Some Principles Of Political Philosophy Contained In De Regimine Principum

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SOME PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY CONTAINED IN

DE REGIMINE PRINCIPUM

by

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submitted to the Department of Philosophy
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of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

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James R. DeGroat
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Introduction

The Importance of Political Thought

"And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man." (1)

Writing one hundred and fifty years ago, the English Romantic poet, William Wordsworth, has put into the form and language of poetry the thoughts and opinions held by most thinking people in the world today: By ignoring, or even totally denying the Fatherhood of God, mankind has consequently and necessarily forgotten about the brotherhood of man.

And in speaking of the locale and circumstances surrounding the poem's composition, Wordsworth said: "Actually composed while I was sitting by the side of the brook that runs down from the Comb, in which stands the village of Alford, through the grounds of Alfoxden." (2)

How similar is our position today! We are seated by the stream of History, at a point where it has just passed the raging whirlpools and treacherous reefs of that great human catastrophe called World War II, wherein so many have gone to their deaths. As they rush by us, the wa-

ters of The Day are still frothy and turbulent from the tremendous churning to which they have just been subjected. Passing by a sharp bend, around which no man can see with certainty, the stream forges through its banks to Tomorrow. Once there, will this raging torrent become calm and placid, affording a place where children may safely play along the banks and where their parents, tired from their labors, may gain respite and refreshment before once more shouldering their daily tasks and responsibilities? We fervently hope that this will be the case. But looking at the present, it portends but ill for the future.

What's wrong with the world today? Why, three years after World War II, is everything in such a state of confusion?

The Scholastic philosopher would answer these questions with "Communism abroad and Secularism at home." He does not set up a dichotomy of isolated conditions here, for Communism abroad is a result of extreme secularization (3), and therefore the two conditions are not unrelated. (4)

In this, as in all things, the Man-on-the-Street has an opinion. And in this case, his opinion would seem to be right. He says: "What's wrong with the world today? Why, I'll tell you. It's politics. That's what it is. Politics."

Now how can one word answer a question of the breadth and scope of the one which we have propounded? Let us see. Originally, "Politics" came from the Greek word "politēs," meaning "citizen." This, in adjectival form was "politikos," or "of the citizens." So in its origins,


politics pertained to the individual, and later, the general body, of citizens.

But a man cannot be just a citizen. He must be a citizen of something. So we see the beginning of the citizen–state relationship expressed in words. (It should not be inferred, however, that civil society had its genesis among the ancient Greeks. The roots are buried even deeper than the early Hellenic civilization, and may be traced practically to the dawn of time. Man has a capacity and a specific tendency for civil society–but above all, man has a need for it, since neither the individual nor the family unit of itself is capable of full development outside civil society.) (5)

So today, our word "politics" refers to "the science and art of government" or to that which is "of or pertaining to civil government." (6)

Political thought or political philosophy, then, pertains to civil government. It might not be amiss to here define what we mean by the term "civil society"–a term which will appear with some frequency during the course of this essay. "Civil society is a natural and perfect society of individuals and families formed to promote their own temporal well-being under the direction of organized authority." (7)

If, as the Man-on-the-Street has previously asserted, politics is the key to the present ills of the world, it would seem almost to be a truism to observe that political thought today is either non-existent or that it is slipshod. Since men throughout the world still exhibit an interest in the affairs of government, it would seem that the choice of non-existence is ruled out, leaving us with the embarrassing conclusion

(7) Robinson and Christoph, op. cit., p. 102.
that, in general, our world-wide political thought has become slipshod and inaccurate.

As a remedy, we propose a more honest insistence on accurate political philosophy for the haphazard systems now in vogue, and that all opportunities be taken to portray Scholastic political thought (which, we believe, alone offers a complete and satisfactory solution to the cry for a more accurate system) to the world.

Totalitarianism and democracy are the most prominent of the modern systems of government. Those governments are totalitarian which deny that the individual as such is the basic element in civil society and affirm instead that the state is superior to the citizens and therefore that the citizens exist for the state, and not vice versa. Democratic states, (8) on the other hand, recognize the inherent dignity of man and consequently these states conceive of their rights and duties as derived from those who willingly submit to the authority of the state. In writing the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson accurately summed up the concept of a democracy in these words: "That to secure these rights Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." (9)

The only state today which is truly and completely totalitarian is Soviet Russia, where the form of government is an atheistic variety of Communism.

(8) Etymologically, "democracy" comes from two Greek words: "demos," the people, and "kratein," to rule. In other words, literally it means "rule or government by the people." (Cf. Webster, op. cit.)
For all practical purposes, all of the other countries of the world may be considered more or less democratic, insofar as a democratic state is one in which "the government is in the hands of the people." (10) Note here, however, that in order to be a democracy, a state need not necessarily be a republic. Living in the United States, we may erroneously assume that unless the government of other states is similar to that of our country – which is the oldest of the contemporary democracies – then other states cannot be democracies. Whether the government be republican, monarchical or even dictatorial, if the government is in the hands of the people to the extent that they have a congress, parliament or other group of elected representatives who are empowered to do the will of their constituents – then that government is a democracy by very definition. (11)

Totalitarianism, however, whether in Russia now, or in Germany and Italy in the past two decades, "deifies the state and gives absolute authority to the ruler in matters civil, social and religious." (12) Since it usurps all powers and functions, whether natural to it or not, such a state is grounded on a false philosophy.

