John Milton's Federal-Republicanism

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Samevatting

Die Engelse Puriteinse outeur, John Milton (1608-1674), se politieke teorie rakende federaal-republikanisme word in hierdie artikel ondersoek. Deelnemende politiek, die wisselwerking tussen die openbare en privaat gemeenskapsdomeine, die rol van die politieke gemeenskap in die bevordering van vryheid en die reg as antidespotisme, dra by tot die betekenisverklaring van republikanisme, waartoe Milton 'n diepgaande bydrae gemaak het. Hierdie teorie oor republikanisme is gepostuleer teen die agtergrond van federalisme, soos verstaan binne die konteks van politieke verdragsluiting, met laasgenoemde wat 'n belang-rike funksie vervul wat betref die doeltreffende toepassing van republikanisme. Milton se federaal-republikanisme het 'n ander perspektief verskaf vergeleke met die liberale siening van politieke gedrag, gedrewe deur bekrompe eiebelang tot 'n groter rol vir burgerlike deugsaamheid in die politieke lewe van die samelewing. Daarbenewens het Milton se federaal-republi-kanisme bygedra tot die bevordering van die beweging weg van die oorgeërfde Goddelike Reg tot soewereiniteit, deur middel van 'n herroepbare kontrak met die mense, om sodoende regeringsabsolutisme te verhoed.

1. Introduction

In Maynor's *Republicanism in the modern world*, reference is made to John Milton (together with James Harrington and Marchamont Nedham) as being a member of those political theorists influenced by the Neo-Roman understanding of republicanism, more specifically the writings of Machiavelli (Maynor, 2003:36). For Neo-Roman republican writers, the main thrust of republican government was the securing of freedom for its people by promoting the common interest of the body politic, while simultaneously allowing individuals maximum liberty to pursue their own

chosen ends (Maynor, 2003:24). Machiavelli's approach was a distinctive conception of liberty that emphasised the necessity of strong laws and institutions to ensure that citizens were not dependent on others for their liberty (Maynor, 2003:30). In this regard, Maynor states that English republicanism was heavily influenced by traditional republican sources through the works of Machiavelli, Livy, Sallust and other ancient writers. The glories of Rome, Sparta, and Greece became an area of intense focus as the English republicans began to acknowledge a greater need for more effective political institutions and more meaningful liberty (Maynor, 2003:36).

The past fifty years have witnessed an increased interest in the phenomenon of republicanism.[1] However, it should be noted that although republicanism was brought into the communitarian-republican discourse by authors as diverse as Gordon Wood[2], Arendt[3], and J.G.A. Pocock[4], the interest in classical republicanism has moved well beyond their original work, by focusing on the phenomenon of republicanism as a political idea, reflected in the work on moral and political theories of republicanism by Alasdair MacIntyre (1982:295)[5], Michael Sandel[6] and Charles Taylor[7], with the work of Cass Sunstein (1988:1539) and Frank Michelman (1988:1493) dominating the jurisprudential aspects of the debate. In spite of the wide variety of views on the essential characteristics of republicanism, a number of key elements are commonly associated with this notion. Firstly, republicanism is based on the view that participatory politics (democracy) is an essential condition to establish a common "public good." Secondly, in opposition to the liberal idea of the neutral state and a strict division between the private and public domains, civic republicanism stresses the creative role of politics and the articulation of virtue and the common good.[8] Thirdly, there is the idea that the political

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1   In many instances, communitarian critical analysis lies at the heart of modern republican theories. See Adrienne E. Van Blerk, *Jurisprudence. An Introduction* (1996, Pretoria: Butterworths), 204.
2   *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787.*
3   *On revolution.*
4   *The Machiavellian moment. Florentine political thought and the atlantic tradition.*
5   *After virtue.*
6   *Liberalism and the limits of justice*, *liberalism and its critics* and "The state and the soul" *New republic*, 39.
7   "Atomism" *Philosophy and the human sciences*, 187; "Legitimation crisis?", *Philosophy and the human sciences*, 248; "Cross-purposes: The liberal-communitarian debate" in Nancy I. Rosenblum (Ed.) *Liberalism and the moral life*, 159-182.
8   See e.g. Sherry, 1986:551: "The contrast between the republican Revolution and the liberal Constitution is stark. Republicanism, unlike liberalism, exalts the good of the whole over the good of its individual members. Where liberalism finds the primary purpose of

community is the legitimate entity to promote virtue and the common good (see e.g. Sunstein, 1988:1555-1556), and fourthly, freedom is seen as the opposite of despotism rather than as a "negative liberty" – this republican "solidarity" supports freedom because it offers the "motivation for self-imposed discipline" (see Taylor, 1991:165).

Within the complex developments of Puritanism, the English author John Milton, in his polemic prose and pamphlets, played a significant role in furthering the cause of the republican ideal. The success of Hobbes's uncompromising individualism and its transportation to the American colonies where it was modified by the natural rights theories of John Locke, saw the American colonies allowing the liberal tradition the dominant position from the late eighteenth century; it witnessed the demise of the Puritan republicanism generally, and Milton's ideal of the republican community in particular. Shifting from one to another more congenial mode of discourse, Milton in his anti-prelatic tracts, reveals some of the most deeply held political convictions of the Puritan movement in his defence of the republican ideal (see Haller, 1967). Studying his political works generally, and his remarks on republicanism in particular, the researcher must bear in mind Barker's remarks about the unruliness of Milton's energy when he writes prose, the embittered complexity of the disputes he engages in, and the deceptive ease with which his statements can be made to seem applicable to present questions (ibid.). Furthermore the complexity of the time frame in which Milton was writing was enhanced by the fact that the democratic theory of society was receiving its final practical formulation, and the fact that this was an age of disintegration, when, states Barker, the weakening of accepted principles and the rise of new modes of thought resulted in intellectual and social upheavals of unique proportions (see ibid., xv). These complex issues formed the basis of the motivation of Milton's prose, being the record of his effort to develop a theory of liberty, religion, the private, and the political, which were intended to reconcile these conflicting forces (ibid., xx).

An in-depth investigation of Milton's work on political matters remains of interest, however, because of the considerable effect his work had on democratic thought generally.[9] He recognised the promises and also some

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government to be promotion of the diverse goods of its individual citizens, republicanism finds its primary purpose to be definition of community values and creation of the public and private virtue necessary for societal achievement of those values."

