

JEAN OUSSET

ACTION



**A MANUAL FOR THE
RECONSTRUCTION OF
CHRISTENDOM**

ACTION

Action.

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Action was first published as a series of articles in the French review, *Permanences*, from 1966–1967. The series was translated into English by Arthur E. Slater, with the assistance of the Rev. R.A. Hickey, for publication in *Approaches* – the Catholic journal edited by Hamish Fraser and published in Saltcoats, Scotland – beginning sometime around 1969. The series was later collected into book form and issued by *Approaches* ca. 1973.

The present edition is a newly edited and formatted presentation of the *Approaches* translation of the original work. The author's footnotes appear at the bottom of the pages where they occur. Notes added by the editor of *Approaches* have been preserved where appropriate, and are listed at the end of the respective Part where they apply. The reader will also find notes added by the IHS Press editors at the end of each Part.

ISBN-13 (eBook): 978-1-932528-22-04

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ousset, Jean, 1914-1994.

[Action. English]

Action : a manual for the reconstruction of Christendom / Jean Ousset.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-9714894-2-4 (alk. paper)

1. Church work--Catholic Church. 2. Church and social problems--Catholic Church. 3. Church and social problems--United States. 4. Christianity and justice--Catholic Church. I. Title.

BX2347 .O97 2002

261.8'088'22--dc21

2002008831

Printed in the United States of America.

ACTION

BY
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Norfolk, VA
2002

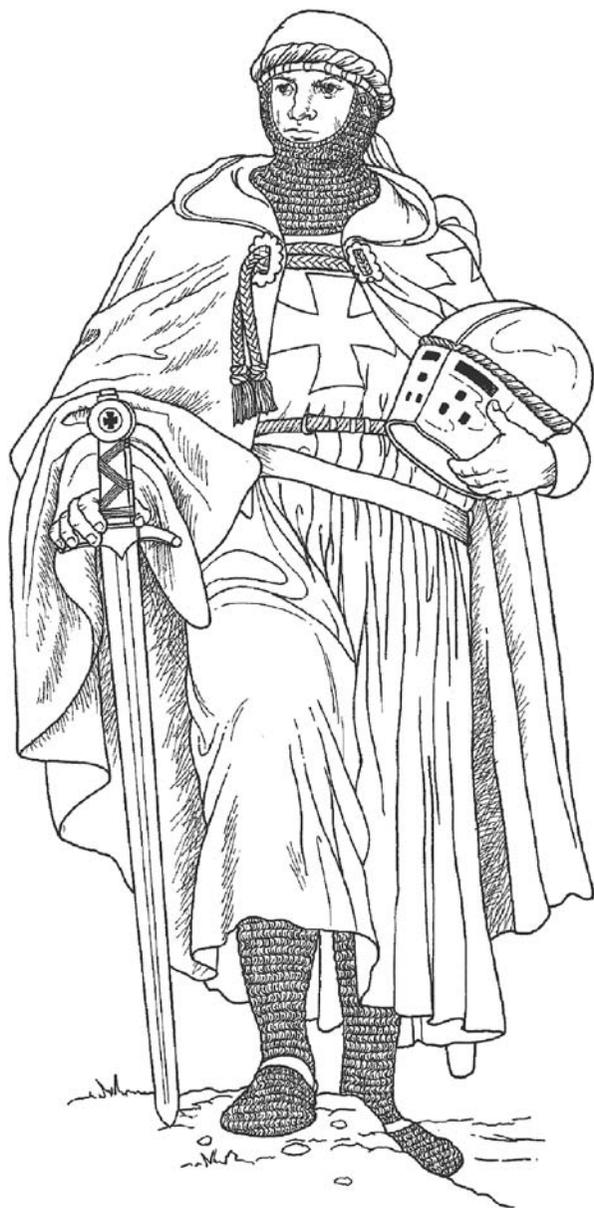
The Publishers wish to extend their kindest thanks to Messrs. Anthony Fraser, editor of *Apropos*, and John Symons, for their support of and contribution to the republication of Ousset's vitally important work.

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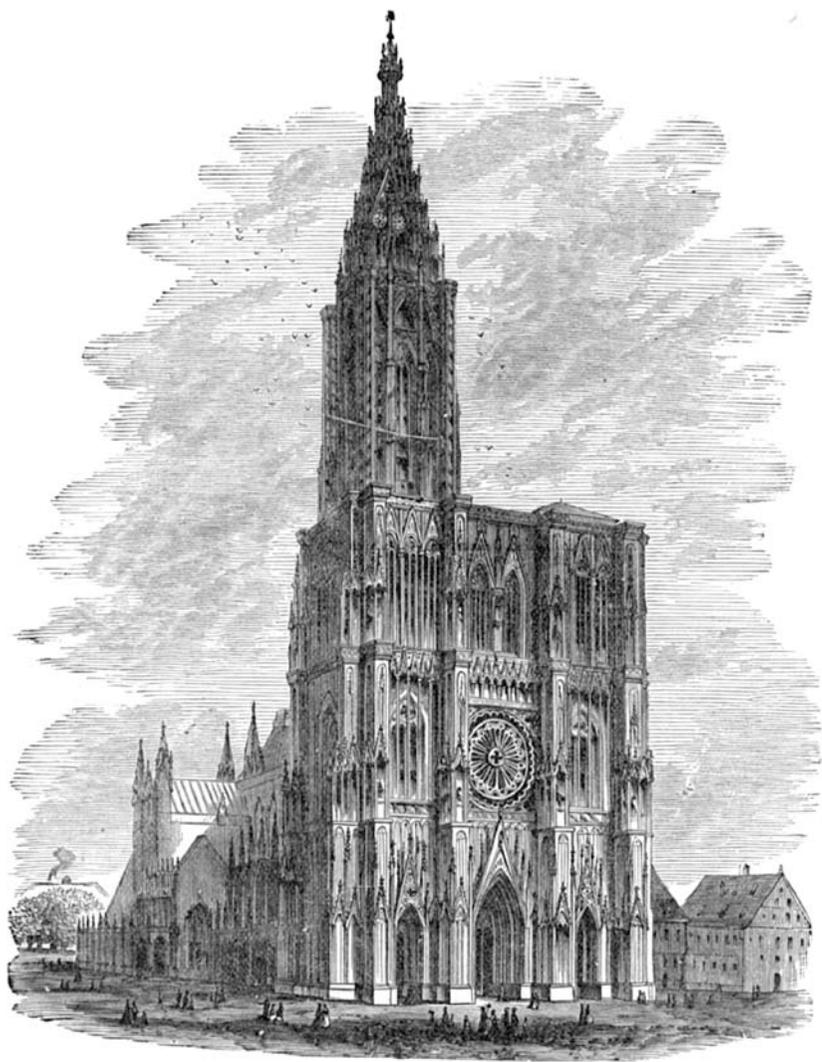
Preface

Jean Ousset's *Action* is the Catholic counter-revolutionary's *vade mecum par excellence*. Despite having been written on the eve of the conciliar era it has lost none of its relevancy. It was designed to address action by Catholics in almost any conceivable situation from that of Communist dictatorship to post-Christian anarchy.

There is a temptation for many Catholics, indeed for many men of goodwill, to wilt and despair before the seemingly unstoppable, onward march of the revolution whether it be in its Marxist, Pantheistic, Secularist, Masonic or Liberal guise (or combination of these). Such a temptation derives in no little way from the auto-demolition of the Church following Vatican II and the litany of scandals liturgical, clerical and socio-political which followed. It also derives from the collusion of many Catholics, by act or omission, with the revolution.

My late father, Hamish Fraser, the editor of *Approaches*, a convert from Communism, regarded Jean Ousset's *Action* as a working document providing the framework for construction of a Catholic counter-revolution, the aim of which is to re-establish the Social Kingship of Christ. My father, who first arranged to have this work translated and made available to English-speaking nations, would have heartily encouraged the re-printing of the work. I am sure that he, like Ousset, would have exhorted those who have resorted to inaction or despair to join or return to the fray. The Sacred Heart has promised us: "I will reign in spite of my enemies," and Our Lady has promised that, in the end, "My Immaculate Heart will triumph." The guidance in *Action* will enable us to take what defensive action we can until, with God's grace and help, His will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

A. S. Fraser
Editor, *Apropos*
Feast of St. Mark, 2002



Introduction

Serious Catholics are worried about the state of the Church and of the world. Their concern is confirmed and justified by events that occur daily. They seek answers diligently – sometimes finding a clue; though frequently finding little or nothing.

Such Catholics would learn a great deal if they were to stroll along to the nearest, amply-stocked and orthodox Catholic bookshop – unfortunately not as easy as it should be – and look at the books on the shelves. There will be books on the Popes and Papal Encyclicals. There will be books on the Church Fathers, Saints and Prophets. There will be books on both the structure and history of the Church. There will be books on the Religious Orders and the Religious Life. There will be books on Theology, Philosophy and Dogma. In other words, there will be a vast field of materials dedicated, broadly speaking, to the Principles and Personalities of the Church.

Now let these Catholics stroll down the road to the local radical/alternative/left wing bookshop – unfortunately much easier than is desirable – and take a look at the shelves. There will be books on Lenin, Mao, Castro, Clinton and Blair, so that the broad school of “progressive” thinkers is covered. There will be books on History from every perspective that is fundamentally anti-Catholic: Socialist, Liberal, Communist, Anarchist, “Green,” Homosexual, Feminist. There will be books discussing every aspect of Life and Society from an anti-Catholic point of view, even down to the absurd “Marxist view of Marmalade in an advanced capitalist society.” In other words, there will be a vast field of materials dedicated, broadly speaking, to the Principles and Personalities of the anti-Catholic opposition.

However, our serious Catholics, looking for answers, will have noticed, if they have looked around the place with an intelligent and observant eye, that a good number of shelves in the “alternative” book-

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shop were given over to a subject rarely, if ever, found in the Catholic bookshop. They will have found shelf upon shelf of books dealing with the “how”: how to create leaders of men from poor quality material; how to build effective political cell structures in all kinds of environments; how to influence those who are, in theory, enemies but who are easily manipulated because they are not “as wise as the children of the world”; how to create broad alliances, temporary or semi-permanent, in order to achieve specific and defined ends; how to network amongst irate workers who have had yet *another* raw deal, amongst middle class youngsters revolted by the bourgeois life of their rather smug parents, amongst technicians who have genuine vision but possess no outlet for that vision, amongst intellectuals who loathe the false façade of modern academia and its illusory doctrine of “academic freedom,” amongst peasants in far-off lands who are victims of some vile global corporation that lives on chewing up communities and then spitting them out. In other words, there is a host of books that instructs enemy cadres on *how* to operate, to organize, to impact society on all levels. There is no person, no position, no place, no problem that is not dealt with – *and amply so*.

If our serious Catholics reflect deeply, they will see that in the case of the “radical” bookshop, full of books on both “doctrine” and “action,” we are dealing with an aping of an essential point of Thomism, and a superficial grasp of the Thomistic and Catholic principle that Thought and Action are necessarily linked, and that, as St. Thomas says in the *Summa Theologica*, “the highest form of Contemplation (i.e., Thought) is that which superabounds in Action.”† While Lies loudly proclaimed and vigorously implemented may produce tangible effects, only the Truth can give rise to *genuine* Action, to an Action which is an organic and legitimate consequence of “real” Truth. What is wrong with the anti-Catholic caricature is that the Thought is wrong, and so the resultant Action can only bring destruction in its wake.

It could, of course, be objected that we are overvaluing these books dedicated to *doing*. It could be objected that the Church, too, has and is organizing a great deal – in all fields and disciplines and has done so

† Elsewhere St. Thomas makes the same point by analogy, in that a Contmplatation which has fruits in Action is superior to Contemplation alone: “...the work of the active life is twofold: one proceeds from the fulness of contemplation, such as teaching and preaching...and this work is more excellent than simple contemplation” (II, ii, Q. 188, Art. 6).

from its earliest times. That is true – up to a point; but it is a point that cannot and should not be pushed too far. For if we look around the world, what do we see happening? Are we seeing the advance or retreat of the Catholic forces? The truth is our society is living on the rotting remains of that Christendom wrought on the anvil of Catholicism for 1,500 years. The enemy are clearly doing something right, and we are clearly doing something wrong. If a football team is losing, it is because it is not scoring. As Catholics, then, we are not scoring.

It is our contention that what is missing in Catholic circles is Tactics, Strategy and Grand Strategy. Our organizations range from inadequate to non-existent. Training is limited in terms of frequency, effectiveness and relevance. Analysis, where it exists, is often poor quality; and it is often so slow moving that by the time a situation, a window of possible opportunity for a Catholic gain, has been grasped and understood, it has already passed. The attitude of mind is frequently too little, too late – and too often done without that enthusiasm that *breeds* success.

Catholics, of course, have no excuse in refusing to embrace systematic organization in the quest to rebuild Christendom. *None at all.* There have been any number of converts from enemy ranks to the Catholic Church who have contrasted the almost diabolical energy and initiative of the anti-Catholic forces with the lassitude and laxity of the massed ranks of Catholicism.

The late Hamish Fraser, for example, wrote in his autobiography, *Fatal Star*, about his days in the Communist Party and his role as a highly effective Political Commissar in the Spanish Civil War. His conversion to the Faith, largely through coming into contact with the Social Teaching of the Church, brought a militant fighter into the ranks of Holy Church, but one suspects from his many articles down the years in his journal, *Approaches*, that he never quite got over how blasé Catholics were. We possess the fullness of Truth through our membership of the Mystical Body of Christ, and yet this pearl beyond value barely registers on the scale of life for most Catholics.

