

Discuss controversial
figure thomas
cromwell history
essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In this paper I would like to discuss Thomas Cromwell which was a controversial figure. Some people called him “ the ideal statesman of Tudor England,” the other people called him “ most corrupt Chancellor.” Cromwell was one of the most outstanding personalities of the English Renaissance era, which had ahead his time.

Let’s start from the biography of Thomas Cromwell. He was an important political personality in medieval England, he was the first counselor of King Henry VIII in 1532-1540., He was the chief ideologist of the English Reformation, one of the Anglicanism founders.

He was born in 1485 in the family of tavern and brewery owner Walter Cromwell. His grandfather was a blacksmith. In addition, the father of Thomas Cromwell hadn’t sober and honest behavior. There is evidence that he not only had a violent temper, but was accused of fraud. But Thomas and his older sister, Katherine were quite different people.

As a teenager, after a conflict with his father, he left not only his home in the village of Putney (now part of London), but also the country. The thirst for adventure and a desire to see the world made him a French mercenaries in the Italian army from which he soon deserted, leaving the battlefield. After the army he went to live in Florence and employed to work at the banker whose name was Friskabaldi. Such start of young life made him possible to get on his feet quickly and travel to Rome. However, inquisitive Cromwell interested not only in finances. He enthusiastically watched the political life in Florence, where he met with the writings of Machiavelli. Later, he often followed the recommendations of the “ Emperor” author.

A few years later he moved to Holland, where he worked as a sales agent of English merchants in Antwerp. Approximately in 1513 Thomas Cromwell returned to England with a sufficient amount of money and began to live in London, at first he traded fabrics and wool, and then became one of the most famous lawyer in England. Such situation gave him the opportunity to meet with Cardinal Thomas Wolsey - Lord Chancellor of King Henry VIII, so that he became his secretary and manager of pontifical estates. The most famous act in that capacity " was the abolition of the small monasteries.

In 1529 he became a member of Parliament, and after the fall of Wolsey succeeded his officials under the king's court. Cromwell's career abruptly went up in 1533 when he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and then in the 1536 he became Lord Privy Seal. However, the real power of Cromwell was given him by the King's friendship and confidence. Cromwell had undoubted talent for management, some historians regarded him as the founder of the revolution in the government's control scheme. If earlier decisions were made in accordance with the wishes of the King (sometimes ill-advised and inconsistent), then Cromwell had developed a system of departments with used control techniques. Not all researchers agree with this statement, but, no doubt, Thomas Cromwell played a leading role in monasteries destruction.

Harshness with which Cromwell enforced the secularization of church property, gave him the nickname " the hammer of monks." Widespread closures of monasteries almost cost Thomas Cromwell's career. In 1537 in the north of England, began the rebellion of Catholics, called the Pilgrimage of Mercy. The main demand of the rebels was the execution of Cromwell.

<https://assignbuster.com/discuss-controversial-figure-thomas-cromwell-history-essay/>

However, the rebellion was suppressed. All segments of society hated him, they often guided by a completely opposite intentions, there wasn't such segment of society, which support or sympathy he could count on. For ordinary people, he was the organizer of the bloody persecution suppressor action against the new levies, the hardships that had befallen peasants after the closure of the monasteries. For the nobility, he was an upstart - a commoner, which did not take rightful place at court. Catholics (especially the clergy) didn't forgiven him the break with Rome and the subordination of church to the king, plundered of church lands and wealth, Lutherans patronage . And those, in turn, accused the minister in the pursuit of new, " true" faith, and in condescending attitude towards Catholics. The Scots, Irish, inhabitants of Wales had a lot of claims to Cromwell.

Cromwell played a leading role in establishing the rule of a monarch over the church, in the empowerment of the royal Privy Council, whose rights were extended to the north of England, Wales and Ireland. Cromwell filled the lower house of parliament by creatures of the yard and turned it into an instrument of the Crown. He was able to dramatically increase revenue of coffers at the expense of confiscation of monastic lands, and taxation of trade, development of which he encouraged by skilled protectionist policies, Thomas Cromwell managed to increase British influence in Scotland, a significant expansion of the British crown estates in Ireland, the final incorporation of Wales.