9   For a rather superficial statement to the contrary, see McDonald, 1962:53: "But the regrettable fact is that apart from the *Areopagitica*, he (Milton) never produced a work of political theory of sufficient depth and consistency to grant him membership among the greats."

of the dangers which must be overcome if they were not to produce anarchy or be itself overwhelmed by tyranny. In addition, Milton's contribution to political covenantalism (federalism), and by implication the necessary interaction between republicanism and covenantalism, also requires emphasis.

Gough states that contract theory became what may almost be called the official theory of the Commonwealth party. This theory is expounded by Milton in *The tenure of kings and magistrates*, written as an express justification of resistance against unjust political power (Gough, 1936:94). Milton's political theory, according to Gough, was largely borrowed from continental writers, and he was one of the earliest English publicists to expound a thoroughgoing contract theory. In certain areas he carried it some distance ahead of the theories of most of his contemporaries (ibid.). In fact, Milton, together with Samuel Rutherford (1600-1665) represents the apex of Puritan political thought, which commenced towards the middle of the sixteenth century, reached its peak in the middle of the seventeenth century, and receded after the Glorious Revolution.[10]

2. Milton and the historical manifestation of republicanism

Milton's references to historical examples of establishing republican systems of theo-politics are mostly concerned with highlighting the libertarian and anti-tyrannical nature of such systems of political governance. In his *Angli Pro Populo Anglicano Defenso* (*Defence of the people of England Against Claudius Anonymous, Alias Salmasius his defence of the king*) (1651), Milton finds support for the principle that the people who have appointed a king, can by the same right put him down (*W,* VII:113 (1D2)). Marcus Aurelius, to

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10 All references to Milton's *Works* (*W*) are to the *Columbia edition of the works of John Milton* (Frank Allen Patterson, Ed., assisted by French Rowe Fogle; New York: Columbia University Press, 1939-1940) unless otherwise stated. The number in roman numerals refers to the volume, while the number in arabic numerals is the page of that volume. Within parentheses comes first the work of Milton referred to, followed by the number of the book, line, or other division within that work. The abbreviations in this regard denote the following contributions by Milton namely: Samson Agonistes (SA), History of Britain (B), The Ready and Easy Way to Establish Free Commonwealth, (W), Notes non-Miltonic (Mnm), Art of Logic (LOR), Commonplace Book (CB), Christian Doctrine (CD), Tetrachordon (T), First Defence (1D1), Of Education (E), Tenure of Kings and Magistrates (TE), and Areaopagitica (AR). For confirmation of the importance of Rutherford regarding Reformed political theory see: Flinn, 1978-9:49; Schaeffer, 1985:137; Maclear, 1965:86; Hall, 1996:349; Hetherington, 1991:147; and De Freitas, 2003.

Milton, conducted himself towards the people just as if Rome had still been a free republic; he also held the idea that in the Roman Republic, the supreme power was seated in the people and that he proposed to himself a form of government under which all men might equally enjoy the benefit of the law, and right and justice be equally administered to all (*W,* VII: 117 (1D2)). Furthermore, in Milton's view, Aurelius acknowledged that all power and property belong to the Senate and the people (ibid.). He also points out that even his prelatic opponent, Salamasius, had to concede that the people of Rome preferred the civil broils of their republic to the unbearable yoke of the Caesars (*W,* VII:189-191 (1D3)). The reason the early Christians did not take up arms against the emperor when the republic of Rome ceased, is situated in the fact that they were scattered and unarmed, rather than willing to submit to the Caesar's authority (*W,* VII:249 (1D4)).

With the power of the spirit of liberty among the people in mind, Milton, in his *Angli Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio Secunda* (*Second defence of the people of England against the infamous anonomous libel, entitled, The cry of the royal blood to heaven, against the English parracides*)[11] (1654), uses examples from the Roman struggle for freedom to convey the idea that freedom is the same thing as being pious, wise, just and temperate, careful of one's own, but also "abstinent from what is another's, and thence, in fine, magnanimous and brave – so, to be the opposite of these, is the same thing as to be a slave; and by the wonted judgment, and as it were by the just retribution of God, it comes to pass, that the nation, which has been incapable of governing and ordering itself, and has delivered itself up to the slavery of its own lusts, is itself delivered over, against its will, to other masters – and whether it will or no, is compelled to serve" (*W,* VIII:249-251 (2D)). In the absence of a love of genuine liberty, such nations will try to shake off the yoke; they may make the same attempt by arms again and again; but they will make no progress: they may change their slavery perhaps; but they will never be able to shake it off (ibid., 249). This is what frequently happened to the ancient Romans, after they had become effeminate and unnerved through luxury: and much more did it happen to the modern Romans, when, after a long interval, they affected to renew their ancient glory, and to restore the republic (ibid.).

Commenting on the Republic of Geneva in his *Angli Pro Se Defensio Contra Alexandrum Morum Ecclesiasten …*(*Defence of himself, In answer to Alexander More, &c.*)[12] (1655) Milton expresses his high regard for the

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11   Hereafter referred to as *The second defence* or (2D)
12   Hereafter referred to as his *Pro se Defensio* or (SD).

city and Republic of Geneva (*W*, IX: 203) (SD)). His admiration is firstly based on its "worship and study of a purer religion", his admiration of the republic "scarcely less high for her prudence, equality, moderation, constancy; by which virtues though cooped up within bounds so narrow, surrounded on all sides by powerful and vigilant neighbours, she has preserved herself – has guarded her liberty, during so many years, in profound peace!" (ibid.) This preservation of the republican spirit, namely liberty, "which is the origin and end of all civil society", she performs for her people with more propriety, skill, and prosperity, though with finances barely tolerable, than the most potent kings can do for their subjects, though possessed of immense treasures, and assisted, as is commonly supposed, by the wisest counsels (ibid., 205).