Or take the revealing work, *I Believed*, by Douglas Hyde, who converted to the Faith in 1948 after 20 highly active years in the British Communist Party, and who for many of those years worked at the top. His book is instructive in many ways, but perhaps most importantly it demonstrates the *centrality* of Action to Communism; it demonstrates that Communism is not a belief system, but *a mode of action*. It is, as Antonio

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Gramsci, the Italian communist ideologue, wrote, “the philosophy of praxis.” It is because Action takes *first place* that we come to understand *why* People and Principles are so expendable in the minds of these materialist revolutionaries. One day Joe Stalin is “The Father of the Peoples” – the next he is an ideological deviant who has tarnished the “purity” of the socialist vision. One day “the class struggle” is the defining element of the Party and its principal weapon in the war against Capitalism and Imperialism – the next day it gives way to a broad front of anyone and everyone in order to confront and crush that person or group which is regarded as *irredeemably* dangerous .

In other words, Communism is not really a body of doctrine at all, but a belief in power at any cost of time, energy, money, reputation, blood. It is perhaps in this sense that Our Lady of Fatima spoke of the “errors of Russia” – not the expansion of overt Communist Party control, but rather of the *mentality* that deals, double deals and wheels and deals so that war of all against all becomes the norm. Is this not the reality behind all Boardroom upheavals? Is this not the reality behind the innumerable splits in Parliamentary parties? Is this not the reality in so many special interest groups, where the “Cause” is only so much wallpaper used to cover naked ambition?

We can have no common social action until we have common values. But common values are the product of a common mind, and a common mind is the *product* of a common religion. In other words, there can be no saving action by Catholics until they possess the common mind and values that their religion *predicates*. There can be no divorce between Thought and Action just as there can be no divorce between Husband and Wife, or between Clergy and Laity. In short, Truth demands *as of right* that it be applied in all spheres, that it be the source and the *raison d’être* of Action.

It is this all-embracing truth that Catholicism is a religion, a philosophy, a way of life for all men, in all places, in all times – that satisfies the Hand, the Heart, the Mind and the Soul – and which requires Action to be incarnate in the world that provides the focus for the book you are now holding.

* * *

Jean Ousset was a household name in France amongst Catholics in the post-World War II world, and his name is still revered in Catholic circles which maintain a traditional view of Catholicism. But in the Eng-

lish-speaking world, he was and is practically unknown. Indeed, it was only thanks to the foresight of Hamish Fraser that his book, *Action*, was ever published in English.

Ousset was an unusual man – at least unusual amongst the men of the modern world. He was someone who could *think* – and profoundly so – and who could also *act*. His Thought preceded his Action, and the latter was a necessary and automatic consequence of the former. In our day, we tend to have Thinkers *and* Doers, but rarely Thinker-Doers. It is this failure to unite our thinking and our doing into a practical habit that has allowed our enemies to grow and prosper to such an extent that the very existence of our civilization is now in the balance.

In order to grasp the significance of Ousset's work, which is probably the only example of its kind in Catholic literature of recent date, we must start at the beginning. We need to confront the question: "What is Action?"

Action, in the sense in which it is used here, is an attribute or quality which pertains only to human beings. Mgr. Paul Glenn, for example, in his excellent *A Tour Of The Summa*, says that whilst it is true that animals act, they do so in a way which cannot be compared to the acts undertaken by men. Why? Because "a human act is a free will act. It is any thought, word, deed, desire, or omission which comes from a man by his free, knowing, and deliberate choice. The Latin noun *voluntas* means the will, and the adjective which means pertaining to the will is voluntariness. . . . A voluntary act is an act which proceeds from free will acting in the light of knowledge." He continues: "Since every human act is a free will act, every human act is voluntary."

To every Catholic and non-Catholic who can still think logically in these days of confusion, this will stand to reason, but the point is made because too many are now incapable of grasping straightforward distinctions. An animal can have no rights. Why? Because it lacks both intellect and free will. Its acts can never have a free and responsible voluntariness. And because this is so, it has no duties either. We conclude that what *ought* to be done, what *needs* to be done in the world, can be done *only* by men, acting according to their nature.

Now, insofar as all human actions are free, they are also *necessarily* moral or immoral. All Action is thus divided into two distinct categories: the Good and the Bad. Any number of refinements, extenuations and widening of definitions can be added, but the basic fact of *an absolute*

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division of Good and Bad remains forever. It is a standard that cannot be superseded by a higher criticism, nor diluted by sophistry. This is an important matter to grasp, for it means that what we choose to do, or choose not to do, will always resolve itself into these two categories.

Perhaps more pertinently, understanding this fact brings us into immediate and necessary conflict with the power élites of modern society, who negate this principle both in theory and in practice. For the “modern man,” Action is a *neutral* idea – a conception that relates more to the circumstances rather than to anything intrinsically moralistic. The validity or usefulness of an action is judged by its “success”; that is to say, if any given action produces what the agent of action desires, then it is successful, it is “good.” If it does not, it is “bad.” In other words, it is the basis of the false philosophy that currently dominates our world that “the end justifies the means”; it is the idea that even a bad means can be used to achieve a good end, because what determines the whole matter is the “success” achieved, not the morality of the means used. It doesn’t take much imagination to see where this fluid mentality can and does lead – to the worst depravities that can be committed by man against man. We saw it in the destruction of millions of souls in Gulags during the Soviet period, and it was justified, held “successful,” because it advanced Communism which was “good.” We see it in our day in the ravaging advance of Globalization, where communities and nations are sacrificed to business, because profit and economic power are “good.” Whilst this mentality continues to exist, continues to go unchallenged, the permutations for resultant corruption and degeneration are simply endless.

But is it really true that action is neutral, a tool or weapon to be wielded according to circumstance, and which justifies itself or otherwise by the fruits obtained? The answer is, of course, no, because what is being really argued is that the effectiveness of an action *determines* its morality.

The Catholic position is this: a good action may be effective or not, but a bad action can never be effective except *apparently*. An evil action can never be absolutely or ultimately effective – except on the surface of life – because its very “nature” prevents it from being fruitful. St Thomas writes: “Evil is not a thing or essence or nature in itself; it is the hurtful absence of a thing; it is the lack of what should be present. Being is necessarily good, for being and the good are really the same. Evil is, in itself, non-being” (I, Q. 48, Art. 1, from Mgr. Glenn’s *A Tour of the Summa*).

Let us look at this idea in more depth. It would be argued by most Catholics that distributing pro-life literature outside abortion clinics, hospitals and shopping centers is a good action. In and of itself, it is a good action – but that doesn't mean that it is *necessarily* effective. It may or may not produce the consciousness that would demand that abortion be outlawed, but that the action is good is beyond question. Equally, we might conceive of the most stunning exposition of Catholic doctrine ever penned, which by its careful compilation, its precision of phrase and its ease of access would convert anyone to Catholicism. The action would undoubtedly be good, but would it be *necessarily* effective? No, because if it were printed but not distributed how could it bear fruit? Thus, whilst Goodness and Effectiveness in Action are closely related, they are not synonymous.

We all know that politicians lie – and that they do so almost from force of habit. Indeed, one might say that it is largely taken for granted that they lie, that somehow lying “goes with the job.”

Why do the politicians do so, since most ordinary folk regard lying with abhorrence? Plainly because they believe that it works, that it is “successful” in obtaining the ends that they seek.

“Success” in our society is generally defined in terms of Power, Wealth and Influence. If you possess these attributes, you are, *ipso facto*, “successful”; if you don't, you are a miserable failure. And the concomitant conclusion is that the more Power, Wealth and Influence that you have, the more “successful” you are; and it is obvious that there is a symbiotic relationship between these three attributes, for Power tends to lead to Wealth, and Wealth tends to lead to Influence. In its turn increased Influence leads to more Power, and more Power to yet further Wealth. And so it goes on, with the result that a Ted Turner, or a Bill Gates are held, by the mass of people, to be phenomenally “successful.”

So politicians lie, and industrialists steamroller opposition because they believe such actions are successful, are “good,” for it stands to reason that few men consciously undertake to do evil knowing that such action is evil. Evil is always carried out under the auspices of the “good,” with the result that the road to Hell is paved with good intentions.

Yet the fact remains that action which leads to such “success” is not good, that the success itself is an illusion, and that this can be demonstrated on two planes – the theological and the practical.

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On the theological level, all Catholics know that “the wages of sin is death.” We know that whatever the “successes” of a great mover and shaker in this life, he will be judged severely by God upon his death and that – all things being equal – his “success” will bring him the eternity of Hell. All the lying, thieving, killing and downright immorality which provided “success” in this life – all consequences of a man’s actions – will be recompensed with damnation. Where, then, is the “success” in a life of action that is founded upon the *bad*? Is it not the case that the “success” is illusory, and the idea of action as a neutral concept wholly absurd?

Of course, those who are rather less “otherworldly” might say that this line of reasoning is typical of medieval Catholicism, the “pie in the sky” that kept men ignorant for a millenium and prevented the great figures of History from being free to mould the world in a new and more inspirational way. The problem, however, is that the illusion that “the End justifies the Means” falls not merely in terms of Catholic theology, but also in the terms of those who adhere to the notion that the morality of an Action is determined by its “success.” In other words, even on their own terms their “success” is a failure. That is not a play on words, even less is it a paradox. Rather it is a demonstrable fact.

Let’s take our favorites – the politicians – once again as an example. Who actually *trusts* a politician? Who actually believes that he means what he says, and that he intends to do what he says? Who actually believes that going into Politics is an honorable vocation, worthy only of the best since Politics is concerned with the life and well-being of an entire community? If public cynicism about Politics, Parliaments, Parties and Politicians is anything to go by, very few. And one certainty is this: no politician believes the word of another politician! They both know the realities, the rules of the game. The world out there is “a dog eat dog” world, and expediency is not merely a Method, but the most sublime Principle. It is because this is so true in such an unreal world that neither Person nor Principle has much value beyond the defining and all-compelling *moment*. If an alliance with a man, a party or a corporation of the most base kind will bring “success” for a day, for a moment, then it will be entered into without a second thought. It is the philosophy behind the much quoted statement that “a week is a long time in politics.”

Thus, when a politician tells you that he will “never lie to you,” one suspects that that was the first lie; that when a politician tells you that he is “a patriot,” it is probable that he is just about to betray; that when a

politician bewails the fact that he has “no alternative to choose from,” one feels instinctively that money has changed hands.

What, then, is the impact on a society which is governed by men who equate the “goodness” of an action with its “effectiveness”? It means that Honor, Respect, Truth, Commitment and Conviction have no meaning whatever. It means that there can be no social cohesion, no social action – for if you have no trust or respect in someone, how can you possibly work with them? A politician may be able to “survive” – for a greater or lesser time – in a Parliament using such methods, but a Community or Nation cannot. It is Truth, Objective Goodness, which must inform the life and spirit of a society if it is to survive and prosper. Its customs, its traditions, its sense of community, its vision and destiny, its planning for the future, its belief in right living, and so much more are predicated on the notion that only Action which is objectively good can vivify its life principle.

Look around you, then, and see what the spirit of lying, of “good” – in terms of success – action has achieved in countless modern societies. It has achieved doubt, cynicism, mistrust, apathy – purely destructive qualities which renders impotent individuals, families and communities by slow, ineluctable degrees. And the politician builds his “success” on this! He builds his edifice of Power, Wealth and Influence on a foundation that he is honeycombing with the seeds of collapse! History is replete with such men, and history is replete, too, with societies that collapsed as a result – many never to rise again.

So the idea that “a good action is one that is effective” simply does not stand up to scrutiny. Good actions are objectively good, irrespective of whether they are effective or not.

The cynical might argue, of course, that there is more to life than politicians. Fine. Let’s look at two more institutions, Industry and the Church, to see that what was said about politicians is just as true of industrialists and modern churchmen.

In commerce, in business, the Captains of Industry, the technocratic whizz-kids, the venture capitalists, the Stock Exchange dealers and so on have done sterling work. They have made of work an endless drudgery; they have made loyalty a nonsense; they have made hard work and initiative pointless; they have killed all those human qualities in the workforce – in factories, in offices, in shops – which not only made work more enjoyable but actually more *efficient* and profitable in every way.

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They have achieved this consummate “success” through belief in the idea that the possession of money is the “highest good,” and that any action that leads to such “good” is necessarily good in itself.

But loyalty, for example, has no price. The person who turns up 10 minutes early in the morning, and leaves half an hour late at night without being paid; the person who does an extra job which is not in their job description but which would go undone otherwise; the person who does more work, or serves more people, beyond the strict necessity – these people, once put off from demonstrating their loyalty, cost the “successful” businessman in the very coin by which he measures his “success” – money! This is so because he has to replace these “free attributes,” generated by generosity and gentility, through stricter regimentation, a greater bureaucracy, more intense working practices and the progressive implementation of the slogan “All for the Company, None against the Company.” In other words, he haggles over nickels and dimes and loses a wad of dollar bills! Is his “success” real or illusory?

Or take Holy Church this past generation or so. Why is it in such a mess? For this reason. Modern Catholic churchmen have convinced themselves in too many cases that they can have their cake and eat it as well. In practical terms, they believe that they can obey the Laws of God *and* be on good terms with the world – when the whole history and teaching of the Church have said precisely the opposite. This grave error manifests itself in the belief that “success” – by which one assumes more members, more influence, more money, more popularity – can be had through the “good” action which calls itself *compromise*; by “going easy” on the Ten Commandments; by being more “tolerant” on questions of Dogma; by insisting exclusively on the “medicine of Mercy” to the exclusion of the lashing whip of Divine Justice; by smiling blandly and sweetly when the countenance of Holy Anger is far more appropriate.

The “success” of such means – actions – was at first heralded by the pronouncement that the Church would witness the fruits of a Second Pentecost, a blossoming and flourishing not seen since the times of the Apostles. Thirty years on these objective fruits have failed to materialize, and the worried churchmen of our day are pushed back to talking, “not about numbers, but the *quality* of people’s spiritual lives.”