Analyzing the literature I can say that Tomas Cromwell greatly influenced King. What else could King claim from the Minister, which not only handles all the orders of the king, but tried to guess his desires and anticipate the

<https://assignbuster.com/discuss-controversial-figure-thomas-cromwell-history-essay/>

plans to which he had not yet figured out? However, the success of Cromwell jaundiced narcissistic Henry, he got into a huff by his minister intellectual superiority. The influence of Cromwell testified Henry's inability to get out of a painful divorce case, to reorganize the state and church affairs in the spirit of royal absolutism. The minister was a living reminder about the second marriage of King, the infamous process and the execution of Anne Boleyn, which he wanted to bring to eternal oblivion. More than once it seemed to Henry that Cromwell prevented him from applying his public capacity, prevented him to be among the major politics of his era - Charles V and Francis I.

Thomas Cromwell made a great contribution to a difficult divorce of Henry VIII. The first wife of Henry VIII was Catherine of Aragon. Henry was still young when he married her, she was a widow of his brother Arthur. Katerina was a Spaniard, she was strict in religion and morals, with calm nature, which didn't correspond to rapid temper of the king. The only thing that spoke in favor of Henry - it was his beauty, mind, love to science, amorous, but none of these qualities she did not appreciate. She married him because the marriage was approved by the pope. But the blessing of the pope did not save her from unhappiness. Henry could not long remain faithful to his wife. A great admirer of the female, he was constantly moved from one subject of passion to another, until finally he stopped on the court lady, Anne Boleyn, who didn't want to live together without marriage, and demanded the marriage and Henry chose the divorce with Catherine.

However, the king met with resistance! Everybody were against divorce: the Father, and Catherine, and trusted people of the King. But Henry has already <https://assignbuster.com/discuss-controversial-figure-thomas-cromwell-history-essay/>

managed to learn all the charm of tyranny and said he would not retreat from his decision. Divorce in medieval dynastic tradition was a quite common phenomenon, so Henry was not particularly doubtful in his success, but the question of Henry's divorce had been delaying for six years. King has repeatedly tried to make Ekaterina to divorce with him, or retired to a monastery, but she skillfully and firmly reflected his attack. Henry was hoping for the Pope's order of invalidity of marriage on the grounds that the King married his brother's wife.

Thomas Cromwell proposed Henry divorced Catherine without the Pope permission. Why, he said, the king did not want to follow the example of German princes and with the assistance of Parliament declare himself the head of the national church? This idea seemed very attractive, and soon he returned to persuade himself.

Henry, following the advice of Thomas Cromwell, decided to break with the Pope and declared himself as a head of the English Church, asked to help the domestic court. To give the case a legal nature, the council was convened, chaired by Archbishop of Canterbury. Cathedral decided - or rather, Henry decided, by means of Archbishop, who blindly did his will - that the head of the English Church, will be king.

Often, but erroneously stated that Cromwell wanted to make Henry the absolute monarch. Cromwell acted through the House of Commons, that is why the decisive factor was the adoption of the Parliament reform (1529-1536). Thomas Cranmer rightly wrote in 1537 to Strasbourg reformer Wolfgang Kapiton: " In all that has hitherto been achieved in the reformation

of religion and the clergy, only Cromwell did more than all the others together." Five-year legal reform led the authority of the Pope in England replaced by supremacy of the king over the English church.