Milton's praise and respect for the Republic of the States of Holland, "inferior in all outward advantages", relates to the fact that notwithstanding great difficulties, the country "courageously, wisely, constantly" went through with establishing a free republic (*W*, VI: 118 (W)). In his *The readie and easie way to establish a free commonwealth …* [13] (1660), Milton, referring to the practice in ancient Greece of having a common government in Athens, expresses the possibility that the English commonwealth could far exceed the United Provinces by having, not as they, many sovereignties united in one commonwealth, but many commonwealths under one united and entrusted sovereignty (*W*, VI: 145-6 (W)). Nine years earlier, in his *First defence* (1651) against the prelatic views of Salmasius, Milton lauds the efforts of the "High and Mighty States of Holland, true offspring of the ancient liberators of their country", who rejected the defence of tyranny, "most noxious to the liberty of all peoples (*W*, VII:19 (1Dp))." In consequence, Milton defends the republican spirit of both England and the United Provinces against efforts by the royalist Salmasius to attack the republican foundations in his efforts "to undermine them both, and make them totter to their fall" (ibid.). Similar to the Romans, who had a most flourishing and glorious commonwealth after they had banished their kings, the Dutch bravely and gloriously secured their freedom (ibid.). In his *Defence of himself* (1655), Milton objects strongly to calumnies that he disparaged the United Provinces: "You are indeed greatly deceived, if you think there is any Englishman more friendly, more closely allied in heart, to the United Provinces, than myself; if you imagine there is any one who thinks more highly of that republic; who prizes more and who oftener applauds their industry, their arts, ingenuity, and liberty; whose will

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13   Hereafter referred to as his *Ready and easy way,* or (W).

was more abhorrent from beginning a war with them; who prosecuted it, when begun, with less zeal, and ended, who more sincerely rejoiced; lastly, who at any time gave less credit to those who would disparage them. You could not, therefore, have devised a calumny against me more false, or less appropriate" (*W,* IX: 105 (SD)).

The historical manifestation of the republican ideal, through all the ages of mankind, is described by Milton as that free government "which we have so dearly purchasd", a free commonwealth, not only held by wisest men in all ages the noblest, the manliest, the most equal, the most just government, "the most agreeable to all due libertie and proportiond equalitie, both human, civil, and Christian, most cherishing to vertue and true religion, but also … planely commended, or rather enjoind by our Saviour himself, to all Christians, not without remarkable disallowance, and the brand of *gentilism* upon kingship" (*W,* VI:119 (W)). The spirit prevailing in the free commonwealth (or republic) is described by Milton as one wherein they who are greatest, are perpetual servants and drudges to the public at their own cost and charges, who neglect their own affairs; yet are not elevated above their brethren, live soberly in their families, walk the streets as other men, and may be spoken to freely, familiarly, friendly, without adoration (*W,* VI: 120 (W)). Elsewhere in the same treatise, with reference to the Athenian commonwealth ("reputed the first and ancientest place of all civilitie in all *Greece*", with a common government), Milton expresses his desire for a republican form of government where parents have schools and academies of their own choice, wherein their children "may be bred up in thir own sight to all learning and noble education not in grammar only, but in all liberal arts and exercises" (*W,* VI: 145 (W)). This, Milton feels, would spread more knowledge, civility, and religion through all parts of the land, "by communicating the natural heat of government and culture more distributively to all extreme parts" (ibid.). It would make the whole nation more industrious, more ingenious at home, more potent, more honorable abroad (ibid.). Nothing is more essential to the freedom of a people than to have the administration of justice and all "public ornaments in thir own election and within thir own bounds", subordinate to the general power and union of the whole republic (ibid.). To Milton, civic republicanism carries with it the liberty of its subjects, in distinction to monarchy, which abuses the subjects for its own ends. Although monarchy may perhaps aim to make the people wealthy, it is for ulterior purposes, namely "for thir own shearing and the supplie of regal prodigalitie" (*W,* VI: 145 (W)). Milton therefore contributes much to developing the republican idea of participatory politics, the creative role of politics, the idea that the political

community is the legitimate medium to promote the common good, and the motivation of 'self-imposed discipline'.

3. Milton and the Covenant

3.1 Introduction

The terms *federalism* and *covenantal* are virtually interchangeable, and it is the academic specialisation in the fields of theology and politics that has contributed to the separation in meaning of these two terms. Federalism entails, *inter alia*, an understanding of the relationships between God and the world, and among humans as based on covenants, including the understanding that the inner nature of social groups and the relationships among them are understood as covenantal (McCoy & Baker, 1991: 11-13). The Scottish political emphasis on theologico-political covenantalism received the admiration of the Puritans in England. In his *Tenure of kings and magistrates*[14], Milton also expresses his appreciation for the covenantal dimension of Scottish politics. To Milton's mind, the Scots were a free nation, they made king whom they freely chose, and with the same freedom deposed him if they saw cause, "by right of ancient laws and Ceremonies yet remaining, and old customs yet among the Highlanders in choosing the head of thir Clanns, or Families; all which with many other arguments, bore witness that regal power was nothing else but a mutual Covnant or stipulation between King and people" (*W,* V:29-30 (TE)). The covenantal basis of Milton's thinking is clearly embedded in the Zurich Reformation, and the Scottish Presbyterians and English Puritans were shaped by that same tradition. Although both Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531)[15] and Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575)[16] recognised the political importance of the Biblical idea of the covenant, it was Martin Bucer (1491-1551) who postulated the idea of the covenant as a political ideal in the establishment of the *Respublica Christiana*. Bucer[17] in particular, exerted considerable influence on the emergent Puritans.

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14 Hereafter referred to as *Tenure* or (TE).

15 Milton refers to Zwingli's views on politics, flowing from his covenant theology, on a number of occasions. See *W,* IV:339 (AR); *W,* V:47: (TE); *W,* VII:65 (1D1); *W,* VII:203 (1D3); *W,* VII:347 (1D5); *W,* VIII:203 (2D); *W,* XVIII:211 (CB).

16 In Milton's references to Bullinger, he was particularly interested in the Zurich reformer's support for the anti-Aristotelian philosopher Ramus. See e.g. *W,* XI:511 (LOR); *W,* XI:513 (LOR).

17 Milton cites Bucer as authority on numerous occasions. Of particular importance for his political views, see *W,* IV:1 (M); *W,* IV:2 (Mnm); *W,* VII:65 (1D1); *W,* VII:347 (1D5), and *W,* VIII:203 (2D).