But the disaster was wholly predictable for the actions undertaken were not objectively good, and thus could bring nothing but evil in their wake. If “all religions are the same at heart” – whether said *explicitly* by

the faithless pastor or *implied* by the cowardly pastor – why bother being a Catholic? If God is going to “forgive us all and take us to Heaven come what may” – why practise the Catholic and Christian virtues? If the priest is “just like any other man” – why bother trying a vocation to the priesthood? If renunciation, sacrifice and penitence are “throwbacks of medieval theology” – why get up early on Sunday morning to go to Mass? Why go through the “humiliation” of Confession? Why go on pilgrimages, build schools, read devotional books, and financially support your parish priest? Hundreds of millions of Catholics have asked themselves these kinds of questions over the last 40 years and have voted with their feet.

The foregoing discussion is vitally important not merely to the fuller understanding of this book, but more importantly to the action that *should* be consequent on its reading. The discussion of Good and Bad Action, the nature of Effectiveness, and their relationship is not academic. Rather it is at the very core of the demand for a Catholic Renaissance, for the laying of new foundations for the New Christendom to come.

Once we grasp that all Action is either good or bad, we are in a position to judge aright what means may, or may not, be employed in establishing a truly Catholic society. But a further understanding is necessary. We must understand first what our Catholic goals *ought* to be. Of the licit and acceptable means, we must then distinguish which means will really advance the Catholic cause from those that won't. We must finally understand which Actions to take – political, educational, social, economic, financial, commercial, agricultural, cultural and so on – and how to make them not merely good, but also effective at the same time. What these actions are, and how to ensure that they are effective, is the subject of this book.

- These actions will involve whom? Young and old, rich and poor, man and woman, worker and intellectual.

- These actions will cover what? Everything from the least to the most challenging.

- These actions will occur when? At all times and consistently so.

- These actions will take place where? In the home, the church, the school, the factory, the farm, the business, the club, the association, the movement, the office.

- These actions will take place how? With whatever resources – material, human and intellectual – are available.

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In other words, wherever the orthodox Catholic structure and spirit does not currently reign, appropriate action, good action, moral action, effective action will have to take place. It will have to continue taking place until a truly Catholic society comes into being once again; and it will need to continue thereafter to ensure that society stays that way.

This is the time of the Catholic sower; the time of the Catholic builder; the time of the Catholic preacher – because all sowing, building and preaching are actions essential to Catholic life. They are the consequence of Pope Pius XI's profound phrase: "Life is Action."

If Life is Action, then we have to *think* and to *do*. Not just here and there, but everywhere and always, for anything less than a *complete action* will prove a terrible failure. If you greatly ameliorate the economic structure of a society through the diffusion of wealth, as the Popes have demanded, but you leave the same corrupt mentality to fester in the schools and universities – you lose! If you return people to the land, but leave so-called "business ethics" untouched – you lose! If you create a usury-free society, but you leave the money-grubbing philosophy untouched – you lose!

This is the primary lesson of Ousset's book: there is everything to do.

The second lesson is that not all of the Questions, let alone all of the Answers, are in Ousset's work. It is not a painting-by-numbers work that, if patiently followed, will lead automatically to a Catholic society. It is for this reason that the Directors of IHS Press have added the subtitle: *A Manual for the Reconstruction of Christendom* to the original title. A Manual of whatever kind does not pretend to give you all the answers to *every* specific question – whether it be a Computer Manual, a Manual of Moral Theology or Tool Manual that explains how a particular tool works and may be used. A Manual is something that gives the outline of how things work; what principles are at work; how to determine how to solve a problem. It is something to be read, re-read, pondered and dipped into as often as is necessary. It is not a Patent for Success, but a Resource to be used in proportion that the user becomes more acquainted, more proficient in its use.

As a consequence, Ousset talks about Individual Action; about Group Action; about National Action; about International Action. He discusses Tactics, Techniques, Strategy and Structures. He highlights the importance of Ideas and of People. He draws out the relationship that should exist between Leaders and Led, between Laity and Clergy,

between Workers and Intellectuals. He discusses how Morals and Prudence must influence the choice of Action. He explains how one should set reasonable objectives *before* an action, and how to evaluate the results *after* the action. He invites one to ponder the fact that just because a given action has been used successfully in the past, it doesn't mean that it will always be so; that whilst novelty in action should be regarded circumspectly, it doesn't follow that novelty is bad in itself, for creativity and initiative are at the core of all authentically Catholic life. In short, he breaks down the immense question, "What is to be done?" into many component parts, analyses those parts sufficiently without being verbose, and then commends the reader to apply the lessons he has learned to the particular situation in which he finds himself. You learn, in effect, to use a hammer and chisel, but it is down to you to decide what to make, how to make it and in what time frame.

Thus Prayer Groups and Confraternities will have their place; as will Study Circles and Cultural/Artistic/Musical Bodies. There is room for Scientific entities, Publishing houses, Political Associations, Clubs, Guilds, Educational Structures, Co-operatives, Rural Initiatives, Training Institutes, Journals and Bulletins, Demonstrations and the Distribution of Propaganda Materials, Lectures and Seminars and Speeches. In a word, the world is your oyster so long as you *link* your Thought and Action in a profoundly Catholic manner!

No book is written in a vacuum. The background of the author, the circumstances and times in which he writes, his religious and ideological formation are all elements that influence the finished work. A man can no more eliminate these elements from his life and work than he can change the color of his hair, or determine his date of birth. Ousset is no different.

Thus, it might be objected that he seems preoccupied with the Left, with the spread of Communism. In its way, it is a kind of valid objection; but it should be remembered that Ousset wrote this work in 1960's France. This was a time when the country was being ravaged by the forces of the Left, and when the whole Western world believed that Communism *might* overrun them at any time. The war in Vietnam, the eruption of Student Power movements throughout the West, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Berlin Airlift, the crushing of the Czech Uprising, the spread of Marxist tyranny in Africa, the oscillation between Left and Right wing governments in Hispanic America, the rise of Communist

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China – all these things must be borne in mind. They are the color and texture of the background against which Ousset wrote. He didn't choose the circumstances, they were simply a given. Thus, it should be no real surprise that he focussed on the immediate, on what was at hand since this is what we all do.

Yet, in spite of pressure, Ousset does not fall into the trap that many did and *do*; that is to say, just because Communism seemed the most urgent threat, it did not blind him to the evils of Capitalism in society. He maintained that being anti-Communist does not make one an apologist of Capitalism even by default.

We should not be over-critical of Ousset's concentration upon Communism, for after all Communism is only one side of the coin, the counterpoint to Capitalism, which jointly prepares what Hilaire Belloc called the *Servile State*. Belloc puts it this way in *An Essay on the Restoration of Property*: "To establish the Servile State one has but to follow certain lines which lead rapidly to an ideal conclusion, a society where *all* men, the few Capitalists and the mass of the proletariat are *all* securely nourished – the latter on a wage, or, lacking this, a subsidy in idleness. The same is true with regard to the Communist state: a society where *all* men are securely nourished as slaves of the government. A simple formula and its exact application will, in each case, produce the ideal society envisaged." And if the Servile State means anything, it means the absence of any *meaningful* human action. It is the repetition of monotony to the benefit of the Few, and at the tremendous expense of the Many. We are well down that road, and it may be seen in how we have become *spectators* – for the characteristic of spectatorship is not action, but *inaction*.

We watch more and more sport, but we play it less and less. We listen to music more and more, but we play it less and less. Work is not something that we *do*, but something that we suffer. Politics we leave to others. Education is for teachers alone. Religion is for old women and priests. Milk comes not from the cow, but from the supermarket. Clothes come off the rack, not off the home loom. Books are viewed on screen rather than handled and read. Concern for the old, the young and infirm gives way to concern for the bank account, the credit card and the compassion-less charity telethon. News gives way to gossip. History gives way to Lies. Law gives way to tyranny. Government gives way to social control. And Catholicism is giving way to anodyne humanism.

Jean Ousset

In sum, Life is ceasing to be action in any meaningful sense. It is becoming a virtual reality – the sickest joke yet of Satan who counterfeits all the gifts of God. We are becoming the spectators of our own lives. Our lack of Action means lack of life – and the lack of life is death. Capitalism is death through Consumerism. Socialism is death through Bureaucracy. Parliamentary Democracy is death through Boredom. Freemasonry is death through Secrecy. Modernism is death through Disbelief. Our lack of Action is truly Abortion right across the board.

Ousset writes as a Catholic. Thus, he writes with precision. He writes with distinctions. He writes with honesty and perspicacity. He writes *brutally* – for in a society of illusions, such as ours, the Truth appears brutal. He writes to wake us up, to stir us to action, to do something before the ship of Catholic culture and civilization sinks below the waves. He writes with passion and conviction. But above all, he writes with the knowledge that the Truth will set us free. *All we have to do is act upon that truth.*

The Directors

IHS Press

July 2, 2002

Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin



“Athenians! Certainly, things are going badly and you are in despair. But in this you are wrong! If, after having done all that was necessary to ensure that things should go well, you had still seen them turn out badly, you might have reason to despair. Yet hitherto things have gone badly only because you have not done what was necessary so that they should go otherwise. It is still open to you to do what you have so far not done. Then things will go well. Why, then, should you despair so soon?”

– Demosthenes

Foreword

“The subtle raising of multiple questions and the most eloquent dissertation on rights and duties matters little, if all this does not end in action.”

– St. Pius X, October 4, 1903

1. *The Question Before Us* is whether we can still attempt something efficacious to hinder the progress of the Revolution; or whether we have no option but to keep on fighting without any hope of winning.

So the question before us is: *what kind of people do we think we are.*

Are we a rear guard, concerned to allow the main body, already in retreat, to disengage at the least possible cost? Or are we seeking to preserve the possibility still open to us, of proclaiming our determined refusal of the Revolution and issuing solemn exhortations against it.

Or is our ambition limited to cultivating a memory; to setting up a number of groups to transmit nostalgic memories of an obsolete doctrine to console a minority. Rather like those groups who call themselves the “Friends of Old Sarum,”¹ the faithful toxophilites,² the fervent admirers of Mozart or Pergolesi.³

Such actions and occupations are, no doubt, very worthy in a sense. But they are very far from constituting an adventure in social reconquest.

The choice of methods and the selection of means of action must depend on the answers to questions such as those. To cherish a memory: to keep a group of the faithful relatively fervent – even to try to increase its numbers – needs only a very little effort. Some meetings; some reports, reviews or weeklies; the publication year in and year out, of a number of works, will suffice.

At this level, action can be carried on by the efforts of a few leading personalities, who speak, write and toil, while the main body is content to listen, read and applaud. This can be consoling and meritorious; it can be called an action – of a sort – but never a victorious one.

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The question before us is to know what we want. Should we be a smug minority, hugging our unique righteousness in a mutual admiration society, or should we work for the effective realization of the victory of the Truth – the means of universal salvation?

Certainly, if we aim to achieve the victory of truth, the struggle will be a long one. Lack of ardour, concern only about Number One, discouragement – such are the temptations within an army that has never ceased to beat a retreat, the army which we must seek to relieve.

And here we come finally to the decisive question confronting us. How can it be that all the efforts, all the mighty labours which have hitherto been exerted, have not brought about a better result? We have strained ourselves to the utmost, yet we are incessantly pushed back. We tug at the oars, yet the current carries us away. Why? How has this come about? Such at least are the questions we tend to ask ourselves.

Otherwise we should have to explain how it is that scrupulous, conscientious, reasonable beings neglect to apply themselves, as they ought, as diligently as they ought, to the problem of the requirements and conditions of efficacious action in the service of the most holy cause in the temporal order.

It is true that the notion of efficacy is itself highly suspect. Some people pride themselves on eschewing it. It is a Marxist notion, they pretend. Because for Marxism the notion of efficacy is the one predominant principle in judgement and action, we should have no truck with such excessive concern about results!

But if we must reject this attitude of mind we must also beware of that other excess, so conducive to being satisfied with the minimum of action, according to which it is enough to “sow the good seed,” and to leave the outcome of the harvest entirely to God. This is indeed a very free interpretation of the Parable of the Sower, which does not teach us to throw on God the burden of obtaining the highest yield from the sowing. Rather it points out that whether the seed yields a hundred fold or is lost through infertility, depends on whether or not it falls on properly prepared ground. This shows that an initial and short term effort is not enough to guarantee the full benefit of the harvest, which comes only by cultivation, that is by appropriate efforts and continuous action.

Of course, the purposes of God are inscrutable. His ways are not ours. But just because God can triumph with nothing, this does not mean that as a consequence of our doing nothing (or nothing suitable or suf-

ficient) we have a right to expect victory, in the name of such a peculiar interpretation of the supernatural. Indeed, we can say for certain that God will never grant us victory so long as we expect it to come in this way.

For while we indulge in this apparently edifying evasion of action for “supernatural” reasons, we are quite inadmissibly dispensing ourselves from the most elementary duty of self-criticism. Besides, can we really believe that it is normal for truth to be so continually sterile, and for lies to be so continually triumphant?

2. Efficacy in the Temporal Order. Let us say, rather, that it is in the order and the wisdom of action that we are going to look for a proper description of the notion of efficacy. For how can temporal action be thought of without a careful study of the temporal factors which give it its specific quality?

We well remember a conversation with an eminent man of religion. We had told him about the extreme difficulty we had found in mobilizing “the Sons of Light.” “Do not let that trouble you,” he replied, “the result matters little. The important thing is that in this way you are gaining Heaven.” “Without doubt, it is reassuring to know that,” we answered. “But we do not think that this argument can dispense us from concern about the efficacy of our action within the temporal order, for such action is quite pointless if it is ineffective.”

In the supernatural life, in the interior life moved by the pure love of God, the obvious temporal outcome matters little, since in that order of things the direct and immediate end is to please God, and it is known that this aim is attained as soon as one sets about it with one’s whole heart. But it is not so when the activities are less directly ordered towards God.