We have said above that Soviet Russia alone, of all the nations in the world today, is the only one which fits the definition of totalitarianism. (References to Soviet Russia or to the Soviet Union in this essay are intended to include not only Russia as geographically constituted as such, but also any and all areas which are Communist-controlled or Communist-dominated.) It is interesting to note, however, that the Communists avoid the use of the word "totalitarian," not only because it was first used by Italian Fascism (Benito Mussolini in his famous article

(10) Robinson and Christoph, Introductory Sociology, p. 199.
(11) Ibid., loc. cit. Also John A. Ryan, Relation of Catholicism to Fascism, Communism and Democracy, Washington, N.C., 1938, p. 15.
(12) Ibid., p. 207.
on Fascist doctrine) but also because it is opposed to the aims of the official Communist doctrine. The state, according to Lenin's doctrine, is an instrument of terroristic domination by one class and it will eventually disappear. Since the dictatorship of the proletariat has as its end the abolition of all class differences it must accordingly advocate the abolition of the state. (13)

The philosophy of Communism is one of abolition of class. Just as Italian Fascism was based on the supremacy of the state and as German Nazism was based on the supremacy of the race, Russian Communism is based on the supremacy of a class.

Karl Marx, (1818-1883) a German-Jew who, along with other members of his family, became a Christian at the age of eight for political and business reasons, expounded the basic principles of Communism and summarized them in The Communist Manifesto one hundred years ago in 1848. (14) Latter-day Communists under Lenin claimed sole authority to interpret Marxian dogma and although today's Communism is still basically Marx, it is, nevertheless, Marx as portrayed by Lenin and his successors. (15)

Marx's philosophical training in the Universities of Berlin and of Bonn was in the Hegelian dialectic which all German universities of his day were obliged to teach. (16)

Briefly, Hegel's dialectical method consisted of three elements: thesis, antithesis and synthesis. It denied that any truth was permanent or that any principle was immutable. It was thus possible to

To Hegel's dialectic, Marx added the Materialism of another German, Ludwig Fuerbach. All thought, ideas, mind and Spirit were denied and matter was affirmed to be the only basic reality. This combination of dialectics and materialism emerged as Dialectical Materialism - the philosophy of Communism.

The French sociologist, P. J. Proudhon, attempted to apply Hegel's dialectics to economics. He suggested to Marx that perhaps capital constituted the affirmative side of dialectics which in turn gave birth to the contradiction which was labor. Proudhon believed that the synthesis would involve changes of property. This idea, coupled with Dialectical Materialism, forms the working basis for Marxian Communism. (18)

Evolved into concrete form, Marx's doctrine is briefly stated as follows:

"...The theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property." (19) "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." (20) "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat." (21)

The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all the other proletarian parties; formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois of supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat. (22) In short, the Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things. (23)

(20) Ibid., p. 488.
(21) Ibid., p. 489.
(22) Ibid., p. 502.
(23) Ibid., p. 523.
The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. Proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. (24)

In addition, Marx gives his arguments upholding the abolition of the family (25), abolition of the "individual" (26), abolition of countries and nationalities (27), abolition of "eternal truths...all religion and all morality." (28)

To the Communists, then, all morality becomes "class morality." By its revolutionary methods it is pledged to destroy all but the proletarian class, whose moral code may be summed up by saying that "the end justifies the means." (29)

We may briefly summarize the case against Communism and censure it as a system of philosophy and as a type of government on the following counts:

1. Despite article 124 of the Soviet Constitution, which "recognizes freedom of religious worship," Communism is militantly and necessarily atheistic. Marx held this idea, and so have his followers. (30) Theodicy demonstrates the unreasonableness of atheism. (31)

2. Communism completely destroys human personality. By usurping to the State all of Man's normal intellectual functions, Communism destroys man as man and leaves only a population of animals.

(24) Marx, op. cit., loc. cit.
(25) Ibid., p. 506.
(26) Ibid., p. 505.
(27) Ibid., p. 507.
(28) Ibid., p. 509.
(29) cf. Sheen, Communism and the Conscience of the West, p. 66.
(30) Ibid., p. 67.
3. Denying, as it does, the freedom of the individual, Communism is anti-democratic. It is entirely possible for a government to be democratic without being a democracy in form. A government guided by democratic principles was clearly pictured by Abraham Lincoln in the Gettysburg Address as one "of the people, by the people and for the people." Such a form of government considers the needs of those over whom it exercises its authority, and in order to ascertain these needs, the government must have a clear understanding of the nature of those in whom the needs are found. Any form of government which does this—understands man's nature, origin and destiny—is a good form of government. (32) Communism does none of these things, and is, therefore, evil.

The exposition and criticism of Communist doctrine and theory above helps us to see what the philosopher and the Man-on-the-Street were talking about when they laid at least part of the blame for the present world situation on Communism and politics respectively. As a philosophy based on materialism, Communism may be shown to be a false philosophy by employing the same arguments which we would use against materialism. As a system of politics which denies the true position and value of the individual in society, and whose by-words are violence and world conquest, Communism is utterly evil.

But the philosopher has also cited Secularism as one of the bearers of the burden of the blame for present world ills. What, then, is Secularism?

Secularism is a view of life that limits itself not to the material in exclusion of the spiritual, but to the human here and now in exclusion of man's relation to God here and hereafter. It is the practical exclusion of God from human thinking and living..... (33)

(33) "Secularism - Root of World's Travail," op. cit., p. 16.
The impact of Secularism on the individual and on society has been devastating. The individual has been blinded to his responsibility to God, and thus has lost his only firm basis for a moral criteria. This in turn leads the individual to deny his personal guilt for sin, and to adopt expediency, decency and propriety as the norms for his conduct. (34)

On the family level, Secularism has robbed the marriage contract of its sacred character by denying its relation to God. The Will of God and the good of society are replaced by the will and convenience of the husband and wife. (35)

In the field of economics, God is removed from the picture, and thus the dignity of the human person, endowed by God with inalienable rights and made responsible to Him for corresponding individual and social duties, is minimized. (36)