Bucer's last great work, *De Regno Christi*, stating the idea of God's Kingdom and how it might be realised in England, was published in 1550, and together with the covenantal views of Dudley Fenner[18] (1558-87), William Perkins[19] (1558-1602) and William Ames[20] (1576-1633), produced a broad basis for support of covenantalism in Puritan political theory. Although Zurich reformer, Heinrich Bullinger's federalism provided for a bilateral, conditional covenant, he did not distinguish clearly between the theological and political covenants. It was Bucer who provided in principle for such a distinction, enabling Phillip DuPlessis Mornay, in his *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*, for the first time, to postulate a clear and systematic compartmentalisation concerning, on the one side, the covenant between God and man, and on the other, the covenant between political rulers and the nation. The distinction between such a *vertical covenant* (or a covenant between God and man), and a *horizontal covenant* (the covenant between political government and the nation), clearly emerges in Milton's theological and political thought. Although it was mainly the Continental Reformed thinkers who developed the idea of the covenant in a political context in the sixteenth century, only one English Puritan, Dudley Fenner, made an attempt to develop a systematic federal political theory. He wrote a tract in Latin, but it was never translated into English nor printed in England (Elazar, 1996:244).

It was only in the sixteenth century that the leadership in covenantal political theory passed to the English Puritans – responding to political necessity, which arose when James I and Charles I endeavoured to impose absolutism on the kingdom. Milton was one of the strong covenantal thinkers under the influence of Reformed covenantalism, soon becoming a potent spokesman for the ideal of the political covenant as the basis for theo-republicanism. In the midst of the conflicts preceding the English Civil War, Milton advanced federal republicanism as the ideal for establishing a free commonwealth, especially in terms of liberty of thought and speech. In particular Milton looked to the Mosaic polity of the Hebrew Scriptures for ideal forms of political governance. Working in Cambridge, the centre of Puritan political thought, Milton promoted the ideal of the covenant as the basis of the free commonwealth (Ibid., 244-5).

The traditional Reformational elements of the Zurich covenant theology are to be found in his early works. God's dealings with man in history

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18   Milton was aware of the political views of Fenner. See *W,* V:50 (TE) and *W,* V:51 (TE).
19   On a number of occasions Milton refers to Perkins. See e.g. *W,* III:467 (D2.12); *W,* III:470 (D2.13), and *W,* III:495 (D2.20).
20   For Milton's references to Ames, see *W,* IV:102 (T) and *W,* XVII:173 (CD2.7).

follow the lines of covenantal actions; the Biblical covenant is a mutual, conditional and reciprocal covenant; God takes the initiative in his relationship with man, demanding man's obedience to the conditions of the covenant. In Milton's epic poem *Paradise lost* (1667), the history of the fall of man and the patriarchs is indeed portrayed as a covenantal history. It is stated that in spite of the fall of man, God's covenant "is in the womans seed renewd …", which covenant is renewed with the descending of Noah and his family from the Ark, observing the rainbow in the heavens: "Betok'ning peace from God, and Cov'nant new" (*W,* II:376 (PLII:867)). God covenants with Noah never to destroy,

[t]he Earth again by flood, nor let the Sea
Surpass his bounds, nor Rain to drown the World (*W,* II:377 (PLII:893)).
The rainbow calls to mind his Cov'nant: Day and Night (*W,* II:377 (PLII:898).
The records of God's covenant are contained in the Ark, *his Testimony* (*W,* II:387 (PL12.252). The giving of the Law to Moses appears imperfect,
… and but giv'n
With purpose to resign them in full time
Up to a better Cov'nant, disciplin'd
From shadowie Types to Truth …(*W,* II:389 (PL12.302).
God lets his people dwell in captivity for a period of seventy years, then in his mercy brings them back, Remembring mercie, and his Cov'nant sworn (*W,* II:391 (PL12.346).

A strong deviation from the classical views on the relationship between the covenant and the law in the Zurich (and Genevan) Reformation emerges in Milton's dispensational views on the law and the gospel: the gospel is the new dispensation of the covenant of grace, far more excellent and perfect than the law, announced first obscurely by Moses and the prophets, afterwards in the clearest terms by Christ himself, and his apostles and evangelists, written since by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, and ordained to continue even to the end of the world, containing a promise of eternal life to all in every nation who shall believe in Christ when revealed to them, and a threat of eternal death to such as shall not believe (*W,* XVI:113 (CD1.27)). Milton relies strongly on the text of Jeremiah 31: 31-33 (compared with Hebrews 8: 8, 9) for his views on the new covenant or testament.[21] Milton's views on the New Testament or covenant entail that the whole of the Mosaic law is abolished by the gospel. However, this does not mean that the sum and essence of the law is thereby abrogated, its purpose being attained in the love of God and the

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21 See Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6.

neighbour, which is born of the Spirit through faith.[22] Contrary to the "whole body of theologians" who concurred in denying the abrogation of the entire Mosaic law, Milton relies on Zanchius, in his commentary on the second chapter of Ephesians, declaring himself of the same opinion.[23] In comparison to Rutherford, Milton's approach regarding the covenant's relationship with the law is that of a New Testamentary covenant, based on the gospel of love, the entire Mosaic law having been abolished. For Rutherford on the other hand, the one and eternal covenant or testament is contained the condition of obedience to the Law of God, which remains the same under the Old and New Testaments.

3.2 The oath-like nature of the political covenant

Milton transposes the general characteristics of the covenant to the political covenant; in a certain sense, it could be said that the political covenant is a specific manifestation of the Biblical covenant. Civil government has a moral and vow-like nature, aimed at the good of the subjects. Therefore, the purpose of the political covenant is to ensure and promote the good of the subjects, to further the good of man – *salus populi suprema lex.*[24] Applied to the political existence of the subjects in the commonwealth, this means that rulers and subjects enter into covenants to attain the ends of justice (*W,* V: 9 (TE)).[25] The historical basis of the political covenant is situated in the necessity of subjects to curb the injustice of political rulers: originally rulers governed well "and with much equity decided all things at thir own arbitrement", till the temptation of such power left in their hands, perverted them to injustice and partiality (*W,* V: 9 (TE)). Suffering from these injustices the subjects consented to

22 *W,* XVI:153-4 (CD1.27): "Christian liberty is that whereby we are loosed as it were by enfranchisement, through Christ our deliverer, from the bondage of sin, and consequently from the rule of the law and of man; to the intent that being made sons instead of servants, and perfect men instead of children, we may serve God in love through the guidance of the Spirit of Truth."

23 *W,* XVI:147 (CD1.27): "I have since however discovered, that Zanchius, in his commentary on the second chapter of the Ephesians, declares himself of the same opinion, remarking, very justly, that 'no inconsiderable part of divinity depends on the right explanation of this question; and that it is impossible to comprehend the Scriptures properly, especially those parts which relate to justification and good works.'" Also see ibid., 125 (CD1.27).