What would one think, for example, of the monastery cook who was so absorbed in gaining Heaven by toiling over his ovens that he paid no regard to the effect of his concoctions, of his burned dishes, his purgative sauces and soups with explosive effect on the digestive system?

Or what would one think of a Nursing Sister so bent on gaining Heaven by her fervency in prayer that she could not be bothered about the habitual inefficacy of both the prescriptions given for her patients and the attention paid to them? Would anyone say: “Do not worry, Sister, simply because the sick die off like flies as soon as they are entrusted to you. The result matters little. Be of good heart. The important thing is that you are gaining Heaven.”

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An alarming proposition! But why should it be less alarming when the very same argument is applied to Christian Social Action instead of to kitchen and hospital? Of course, God can allow the most conscientious of labours, the most prudent of efforts, the most generous courage, to be defeated. Such trials must be borne with fortitude, but however lasting and grievous it may be, it should never become an argument for indifference to results, for disregard of temporal efficacy. For it is precisely such efficacy that temporal action is bound to seek.

Disasters happen from time to time – disasters such as Singapore and Pearl Harbour in World War II. But it is quite impermissible to be unconcerned about victory, about one's part in causing defeat, and, generally speaking, to regard the sterility of our action as being entirely normal.

3. *"The men at arms will give battle, and God will grant them victory."* How odiously false is that fatalistic false piety which imagines itself to be supernatural simply because it lacks flesh and blood, the false piety in which prayer becomes an excuse for negligence and passivity, an attitude which derives from our natural tendency to idleness or to a short term though violent effort that is without lasting or serious effect.

This is a "supernaturalism" limited to what is "extraordinary" in piety. It waits for a miracle, the realization of a prophecy wherein everything will be settled some day simply by divine intervention, without any need for us to stir a finger to bring it about.

But who could possibly accept this caricature as being the true piety that has always characterized the saints? Consider, for example, the piety which prompted St. Joan's response to the pedant of Poitiers, who said: "You say that God wills to deliver the people of France from their calamities. But if this is what He wills, then it is not necessary to set in motion the men at arms." "In the name of God," was the Maid's reply, "the men at arms will give battle and God will grant them victory." Such is indeed the orthodox response in the natural as in the supernatural order. Or, as it has been said, "Pray as if our actions were sure to be useless and act as if our prayers could be of no avail."

In the absence of this realistic approach it is normal to come up against a double peril:

– on the one hand a silly trust in Providence, passive indifference concerning action. One does not think in terms of action. One improvises,

relying on God's assistance, forgetting that He could not possibly bless no matter what, done no matter how. God has not undertaken to make good our guilty negligence. Such spurious supernaturalism deserves only abject failure.

– on the other hand a practical naturalism, or activism. One does not think deeply about action. Sure of one's self and one's means, one no longer relies on God. One no longer reckons with God. When such means prove to be of no avail, discouragement and despair follow. When we are left with nothing that God has blessed, there is absolute sterility, the pretended remedy having proved worse than the evil.

There is no more subtle and heinous a perversion than a self-satisfied orthodoxy that is indifferent as to whether truth is fruitful or whether evil is triumphant. A wholly cerebral and speculative orthodoxy is not enough. To be really and vitally orthodox, one needs not only intellectual orthodoxy but also what may be termed orthodoxy of the will. And this is manifested, principally, by a normal readiness for both zeal and indignation. "The frequency and power of crime," writes Cardinal Ottaviani,⁴ "have blunted Christian sensibility, even alas! among Christians. Not only as men, but as Christians, they do not react, do not leap to their feet. How can they feel themselves to be Christians if they are insensitive to the wounds which are being inflicted on Christianity. Life shows its existence by the sensation of pain, by the vivacity (an expressive word) by which it reacts to a wound, by the promptness and vigour of the reaction. In the midst of rotteness and decomposition there is no reaction."†

There is no organization, no party, no sect, today, which has not a plan to propose and is not committed to getting it accepted. Only we Christians allow ourselves to be dragged along – capable at the most of occasional bursts of energy. So we lose ourselves in nostrums and trifling concerns – in short term efforts, in inconsequential chatter. Waiting to be saved by some lightning operation, empiricists seeking quick returns, we seem incapable of learning anything from experience.

Professing concern for order and method, we act chaotically. Canonizing zeal and labour, we do little or nothing. Desperately and blindly overcome by passion as soon as we take to action, we nevertheless proclaim that we always wish to be guided by reason. And while we never cease prattling about the forces of mind and spirit, in practice we have less confidence in these forces than self-confessed materialists.

† *L'Eglise et la Cité*, p. 44.

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Things have indeed gone so far that if the Revolution were to triumph tomorrow, its triumph would be merited. For two hundred and fifty years (reckoned from the foundation of Freemasonry in 1717⁵) the Revolution's waves of assaults have followed one after another, tirelessly renewed, ever more ingenious, shrewd and efficacious. It can therefore be truly said that the Revolution has merited its conquest of the world. Its cadres have known how to fight and how to persist; how to expend their efforts obstinately – and also how to open their purses when necessary.

The impressive array of secular institutions and the material power of established Christianity in no way discouraged them. In spite of their small numbers and their initial weaknesses they have dared to act. Similarly, in 1903, the supporters of Lenin's movement numbered only 17. Sixty years later the Communist machine throughout the world had at its disposal some two million committees, cells and associations. Each year two thousand million dollars are spent; two hundred great films and thousands of little ones are turned out; 120 million books printed (besides manuals and pamphlets); 20,000 propagandists tour the world, 500,000 agents are at work; each week 130,000 hours of radio propaganda are organized – all of it for the triumph of the universal Revolution.

Far from manifesting a lack of divine justice, the constant progress of Subversion shows how God respects the causality of the world He has made, by not denying the normal fruit of their labours even to the impious. For if it is true, as Psalm III declares, that "the desire of sinners shall perish," it does not follow that their inescapable divine chastisement should be to the advantage of that army which has not fought, of those "Sons of Light" who have not shone, of the "good people" (as they think themselves) about whom Pius X has not hesitated to say that through their idleness and cowardice they are, more than all others, the *sinews* of Satan's reign.

4. *Spasms of Violence Are Useless.* This insensitivity, this fear, this desertion, on the part of Christians is the worst of all evils. First of all by the inaction which is involved, but also by the disastrous gusts of exasperation which such inertia in our most grievous hours must provoke. "We want to combat evil in the place where it shows itself," Goethe⁶ remarked, "and we are not concerned with the source from whence it exerts its action. This is why it is difficult to take council with the multitude which judges affairs from day to day, rarely extending its view beyond tomorrow."

Hence we get spasmodic reactions which are hasty, violent and explosive. Those who have hitherto done nothing, who have not reacted, or very little, against the progress of evil, who have perhaps encouraged it at first and accepted it in its early stages, rise up suddenly, finding it intolerable that the fire which they watched being lit without intervening should now threaten their complacent lethargy.

There is thus being continually re-enacted the slumber from which the principal apostles could not rouse themselves in the Garden of Gethsemane while Jesus was in agony and Judas was already bringing up his band. The eruption of these latter invariably proves to be a bitter awakening: one gets angry and draws the sword.

But in such circumstances is it surprising that the Master should reject the use of the sword? What is symbolized by the ear of Malchus severed by Peter's sword is perhaps insufficiently meditated.†

When nothing has been accomplished of what should have been done in the realm of spiritual and doctrinal vigilance, recourse is had to the sword of brute force. And drawn so inopportunistically it has for its only result the suppression of that organ by which men are able to hear and understand.

When the preparation of men's souls and intellects has not been sufficiently attended to, it is normal and in a sense it is just, that violent reactions too tardily initiated should bring about their own punishment. Those who take up the sword in this way, inevitably perish by the sword. The wisdom of God abandons to its own murderous logic such force as is clearly without adequate spiritual and intellectual preparation.

What we are saying is that in the hour of the powers of darkness, the force of arms alone cannot conquer, because it is then that nothing has been adequately illuminated. Then what matters for the glory of God, for the more fruitful victory of the good, is less the repressive intervention of an overwhelming force (which would be the equivalent of "twelve legions of angels"), than the witness and apostolate of the Truth, justified and defended on the plane that is eminently its own – that of spiritual combat for the conquest, edification and instruction of souls.

And it is certainly the climax of our shame that we should see the Revolution devoting so much care to winning over minds, and to obtaining the adhesion of intellects, while the so-called faithful to the Truth

† Cf. St. Luke xxii: 50–53 and St. Matthew xxvi: 50–53.

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take so little trouble to learn what is true and to communicate it to others – while they are much more ready to put their trust in force than in the sword of the spirit. But God, who is spirit and truth, cannot permit His faithful to triumph in this way.

By a tireless effort of spiritual and intellectual intoxication, the Revolution has conquered the world. What have we done that can compare with the Revolution's efforts? "Have our adversaries replied to us?" asked the French Socialist, Jaures,⁷ when speaking in the Chamber of Deputies on the Bill to separate Church and State. "Have they opposed doctrine with doctrine, ideal with ideal? Have they had the courage to range Catholic thought against the thought of the Revolution? No! They funked it. They niggled about the details of organization, but never once affirmed clearly the principle which is the soul of the Church."

So long as the notion of efficacy – profound and durable – is not linked in our minds with the notion of Truth, so long as we think it better to leave Truth on one side, founding our hopes on lies and force, we shall have lost any right to be pitied for our chronic impotence and sterility.

In these circumstances, how can we possibly hold that the chance outcome of a sudden coup would suffice to restore society to where it was before it had been undermined by Subversion? While the Revolution is almost alone today in having a trained élite at its disposal, those on our side who are best qualified refuse to be engaged and thus become "compromised." Is it not absurd to suppose that salvation can be gained for such trifling expense, and without a suitable preparation?

We do not despair of salvation. On the contrary, we believe that it should be relatively easy to save society, but only on condition that a number of good folk should apply themselves to the action involved, in the necessary manner and with sufficient perseverance. Our worry is not that it is radically impossible to save society, our worry is that those members of society who are apparently most fitted to work for its salvation will not set about this task, or only half-heartedly.

There is nothing pessimistic in this reflection. Realistic optimism demands that we look reality in the face and square up resolutely to the principal difficulty confronting us. Everything is grist to the Communist mill. Its dialectic can exploit the smallest contradictions; it can provoke, exacerbate and envenom every conflict between classes, peoples and races. This sort of war bears some analogy to that form of struggle referred to by St. Ignatius in his famous meditation on the two standards

– where the combatants are not drawn up on one side or the other of a line of battle, recognizable by their uniforms, but in a frightful *mêlée* where the spirit counts for more than any uniform to distinguish the warring forces, a war where the real enemy may be the neighbour just across the staircase landing, or a member of one's own family who has been won over to the Revolution.

This is a war in which the main armies play a smaller part than the strong points, the true citadels that are in minds and hearts, a war in which those involved must not only not themselves turn away or go over to the enemy but must also seek to prevent their relations, friends and neighbours from doing so. This is a war in which there is a universal mobilization of élites called upon to stand firm, to defend moral and intellectual truth and to radiate it – a war in which in order to conquer, it is necessary to convince.⁸

Can we oppose any effective action to the assault launched by the Revolution so methodically and with such skill? Do we possess a doctrine of action? Do we even care if we have one? In other words, do we even think about the problem at all seriously? Do we take the trouble to learn so that we can act more effectively?

In reality, we are hidebound theorists. We “think about” the aim, the objective, the state of affairs, the order towards which we aspire. But we do not think in terms of action, we do not think of the movement or the means which will permit us to reach our aim more surely. We know where we must go but we do not speak, we scarcely ever concern ourselves, about how and by what means we should get there.

Symbolic of the situation we are in are two rows of shelves in a library: on one, books by the masters of Catholic thought; on the other, those of the “doctors” of the Revolution. How splendid the first shelf seems, so long as the books deal with the aim and the end to be described or defended. Truth is there presented and defended with talent and sometimes with genius. About the promotion of order or the hierarchy of values to be defended; about what we must live and perhaps die for. All is said and said exceedingly well. But when it comes to the means to be adopted to bring victory, the question is scarcely mooted. Some principles perhaps but in much too generalized a fashion. We have never yet found a volume about anti-revolutionary action that was anything but sketchy; only some booklets pretending to solve an extremely limited tactical problem, such

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as whether a certain operation could be attempted or if a coup might be possible. But concerning action as a whole, absolutely nothing.

On the second shelf, that of the teachers of the Revolution, the situation is reversed. By comparison with Catholic authors, such as De Maistre,⁹ Blanc de Saint-Bonnet,¹⁰ Veuillot,¹¹ Pie,¹² what have the writings of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin or Mao to offer to a strictly rational intelligence? Nothing but a few well-worn systems repeated with some variation *ad nauseam*: an incredible multitude of dubious propositions.

But if nothing is offered on this side to satisfy an intelligence avid for what is really good and substantial, what a profusion of works there is dealing with means, procedures, methods and approaches. Everything one could wish for concerning strategy and tactics. With what realism, skill and keenness of perception. There one finds nothing at random. Instead there is a veritable hierarchy of social actions, with one operation complementing another; progress step by step, a simultaneous multiplicity of co-ordinated initiatives.

If our writers excel in describing the aim and the purposes of action but are lacking in insight as to means and methods, with the Revolutionary authors it is the other way round. Their aims and purposes are inconsistent, but everything is firm, precise, methodically thought out and calculated when it comes to the means and methods of movement and action.

In the light of this so glaring discrepancy, is it reasonable for us to be so little concerned with, indeed oblivious to, these urgent problems?

5. *The Duties of Our State of Life*. Consider by contrast what attention, ingenuity and zeal is displayed by the ordinary Catholic in the pursuit of personal prosperity.

In this sphere everything possible is done with a view to getting the best possible technical advice. Days and nights are spent on thinking up ways and means of increasing one's income or of prevailing against a competitor.