Nations cannot live rightly and successfully in the international community unless they recognize the existence of, and base their own laws on, God's own law - the Natural Law. Even on the international level, right and wrong are objective concepts. By exiling God from human life, Secularism paves the way for the acceptance of godless, subversive ideologies. As a solvent of a real religious influence in the lives of men and of nations, Secularism emerges as the most insidious, if not the most patent, obstacle toward a world reconstruction founded on God's Natural Law. Within this generation, Secularism has been the link between a receding devotion to a Christian culture and the revolutionary forces which have precipitated what may well be the gravest crisis in all history. (37)

(34) "Secularism - Root of World's Travail," loc. cit.
(35) Ibid., loc. cit.
(36) Ibid., p. 17 f.
(37) Ibid., p. 18.
Secularism has manifest itself in many phases and aspects of life in the United States today, but it has probably wrought more havoc in the field of education than in any other. For over a century, it has been the public policy to ban the formal teaching of religion in our common schools. This is a rather unfortunate solution to the extremely difficult problem presented to the public authorities in a nation of diverse religious beliefs. But neither the originators of this policy nor the founding fathers of our democracy intended to minimize the importance of religion in the training of youth.

Secularism, however, breaks with our historical American tradition. There is a vast difference between a practical arrangement which leaves the formal teaching of religion to the parents and to the Church and the secularist educational theory wherein God is advisedly and avowedly excluded from education. One cannot make a safe plan for life by disregarding inescapable facts. God is such a fact.

We may cite the recent legal actions brought in several states to prohibit private and parochial school pupils from riding to school on busses supported by public taxation, the "anti-garb" law enacted in North Dakota to bar Catholic nuns teaching in the public schools of certain teacher-short districts of North Dakota from wearing a religious habit while teaching in these schools, and the United States Supreme Court's decision banning "released time" in public school curricula for religious instruction in the McCollum Case as salient examples of the rising tide of Secularism in American education.

How are we to prevent a recurrence of the disasters which the political and social blueprints of the past have been unable to avoid? By introducing a regime of
democracy, we are told; by guaranteeing a multitude of freedoms to those who are at present crushed under the heel of tyranny; by transferring material resources from one part of the world to another; by tearing down old houses and building new ones; by some vaguely conceived realignment of national boundaries. It would be cynical to assert that these proposals indicate no advance in the direction of a peaceful world. But they do not reach the real heart of the problem for the simple reason that they are drawn up in view of the material concomitants, rather than the essential constituents, of human happiness. They are for this reason, in the most literal sense of the word, impossible abstractions. By a strange paradox they originate in the minds of hard-headed and practical statesmen. Most of these men would smile in derision at the suggestion that the Ten Commandments embody a much more realistic outline of the destiny of human nature than the untested contrivings of unphilosophical statesmen. We cannot cure the ills of a divinely constituted human nature by a mere cumulus of economic and sociological remedies. We cannot draw up our plans for the future unless we recognize, effectively as well as theoretically, that God is the center of the universe, that God has an interest in every human consideration, that God alone can assure success to any human endeavor. When short-sighted humanity will at length open its eyes to the precious advantages to be gained by following God's plan rather than its own, we may hope for something more at the peace-table than an armed truce between groups of cultivated gangsters, each scheming for its next expedition of pillage. (38)

Chapter I

The Historicity, Authenticity and Character of De Regimine Principum

At one time or another, some doubt has been raised as to the authenticity of St. Thomas Aquinas' opusculum, De Regimine Principum, and it is proper, if not necessary, to summarize the opinions presently held by Thomistic scholars in this regard.

Although some scholars have flatly denied St. Thomas' authorship of any part of De Regimine Principum on the basis of internal criticism in the work (39), it is now virtually established that all of the first book and the second book as far as the middle of the fourth chapter are the work of the Angelic Doctor. (40) To Ptolmey of Lucca, a pupil of Thomas', is attributed the authorship of the rest of the treatise. (41)

We have no strong evidence for denying Thomistic authorship for at least part of the work. This position is supported by evidence from the oldest catalogs, the strong manuscript tradition and the fact that early biographers of St. Thomas and historians of the Dominican Order have always attributed the work to Thomas. (42)

(40) Ibid., loc. cit.
(42) Phelan, op. cit., loc. cit.
As to the unquestioned actual title of the work, however, some legitimate doubt has been raised. Citing Mandonnet's *Écrits Authentique de Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Phelan tells us that the title most frequently found for this treatise in older catalogs and manuscripts is *De Regno, ad Regem Cypri*. (h3) Grabmann, however, upholds the title which is more common today: *De Regimine Principum*. (h4)

To further complicate matters, we must note that, in addition to disputes over the authentic portion of *De Regimine Principum* and the true title of the treatise, there is the further difficulty that we do not know the date of composition with any certainty, nor do we know for sure who the king of Cyprus was for whom St. Thomas started to write the work.

Quoting Grabmann, Phelan says that it is practically impossible, with the evidence (or lack of evidence) presently available to us, to set any date, even approximately, for the composition of *De Regimine Principum*. (h5)

Some evidence would indicate that the work was composed no earlier than 1265-1266. Throughout the treatise Thomas makes use of William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Politics* of Aristotle, which, says Grabmann, was published in 1260. (h6)

If it were possible to know for which king of Cyprus Thomas intended his work, it would be possible to fix the date of composition more accurately. But even this is difficult. Phelan presents the rather logical view of Jacques Zeiller contained in *L'idée de l'État dans Saint*...

