and diminished the authority of and respect towards the gentry and nobility.<sup>6</sup> Andy Wood agrees, stating in *The 1549 Rebellions and the Making of Early Modern England* that “. . . the commons interpreted the Reformation in terms of the dispossession of the parish community at the hands of greedy, avaricious and corrupt gentry, backed by the Crown.”<sup>7</sup> It is clear from the petitions and demands of the rebels that they did not equate the king with the nobility, believing that the nobility actively ignored the crown and welfare of the commons. In fact, those who benefitted most from the Reformation were those who were most committed to serving their king and kingdom.<sup>8</sup>

Somerset’s fall from power cannot be attributed completely to the 1549 rebellions, but they certainly provided an immediate impetus for his removal. John Dudley, earl of Warwick, replaced him as head of the Privy Council; he did not conduct affairs as Somerset had, instead he frequently called the council together to decide affairs of state in unison.<sup>9</sup> Somerset was imprisoned in the Tower of London, but released and able to rejoin the council in 1550. His wife wrote to Paget:

What has my lord done to any of these noble men? Or others? That they should thus rage and seek the extremity to him and his that never had thought in the like towards any of them. . . . God must needs of his righteousness sore plague those that seek these matters. . . . For knowing so well my lord’s innocency in all these matters that they charge him with all, they be so untrue and most unfriendly credit

<sup>5</sup> Shagan, 122, 125.

<sup>6</sup> Lowe, 254-255.

<sup>7</sup> Wood, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Lowe, 176.

<sup>9</sup> The Imperial ambassador wrote in 1547 that “the government here remains entirely in the hands of the Protector; to such an extent, indeed, that very little mention is made of the King and his Court . . .” *CSP Negotiations*, 91.

that surely it hath been some wicked person or persons that first thought this great uproar.<sup>10</sup>

The Duchess of Somerset's sentiments reflected the confusion in the country and alluded to Dudley's blame for the coup.

He was arrested again in 1551 on bogus charges of conspiracy, attempted murder, and illegal summoning of the London commons. The duke was executed by order of the Privy Council January 22, 1552. His nephew, the king, merely recorded in his journal that "the duke of Somerset had his head cut off upon Tower hill between eight and nine a clock [sic] in the morning."<sup>11</sup> Despite the attempted secrecy of his execution and a warning that people were not to attend, thousands of commoners gathered to watch. Head on the block, Somerset stated with some pride and no equivocation that as Protector he had been the principle 'agent' behind the reformation of religion. Many hoped and believed that a pardon would come from the king before the ax fell, but they were deceived. They watched their champion die, but whether they knew that his death was partially due to his sentiments towards them is unclear.

It is significant that the duke of Somerset was the only major Tudor politician whose fall from power was hastened by popular rebellion.<sup>12</sup> His mistake in 1549 had been to divide the council by seeming to support the commons.<sup>13</sup> His willingness to accept the rebellious commons' rhetorical strategies led to his fall from power.<sup>14</sup> The causes of the rebellions were Somerset's policies and his true desire to protect the commons from exploitation. The idea that the 'Good Duke' was on their side encouraged them to take more action.<sup>15</sup> Their major

<sup>10</sup> Beer, 135. The Duchess of Somerset to Paget, 8 October 1549.

<sup>11</sup> J. G. Nichols, *The Literary Remains of King Edward VI* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1964), 390.

<sup>12</sup> Beer, *Rebellion and Riot*, 215.

<sup>13</sup> Hoak, 76, 171, 174.

<sup>14</sup> Wood, 130.

<sup>15</sup> Fletcher and MacCulloch *Tudor Rebellions*, 76. For an opposing view of Somerset's reputation as the 'Good Duke', see G. R. Elton's review of W. K. Jordan's two-volume series of Edward VI, *The Historical Journal* 12, no.

grievance was not his evangelical beliefs but their dissatisfaction at the way their localities were being governed by the gentry and nobility.<sup>16</sup>

John Dudley, later to become the duke of Northumberland, continued the pace of Reformation, but the language of government-sponsored propaganda changed. His campaign was less aggressive than Somerset's and modified its tone. Whereas Somerset tried to inspire intense feelings and urgent desires, Northumberland tempered the propaganda during his years of rule. Obedience to social superiors was a feature of his evangelical rhetoric. Some of the more feisty evangelical preachers, such as Hugh Latimer, left the court for the rural countryside around London to continue their preaching. Latimer, like some other preachers, still felt fiercely loyal to the former Protector and continued to espouse his doctrine against covetousness and enclosing common land. When Somerset was finally executed, many of the lower orders (encouraged by Latimer) blamed Northumberland for his unjust death.