But when it is a matter of the fate of society (on which the lasting prosperity of everyone's private affairs depends), those who are admired for their worldly wisdom and initiative are outstandingly negligent, unthinking, unconcerned and lethargic. They are like passengers forever mopping up the damp in their cabin who are unconcerned that their ship is likely to sink at any moment.

The truth is that we waste our time on trifles. We devote more time to quite inconsequential worldly matters than would be necessary to work victoriously for the safety of the Temporal City.

An obsessive craving for physical comfort has succeeded in surrounding us with a climate of irresistible materialism, which does not display itself in vile and provocative maxims, as it used to do. That at least had the advantage of alerting the better disposed against it. But this is a factual and implicit materialism, which does not keep us from going to Mass but has resulted in the greatest manifestation of political absenteeism the world has seen since the decadence of the Roman Empire - the same kind of political negligence that was the cause of that Empire's fall.

We now see Christians who wish to be excellent husbands, excellent parents, excellent employees, excellent parishioners. The world can depend on them, but not their City, not their country!

"We leave to others," they say, "the study of these complex and serious questions. Our duty cannot step outside our domestic life. We cannot do everything; too many things need to be looked after already."

This might appear to be a wise response but it does not justify the neglect of what is an obvious duty. The truth is that we have to do everything that is required of us by our state of life. Can a husband refuse his duties as a father in order to confine himself to his duties as a husband, on the plea that he cannot do everything? Can a son, for the same reason, justify abandoning his sick father, in order to devote himself solely to a parochial apostolate?

It is an easy way out to choose the duty which suits us best and to ignore the others. But the living of a virtuous and holy life requires of us nothing more (or less) than a judicious solution of the problem of the co-existence of the multiple and inescapable duties of our state of life.

We have duties arising from our state of life: towards God, since our status is that of His creatures; towards our parents, since our status is that of their children; to our spouse, if our status is that of a married person; towards our children, if our status is parental; towards our city or nation since we are members of that community; towards our profession, our friends and neighbours, etc., because no duty arising from our state of life can be refused so long as we retain that state of life.

Each of us is free to regret that our modern democracies have increased the burden we bear, by imposing on each citizen the burden of a greater participation in public life. But this obligation cannot be

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disputed. It is all the more imperative because in this case it is the most sacred of values which are liable to be lost by the defection of those best able to defend them.

To action, then! For it is the imperative duty of the immediate present. Pius XII has already proclaimed: "There is no time to be lost. The time for reflection and planning has passed. It is the hour for action! Are you ready? The fronts opposing one another in the religious and moral sphere are becoming more clearly distinguished. It is a time for intense effort, in which even a few moments can decide the victory!"

Never before perhaps has the salvation of society depended on the efforts of so few people. But the few must be sufficiently resolute and prudently resolute. A few spasmodic efforts, a few gusts of belated anger will achieve nothing.

It is recorded that when the last Moorish King of Granada was leaving the city to go into exile, he paused on the mountain pass to look back at his beloved palace of the Alhambra and wept at the thought of what he had lost. But his mother said to him bitterly: "You do well, son, to weep like a woman over what you did not have the will and tenacity to defend like a man."

Let us take care that we also do not merit a similar stern reproach.

Notes.

1. Old Sarum. The Rite of Mass used in the Catholic diocese of Salisbury, England, from the 11th century up to the Reformation. Similar to the Tridentine Rite of Mass, differing only in non-essentials.
2. Toxophilite. A student or lover of Archery.
3. Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710–1736). Italian composer, writer and musician. Known particularly for his *Stabat Mater* and *Salve Regina*.
4. Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani (1890–1979). Secretary of the Holy Office at the Vatican. A conservative prelate who, in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, was one of the driving forces behind the Critical Study of Pope Paul VI's New Mass, in 1969, known also as the "Ottaviani Intervention."
5. Foundation of Freemasonry. Although the Masonic and occult tradition existed long before the known "foundation" of Freemasonry, it is regarded as an historical fact that Freemasonry was established on a settled basis on June 24, 1717 when the Grand Lodge of England was founded at the Goose and Gridiron in St. Paul's Churchyard, London. Antony Sayer was elected the first

Jean Ousset

Grand Master.

6. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832). Celebrated German poet, whose most well-known work is *Faust*, in two parts that date respectively from 1808 and 1833.

7. Jean Jaures (1859–1914). One of the leaders of the French Socialist Party, who founded *L'Humanité*, the French Socialist journal, in 1904. He was militantly anti-Catholic, and yet strangely warned his countrymen to “beware of the Illuminati, who seek to organize the proletariat on a non-national basis,” according to the speech of the Socialist MP, Brunet, in August 1920.

8. It is alas impossible effectively to translate Jean Ousset’s play upon the words *vaincre* (conquer) and *convaincre* (convince). –Editor, *Approaches*

9. Joseph de Maistre (1753–1821). Although French by language and culture, de Maistre was a citizen of Piedmont (now in Italy) and served in several legal and diplomatic capacities with the Piedmontese government. Regarded as a foremost Counter-Enlightenment theorist, who inspired Ultramontane Catholics and French Royalists, he was not always to be found on the right path. He was involved with a number of illuminist Masonic lodges from 1774–1790, and thus was initially favorable to the French Revolution. He later became a staunch defender of Throne and Altar.

10. Adolphe-Antoine Blanc de Saint-Bonnet (1815–1880). A French Counter-revolutionary philosopher.

11. Louis-François Veuillot (1813–1883). Founder of the French Catholic journal, *L'Univers*, which championed the powers of the Papacy vigorously, and whose writings extend to some forty volumes. He is described by Sparrow-Simpson in *French Catholics in the Nineteenth Century* as: “A man of exceptional abilities in exceptional times, he played so important a part in the religious and political history of France during the latter half of the nineteenth century that French Catholicism can hardly be described without him.”

12. Louis-Edouard-Désiré Cardinal Pie (1815–1880). Nominated Bishop of Poitiers in 1849, he was removed from the Council of State in 1861 for having criticized the politics of Napoleon III in respect of the Holy See. At the First Vatican Council he played an important role in the definition of Papal Infallibility. Created a Cardinal in 1879 and lauded as a great Christian leader by Pope Pius IX, he was also a prodigious writer, and a noted champion of the Social Reign of Jesus Christ.





“What use is a veneer of doctrinal knowledge if one lacks the will to act? At a time when the world is on the way to becoming the nearest thing to an ant-heap that history has ever seen, any ‘doctrinal orthodoxy’ or ‘spirituality’ which does not lead to action is automatically suspect.”

PART I

ON ACTION IN GENERAL

1. *Fundamental Principles.* As the word indicates, “action,” in the philosophical sense of that term, signifies the passage of something from “potency” into “act,” the realization of something which was formerly present only potentially and not actually.

Action is therefore a means: a means towards that realization, that passage into act, of something which was as yet only possible, “in potency.” This supposes a strict and harmonious relationship between the nature of the realizing action and the nature of that which is realized.

Let us take as examples a grain of corn and a tree trunk. These contain “in potency” the ear of corn and the baulk of timber, which can be obtained from them. Nevertheless, the operations by which the ear and the timber, virtually contained in the grain and the trunk respectively, are made to pass from potency to act are quite different.

To produce the ear it is necessary to sow the grain in definite conditions, to cultivate it and wait for the harvest, etc.

To produce the timber, the trunk must be cut down and transported to the sawmill where arrangements are available to square it into baulks, etc.

All of these imply different human skills, methods, techniques, instruments and a perception of very different circumstances. In short, the action required to raise a harvest of cereals does not resemble the action by which beams and rafters are produced.

So we can see the relevance of Marcel de Corte’s¹ comments at the Lausanne Congress of 1965: “I often hear it said that means, taken as such, are neither good nor bad. I confess that this assertion leaves me at a loss, for I ask myself where can we find means that are purely means, without being, by the same token inert, unusable, unused, non-existent, resembling perhaps some strange Heath Robinson gadget. A means can

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never be considered as such, except purely in the mind. A means is always considered in relation to an end.”†

How often, in matters of political and social action, are the truths of common sense forgotten?

2. *The Means Must Accord With the End.* The error is frequently observed of employing in the service of an end, methods or means of action which in practice have been devised for a quite opposite end. Under these circumstances, it is scarcely surprising if results are disappointing.

Unfortunately, many people think it opportune to have recourse to methods which have been efficacious in the service of the Revolution, and which continue to serve revolutionary ends even when they are for counter-revolutionary purposes, which goes to show that the indispensable relationship of means to ends is by no means as well understood as it is thought to be.

We often hear trotted out the metaphor of the train or the automobile which can take us indifferently to the city or into the country. But it is the function of a train to roll on rails and to transport us wherever the rails go. Our destination is irrelevant, always provided it is on the railway. So with the automobile, which is designed to circulate on highways, roads or tracks. It can take us wherever there are highways, roads or tracks, but it cannot travel over sea nor climb a rocky cliff. If our destination is the Isle of Man, neither railway nor car will serve.

The fact that even the most well-meaning of people misconstrue this relation of means to ends makes these elementary reminders all the more necessary.

The efficacy of Communist methods is so notorious that many people imagine that it is expedient to use in the service of Order what appears to be so powerful in serving Subversion. But this ignores the essential difference between the two tasks. The metaphor often applied to this situation – snatching the revolver from the aggressor and turning it against him – cannot be accepted. For, in this example, the action of the person attacked is to shoot down the aggressor who tried first to shoot him. The revolver can be used by either side, but in using it the purposes of both sides is not strictly identical.

† “*L’Information déformante*,” *Actes du Congrès de Lausanne*, 1965.

To suggest that the same doctrine of action can serve indifferently either the progress of the Revolution or the restoration of a Christian Social Order proves that the person concerned fails to distinguish between the two operations, which is a very grave matter! Because this is tantamount to admitting that the oppositions which exist between the two causes are no wider than, say, the competition between two sawmills, both producing timber. In this example, the essential feature of both establishments is that they saw wood; consequently, on either side, the same procedures and implements can be used.

The basic question is this. Is the difference between working for the Revolution and working for a Christian Social Order no greater than a party dispute, or a competition between shops dealing in similar merchandise? For, if the merchandise is similar, it must be admitted that methods and means of action can be the same in either case.

But how can the same doctrine of action and the same proceedings be accepted when, on the one hand, it is a matter of demolishing the social order, by "dialectizing" it, and transforming the people into a mass proletariat, and on the other hand of re-establishing true social order in all its hierarchies, liberties and essential diversities. One might as well maintain that the same operations, methods and instruments could serve equally well in planting trees as in cutting them into planks.

This goes to show that many who are against Liberalism in the dogmatic sense are liberals at heart when it comes to action, being incapable of distinguishing the incompatibility of methods and means in relation to *ends* as radically opposed as is construction to demolition.

In order that we should be able to adopt efficaciously (in the service of our own end) revolutionary modes of action, the Christian Social Order which we are seeking to promote would have to possess nothing which was essentially opposed to the Social Order willed by the Revolution. Between conscious revolutionaries and those faithful to Christian Social doctrine there would have to be only opposition on points of detail, personal rivalries, clashes between cliques and between parties. And this is not the case.

3. *Revolutionary Methods.* Through ignorance of these absolutely fundamental distinctions very few people take into account the fact that by trying to combat the Revolution in the way they do they are actually contributing to the spread of Marxism; at least by the diffusion of an

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attitude of mind from which Marxism is not slow to emerge, as a chicken does from an egg.

By studying, as they do, means in isolation, by thinking about action without paying attention to the specific end of the means they envisage, they cannot but encourage the cult of procedure as such, of the technique as such, the cult of pragmatism. And such is the essence of Marxism, however little this may be realized.

The truth – alas! – is that, in the majority of cases, Communism finds a favourable attitude of mind, a sort of pre-Marxism. Those who entertain this notion had better be on their guard. They may think that they are struggling victoriously against the Revolution by adopting its own weapons, but they forget that Marxism, being purely pragmatic, is merely the action implicit in pragmatism. They forget the educative effect of that action. They forget that this educative effect does not depend on intellectual adhesion to some Marxist or Communist “truth,” but that it stems from the mere habit of acting, or of thinking about action, according to Marxist methods.

If our behaviour is regulated in Marxist fashion, how can its educative effect fail to be Marxist?

Many are in this state of mind while nonetheless pretending that they are struggling against Communism. At a given moment, however, a mere trifle is enough to reunite them with their apparent enemies. Some event is sure to make them “become conscious” of their latent Marxism, when these pretended “defenders of the social order” will rejoin the ranks of the Revolution. In this way the Nazi troops of Von Paulus,² after their surrender at Stalingrad, went over to the communists.

To act like a Marxist is to be already a Marxist, even if one is combating Marxism. Thus, many efforts, which are reputed to be counter-revolutionary, have resulted and will result in increasing the Marxist consensus throughout the world.

These well-meaning people not only lack a doctrine of action, not only do they tend to adopt the methods of the enemy to their own undoing, they do not even know how to profit by what they might legitimately learn from the enemy. Because they do not understand what the enemy is about, or have such a wrong idea of it, the enemy’s power for evil tends to be exaggerated.

Thus, the idea that is formed of revolutionary action is almost always a caricature of reality. All that is perceived is what is most crudely

evident in the history of the Revolution. All that is perceived is the very superficial and deceptive aspect of mass movements, clumsy through their excess of numbers, and their orientation by rudimentary catchwords and a childish notion of doctrine. Mass agitation and massive influence. Demonstrations and scuffles, preparations for violent action; more or less clandestine operations; popular mob leaders; enormous meetings. This is the image we have of revolutionary activity and of subversive agitation, the very aspects that can scarcely be transposed to suit our purposes. For this kind of action is impermissible.