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(h6) Phelan, *op. cit.*, loc. cit.
Thomas d'Aquin, to wit: From available evidence, it seems that Thomas was endeavoring to finish the *Summa Theologica* when death overtook him in 1274. The death of the author, then, would not seem to explain the incomplete form of *De Regimine Principum*. But if the person for whom the disquisition was intended had died, then this might explain why St. Thomas did not finish it. If this is the case, then it may have been King Hugo II of the House of Lusignan of Cyprus to whom the dissertation was addressed. Hugo II died suddenly in 1267 at the age of seventeen. Considering the age of the monarch, it seems more possible that he was to be the recipient of the completed discourse than it is to postulate Hugo III, who ascended the throne as a rather elderly man in 1267, and whose political persuasions and alliances were at variance with St. Thomas', and therefore hardly a man who would need or be likely to get a guidebook for conducting his royal affairs from the Angelic Doctor. But although this would seem to place the date of composition about 1265-1267, it should be noted that we arrive at these dates only indirectly by deduction and inference from uncertain premises. (17)

To summarize, then, we can say that St. Thomas surely wrote a treatise on the duties of a ruler called *De Regno, ad Regem Cypri* in the early catalogs and now commonly known as *De Regimine Principum* and possibly intended the piece as a sort of guidebook for the youthful King Hugo II of Cyprus, whose sudden death in 1267 may account for the fact that Thomas stopped his work mid-way in Chapter Four of Book II. Best evidence available today indicates that Ptolmey of Lucca, a pupil of St. Thomas', finished the work. Nevertheless, *De Regimine Principum* is listed by leading modern Thomistic scholars as a genuine and authoritative *opusculum*. (18) The probable date of composition lies between

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(17) cf. Phelan, introd. to trans. of *De Regimine Principum*, p. 6 ff.
1265 and 1267, but at best this is only probable.

What kind of work is De Regimine Principum? What was its purpose? St. Thomas himself tells us in a short preface to the work that he intended to expound the teachings of the Bible and of philosophy, as exemplified in the conduct of good Christian rulers, on the origin of government and the duties of those who govern. Because of the frequent references to Holy Scriptures, it can be said that De Regimine Principum is more of a disquisition in theology than it is in philosophy. Notwithstanding, many philosophical principles of government are stated. (49)

But De Regimine Principum is primarily a handbook for a Christian prince, to help him rule his subjects in such a way that it will be to their greatest good and to his eternal salvation. (50)

Some 250 years later, in 1511, what is perhaps the most famous of the many guidebooks for princes was published when Machiavelli's The Prince appeared. Dedicated to Lorenzo di Medici, The Prince was to create the vogue for such handbooks which was furthered by those who wrote this type of book to curry favor, or because they genuinely had at heart the good of the kingdom. (51) Among these latter was Erasmus' Education of a Christian Prince—a book prepared for the diffident Spanish youth who was soon to become Emperor Charles V.

It might be well to observe here that St. Thomas does not propose any kind of ideal state or community in De Regimine Principum. Rather,

(49) cf. Phelan, op. cit., p. 9.
(51) The only similarity existing between The Prince and De Regimine Principum is in the purpose of the works, and definitely not in form or content. Truly reflecting Thomistic thought, and possibly a familiarity with De Regimine Principum are the Enseignements or "written instructions" which St. Thomas' contemporary, King (St.) Louis IX of France (1214-1270) left for his son, Philip III. (cf. Grabmann, op. cit., p. 163.)
he insists that by living in God's world as God intended him to live, man will attain a state of earthly happiness.

In Christian times, it was for Sir (St.) Thomas More in Utopia to start the long chain of "ideal state" literature which persists even to our own time. (52) Bacon's New Atlantis, Harrington's Oceana, Campanella's City of the Sun, William Morris' News From Nowhere and Samuel Butler's Erewhon are but a few of the more famous examples. (53)

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(52) The Utopia idea first appeared in Plato's Timaeus and was fully developed in his Republic. But while More owed much to Plato, along with St. Thomas there is a fundamental difference in their viewpoints: Plato sought the perfection of the aristocratic few, while More and Aquinas sought the betterment of all. **


Content of the Work

In the preceding chapter it was sufficiently explained that the four books usually included in Thomistic writings under the title of De Regimine Principum are not all authentic. The result of recent scholarship has been to pronounce all of Book I, and Book II as far as the middle of the fourth chapter, as authentically the work of St. Thomas. The rest of the treatise is generally attributed to a pupil of Thomas', Ptolmey of Lucca. (54)

For the purpose of this essay, we are concerned only with that portion of the first two books which are surely the work of St. Thomas.

In making this précis, as well as in making any reference to the text of the disquisition in this essay, the translation used has been that of Rev. Gerald B. Phelan, Ph. D. (55)

As mentioned in the preceding chapter (56), in the introduction to the translation, Father Phelan states that On The Governance of Rulers

(54) cf. p. 13, supra.
(55) Gerald B. Phelan, translator, On The Governance of Rulers by St. Thomas Aquinas, Toronto, St. Michael's College, 1935. For brevity in footnotes in this essay, this title has been shortened to "Governance,"
(56) cf. p. 16, supra.
is "not primarily a philosophical but a theological treatise." (57)
The frequent citations of Holy Scriptures and the recourse to revealed
doctrines to substantiate arguments confirm this statement. (58) Never­
theless, many doctrines pertinent to the philosophy of government are
evolved. (59)

Book I - Chapter 1

This chapter is concerned with the necessity of government. Nearly
all of the principles which underlie St. Thomas' political philosophy
are to be found in this chapter.