Cromwell's efforts to abolish the legal independence of the church began with the adoption of the Supplication of the Commons Against the Ordinaries, which said about restricting the right of clergy to assert ecclesiastical laws without the consent of the House of Commons, and the arbitrary and abusive acts of ecclesiastical courts were criticized, which were often unfair to the laity. The King complained the Speaker of the House that the prelates during his ordination swore allegiance to the Pope. On May 15, 1532 council adopted an appeal of the clergy, asking the king the protection from the House of Commons and giving the council control of his legislative activities in return for his patronage of the ecclesiastical courts. The next day, Thomas More resigned from his post as chancellor. By the end of the year the stopping payment of annatto act to Rome was approved, and the Pope, because of the threat, made Thomas Cranmer as Archbishop of Canterbury,.

In March 1533 Cromwell prepared statement of overriding Act to limit appeals. The famous preamble to the Act reads: " The Kingdom of England is the Empire ... under the sole rule of the Supreme Head and King, who has the imperial dignity and the imperial throne, and whom society consisting of people of different classes and conditions of various titles and the foundations of spiritual and secular, after God is obliged by natural and humble obedience. " Act held that issues relating to the activities of the king, sent for consideration to the Supreme Church Council, the highest legal

authority, and no further appeal beyond the Kingdom, for example in Rome - were impossible.

Resistance to the Henry church upheaval was surprisingly weak, but on the altar of change were two victims: Bishop John Fisher and the layman Sir Thomas More. Fisher and More could not make a compromise with their conscience and to sign the Act of the rule, because it rejected the authority of the Pope.

In February 1536 the reformist parliament received from Cromwell inspectors' reports about monasteries and approved the first act of elimination. Henry was forced to limit the number of monasteries, due to economic reasons, as well as for religious reasons and because of the anticlerical the House of Commons mood. In adopting the act in 1536, Parliament abolished the small communities with an annual income of less than 200 pounds. Most of the larger monasteries were forced to obey the King.

Monastic lands transition to the hands of the nobility contributed to further strengthening of this class and his participation in the governance of the country, while at the level of local governance became dominate the rich esquires. Profits from the land sale and other property were used for the pensions of certain former monks and nuns for the content of the new diocese, new schools and colleges as well as to enrich the royal purse.

In 1539, to strike up relations with German Protestants, Cromwell persuaded the king to marry Anne of Cleves - the sister of a German duke. Alas, the bride did not like Henry. Circumstances allowed the leaders of the Catholic
<https://assignbuster.com/discuss-controversial-figure-thomas-cromwell-history-essay/>

party at the yard - Thomas Duke of Norfolk and Bishop Stephen Gardiner to convince a suspicious king in the unreliability of his most loyal ministers. He was arrested and executed in confidence in the Tower of London in 1540.

After that, his head was welded and installed on a stake on London Bridge.

Reformer Tomas Cromwell made a great contribution to the formation of the Anglican Church. Renowned British historian Thomas Babington Macaulay called the Anglican Church "fruit of unity" of government and Protestants, i. e., the result of the consent of both parties in the views of the church.

Alliance between the Crown and Protestantism was not easy and was characterized by periods of tension and regression. Obviously, Henry VIII believed in the possibility of destruction the relation with Rome without any changes in church teaching and worship. The king maintained a conservative theology, and in the period from 1532 to 1540 was forced to choose between the radicals, led by Cromwell and the Conservatives, led by the Duke of Norfolk and the Bishop of Winchester by Stephen Gardiner. At first, followed by a period of elevation of radicals, and after the fall of Cromwell in 1540 - the Conservatives. Henry tried to act as judge in the competition of the parties, as later in the same century, his daughter Elizabeth maintained her position over the Anglican and Puritan parties. As a consequence, the Reformation in England developed by universal course via media, as nowhere else on the continent, with the possible exception of Sweden.

Summing it up I would like to stress that a small portion of society has learned for himself the benefit of the Reformation. These were the "new people", the emerging class of capitalists and bureaucrats who have

acquired property, without noble birth. As a result of the Reformation there
<https://assignbuster.com/discuss-controversial-figure-thomas-cromwell-history-essay/>

were such large changes in class composition of society, which it hasn't known throughout their history.