On the other hand, we know very little about what might well be a lesson to us: the Communist concern for working in-depth; their keen sense of action through ideas; the diligence with which they attend to the formation of key people; their determination, so extreme as to be ridiculous (but nevertheless characteristic), to think out action “scientifically.”

The one thing we can learn from the revolutionary example is the need to emulate and be stimulated by the zeal of Revolutionaries. We should be able to see in them the kind of ardour we ourselves should have, for when we observe how the agents of subversion buckle to their task, how they are always striving to act better, this can at least put us to shame.

Some pages of Mao Tse Tung³ are well worth studying, for there is nothing subversive about them.† On the contrary, in these pages Mao pitilessly denounces undisciplined zeal, want of reflection and imprudence or (to use Communist jargon) subjectivism, adventurism, putschism. How profitable to us the reading of these chapters would be!

They contain so many features which are not essentially revolutionary, from which we should be keen to draw some profit. But these we refuse to notice. And so we are ignorant both of the doctrine of action which ought to be ours and of that which we could learn from the example of the adversary.

The fact remains however that it would be absurd to set about constructing something in the same way as one would set out to destroy it. For the Revolution is destructive in this sense, that its dialectics lead to conflict and disorder by provoking, exploiting and keeping up social contradiction. It pits class against class; Third Estate⁴ against the nobility; *sans-culottes*⁵ against *ci-devant*⁶ aristocrats; the Mountain against the

† *Œuvres choisies*, T. 1, pp. 122-135.

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Gironde;⁷ the poor against the rich; proletariat against the bourgeoisie; workers against bosses; Left against Right; radicals against liberals; Bolsheviks against Mensheviks;⁸ nation against nation; colonized people against colonialists; blacks against whites; democrats against fascists; defenders of the laity against clericalists.

Even in the heart of the Church it tries to provoke opposition between “progressives” and “integrists,” polarizing Council Fathers against the Curia, John XXIII against Pius XII and Paul VI. Generally, the majority are stirred up against the minority, unless these latter seem to be more intensely subversive.

This is how the Revolution goes to work. Its drive is towards negating previous social growth, towards the levelling out and atomising of society by a progressive elimination of intermediate social bodies. Its action has never ceased to open the way towards a State totalitarianism which every day becomes more and more tyrannical. Everyone must be aware of innumerable examples of this.

So we come to the advice given by Joseph de Maistre concerning counter-revolution. “It must be and do the opposite of what the Revolution is and does. It ought not to be an opposite sort of revolution. That is, it must renew social bonds instead of breaking them, and exercise a co-ordinating action in the opposite direction to the disorganizing action of the Revolution.”

This should suffice to dispense us from the need to insist further that an opposition in the order of *ends* must forbid the employment of the same kind of action, in the order of the *means*.

4. *The Parts Played by Doctrine and Practical Experience.* Our aim is not to re-establish artificially a particular political and social system, to secure the triumph of a party over its rivals. We cannot, therefore, resort to the procedures of the Revolution, for these are partisan on account of their addiction to the dialectics of disruption.

We have to restore to society its health, its natural and true life. We have to bring back life, health and strength (i.e., normal activity) to social organs which have fallen victims to the unnatural sclerotic conditions which modern totalitarianism has forced upon them.

Because the Revolution was produced by a rationalistic kind of reason, it tends to impose formulae deriving from the human mind alone. And it is therefore led by its infernal logic to use means which can be

described as alien to the natural order – a miscellaneous collection of procedures for exercising pressure which do violence to the nature of things. It must, however, be recognized that the means employed are admirably suited to the purposes of the Revolution.

For, as St. Pius X has put it, we do not seek to rebuild the City otherwise than God has built it. We know only too well that civilization no longer requires to be invented, nor is it a new city to be built in the clouds.

We take for granted a knowledge of the laws and conditions of life for a true society. This is none other than a sense of what is True, which is acquired in the first place by doctrine. We say, “in the first place,” because only extensive experience can bring to perfection this sense of knowing what is True, and because a formation that is too theoretical, too dogmatic, too speculative, can also have its dangers. It is prudent to complement this knowledge with a more practical knowledge, the knowledge to be found, for example, in history and in several other humanistic disciplines. Shakespeare’s Hamlet puts it admirably: “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than can be found in your philosophy” (meaning, the scholastic doctrines taught at the University of Wittenberg). Not that we are inciting our readers to cock snooks at the idea of a sound doctrinal formation. We seek only to remind them of the danger of stopping short there.

History shows that the most brilliant minds were frequently unable to discover what the experience of a mediocre empiricism succeeded in making evident some centuries later. Only the very ignorant or the very blind are unable to distinguish in the various spheres those aspects of truth which are formulated by doctrine, and those other lessons not less precious, lessons of history, the lessons of human experience in all walks of life.

The man who is forever reducing everything to principles is but a bogus “brain,” whose wisdom is superficial and ill-regulated. The title of “prudent” is merited only by those who perceive the complexity and the hierarchy of ideas and things, a perception of what matters most, what matters least, and what simply does not matter at all.

Indeed, as soon as thought and action cease to run in double harness, both become corrupt; vain formulae on one side or the other.

Left to itself, deprived of the counterpoise which experience affords, thought becomes more and more rarefied. It cuts and slices truth, it makes

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plans and universalizes theories solely in terms of principles. Thereafter, orthodoxy becomes a title accorded only to the finest splitter of hairs who can sub-divide them into four, eight or sixteen different parts. Formation becomes an end in itself, and tends towards fatty degeneration, to doctrinal fibrositis and to veritable impotence.

But in its turn, when action is deprived of that perception of the diversity of things and problems which only doctrine can give, it is soon reduced to cut and dried formulae, to an activism that relies on plans and diagrams. It gives rise to the kind of mind that says: "Let us fuse everything together so as to keep only a single organization." This is assumed to be stronger. It leads to prescriptions that take us back to formulae about pure means, means as such which work just as well one way as the other, to the formula of action for its own sake – Action with a capital A, the very errors which we condemned at the beginning of this chapter.

So we get that well-known figure, the man of action who scorns doctrine, a specialist in one or two procedures; the kind of man who is less concerned with solving such problems as arise than with carrying out on every occasion a number of operations or exercises, which are always the same. Invariably, he resorts to demonstrations, gatherings, publications. These are means which always touch only the exterior surface of the difficulty, and one could say about them that even when they are legitimate and beneficial they are more akin to orthopaedic techniques than to the art of healing.

The distinction we are drawing here is an important one; not only does it put into clear relief the existence of these two forms of action, but it allows us to grasp at the outset the superiority of the medicinal over the orthopaedic approach. And this in an era when spectacular action of the "orthopaedic" type eclipses and most alarmingly prejudices opinion against the multiform "medicinal" action which alone can cure the social body.

We are not here condemning orthopaedics as such. It is often indispensable and doctors do not fail to make use of it at need. But however valuable straitjackets, splints and crutches may be, they are not remedies in the strict sense. Of course, they can contribute greatly to a cure – by exterior action – always provided that the state of the patient has not declined too far. But when the sickness is such that the vital reactions seem to be suspended, a full return to health is impossible without treatment which gives back to the organism its internal vigour.

We have no right to yield up to Christ the King a maimed society, only kept going by the supports of artificial limbs, glass eyes, hearing aids, etc. We must restore to the City its full natural life.

At least we can refuse to limit our action to its “orthopaedic” form of patching up what has gone wrong. Our hearts must be set on promoting “medicinal” action which will truly cure. This may be less spectacular, since one can see from a distance that “orthopaedic” action seems to be materially efficacious. Nor would one dare to dispute the usefulness of crutches to a lame man. The danger begins only when “orthopaedic” medicine claims to be more efficacious than true “medicine” and begins to dissuade people from seeking the only real remedies: those which will allow the cripples to walk on their own legs, the deaf to hear without earphones, the paralytics to get about without a bath chair. One could prolong this parable indefinitely.

Far above social and political action of the “orthopaedic” type, which merely tinkers with the damaged social structure, must be placed the social and political action which revitalizes and cures society. The latter is much more demanding, of course, for where “orthopaedic” action achieves some results by wholly mechanical means, a revitalizing and curative action supposes, if it is to be well conducted, a profound knowledge, both theoretical and practical, of the one and only true social doctrine.

5. *Thinking Out Our Action: the Pros and Cons.* The one true doctrine.

It would be a great error, indeed, to think that there might be two doctrines, one which might be termed descriptive of the *aim*, and a second described as a doctrine of action, of *means*, of the methods to be adopted to attain the *aim*.

The Christian doctrine of political and social action is an expression of the Natural and Christian law, considered in a practical fashion, with constant regard to its implementation. Strictly speaking, a moral and social doctrine is never purely speculative, since in itself a moral principle presupposes the action which it governs. Nevertheless, this kind of doctrine is not immediately practical, which is all that we mean to say at this point. In other words, there is a theoretical way (speculative, platonic) of considering a doctrine even when it governs action. And there is also a

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practical way which leads us to consider the immediate possibilities of applying the doctrine.

For example, let us take the plans of a country house which has to be built to order. There are several ways of looking at them, according to one's particular interest. That of the owner: in his eyes what counts most is the *end*. The house as it will be when completed is what interests him: beauty of aspect, harmony of proportion, comfort, etc. He scarcely pauses over the problems of construction (action). He does not think about the means, the "how" of what is to be done. Others can see to the overcoming of these difficulties.

This leads us to another way of looking at the problem, that of the builder, the workmen, the artisans and artists who will have to erect, decorate and adorn the dwelling. Of course, they are not insensitive to the beauty of the house, and they work with greater ardour and taste on account of it. But not being merely onlookers, the necessities of construction lead them to take a different view as compared with that of the owner. They have to think about the "how": the means, procedures and techniques of action, which (although still governed by the same object, the house) differ greatly from the owner's simpler view.

There is an obligation, then, not only to know the *aim* (the Plan), but also to realize that the nature of this aim requires that it be carried out in a specific manner. There must be sufficient precision in detail, for there is a way of saying what must be done which is in no way practical because it is too general, because it does not lay down *how* it is to be done, how one should set about it, by what particular means it should be carried through.

Take, for example, the case of the young man on retreat who was possessed by holy zeal and decided to become a militant Christian "generally speaking." This kind of resolution was, of course, entirely without practical significance precisely because it was too general in scope – too vague. So he was advised to think in terms of some precise commitments: to hear Mass so many times a week; on this day, at that hour, to say the Rosary on his way home from the office; etc. This is the only sound approach to practical action in temporal, as well as in spiritual, affairs.

When the choice is difficult the way to choose is to compare:

- (1) the advantage of what one considers doing;
- (2) its disadvantages;

- (3) the advantages which can result from not doing it;
- (4) the disadvantages of not doing it.

This formula could be summed up as follows:

- (1) the pros of the pro;
- (2) the cons of the pro;
- (3) the pros of the con;
- (4) the cons of the con.

It may raise a smile but remains no less an excellent way of developing an attitude of mind which habitually seeks a rapid and clear perception of concrete possibilities. "Weigh the case, for and against." How many really follow this advice conscientiously? "How much will this cost? How much will it pay in return?" was the constant remark of a friend whose disinterested nature was so well-known as to make impossible any uncharitable interpretation of this apparently cynical quip. These are only procedures, some will say. Let them say what they will. The purpose of these procedures is to facilitate the execution of what has to be done.

6. *Plurality: Harmony.* These procedures should be capable of developing a livelier sense of the complexity of things, thereby affording us the advantage of dispelling our inclination towards the unique movement, the one operation which pretends to save everything, all by itself. All other kinds of action being declared vain and harmful.

This unitary concept of the political and social struggle has been and remains the cause of our failures. In it the whole range of sins is united. First there is a fundamental misunderstanding of reality, which is essentially diverse. Secondly, and concomitantly, we have particularisms ("What I prefer should be good enough for you!"); rivalries ("None can lead as well as I."); and exclusivisms ("Surely we are the people – and wisdom shall perish with us.").

The vain dream of victory by panacea, by a single line of action, is manifestly absurd. What hopes of victory has a commander who has at his disposal the very latest in aircraft manned by the most capable pilots – but no infantry, only medieval catapults for artillery and Boadicea's chariots⁹ instead of armour?

What would happen to the strength of an army if its Divisions and Brigades thought they could act on their own without any liaison between

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them – with no possibility of manoeuvring, no concentration of fire power? Under these circumstances victory would be inconceivable.

Hence the necessity for developing an appreciation of a need for concerted action, the ability to look above and beyond the immediate outcome of what we ourselves are doing, even if it costs us something in terms of personal pride.

Some may be affected by what may be called the “Universal Stores” mentality, the kind of mind that succumbs to the advertisement: “Buy all your goods at ‘So and So’s.’” For some schools of thought, addicted to planning, this may indeed appear simpler from the standpoint of accounting. “Why take out several subscriptions? One payment can cover the lot.” But who would have the nerve to propose to reduce the Army to a collection of footsloggers in order to reduce the cost of its weapons, equipment and training?

The craze for unity at all costs leads to two forms of error:

– the selection of one organization to be hypertrophied so as to cover the whole field (like the Nazis and Falangists).

– the amalgamation of various organizations into the “great whole” of some general “rassemblement” (widely favoured at various times in France).

Both of these are ruinous because they display an equal ignorance of the plurality and diversity of forces as they really are. Basically it is because we doubt the vivifying efficacy of these real forces that we are haunted by the temptation to have recourse to those compact regroupings alluded to under error Number One – which are impotent, vulnerable to any passing whim, and quite incapable of responding to the varied requirements of social and political reality.

But to seek unity by the exclusive choice of one organism or particular method (error Number Two) is also futile, as if a single group, a single mode of action could suffice in the combat that lies before us. “Let us beware of bourgeois selectivism,” said Lenin, meaning this habit of putting all our eggs in one basket, a maxim which is well-worth bearing in mind.