Man, as an intelligent being, acts in view of his end. But the
methods of reaching it may vary from individual to individual. It is
evident, therefore, that man needs some guiding principles to direct
him to his end. (60)

If man were not a social and political animal, he would require
nothing other than the light of (individual) reason to guide him to his
end. (61)

But man, by nature, was intended to live in a group. Unlike other
animals, which are equipped with claws, horns, hairy covering, etc., to
enable them to survive in their environment, man has reason so that he
is able to do all that an animal can, and more besides. However, no one
man by himself is able to provide himself with everything he needs to
live as a man. Naturally, then, man lives in company with others of his
kind. (62)

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(57) Phelan, introd. to "Governance," p. 9.
(58) Ibid., loc. cit.
(59) Ibid., loc. cit.
(60) "Governance," p. 29.
(61) Ibid., p. 30.
(62) Ibid., loc. cit.
In this group living, men may assist each other, so that one man's
labors in one field will be of use to all men. (63)

Since man is naturally designed to live in company with other men,
it is necessary that there be some means to govern the group, since the
common welfare must supercede individual interests. In all created things
we see that it is natural for one thing to rule others of its kind. (64)

In things which are ordained for an end, it is possible for the
things to seek the end in right and in wrong ways. This is also true
of governments. (65) "If, therefore, a group of free men is governed
by their ruler for the common good of the group, that government will
be right and just....." An unjust government, on the contrary, is one
from which only the ruler derives benefit. Such types of unjust govern­
ments are tyrannies, oligarchies and democracies. The kinds of just
governments which are opposite to these are monarchies, aristocracies
and polities. (66)

The perfection of a society may be judged by the extent of its self-
sufficiency in providing the necessities of life. On this basis, some
degree of perfection exists in the family and in small communities, but
only in the state is full perfection attained. The head or ruler of the
family is called the father; the person who rules the state for the

--- "Governance," pp. 31-35.

Book I - Chapter 2

The aim of any ruler should be to secure the welfare of those over whom he rules. The welfare of society is the "preservation of its unity, which is called peace." A ruler has this as his end, and he may not deliberate as to whether or not he will seek this end, since it is his duty. One man will be more successful in promoting unity in government than will several. "Therefore the rule of one man is more useful than the rule of many." (68)

The reasonableness of this may be seen in nature, where, in the body, all bodily members are moved by the heart and all intellectual powers are subject to reason. In the universe itself, all things are subject to one God. (69)

Book I - Chapter 3

In the preceding chapter it was shown that monarchy was the best form of government. Its opposite is tyranny - the worst kind of government. (70)

Just as a united force striving for good is more effective than a divided force, it follows that a force which is united to produce evil is worse than a divided force with the same object. (71)

The fewer the number of persons who benefit from a government, the worse and more unjust that government becomes. No fewer persons than one could benefit from a government, so a tyranny is seen to be the worst form of government. (72)
It is better for a just government to be headed by only one man so that it may be strong; expediency dictates that an unjust government be under many men, so that it may be weaker, and so that they "may mutually hinder one another." (73)

Tyrants have no concern other than their own interests. Under such a system nothing can be certain because of its departure from justice and because it depends on the will and whim of one man, who tends to hinder his subjects in both temporal and spiritual matters. (74)

Good and virtuous men are subject to a tyrant's suspicion because some just man might win the public confidence and as soon as the citizens came to mutually trust one another, they might seek to unseat the tyrant, whom they could not trust. (75)

It is also the part of a tyrant to keep the people disunited by forbidding any social and public gatherings which bring people together in familiarity and confidence. (76)

Because they use their power and wealth for evil purposes, tyrants try to prevent their subjects from acquiring power and wealth because the tyrant fears that the subjects might use these acquisitions against him. (77)

Few virtuous men are found under a tyrant's rule because the tyrant vigorously endeavors to suppress virtue, and it thus becomes unpopular to be good. (78)

A tyrant governs without reason, but is guided only by his own self-
ish desires. Such a man is no different from a beast. "And therefore
cen hide from tyrants as from cruel beasts and it seems that to be sub-
ject to a tyrant is the same thing as to lie prostrate beneath a raging
beast." (79)

Book I - Chapter 4

St. Thomas develops the points he has brought out in the two pre-
ceeding chapters by applying them to the government of Rome as an illus-
trative example which bears him out. (80)

Book I - Chapter 5

Despite the dangers possibly arising from both monarchies and oli-
garchies or aristocracies should they become corrupt, it is only reason-
able to adopt the form of government which would be least likely to be-
come unjust; and should it become so, to adopt the government which
would be least evil as a corrupt government. (81)

The monarchy fits these requirements. Reason and experience show
us that one man ruling alone becomes corrupt and tyrannical much less
frequently than does a group, because in the group one person may become
unjust and thus vitiate the efforts of the others. The dissension thus
created is of greater harm to society than the injustice encountered
under one tyrant. (82)

Book I - Chapter 6

To forestall the outbreak of tyranny, prudent citizens will take
steps to limit the powers of their king so that he can become unjust
only with difficulty. (83)

(79) "Governance," p. 146.
(80) Ibid., p. 247.
(81) Ibid., p. 50.
(82) Ibid., pp. 51-52.
(83) Ibid., p. 53.
Should a ruler become tyrannical, it is far better to put up with him for a while than it is to become rebellious, since the evils encountered in the wake of a revolt are usually worse than those experienced under the tyrant. (84)

If all of the subjects as a group oppose the tyrant, that is perfectly just, because since the king was empowered by the people, they may rightly remove him, or limit his powers. (85)

No private citizen, however, should take it upon himself to slay a tyrant, however oppressive. (86)

Many times tyranny is a punishment visited from God on an iniquitous people. Before attempting to rid themselves of the tyrant, the people should rid themselves of their sins. (87)

**Book I - Chapter 7**

With this chapter, St. Thomas begins his discussion of the various motives which should inspire rulers to govern justly and well.