24 See e.g. *W,* IV:75 (T): "Although indeed no ordinance human or from heav'n can binde against the good of man; …"

25 In his *Tenure of kings and magistrates* (1649) the concept of the political covenant had already come to fruition in Milton's thought. For the close relatedness of justice and virtue, see *W,* III:472 (D2.14)-473 (D2.14).

confine and limit the authority of the rulers by subjecting them to the law.[26] When this would not serve, so that the law was either not executed, or misapplied, they had recourse to the only remedy left them, "to put conditions and take Oaths from all Kings and Magistrates at thir first instalment to doe impartial justice by Law: who upon those termes and no other, receav'd Allegeance from the people" (*W,* V: 9 (TE)). They bound themselves by covenant to obey the rulers in execution of those laws which the people had made or assented to (ibid.). The political covenant between rulers and subjects comes into existence by free people, not meaning to enslave themselves to the wills and lusts of their rulers, and desiring the good of society (*W,* V: 8-9 (TE)). To this end, kings and magistrates are not appointed to be the lords and masters of the subjects, but their "Deputies and Commissioners, to execute, by vertue of thir entrusted power, that justice which else every man by bond of nature and of Cov'nant must have executed for himself, and for one another" (ibid.).

The bonding or covenanting of the ruler to obey them is sometimes expressed in terms of a warning, that if the king or magistrate proves unfaithful to his trust, the people will be disengaged (*W,* V: 9-10 (TE)). This trust emanates from the coronation oath concluded by the king at his installation as ruler (see *W,* V: 12 (TE)). Milton rejects the notion that kings are accountable to none but God, because this is the overturning of all law and government (*W,* V: 11-12 (TE)). For if they are allowed to give account only to God, then all covenants made with them at their coronation and all oaths are in vain and all laws which they swear to keep, made to no purpose; for if the king does not fear God, then "our lives and estates, by the tenure of his meer grace and mercy, as from a God, not a mortal Magistrate, a position that none but Court Parasites or men besotted would maintain" (*W,* V: 12 (TE)). The coronation oath, to Milton, is the deed whereby the king, in the presence of God, binds himself to his subjects.[27] The fact that kings and magistrates hold authority from the people, in the first place for their good, implies that the people may, as often as they judge it for the best, "either choose him or reject him, retaine him or depose him though no Tyrant, meerly by the liberty and right of free born Men, to be govern'd as seems to them best." Milton finds

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26 *W,* V:8-9 (TE): "While as the Magistrate was set above the people, so the Law set above the Magistrate" (at 9).

27 See *W,* V:12 (TE): "For if they may refuse to give account, then all cov'nants made with them at Coronation; all Oathes are in vaine, and meer mockeries, all Lawes which they sweare to keep, made to no purpose …"

Scriptural support for this view in the classical text of Deuteronomy 17: 4, often quoted by both Puritans and Presbyterians. The important point, though, is that the king upon his installation, binds himself by oath to God and the people, to rule to their well-being (*W,* V: 14-5 (TE)).

According to Milton, the coronation oath introduces a vow-like covenant between the king (or magistrate) and the subjects. In his *Tenure of kings and magistrates*; *Eikonoklastes*, and his *First Defence*, Milton regards the coronation oath to be of primary importance for the establishment of the political covenant. Firstly, he relies on historical precedents for his emphasis on the bond between the king and his subjects established by the coronation oath. In his *Tenure of kings and magistrates*, Milton pursues the argument that the authority and jurisdiction of one person over another is not natural, but due to the need for self-defence and the preservation of mankind, kings and magistrates are instituted.[28] Owing to the temptation of power that perverts political rulers to injustice and partiality, the need arose to set the law above the magistrate (*W,* V: 9 (TE)). When this would not serve, the only remedy left to the subjects was to put conditions and take oaths from all kings and magistrates at their first instalment, "to doe impartial justice by Law …" (ibid.). Upon those terms and no other, political rulers received allegiance from the people, by bonding or covenanting to obey them in the execution of those laws which the people had made or assented to.[29] Milton explicitly mentions the example of William the Conqueror who, though not unsworn at his coronation, was compelled to take the oath a second time before the people would be brought to yield obedience (*W,* V:10 (TE)). This, to Milton, illustrates that the power of kings and magistrates is nothing else but what is only "derivative, transferr'd and committed to them in trust from the People, to the Common good of them all, in whom the power yet remains fundamentally, and cannot be tak'n from them, without a violation of thir natural birthright" (ibid.).

If kings are accountable to none but God, this would amount to the overturning of all law and government, for if they may refuse to give account, then all covenants made with them at coronation would be "meer mockeries" and all laws made to no purpose (*W,* V:12 (TE)). A number of examples of covenanting by kings are quoted by Milton to confirm that the

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28   *W,* V:8-9 (TE): "This autoritie and power of self-defence and preservation being originally and naturally in every one of them, and unitedly in them all."

29   *W,* V:9-10 (TE): "If the king or magistrate proved unfaithful to his trust, the people would be disengaged.

right of choosing a king by the people in Deuteronomy 17: 14, was granted by God himself to the people. Referring to the history of England, Milton states that it would not be illegal to depose and put to death tyrannous kings (acting contrary to their coronation oath) (Sse *W,* V: 12-8 (TE)).[30] Having stated the basic principle that tyranny absolves the people from obedience to their rulers, Milton, in his *Eikonoklastes* (1649), reflects on the implications of the king's commitment to justice by means of the coronation oath (see *W,* V:133-8 (E)). The main arguments in this tract are directed as a response to the pamphlet *Eikon Basiliké,* attributed to Charles I, and published immediately after his execution on January 30, 1649: firstly, the oath binding the king to performance of his trust, ought in reason to contain the sum of what his chief trust and office is (*W,* V:133 (E)); secondly, oaths of allegiance and supremacy are not sworn to the person of the king or magistrate, but to his authority, conditionally granted him "in Law and under Law, and under Oath also for the Kingdoms good (*W,* V:300 (E))"; thirdly, the subjects should not be bound by oaths further than the king by his coronation oath is bound to them (*W,* V:300-2 (E)). In his *The first defence* (1651), Milton takes the coronation oath to be binding upon the king "as the most rigorous law", to do justice to all (*W,* VII: 453 (1D9)).[31] This implies that the king is the people's servant and agent, delegated by the people.[32] Furthermore, it means that it is the king's duty to call parliaments whenever and as often as the people ask, "since it is the people's business, and not the king's, that is to be treated of by that assembly, and to be ordered as the people wish" (ibid.).