What madness to pretend that it is enough to play only one card, swallow only one prescription, vote for just one man? If he is beaten, all seems lost. If he is victorious, all seems safe and we need not worry any more. Yet, even if the Revolution were conquered, the duty of active

vigilance would still be imposed on us. Its spores would not have disappeared, even in defeat.

Just how costly can they become – those so numerous formulae for action that are supposed to be economical in terms of money and effort, whose deceptive simplicity borders on cerebral anaemia? The argument in favour of all this is the immense advantage which the enemy derives from effective propaganda, rudimentary arguments and specious slogans. What they forget is that the Revolution is benefiting from its acquired momentum, which is not the case with us. An occasional dipping of the oars is enough to keep going downstream, but hard pulling is required to re-ascend the river against the current.

Our puerile slogans are, therefore, most unlikely to awaken an echo comparable to that evoked by the enemy's childish slogans, and for the simple reason that the enemy's slogans appeal to and exploit a consensus of opinion which has already been prefabricated by the Revolution. Ours cannot hope to evoke a comparable response.

Let us therefore realize that there can be no salvation except by organizing an action which is fully integrated, powerful and rigorously thought out. Without this we may perhaps continue to strike an odd blow here and there, only to find that in less than a year the Revolution will already be exploiting the reaction to our momentary success.

If all we can think in terms of is one man or a possible event, since they are never so effective as they were hoped to be, we continue to remain baffled, embittered and discouraged. We have lived on catchwords and slogans. We have conceived of action in terms of guile or cunning, whereas in such matters all simplifications should be distrusted – from “The Exercises of St. Ignatius are the sole means of overcoming Communism” on the one hand, to those which make everything depend on “one good push, well prepared,” on the other.

The truth is that there is no sole means. All means must be made use of. Prayer first, to be sure, and the Exercises, but also every means that sound prudence requires us to employ. Mass meetings (as and when necessary); study circles, lectures, congresses; newspapers, reviews and tracts; the word in the ear of a friend; the radiation of ideas within one's neighbourhood; taking the initiative in one's profession; personal influence; the links of friendship, etc. “Insofar as but not more than” – this is what the situation demands.

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The good physician is not one who tries to effect a cure by ingenious devices. Well instructed in the conditions and requirements of good health, he seeks instead to discover what is wrong with his patient, and what functions can be re-established in the way that nature allows this to be done. This is not an object to be achieved by cunning tricks, but only by knowledge, attention, experience and skill, in the strictest sense of those terms.

Our task is to restore true health to the social body. Now it is basically the same with the social body, as with our own. And no one would, for example, maintain that washing it was enough to keep it in good shape. Certainly there is a need for soap, but also nourishment, drink, clothing, exercise, a comb, a razor, relaxation, rest and sleep, oxygen, etc. Any distorted simplifications concerning these needs could not but lead to dirt and vermin, to sickness and to death.

We must learn to think of multiform yet co-ordinated action capable of integrating the initiative of Mr. X or of Group Y, this or that tactic – an action also capable of taking fortuitous circumstances in its stride. This action must have a much wider perspective than that of any of its specific components, so as to prevent despair in the case of failure of any particular initiative. For with this perspective any such setback is seen to be only a partial failure. This diversity, this variety of separate complementary initiatives prevents the fall of an advance post from appearing to be other than it is – a hard blow no doubt, but never a total disaster.

Either we regain a sense and desire for this kind of action, or we shall see the downfall of all that we seek to serve.

Since the most obvious characteristic of all superior forms of life (human life, social life) is the variety of their organisms and the complexity of their operations, it must be immediately obvious that a unitary formula which is simplistic and monopolist by intention, cannot possibly respond to the requirements of an order so fluctuating and diverse. Where needs are diverse, so also must the formulae be.

The only possible unity which is truly desirable occurs at the intellectual level, on the doctrinal plane; that is, a unity of minds about what is essential about doctrine. As for actions and functions, it behoves them to be numerous and various.

Now more than ever, confronted as we are by the leviathan of modern totalitarianism, it is important to think in terms of the action of flexible manoeuvrable forces, that are not readily vulnerable, are easy

to reconstitute, rich in varied resources and capable of pursuing several objectives simultaneously. This is the style of action which is adapted to the conditions of the struggle against modern totalitarianism. The enemy controls almost all the means of communication and thinks it can make people believe what it wants them to, by blackening and discrediting even the most respectable of initiatives, by bewildering the well disposed, by imprisoning, torturing, condemning and massacring the innocent, without the guardians of the so-called “universal” conscience daring or deigning to raise their voices.

This action is balanced, patient and persevering. Against an enemy on the point of victory it is vain to reckon on gaining an advantage by advancing mass formation. Another method must be tried, that of a flexible type of action capable of compensating for an evident lack of material strength, as regards numbers, by a surplus (eminently qualitative) of individual valour and zeal – an action characterized by its intelligence and mobility.

7. *Where to Find the Federating Element?* This, of course, supposes some element which synchronizes and co-ordinates all the various actions. However valuable the necessary diversity and plurality are in their total effect, it is far from being our intention to underestimate the importance of union and unity. For if uniformity and unitary urges are the scourges of the present time, it remains true that nothing can be done without union. Everyone recognizes this in principle, but it is difficult to realize it in practice.

One objection is enough to present this difficulty in all its magnitude: “In practice, there is no federation without a federator; no strategy without a strategist; no unity in act without a unifier; no unity without a chief.”

In one sense, this is perfectly true. But one must be careful not to interpret it wrongly. There is no question of denying the importance of a chief, or the co-ordinating power of a specific authority. But how can one imagine such a chief? What can he be, in the conditions in which the conflict has to be developed? For while the conflict is national it is also, and now more than ever, international. It is a multiform conflict: it is philosophical and rural; theological and professional; cultural, yet also concerned with the manual labourer. It also involves the family and education, etc.

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Never has any monarch's brain had to grapple with so many responsibilities at once. Besides, is it not unreasonable to expect such a synchronization from a single chief, in matters so contrasted and so numerous? Who could such a paragon be?

The problem is not of knowing whether anyone can be found with the ambition to undertake the task. Even if it should happen that some exceptional being should aspire to do so, the requirements of such a concentration of duties would oblige him to simplify, schematise, draw up plans and consolidate, which, as we have just seen, is precisely what ought not to be done. Nor would this happen from malice but because it would not otherwise be possible for him to organize so many different things.

Also it is well-known how many of the wisest excel in being the victims of their own talents. It can be safely assumed that if the chief in question were a natural orator, all action in the form of oratory would be privileged. If he were a writer, articles and pamphlets would take precedence. If he had a fancy for organizing associations, he would spend most of his time in spasms of togetherness. The doctrinaire type of mind would similarly tend to be preoccupied with the need for formation, while the activist on the other hand always tends to underestimate the need for formation. This may perhaps explain our scepticism about a synchronization of action, through some kind of "big, white chief."

We prefer, therefore, to think in terms of "the concerted activity of a body of chiefs" (an oligarchy). This would at least safeguard the indispensable flexibility and variety of action. And without hesitation, we consider it necessary to declare the formula a desirable one. The benefit of its advantages merit its being explored, whatever disadvantages and risks it might entail, such as cliques, factions, indiscretions, time-wasting, etc.

The disadvantageous aspect of such "collegial" leadership is that its unity is fragile, being dependent upon the psychological caprices of a number of individuals. The concerted control may thus be possible today, yet impossible tomorrow.

It can be seen, therefore, that the secret of union has little likelihood of being found in any material formula. Our first duty is to recall that observation of Joseph de Maistre: "The advantage of a chief who commands always presupposes troops who are more or less ready to obey." And this in turn implies the existence of a sufficient sense of community – spiritual, intellectual and moral.

Now, knowing as we do our rivalries and oppositions, we cannot possibly be complacent in outlook. It would be, however, quite wrong to infer from this that all possibility of concerted action should be ruled out. We humbly believe that the synchronizing element is to be found (where St. Paul places it) “in the unity of the one same spirit”; in the similarity of the methods by which we have been educated and informed; in the establishment of a “consensus” – as a result of a certain style of action, a common method of doing what has to be done.

It is like learning the rules of some new game. Do not bridge players, in effect, all act in the same way at the bridge table? Where is the synchronizing element so far as they are concerned? No chief, or umpire, presides over their bridge parties. Their co-ordinated action stems from the factual existence of the Laws of Bridge, accepted by common consent. These work harmoniously notwithstanding the different standards of skill between players. This is perfectly normal. Let us not forget that the authority of a single chief does not prevent some of his soldiers from being good and some bad – or some of his administrators from being efficient, while others are incompetent.

There is a need, therefore, for establishing the rules of the game, with the formation which this implies of a number of animators, the instructors in this new kind of action. These will take the form of an élite, distributed among the most diverse forms of groups and networks, who, being able to observe things with sufficient detachment and objectivity, can suggest the action required, with unremitting concern both for the union to be realized, and for the diversity which must be maintained.

There will be apostles, convinced that they have no need for any “mandate” from others, or of any special “ordination,” in order to advance the progress of truth, in order to feel themselves responsible, and capable of taking the initiative. Radiating a surer perception of doctrine, a keener sense of how one task complements another, they will make possible the accomplishment of an immense progress. For, thank God, it is not the cordiality of relationships between chiefs which makes for the subsidiarity and complementarity of their actions, but the very nature of the actions themselves. No doubt too many will ignore this unifying influence, or will scorn and object to it. But it still remains true, broadly speaking, that these actions have their own compelling power, their special quality, their rich variety.

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8. *The Binding Force of Truth.* A truth which penetrates everywhere has the saving action of binding all together. For if error is innumerable and divisive, truth is one and unifying. Now here we are concerned not with a magisterial proclamation of the truth, but with its free diffusion, its deep penetration. Truth is like gold; its value is fully appreciated only insofar as it is in circulation. Now while error circulates freely, the truth does not circulate, it remains stock-piled through lack of a distributive network. The worst of stupidities prevail because being everywhere proclaimed, they are listened to and talked about. And so they become the rule, universally accepted, to the advantage of the enemy who nevertheless contradicts himself much more than we do.

It is, therefore, imperative that truth, better diffused, more clearly professed, must become the first law of our new methods of work, because this alone (above all our discords, above our legitimate and beneficent diversities) can be our element of union and unity.

Some people, it is true, assert that it is too late to work efficaciously for this kind of union. Let us point out to them that any lag in the order of doctrine corresponds to a lag in action. As far as we are concerned, let us rest assured that our slowness in achieving union or (what amounts almost to the same thing) our tardiness in action, is directly related to our backwardness in doctrine. Or to put it somewhat differently, the poor quality of our union, like that of our action, derives from the inadequacy of our doctrinal consensus.

We can thus grasp the importance of that privileged co-ordinating element: doctrinal or cultural action.

Culture is not a distinct form of action – though a few people may be especially consecrated to its pursuit – but a way of giving all actions a higher value. It does not come solely from spreading “the right ideas” as they are called – if by this is meant their mere diffusion, a simple intellectual radiation operated from a distance and from above, as troops are billeted among the population.

It does not consist only in launching ideas, but in following up these ideas and cultivating them on the spot, according to specialized needs. Doctrinal action is, one might say, like furnishing a house with theoretical and practical notions, binding together diverse efforts, without those efforts ceasing to be diverse. It is a living presence – because it is confirmed by the spoken word, not by the distribution of writings – a

living presence of continual reminders of doctrine and of strategy in all places and circumstances.

This doctrinal or cultural action is nothing other than the practical organization of that vivifying, fortifying, circulation of truth which is indispensable in every social network, so that the obstacles of routine or too narrow specialization may be overcome.

“Put a tiger in your tank,” we are admonished by placards on our highways. Doctrinal or cultural action has as its aim that of offering everyone the means of increasing tenfold the motive force of this action by introducing that element of power – plus that “tiger”! – *perhaps through a more practical understanding of whatever action is contemplated.*

How many people – however strongly they may be attached to their family, their business and professional affairs – operate at half-cock because they do not realize what a more lively sense of doctrine might make possible, without any greater cost, by the simple effect of a more penetrating vision of the finality of things, of a keener understanding of possible relations.

Alas! How many do not even suspect that doctrine might be of some usefulness outside the strict domain of a purely “cerebral” study. Doctrinal or cultural action has as its essential end the enhancing of the value of social or political activities by permanent communications of the surplus of light and strength which a harmonious understanding of the natural and Christian order cannot fail to bring into every domain.

It is by this means that we shall find what is, what can be, what ought to be (with the help of the concerted action of chiefs referred to above) the surest and greatest element of our union and our unity. And this is so because it is, of all means, the one most strictly ordered to the establishment and maintenance of that consensus without which all fruitful action is inconceivable.

9. *Is It Ideas Alone That Rule the World?* Doctrine, in itself, however, is not enough. For if there is truth in the dictum that “ideas rule the world,” it is more accurate to say that this cannot be said of all ideas. Most ideas do not direct anything at all. There are immense numbers of dead and abortive systems of thought which have disappeared without having had the smallest influence. Certain doctrines have had a wide distribution at a particular epoch but have had none since, or were only taken up again very much later.

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Consequently we may well ask ourselves why some ideas have led the world at a particular time? And why did they cease to lead it afterwards? Why do so many ideas lead to nothing at all? And, more especially, why are our ideas so ineffective at the present time?

It is obvious that ideas do not sustain themselves by their own power, however valuable they may be. They do not spread or propagate themselves just by being there; they could not, if left to themselves, produce the slightest lasting action, or snatch the slightest victory. They are just like the best quality tools which have never achieved anything, nor ever will, unless some workman yields them.

In other words, so long as an idea, good or bad, does not find an army to make use of it, it remains ineffectual. Hence the importance of people. For even ideas can achieve nothing unless there are people to fight for them. But, in their turn, what can people achieve by their own unaided strength, unless they have implements and methods of work and action?

And what can be achieved even by the most courageous of men, however methodical and well-equipped, if they refuse to take account of the circumstances of place and time, etc?