Ruling well may often prove to be an arduous task. It is not unjust, therefore, for a good ruler to entertain hope of receiving some reward for his services. (88)

For some men, honor and glory is the motive of their rule. For others, it is riches and plunder. (89)

Honor and glory are transient and perishable things, and thus offer a poor motive to rulers. (90)

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(84) "Governance," p. 54.
(85) Ibid., p. 57.
(86) Ibid., pp. 55-56.
(87) Ibid., p. 60.
(88) Ibid., p. 61.
(89) Ibid., pp. 61-62.
(90) Ibid., p. 62.
But riches and plunder are even worse, because a man motivated to rule well by a quest for honor and glory may rule as he does in order to obtain the praise of his subjects, but if riches and plunder are the motives, the ruler does not care what his subjects think of him. (91)

So while the perfect ruler governs virtuously for virtue's sake, a just ruler may seek honor and glory as a means of preventing himself from becoming lustful and avaricious. (92)

Book I - Chapter 8

No earthly reward, however, is sufficient for a good and just ruler. For his reward, such a man must look to God "as a servant to his master. (93)

The only adequate reward for virtue in this life is perfect happiness. We cannot attain this happiness on earth, but must wait until the next life. (94)

A ruler who governs with this end in view will have a two-fold reward: He will attain perfect happiness in the next world, and through his virtuous living, he will gain the love and respect of his subjects. (95)

Book I - Chapter 9

It is a very great virtue for a man to be able to rule himself justly, and to be able to rule others in the same manner. This act of ruling becomes more virtuous with an increase in the number of people who are ruled. If the reward of virtue is happiness, then a good ruler is duly entitled to a greater degree of happiness in heaven than are ordinary men. This is because the kingly virtues are more pleasing to God than the virtues attained by being subject to a king, and these higher virt-

(91) "Governance," p. 65.
(92) Ibid., pp. 64-65.
(93) Ibid., p. 67.
(94) Ibid., pp. 68-70.
(95) Ibid., pp. 70-72.
tues will thus merit a greater heavenly reward. (96)

Book I - Chapter 10

Because of the great heavenly reward in store for just kings, it behooves a king not to fall into tyranny. (97) Only a "fool or an infidel" would trade eternal joy in heaven for a transient earthly happiness which might be procured through a resort to tyranny. It is quite possible for a just king to obtain more temporal advantages by his rule than a tyrant will by his. (98)

Among these advantages may be counted friendship. This is a fundamental need of man, regardless of rank or station. Because they selfishly seek their own good in preference to the public good, tyrants never have true friends among their subjects. (99)

A just king can hope for a fuller expression of friendship than a tyrant will ever obtain, for a just king is loved by his subjects because a just king shows his subjects that he loves them. (100)

A government thus blessed with the mutual respect and love of ruler and ruled will be a stable government, because such love inspires loyalty. (101) Lacking any species of love and loyalty, but depending on fear as a "whip," no government can last long, for it will be overthrown - as have all tyrannies in the history of the world. (102)

From past experience we can see that just kings are able to acquire more wealth than tyrants are because they are not forced to pay bribes for protection and loyalty. (103)

(96) "Governance," pp. 73-78.
(97) Ibid., p. 79.
(98) Ibid., loc. cit.
(99) Ibid., pp. 80-81.
(100) Ibid., p. 81.
(101) Ibid., p. 82.
(102) Ibid., pp. 83-84.
(103) Ibid., p. 85.
A just king is revered and remembered by his subjects, thus gaining the fame which a tyrant can never obtain, for if he is remembered at all, the tyrant's memory is cursed by his people. (104)

Book I - Chapter 11

The pride of a tyrant is such that only rarely does it allow him to repent his evil deeds, and because of impenitence, tyrants will be severely punished by God. (105)

But even if he repents, as he is surely bound to do, how can a tyrant make proper restitution for all of the harm which he has caused? (106)

The sin of the unjust king is made all the greater by the fact that posterity assumes the king's supposed right to sin with impunity. The malice of a tyrant's acts is increased by the very position of responsibility which he holds, and thus God will exact a severe punishment from those who misrule His people. (107)

Tyrants are bound to be disappointed, for they lose both eternal happiness and the temporal gain which they seek to acquire by their tyranny. (108)

Book I - Chapter 12

In the last four chapters of this book St. Thomas discusses the nature of the ruler's position and the manner in which the ruler should perform the duties attached to the office.

In the natural scheme of things, man is a social being. To conform with nature, governments must follow the law of nature regulating

(104) "Governance," p. 86.
(105) Ibid., pp. 88-89.
(106) Ibid., p. 89.
(107) Ibid., loc. cit.
(108) Ibid., p. 90.
all artificial things: They become more perfect the more they resemble natural things in their mode of operation. (109)

In man, reason reigns over his other faculties. In society, in like manner, the subjects are ruled by the reason of the ruler. (110) The ruler should be to his kingdom what the soul is to the body, and what God is to the world. (111)

Book I - Chapter 13

In order to ascertain the duties of a king, we must see how God functions in the universe. Two of His works in particular must be examined: His establishment or creation of the world and His governance of what He created. (112)

This same function is performed by the soul in the body when it informs the body and when it governs and moves the body. (113)

Not all kings establish the kingdom over which they reign, but govern a land already founded by another. Nevertheless, it remains within the proper function of kings to establish kingdoms. (114)

Among the functions of a king comes the responsibility of preserving the kingdom over which he rules and guiding it to fulfil the purposes for which it was founded. But in order to do this, a man must know how the kingdom is constituted. This can be learned from the example of the creation of the world, in which can be seen the production of things themselves and the orderly distinction of the parts of creation. (115)

(109) "Governance," pp. 91-92.
(110) Ibid., p. 92.
(111) Ibid., loc. cit.
(112) Ibid., p. 93.
(113) Ibid., loc. cit.
(114) Ibid., p. 94.
(115) Ibid., loc. cit.
A ruler cannot create things, but must make use of things already in existence. In founding a state, the ruler must select a site which will offer the subjects a healthful climate, be fertile enough to provide the necessities of life, will be reasonably scenic and afford natural protection from enemies. (116)

The king must also determine the best location for cities, farms, schools, market-places, etc. In founding cities, the ruler must determine the location for churches, law courts and industries. (117)

Finally, he must provide everyone with the necessities required for his particular state in life, and provide for competent public officials to help him rule. (118)