Latimer's last of his seven sermons before Edward VI did not take place until Lent, 1550. Somerset had fallen from power and John Dudley, still earl of Warwick, took his place as head of the regency council. In response to these events, Latimer took to the pulpit and began his sermon:

Take heed and beware of covetousness. Take heed and beware of covetousness. Take heed and beware of covetousness. And what if I should say nothing else these three or four hours – for a I know it will be so long in case I be not commanded to the contrary – but these words, Take heed and beware of covetousness? . . . Here could I say somewhat to them, if I would, that spake so much against me for my preaching here the last year. Oh, what a great matter is made of it and what ado, and what great fault is found with me for speaking that I did of the Lord Admiral. . . . But I will tell you and I will speak now with a clear conscience. If it were to do again, and having the occasion that I then had, I would speak it again, every word of it, yea, and a great deal more too. . . . I spake it but for an example of others to beware thereby. . . . For covetousness is the

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4 (Dec., 1969), and M. L. Bush's book, *The Government Policy of Protector Somerset* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975).

<sup>16</sup> Fletcher, 79.

cause of rebellion. . . . Covetousness is the root of all evil; rebellion is an evil; ergo covetousness is the root of rebellion.<sup>17</sup>

Latimer recognized that in the summer rebellions, both parties (gentlemen and commons) were covetous in their desires to appropriate land for their own use. He also predicted that this would be his last journey to the court (he was right). His last court sermon sounds highly dissatisfied, no doubt with the passing of the torch from Somerset to Dudley. Dudley had no desire to hear more of Latimer's continuing attacks on enclosures, rack-renters, corruption and incompetence in high places. The preacher entered the services of Katherine Brandon, duchess of Suffolk, in Lincolnshire; his sermons for her were in a much different tone from those at the court, where he preached about the concerns and duties of kings and magistrates. Instead, his Lincolnshire sermons were concerned with the duties of servants and subjects, with the importance of obedience, good manners, faithful work, and virtuous living.<sup>18</sup> He still believed in the supremacy and that the king should always be obeyed; he had felt betrayed by the rebellions and their negative impact on the kingdom.

Upon Edward's untimely death, Dudley, now duke of Northumberland, and the regency council attempted to preserve the Protestant settlement by placing Lady Jane Grey (married to Dudley's youngest son) on the throne.<sup>19</sup> What followed is confusing. Mary Tudor raised a massive army to march on London in support of her own claim to the throne. Northumberland and the council expected that their evangelical subjects would rally to their own support – but they were wrong. Instead, English subjects recognized Mary's superior right to the throne, based on her father's Act for the Succession which had been passed by Parliament before his death. There were still misgivings about her religious inclinations, but Mary herself assured her soon-

<sup>17</sup> Chester, 138-147. Latimer was no doubt also commenting on Dudley's own covetousness.

<sup>18</sup> Chester, Preface.

<sup>19</sup> For Edward VI's role in subverting his father's will, see Eric Ives' *Lady Jane Grey: A Tudor Mystery* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

to-be subjects that she would respect the religious changes of her father and brother. In this concession, she undoubtedly had no choice if she wanted to command the loyalty of her people and gain the throne for herself. And gain it she did – arresting and executing Northumberland immediately while Jane was left to wallow in the Tower for some time before her own execution. But perhaps what is most interesting about this episode is how a religiously-charged situation in the nobles' point of view was transformed as a secular and legal issue for the commons. To the lower orders, Mary's religion was unfortunate (for some), but her claim to the throne was incontrovertible compared to Lady Jane Grey's. Could this sentiment also be the result of Somerset's propaganda campaign? In addition to his fiery rhetoric of evangelical benefits for the commonwealth, his propaganda also established that the laws of the king were to be obeyed over the laws of a foreign apostate. In addition, Somerset's own personal reputation can also be blamed for the commons' refusal to aid Northumberland and the Lady Jane. Eric Ives hypothesizes in *Lady Jane Grey: A Tudor Mystery* that one major reason the lower orders did not rally to support Northumberland was because of his blackened reputation as the gallows-man of their favored champion.