The view that the oath cannot bind kings more than do laws, and that kings pretend that they will be bound by laws, and live according to them, though actually they are unbound by them, is regarded by Milton as sacrilege, similar to asserting that a solemn oath, "sworn upon the Holy Evangelists", may without cause be unbound as if in itself it were the merest trifle (*W,* VII: 537 (1D12)). He (the king or magistrate) that promises and engages under oath to faithfully perform something, binds his fidelity to them that require the oath of him (ibid.). By way of illustration, Milton again refers to the example of William the Conqueror, who was forced more than once to swear to perform not what was

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30 At 18 he defines a tyrant as "whether by wrong or by right coming to the Crown, is he who regarding neither Law nor the common good, reigns onely for himself and his faction …"
31 Milton also refers to *Magna Charta*, chapter 29.
32 Ibid.,: "For without the suffrages of them that are delegated by the people he cannot resolve the least thing with relation either to others or even to himself."

agreeable to him, but what the people and the great men of the realm demanded of him. This means that the crowning of English kings is not permitted till the taking of the oath (*W,* VII: 537-9 (1D12)). If the king by not taking the oath is unbound, the people are so too, and that part of the people who swore did not swear to the king only, but to the realm and the laws by which the king came to his crown (*W,* VII: 539 (1D12)). Hence, if the king by not taking the oath is not bound, then the people are so too. The oath is, therefore, neither fictitious nor merely ceremonial, but has a meaning "which would forever be *not* satisfactory to tyranny" (*W,* VII: 541 (1D12)).

3.3 The binding effect of the political covenant

Once a political ruler has bound himself by way of covenant, a right to resist on the part of the subject remains if a mutual contract is made upon certain conditions, and if the conditions are not fulfilled, the injured party is released from the contract. Milton's reasoning pertaining to the binding covenantal nature of the institution of marriage is also applied to the political covenant between subjects and rulers. In the enlarged edition of *The doctrine and discipline*, Milton elaborates on the parallels between marriage and political covenants: "He who marries, intends as little to conspire his own ruine, as he that swears Allegiance: and as a whole people is in proportion to an ill government, so is one man to an ill marriage." If they against any "authority, Covnant, or Statute, … save not only their lives, but honest liberties from unworthy bondage, as well may he against any private Covnant, which hee never enter'd to his mischief, redeem himself from unsupportable disturbances to honest peace, and just contentment …" (*W,* III:374 (Dp)). Although God never gave man express allowance to resist the highest magistrate, he did give us "reason, charity, nature and good example" to guide us (*W,* III: 374-5 (Dp)).

Similar to covenants between subjects and rulers in the public sphere, saving the lives and honest liberties from unworthy bondage by acting against authority, covenants or statutes are similar to marriage where the parties may save "not only their lives, but honest liberties from unworthy bondage, as well may he against any private Covnant, which hee never enter'd to his mischief, redeem himself from unsupportable disturbances to honest peace, and just contentment …" (*W,* III: 374 (Dp)). Parallel to his views on the covenant of marriage and the grounds for divorce, Milton also argues in favour of the right of the people to depose of their ruler, where the main aim of the covenant is broken. The covenant between a king and his people is governed, like the covenant of marriage, by

conditions; and if the good which is the end of the covenant is not attained, it ceases to be binding (Barker, 1964:150). Reason and equity testify that any law or covenant, however solemnly concluded between God and man, or man and man joined in the presence of God, does not bind against the prime and principal scope of its own institution. Because covenants are intended for the good of both parties, they are not intended to "making miserable of them both." Equity is contained in every covenant and therefore "extremity may dissolv it" (*W,* IV: 119 (T)). The conditionality of public and private covenanting is of paramount importance in Milton's theory. The political covenant between a king and his people is governed, like the marriage contract, by conditions: if the end of the covenant is not attained, it ceases to be binding. All covenants and contracts are made according to the present state of persons and of things, and generally have the laws of nature and reason included in them, though not expressed (*W,* IV: 75 (T)).[33] The subjects are therefore justified in renouncing their allegiance to a ruler who seeks his own rather than the public good, because his authority was first given by the people conditionally for the kingdom's good only (*W,* IV:117 (T)). If the people in their right wits did give power over themselves to a king or magistrate for purposes of the common good only, there can be no reason why, for exactly the opposite purpose and to prevent total ruin to them all, they may not take back again the power they gave the ruler.[34]

3.4 "O ever failing trust in mortal strength"[35]

Hope, trust and confidence are the foundations upon which a free commonwealth is established. This is the core of Milton's political message. These are also the foundations upon which the king's oath is founded. The refusal to take or the breaking of the coronation oath, therefore, amounts to rejecting the people's faith and trust in the king's willingness to minister justice in the commonwealth. It extends even further, so that the office of a king or magistrate is a position (or status) of trust. When the people's trust, hope and confidence are wanting, there

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33   All law refers to the common good.
34   *W,* VII:359 (1D6): "Certainly, if no people in their right wits ever gave power over themselves either to a king or to any magistrates for any other purpose than the common good of all, there can be no reason why, for exactly the inverse purpose, to prevent the utter ruin of them all, they may not take back again the power they gave, and this as well from a king as from other magistrates; nay, and it may with far greater ease be taken from one than from many."
35   *W,* I:349 (SA).

cannot be a legitimate exercise of political power. Political legitimacy in the free commonwealth is based on (or flows from) the trust of the subjects in the person of the king or magistrate to minister justice to the common good. Responding to the king's (Charles I) calling the bill preventing the dissolution of Parliament an "unparalell'd Act out of the extreme confidence that his Subjects would not make ill use of", Milton states that it was a greater confidence of the people to put in his hand so great a power, till he abused it by summoning and dissolving Parliament – rather he ought to thank them for trusting him, than the other way round (*W,* V: 120 (E)). Because it was trust, and not the king's prerogative, to call and dissolve Parliament at his pleasure, the king acted unlawfully. Neither is the discharge of this trust a matter of courtesy, and "a parcell of his liberality" (*W,* V: 122 (E)). The king takes the trust of the people to dispense justice in his hands by way of the coronation oath. The oath which binds him to performance of his trust ought in reason to contain the sum of what his chief trust and office is.