Book I - Chapter 14

It is just as possible to learn how to govern a city or a state by observing the governance of the world as it is to suitably learn the process of founding a city or a kingdom from the manner of mundane creation. Cognizance must be given to the fact that "to govern is to bring the thing governed in a suitable way to its proper end." We thus say that a ship is governed when it is brought safely and directly to port through the skill of the sailor. So for anything ordained for an end outside itself, it is the ruler's duty to preserve the thing and to bring it to its end. (119)

We may form the same judgement about the whole of society as we do about the end of an individual man. For instance, if the ultimate end of the individual or society was concerned with the life and health of the body, then a physician should be the king; if the ultimate end of

(116) "Governance," p. 95.
(117) Ibid., p. 96.
(118) Idem., loc. cit.
(119) Ibid., p. 97.
the individual and society were knowledge, the king should be a teacher; if wealth was the ultimate end, then the king should be a financier. But since the end of any multitude is to live virtuously together in order to attain eternal happiness, it is the duty of the king to do all in his power to guide his subjects to this end by wise and virtuous living. (120)

Man is ordained for an end which is supernatural. Natural means alone will not obtain this end for man, so a supernatural means, namely, the Church, must be employed. The natural end of man is the concern of the king, but the supernatural end is in the province of the Church. Because the supernatural end is superior to the natural end, it follows that the king and all civil authority must be subject to the Church, as ruled by Christ through His Vicar. (121)

Book I - Chapter 15

Just as the ruler is subject to the priests in helping to order his subjects to their ultimate end, so he ought to preside over all human offices and regulate them by his government. (122) It follows from this that in order to secure eternal happiness for his subjects, the ruler should positively prescribe those things which will lead to eternal happiness and proscribe those things which are contrary to this end. (123)

So that all persons subject to him may live well, the king must (A) establish a virtuous life among his subjects; (B) preserve it, once it is established and (C) once preserved, perfect it. (124)

For a man to live virtuously, he must act in a virtuous manner, and must have enough of those material goods necessary for him to perform an
act of virtue. To extend virtuous living to a society, the multitude must be united in and by peace, they must be guided to good deeds and the ruler must provide a sufficient quantity of all those things necessary for virtuous living. Once established by him, the king must conserve virtuous living. (125)

Permanence in public virtue is impeded by the life span and transient energies and interests of men, by their perversity, selfishness, or laziness and by the danger of enemy attack and the ensuing disruption of the public peace. (126) To protect the state from these three threats, the king must appoint competent successors or replacements for public officials, he must legislate to provide for the punishment of evil-doers and the encouragement of virtue, and he must provide for the defense of his people from the enemy. (127)

The last of the king’s three kingly duties is that he must be solicitous for the improvement of the state. To do this, he must correct what is out of order, supply what is lacking and do anything better which can be done better. (128)

Book II - Chapter 1

The authentic portion of Book II (Chapters 1-13) is devoted to an elucidation on the first of the duties of a king, namely the founding of a city or a state. (129)

Of first consideration in this regard is the locality. The climate should be temperate in order to insure health and long life to the inhabitants, proper physical and mental fitness in time of war and an aggressive attitude in social and political matters. (130)

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(126) Ibid., p. 107.
(127) Ibid., pp. 107-108.
(129) Ibid., p. 113.
Book II - Chapter 2

The actual site of the city in the chosen locality is next in importance. The site should have wholesome air. For this, highland country seems to be the best, because it is comparatively free from mists, frosts, excessive humidity and proximity to marshes. However, if the marshes can be drained, a coastal site could be attractive. (131)

Attention should be paid to the direction in which a town faces, so that the sun will give fairly even heat all day long. (132)

Adequate farm lands should be adjacent to the city so sufficient food may be produced for the inhabitants.

A supply of fresh, pure water is a necessity.

It is possible to judge the healthfulness of the climate of a city by observing the complexion, stature, physique and age of the citizens. (133)

Book II - Chapter 3

Unfertile land will not supply a city with food sufficient for its needs. Soil conditions thus form a necessary consideration. (134)

It is better for a town to raise all of its own food because in time of war it is important for the town to be self-sufficient, or nearly so. (135)

The importation of foods necessitates the presence of many foreigners in the kingdom or city. This causes civic disunity and unrest. Also, foreigners and merchants will resort to trickery and become greedy for wealth - all to the detriment of the city or kingdom. (136)

(131) "Governance," pp. 117–118.
(132) Ibid., p. 119.
(133) Ibid., p. 120.
(134) Ibid., p. 121.
(135) Ibid., p. 122.
(136) Ibid., p. 123.
Military strength and preparedness are incompatible with trade, so for the preservation of the state, trade with other cities or kingdoms should be kept to a minimum. (137)

It is healthier and more peaceful when the people live in small communities in the rural areas than when they are congregated in masses in the city. (138) But should a state be engaged in trade, all the traders should live in the city. (139)

No city will naturally have all of its necessities immediately at hand. Likewise, it will have a surplus of some items which other cities need. Therefore, a merchant class is necessary, but for the sake of internal peace, it should be small. (140)

Book II - Chapter 4

A good city should be scenic. Man needs the beauties of nature for his enjoyment, but a good ruler will prevent his subjects from becoming excessive in their pursuit of pleasure and enjoyment. (141)

Pleasure in moderation will add a spice to life, but it should not become a passion because this weakens both the individual and the society. (142)

(137) "Governance," p. 123.
(138) Ibid., loc.cit.
(139) Ibid., p. 125.
(140) Ibid., loc. cit.
(141) Ibid., pp. 125-126.
(142) Ibid., pp. 126-127.
Chapter III

Contrasts and Comparisons

As a creature of nature, one of man's basic inclinations is to live in society with others, because he is not self-sufficient and needs the help and cooperation of others in order to survive.