The Marian regime did not appreciate how the gradual spread of literacy and printing had helped increase the importance of the laity in religious affairs.<sup>20</sup> Why were Catholics not as successful in their propaganda? The clerics who wrote referred to the laity as simple or rude – this included Richard Smyth after his recantations. Clerics were superior in their knowledge and did not appreciate being questioned or being forced to cater to the common people.<sup>21</sup> More enterprising mid-century printers were evangelical in inclination. Mary's government forced out of business those printers who were zealously Protestant, but there were few Roman Catholics of

<sup>20</sup> J. W. Martin, "The Marian Regime's Failure to Understand the Importance of Printing," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (Autumn, 1981): 231.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

equivalent zeal to replace them.<sup>22</sup> However, other research indicates that Mary's regime *did* focus on the importance of propaganda, utilizing Paul's Cross as the main preaching venue to counter evangelicalism: "The Paul's Cross sermons were also occasions for set-piece propaganda exercises, such as the public recantation of heretics, the disciplining of married or concubinate clergy and the exposure of protestant conspiracy."<sup>23</sup> In addition, Mary's regime exercised tight control over the press, censoring evangelical tracts and pamphlets.<sup>24</sup> Eamon Duffy reports that "the number of printers at work remained roughly the same, but the number of publishers shrank because tighter controls discouraged speculative publishing ventures funded by non-stationers."<sup>25</sup> Mary's crowning achievement was John Dudley's scaffold speech, in which he recanted his evangelical position and claimed that he was an ardent Catholic. His speech was printed and disseminated throughout England and Europe by Cardinal Reginald Pole, now residing at the English court.<sup>26</sup> Following this gem, the regime concentrated on the disruptive effects of evangelicalism, citing Northumberland's attempted coup and another recent rebellion led by a reformer, Thomas Wyatt.<sup>27</sup> They also attempted to reverse some evangelical teachings, including lay biblical self-education.<sup>28</sup> Mary succeeded in destroying her major opponents during Edward's life, including Thomas Cranmer (Richard Smyth presided over his trial), Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley. Richard Smyth preached at the latter two men's burning.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 236-237.

<sup>23</sup> Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 19.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>28</sup> Jennifer Loach, "The Marian Establishment and the Printing Press," *The English Historical Review* 101, no. 398 (Jan. 1986): 139. Though Loach's research of Marian printing is invaluable, some of her conclusions regarding Edward's emphasis on vernacular works is misguided: "it seems that neither Edward's government nor Mary's was much interested in the commissioning of vernacular works for the domestic market . . ." 143.

During Elizabeth's reign, there was a strong cultural connection between the physical health of the human body, the welfare of a commonwealth, and the crucial part governors and magistrates played in preserving the state of a kingdom: in other words, commonwealth rhetoric was revived and continued to flourish.<sup>29</sup> In addition, Elizabeth signaled the English return to Protestantism in 1559 by reinstating the 1552 Edwardian prayer book, and with it the Edwardian supremacy over the church.<sup>30</sup> No doubt, the likenesses between Elizabeth's and Edward's governments were due to Elizabeth's employment of many Edwardian councilors, namely William Cecil (Somerset's personal secretary for two years, later working as Dudley's secretary) and others raised and educated during the formative years of the Edwardian Reformation. Elizabeth would have to deal with some more radical sects of evangelicals though, many of whom looked back to Edward's reign and saw only half-hearted attempts at reform when defining their split from the accepted religious settlement in England.

Edwardian propaganda and the government's attack on conservative and Roman-Catholic clerics would shape England for the remainder of the Tudor dynasty. Protector Somerset recognized how important the printing press could be for government purposes; he also realized that with a wider audience, it was necessary to form a dialogue with the lower orders of society. Print had to be harnessed to gain the public's trust and support. His rhetorical devices inspired rebellion, but not against his policies and measures. The rioters in eastern England aimed to further government aims and protested against nobles seemingly operating against the Protector's proclamations. Somerset failed by not balancing the support of the commons with the needs and power of the nobility; but he did succeed in creating a precedent for widespread involvement and action by commoners in the English government.

<sup>29</sup> Alford, 27.

<sup>30</sup> Loades, *Revolution in Religion: The English Reformation 1530-1570* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992), 18.

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