The king's view that the majesty of the crown of England cannot be bound by any coronation oath "in a blind and brutish formalitie", to consent to whatever its subjects in Parliament shall require, amounts to kicking down all law, government, and bond of oath (*W,* V:133 (E)). If the oath of coronation does not mention to him as a part of his duty, the making of any law but requires only his assent to those laws which the people have already chosen, then the denying of any law which the commons choose, is against the oath of coronation and his kingly office – rejecting the people's trust is in conflict with the coronation oath and the king's office (ibid.). In the religious sphere, "faith" sometimes has the same meaning as "trust": 2 Corinthians 3: 4 ("such trust we have through Christ to God-ward") and Ephesians 3: 11, 12 ("in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and owe with confidence by the faith of him"). In other instances "trust" or "confidence" seems rather to be a particular effect or degree of faith, or a firm hope, and "to believe" is used indiscriminately in the same sense, both in the Old and New Testament (*W,* XV:397-399 (CD1.20)).[36]

3.5 *The political covenant and the right to liberty*

In Milton's theory of federal politics, the political covenant is constitutive for political legality and civil liberties in the commonwealth. Not only

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36 See Psalm 78:22; 37:5; Jeremiah 17:7, and Matthew 9:2.

does the political covenant set the boundaries for the exercise of legitimate power by political rulers, it also enshrines the right to freely depose a king or magistrate governing in conflict with the good of the people. In short, the king or magistrate holds his authority of the people (see *W,* VII: 361-3(1D6)). In *The first defence*, Milton elaborates on the principle of authority entrusted to kings by the people. Kings in general receive from the people authority entrusted to them subject to certain conditions.[37] If the king does not abide by these conditions, that power, which is but a trust, should be returned to the people (*W,* VII:361-3 (D7)).[38] Where a people give power over themselves to a king or a magistrate for the common good of all, there is no reason why, for exactly the inverse purpose, they may not take back the power to prevent utter ruin of them all (*W,* VII:359-61 (1D6)). Because the only condition for entrusting magistrates with power is one of trust, and indeed the safety of the people is the supreme law, the law should advantage the people against a tyrant, and unfit kings may be deposed.[39]

In *The tenure of kings and magistrates*, the liberty of subjects to depose unfaithful kings or magistrates is formulated widely – since political rulers hold their authority of the people, "both originaly and naturally for their good in the first place, and not his own", the people may as often as they shall judge for the best, either choose him or reject him, retain him or depose him (*W,* V: 14 (TE)).[40] The refusal of the king or magistrate to govern in the public good, says Milton, relying on his singular judgment, amounts to denying the people "that good which they being all Freemen seek earnestly, and call for" (*W,* V: 130 (E)): it is "an arrogance and iniquity beyond imagination rude and unreasonable" (ibid.). Although without magistrates and civil government, there can be no commonwealth, no human society, no living in the world, no obedience is due to rulers

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37 Milton's clear purpose is "to assert the people's common rights against the unrighteous despotism of kings - and this not out of hatred of kings, but of tyrants" (*W,* VII:551 (1D12)).

38 Because, Milton writes: "God Himself tells us that he abhors all fellowship with wicked princes for the very reason that under pretence of royal right they create misery and vexation for their subjects" (*W,* VII:95 (1D2)).

39 See *W,* VII:359 (1D6): "For it is very certain that kings in general, throughout the world, receive from the people an authority entrusted to them subject to certain conditions; which if the king abide not by, pray tell us why that power, which was but a trust, should not return to the people, as well from a king as from a consul or any other officer of government."

40 Also see *W,* VII:177 (1D3), *W,* VII:359 (1D6) and *W,* V:130 (E)

who do not govern to the good of the people. This right of the people to alter the government as they shall judge most conducive to the public good, appears to Milton that in which all civil liberty is rooted (*W,* VII: 175-7 (1 D 3)). In his political tracts Milton is intent on proving that the people have a natural right to break their contract with a ruler; that right applies equally to all in the commonwealth – this, in effect, being the most fundamental political right of the subjects in the commonwealth. This liberty is not Caesar's, for example, but "God's own birthday gift to us" – this liberty being the right freely to resist delivering themselves into slavery to Caesar, "to a man, that is, and, what is more, to an unjust man, a wicked man, a tyrant" (*W,* VII: 151-3 (1D3)).

4. The virtue of federal republicanism

4.1 Liberty in the free commonwealth

Walter Berns (1972:418) points out that Milton was not always a republican. From his work, *Of reformation* (1641), in the span of eight years, he moved towards a position justifying the deposing of kings acting unlawfully, because the king "holds his authority of the people." In *The tenure of kings and magistrates*, he holds that the people choose kings in the first place and they may reject them because they have the "right … to be govern'd as seems to them best" (*W,* V: 14 (TE)). In the mixed commonwealth, this means being governed by men of good character, a "rule of truly virtuous men." The commonwealth taking upon itself the major public duty "(t)o make the people fittest to chuse, and the chosen fittest to govern" (see *W,* VI: 131 (W)); to "mend our corrupt and faulty education, to teach the people faith not without vertue, temperance, modesty, sobrietie, parsimonie, justice … (ibid., 132); to place every one his privat welfare and happiness in the public peace, libertie and safetie" (ibid., 133).

The first implication is that teaching virtue and morals in order to establish a free commonwealth, to Milton, has a high priority so that the people will have "faith not without vertue" (*W,* VI: 132 (W)) – this is the essence of moral training in Christian liberty. Secondly, the excellence and stability of the republican commonwealth depends on the moral and virtuous fibre of the men comprising it, rather than on institutional mechanisms to uphold it. The only true safeguard for attending to the people's interest is the political covenant, based on the trust, commitment and virtue of the political rulers and the subjects in the free commonwealth – true liberty is not in the first place warranted by powerful rulers, but by the mutual trust of subjects and rulers towards one another, formally manifested in the political covenant.

The free spirit of republicanism can only flourish in a commonwealth based on trust and virtue; "the most agreeable to all due libertie and proportiond equalitie," - a form of government "planely commended, or rather enjoind by our Saviour himself …" (*W,* VI: 119 (W)).