The nearest approach to the pure individual we have heard of was Adam, and of him it was said: It is not good for man to be alone. The self-sufficient individual would be, as Aristotle says (Politics, i, 2, 1253a,) either a beast of [sic,] or a god; or as Plato had said before him (Laws, IX, 575,) the life of man without laws to conform to would be as bad as the most savage beast. (1h3)

St. Thomas treats of this natural dependency of man's in De Regimine Principum. (1h4)

The society which we call the state (1h5) is further necessitated by its place as a means necessary to man's final end. (1h6) This point is treated in the opening paragraphs of De Regimine Principum. (1h7)

(1h4) "Governance," pp. 30-31.
(1h6) O'Brien, op. cit., p. 316.
(1h7) "Governance," loc. cit.
Just as it is possible for men to seek their ultimate end in a di-
versity of ways - some of which are good and some of which are bad - it
is likewise possible for governments to take a variety of forms in seek-
ing to guide man to his ultimate end, and like the individual men who
compose it, the state may take good or bad forms.

The saying "What's one man's food is another man's poison," is ap-
plicable to forms of government. Only the people who place themselves
under a government can decide whether the government is just or unjust.
If the government supplies the temporal needs of its subjects and yet
will guide them to their ultimate end, then the government is just.
This is in line with Thomistic thought. (1h8)

The "best form" of government must be judged from its prin-
ciples. It is from these that a government's activities arise.
If the principles of government are based (1) on the nature of
man with a recognition of his having a destiny beyond that of
material well-being in time; (2) on the necessary means to pro-
curing the welfare of the social whole and all its parts and
(3) if it involves no injustice, whether of the individual sub-
jects or of the Church, then such a government may be consid-
ered "the best form." (1h9)

The person or persons who are at the head of the government are
bound to rule justly and well under the pain of incurring God's wrath.
In legislating for their subjects, however, rulers have been given a
positive, although indirect, help by God. The Supreme Lawgiver has
given to each man an aid to moral guidance to his ultimate end. It is
this moral guidance of man to his end which we call the Natural Moral
Law. Its spirit must underlie all laws made by temporal authority.

".....The Natural Law [is] the ordinance of Divine Wisdom, which
is made known to us by reason and which requires the observance of the
moral order." (150) "Its general expression is You must do good and

(1h8) "Governance," p. 33.
(1h9) O'Brien, op. cit., p. 320.
(150) Charles Coppens, S.J., Moral Philosophy, New York, Catholic
School Book Co., 1895, p. 51.
avoid evil." (151)

Recognizing man's obligation to observe the Natural Law, it is only reasonable that St. Thomas should base his political philosophy (which, after all, deals with the state's relations with its subjects and with other states,) on nature. "The bedrock of the Thomistic political philosophy is nature." (152) This simply means that St. Thomas recognizes that, in accordance with his double nature, man has a twofold end. One end is physical and involves perpetuation of the species. The second, and primary, end is spiritual and intellectual.

In His Justice, God rewards the good and punishes the wicked. Just as bad or unjust rulers will be punished, just rulers will be rewarded by God. To rule well is to act in a virtuous manner. The only sufficient reward for such virtue is eternal happiness. This quest of heavenly happiness should be the chief motivation a ruler has for governing justly and well. Chapter 10 of Book I of De Regimine Principum is devoted to an exposition of this idea.

Only by adopting right principles in national and international laws and governments can we hope for a just and lasting peace.

Deliberately, but not arbitrarily, the world problems we have mentioned specifically are Communism and Secularism. The reasons for limitation are twofold: As it stands, the term "current world problems" is entirely too broad for a satisfactory treatment in any essay of this type. Without qualification, the term would include such involved and

(151) Thomas V. Moore, O.S.B., Principles of Ethics, Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1935, p. 13. This, of course, is just a rephrasing of St. Thomas' expression of the Natural or Moral Law in the Summa Theologica, 1a, 2ae, q. 91, a.2.

controversial issues as the atomic bomb, the United Nations, rehabilitation of war-desolated peoples and countries, and many others. Secondly, since this essay is principally concerned with philosophy, it is more reasonable to treat the principal philosophical problems confronting the world today than it is to devote lengthy discussion to problems which are of more concern to economists, sociologists, lawyers and others.

It is interesting to note that both of the philosophical attitudes under consideration rose at almost the same time. As previously mentioned (153), the basic tenets of Communism were laid down in 1848 in Karl Marx's book, The Communist Manifesto. About two years earlier, the Englishman George Jacob Holyoake had coined the word "secularism" to denote "a form of opinion which concerns itself only with questions, the issues of which can be tested by the experience of this life." (154)

As political philosophies, both Communism (and we use the word Communism as synonymous with the Russian brand of atheistic Communism,) and Secularism may be censured in the light of Thomistic teaching because they are unnatural, and being unnatural, both are anti-supernatural.

The basic political beliefs of Thomism, Communism and Secularism may be compared and contrasted on major points as follows:

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(153) cf. p. 6, supra.
GOD
1. Thomism: There is a God Who is personal and providential.
2. Communism: God Himself, as God, is denied. There is no God but matter.
3. Secularism: There may or may not be a God. This question, along with others like immortality of the soul, is open to debate and subjective, utilitarian interpretation.

MAN
1. Thomism: Man is a personal, rational animal, ordained to an end outside of and superior to himself.
2. Communism: Man has sort of a historical personality, but is just material under the domination of the state.
3. Secularism: Man is a creature seeking perfection on earth.

FREEDOM OF MAN
1. Thomism: Man is freely guided and directed.
2. Communism: Man is enslaved to the state, to material and to himself.
3. Secularism: Man is guided by a "freedom" which belies moral obligation.

LAWS AND GOVERNMENT
1. Thomism: Governments are established for the good of the individual here and hereafter and must be based on the Eternal and the Natural Laws.
2. Communism: Government is totalitarian.
3. Secularism: The laws of the state are the moral determinants and guides to a short-lived, comfortable, earthly destiny.
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