To Milton, however, stability is merely an essential condition to attain the goals of politics; it is not the purpose of political life but only a means. This purpose is Christian liberty: to form and increase virtue, the most excellent thing is liberty (*W,* VIII: 239(2D)) – the liberty to become virtuous. Commenting on Milton's views on liberty in "an exalted sense," Berns describes this as the "liberty that can neither be won nor lost by force of arms, and the liberty on which all other liberties depend" (1972:427). That is "Christian liberty in the full meaning of the term. This is the liberty known only to the truly free man, and this is the liberty that constitutes the end or goal of political life."[41]

4.2 Republicanism and the common good

The notions of law and politics embraced by Milton's republicanism are normative concepts, grounded in the covenant as the basis of the common good. This is different from the typical liberal view of political behaviour, driven by narrow self-interest towards a larger role for civic virtue in the political life of society. Milton's republicanism expresses two classic republican ideals: these are government by men (or self-government) and government by laws (or the rule of law). A functional conception of republican politics must satisfy both of these principles. Milton attempts to find a course between the manifestation of extreme solidarity found in Plato's republic on the one hand, and the liberal rejection of a public conception of the good, based upon citizenship and public dialogue, on the other. He is convinced that people and their values are moulded by social interaction and the search for agreement upon what constitutes the common good, or the same idea expressed by Sullivan: "One way of making sense of this is by conceiving of politics as a process of which private-regarding 'men' become public-regarding citizens and thus members of a people (see Michelman, 1988:1502).[42]

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41   See *W,* VIII:237-41 (2D): "And as for you, citizens, it is of no small concern, what manner of men ye are, whether to acquire, or to keep possession of your liberty. Unless your liberty be of that kind, which can neither be gotten, nor taken away by arms; and that alone is such, which, springing from piety, justice, temperance, in fine, from real virtue, shall take deep and intimate root in your minds; you may be assured there will not be wanting one, who, even without arms, will speedily deprive you of what it is your boast to have gained by force of arms."

Basically Milton's republican views reflect an optimism in his belief that political dynamics can be a unifying force for harmony, even in the face of opposing conceptions of the good in early modern societies. In essence, Milton's federal republicanism represents a pioneering effort towards deliberative participation and citizen self-rule, presented as an alternative type of political community to that of classical liberalism.[43]

5. Conclusion

Self-government and government by laws become possible in the republican community committed to dialogue on the basis of trust, faith and mutual commitment. This is the foundational perspective of Milton's republican ideal. Through mutual trust a political community can change its normative world. Milton's federal political views provide vivid examples of how dialogue in the public sphere can change individual identity and values; and also show that the rights of individuals are not prepolitical, but must be justified in public terms. The further legacy of Milton's pioneering formulation of federal republicanism is the fact that morality is an integral part of communal life, rather than a purely private sphere in which the individual is unaccountable to communal standards – the republican community has a communal political life, unlike liberal political society where communal life is restricted to the private sphere. This also implies that ethics and politics are not separate disciplines, but parts of one and liberty must be deserved by virtuous action (*W,* VIII: 249-251 (2D)).[44] However, this does not exclude individual self-realisation – the *Areopagitica* provides clear examples of the results of Milton's federal republicanism, bearing the image of the "active republic full of vibrant, energetic individuals: "I know they are as lively, and as vigorously

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42 Milton's views are reminiscent, in certain respects, of William Perkins's statements on man's calling for the common good: A vocation or calling is a certain kind of life, ordained and imposed on man by God, for the common good. The "common good" meaning for the benefit and "good estate of mankinde." Perkins uses an organic metaphor: "In man's body there be sundry parts and members, and every one hath his severall use and office, which it performeth not for it selfe but for the good of the whole bodie …" (Perkins, 1794:39).

43 So, for example, the spotlight in Milton's thought on liberty moves from freedom as such, to virtue in a positive sense. See Diekhoff, 1963:144. Freedom itself is based upon virtue: "Freedom from want implies temperance as well as industry; freedom from fear, courage; freedom of opinion, wisdom; freedom of worship, faith. All of them are based upon the selflessness, the magnanimity, that recognizes the dignity of the human individual." Yet the discipline of one's self is the first requirement of freeddom for one's self and is essential to the freedom of others (at 145).

44 Also see Diekhoff, 1963:163.

productive, as those fabulous Dragons teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men" (*W,* IV:298 (AR?)). The basis of temperance in politics adds valuable perspectives on the cultivation of the republican spirit because "the nation, which has been incapable of governing and ordering itself, and has delivered itself up to the slavery of its own lusts, is itself delivered over, against its will, to other masters" (*W,* VIII:251 (2D)). A loss of republicanism is finally a loss of virtue (*W,* X: 323-4 (B)). On the whole, magisterial authority is largely supplemented by greater personal responsibility and collective energy (Smith, 1990:117). Milton's federal republicanism, reflecting these traits, contributed towards the furthering of the movement away from hereditary Divine Right to sovereignty by revocable contract with the people, preventing the creation of a European-style royal absolutism, and promoting the idea of mixed constitutionalism to prevent the excesses of unlimited authority.

Milton also emphasises the political covenant, its mutual and conditional nature, the king's covenantal responsibilities, the legitimisation of resistance against a corrupt king, the active role the people play in the election and disposal of the king (coupled with the "good and safety of the community"), and the invalidity of the "divine right of kings." The covenant acted as an instrument of political responsibility and accountability, hereby enriching republicanism. Regarding Milton's views on the biblical and political covenants and their inter-relatedness, the comments of Victoria Kahn are to the point, namely that Milton's reflections on the biblical covenant and political contractarianism reflect the intersection of the language of biblical covenant, with its emphasis on God's contractual relationship with man, and that of political contract in terms of which God's covenants with Abraham and Moses formed part of a symbolic language with a range of powerful political implications (Kahn, 1998:86). Kahn adds that Milton construes biblical covenant and political contract in similar terms: both are structured as rational, open-ended and revocable agreements that depend for their realisation on the performance of the contracting parties. In addition, Kahn states that Milton's understanding of covenant and contract is rooted in the interest of the people "and for that reason compatible with strategic considerations of reason of state" (ibid., 94). Had Milton's federal republicanism been exported to the new colonies rather than Hobbes's and Locke's philosophical individualism, American republicanism would probably have reflected more commitment to the common good, and a stronger inclination towards public virtue and collective responsibility in the public sphere. The new American democracy needed one essential element

which Hobbes's and Locke's individualism could not provide – the covenantal bond of deference. In the final analysis, Milton's federal republicanism was a bridge from medievalism to the Enlightenment across which travelled some of the fundamental concepts of democratic constitutionalism.

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