People, implements, circumstances.

Reference to these three resources become indispensable as soon as it is proposed to tackle the problems of efficacious action. It is not suggested that these three labels define separate spheres independent of one another, such that it would be possible to study any of them without regard to the others. In reality these three spheres interlock; circumstances may increase tenfold the energy which persons display. The energy of persons can completely change circumstances. But however numerous the combinations of these three elements may be, their interaction determines whatever is most important in the action, and such will always be the case.

First: men, people, social networks; or, alternatively, the agents of the action, the executives and the managers. Second: instruments, tools, techniques, methods of action. And finally: circumstances, events, conditions of time and place.

Or, if you like, it may be asked: (1) By whom? (2) With what and how? (3) When and in what circumstances should action be taken?

These three questions will be discussed respectively in the three Parts which follow.

Notes.

1. Marcel de Corte (1905-1994). French student of Aristotle and St. Thomas; a fierce opponent of modernism and a critic of modernity. Professor of Philosophy at the University of Liège, Belgium. Conferences at Lausanne, organized chiefly by Ousset and featuring leading French counter-revolutionary scholars (many of them his colleagues), were held frequently during the 1960s and 1970s.
2. Field Marshal Friedrich von Paulus. Commander of the German Sixth Army during World War II, which attempted to conquer Stalingrad. Von Paulus was forced to surrender in the attempt on January 30, 1943, and large numbers of his troops went over to the Soviet side immediately thereafter, due in no small way to effective propaganda waged by the Communists prior to and after their defeat.
3. Mao Tse Tung (1893–1976). Son of a Chinese peasant from Hunan province. Initiated the “Long March” in October 1934, culminating in the Communist takeover of China after WW II; and the Cultural Revolution in May 1966, which led to the deaths of millions of “unreconstructed” Chinese. From the mid-Sixties to his death, he was Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party. Author of *The Thoughts of Chairman Mao* – popularly known as *The Little Red Book*.
4. Third Estate. The French bourgeoisie before the French Revolution of 1789, as distinguished from the nobility and the clergy.
5. *Sans culottes*. Literally, “without knee breeches.” A reference to the lower class Parisian Republicans of the French Revolution.
6. *Ci-devant*. A term for aristocrats who lost their titles during the French Revolution.
7. Mountain and Gironde. A reference to the two parties which came to be identified as such during the period following the meeting of the French National Assembly of October 1, 1791; they came into conflict over the degree to which the principles of 1789 were to be implemented against the traditional social order, and how such implementation was to be carried out. Robespierre, Danton, and Marat led the Mountain faction while Girondin leaders included Vergniaud, Isnard and Brissot.
8. Mensheviks. The term derives from the Russian for “member of the minority,” a reference to those who became a minority – vis à vis the Bolsheviks – in the Russian Socialist Party during the period immediately preceding the Russian Revolution of 1917. The Menshevik leader, Alexander Kerensky (1881–1970), was briefly head of Russia before the rise of the Leninists.
9. Boadicea. Queen of the Iceni tribe of southeast Britain who led a rebellion against Rome ca. 60A.D. The nobility in her army used chariots, considered by them to be unique and advantageous (though expensive) instruments in war.



“If in 1917 there had existed in Petrograd only some thousands of men who knew what they really wanted, we should never have been able to take over power in Russia.”

– Lenin

PART II

MEN

Chapter I

The Most Decisive Asset

“Of all possible assets, the most precious, the most decisive, is cadres, people.”

– Stalin

We are told that our struggle is an ideological one. This is a true statement – if it is intended to refer to the reasons for, the ultimate causes and full dimensions of the conflicts now tearing the world asunder.

But this statement is false, if it intends to suggest that it is ideas as such which are in conflict and that it is ideas as such which control and direct the course of events, as if in such matters human beings were only pawns manipulated by unseen forces, and not themselves the motive power of events; as if changes could be imposed on men from outside by some kind of intellectual remote control, as though human resolution, prudence and perseverance had a purely subordinate role concerned only with the enunciation, propagation and diffusion of ideas.

If it were true that ideas directed the world in this manner, the process of idea diffusion would in itself suffice, since, once the doctrine in question had been spread, the rest would follow automatically, simply by the intrinsic power of the diffused propositions. But to imagine that the diffusion of ideas is a function of their inherent dynamic power is like supposing that the richness of a harvest could come about, simply by scattering seed, without having to cultivate the ground – which would be too good to be true.

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History gives abundant proofs that such methods have never worked, so long as a doctrine, good or bad, has at its disposal no army, no body of resolute men, to defend, propagate and implement it. The doctrine in question will continue to be totally ineffective.

1. *The Importance of People.* The problem of persons, of cadres, therefore, is of major importance. Not of course that we intend thereby to underestimate the influence of ideas. It is ideas which undoubtedly enlighten the intelligence, excite ingenuity and animate the will of those who make history. There are undoubtedly some people who all of a sudden become ardent, indefatigable apostles, as soon as they are introduced to a coherent body of doctrine relevant to the problem confronting them – although previously they seemed to be quite spineless and lacking in purpose. Even so, however, ideas cannot be regarded as the decisive element in action. In this connection, it is relevant to recall Psichari's¹ observation that it is not given to everyone to be at the service of ideas. The number of such people is indeed very small. The only folk in this category are those in whom intelligence and will function harmoniously.

It is true that, minus doctrine, men of action soon lapse into opportunism. On the other hand if they lack the virtues of the man of action, those interested in doctrine soon degenerate into verbose oracles who succeed only in boring everyone to tears.

So we come to realize the essential superiority of the complete man: i.e., one who has had a thorough grounding in doctrine and is also prudent in action. Such a leader is astute in discerning the means best suited to achieve the objective required by his doctrine. He will also be dauntless in his determination to achieve that end. The qualities of such a leader are courage and determination which cannot be undermined either by the wide-ranging demands of the tasks which confront him, by the psychological isolation inevitable to his role as a leader, or by the occult obstructions he may encounter. In short, he will never lose heart.

Granting all this, we come to the conclusion that a body of men trained in this way will enjoy an overwhelming superiority. Although such men are naturally conscious of the joy and uplift that derives from their unity of purpose, they realize also that the initiative, the determination, the action of each of them is more important than the collective strength and élan of a mass formation operating by word of command. In short, it

is the difference between an élite band of commandos or paratroopers and the operation of a regular army formation of World War I vintage.

We should certainly not despise those who join in the fray only when the going is good, when solidarity is the mood of the hour. It must however be emphasized that without a certain number of men who are sufficiently resolute and have had a formation enabling them to act correctly even in the most difficult circumstances, even in times when others tend to despair, it is quite vain to think in terms of fruitful action.

Most important of all, then, and our first consideration, should be the question of cadres, the men who get things done. It is true that the problem of tools for the job is also very important, for the workman cannot be considered apart from his tools. We need both good workmen and good tools. The fact remains however that it is the workman himself who matters most of all.

It is foolish to expect success simply as a result of the structural might of some institution or the power of ideas alone. Organization and institutions certainly have a role to play. They can increase our capacities tenfold, but only in the same way as a good tool increases the potentiality of a good workman. But it can do nothing unless it is in that workman's hands. A good tool in the hands of a clumsy workman never made a masterpiece. But clumsy workmen are notorious for spoiling good tools.

History teems with the catastrophic collapses of institutions which were swept away by a handful of resolute men forming an active minority. Institutions no longer animated by an élite capable of sustaining the spirit which had brought them into being. The future always belongs to the groups whose members are best instructed and most determined on action, even when confronted by an array of opposing institutions.

This does not mean that we have to fall into an error which is often expressed in the following terms: "Let us first set about making good men. Then good institutions will come about by themselves." For if it could be shown that the generality of men could be made good without good institutions, it would be useless to bother about the institutional problem. The aim having already been achieved, it would be quite pointless to think in terms of institutions, whose only *raison d'être* is to enable the generality of men to become better.

There is no greater fallacy than to consider a general conversion an indispensable precondition for the establishment of an order of society conforming to Christian principles and the natural law. For the essential

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purpose of such a social order is precisely to facilitate a more general and more lasting conversion of men.

The solution of this difficulty is, *first*, to recruit and train a number of men who can *afterwards* (acting *on* and *by* institutions, as if with a lever) work for the establishment of a social order such that the salvation of the generality of men will be made easier.

So we have an operation in three stages: (1) to train a number of men, who (2) acting on and through institutions, will build a social order such that (3) the salvation and growth of the generality of men will readily follow.

This is the only effective solution. Misunderstanding it leads to putting the conversion of men in opposition to the reform of the institutions. Whereas there should be no conflict between these two aims – at least in theory.

Institutions – in the hands of an élite – assume the function of a tool – for the easier salvation of all.

This in no way detracts from the role of the institutions. Rather does it reveal it in its true light – without, however, denying the fact that primacy must be given to the problem of the people, of cadres. Important as is the institutional lever, it must be recognized that without people capable of making the right use of it, it can serve no useful purpose. To serve their purpose, institutions must be continually reformed. Moreover, it is also necessary to educate the élite which under no matter what kind of régime constitutes the “garrison” whose responsibility it is, either by its intellectual influence or by its political action, to defend the institutional fortress.

To realize the truth of this one need only note how assiduously French Freemasonry clings to that key institution, the Ministry of National Education – the means of controlling the formation of youth, the men of tomorrow. Also to be noted in this connection is the educational, political and “intelligence” role played by the Communist Party in communist countries.²

2. *The Question of Effectives.* The problem of cadres then is problem Number One. This is the first problem which should engage our attention. Above all, it is essential that the problem of cadres should not be reduced to a mere problem of effectives – to a counting of the number of people more or less in sympathy with our aims.

The worldly wise will, of course, ask the inevitable questions: "How many subscribers? How many listeners? How many adherents?" But while such questions are by no means altogether irrelevant they are by no means enough. For they concern mere depersonalized tabulations, statistics and information taken from files, etc. And these are quite incapable of revealing people as they are, as they must be known whenever action is contemplated.

They could be married or celibate; country folk or townsmen; soldiers, teachers, artisans or peasants; literate or ignorant; tenacious or unreliable; taciturn or babblers; rich or poor; tied down by their work or with plenty of spare time, etc. There are many such characteristics which should be known, in order to use them to the best advantage. And there are as many different possible kinds of action. For political and social action is essentially multiform, complex. It comprises innumerable diverse activities. It is therefore folly to imagine that a single type of character, a single type of cadre, will suffice for all kinds of action.

If there were but one, interchangeable type of cadre, one would require only to count the number of one's supporters. But the real problem is quite different. And to solve it one must ask questions such as: "Whom will you be able to contact? Who are these people? How worthwhile are they? From what district or milieu do they come? What operations are planned or in process of being carried out?"

All these questions have reference to real persons, normally grouped in extremely varied social relationships. They go far beyond the scope of a list of names, classified in a file in alphabetical or geographical order. Yet how many are there who measure the success of their action by the bulk of their files!

Of course in these democratic times we are bound to recognize the formidable importance of numerical considerations. Votes have to be cast and numbers reckoned. We must therefore do our best to stand up and be counted. Where we go wrong is if we stop there – at the simple level of recruitment, and speak of action as if its success depended solely on totting up numbers. In doing so we can deceive ourselves in two ways: on the one hand a magnificent numerical achievement can lack all significance in terms of dynamism; on the other hand certain groups, though small in numbers, can exert considerable power in action.

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3. *A Small Number of Active People.* All too often one hears it said: "If only there were some thousands more of us."

Thousands of whom, and doing what?

On this kind of reckoning, the invertebrates ought to have conquered the earth, for there are a lot more of them than of anything else. Several thousands more readers, listeners or subscribers could perhaps improve the balance and the budgetary position of an organization – which is not to be sneezed at – but it would not be enough to secure effective social and political action. There are many groups which only waste their time and energy, though their coffers are full and their files bulging with names.

During the last century, the cause of Christian social order had very important resources and a numerous body of supporters at its disposal. But what did all those thousands, virtually millions of adherents, do? They were mere readers, mere listeners, mere subscribers – and with merely that kind of support no victory has ever been won.

These thousands or millions neither knew how, nor were able, nor in reality even seriously wished, to stop the progress of a tiny number of convinced and resolute revolutionaries – which goes to show that the problem of numbers (while being far from negligible) is by no means the most important or the most decisive one. Fifty or so active, tenacious, clever and well-instructed people are worth more than a million egoists or idlers who are ham-handed and doctrinally illiterate. The handful of French freemasons who inspired the "League for the Rights of Man" or the "League for Secular Education" had a much more decisive influence than all the "men of the Right" in France put together.

Intelligence undoubtedly counts. But so also does a resolute will. In a letter from Fr. De Foucauld – the evangelist of the Sahara – to General Laperrine we read: "When I entered religious life, I thought that it was gentleness and humility that I should principally have to preach. In the course of time, I began to see that what is most lacking is dignity and intrepidity."³

This is a most revealing indication of the kind of qualities needed for the inspiration of effective action.

What is needed above all else is a handful of resolute men, thoroughly enlightened and indomitable, who can never be worn down. We well remember the reply one of our friends gave to someone who was talking to him of the need for enrolling an immense body of adherents:

“Victory appears to you to depend on the recruitment of these thousands of men. How enormously our ideas differ on this point. Your hope lies only in a great reinforcement in terms of numbers. While at the present moment all I aspire to do is to discover one or two persons. And these I cannot find. For the people I need to increase the effectiveness of our action are not the “anybodies” who make up the battalions you envisage. I would with pleasure give you the immense crowd if I could get the two or three whom I consider indispensable to our action. For the discovery of these two or three, by completing our team, would make possible the subsequent recruitment, in a harmonious, hierarchical and orderly fashion, of the much sought after multitude.”

4. *The Right Man for the Actual Job.* Practically speaking, to get a job done and done well we do not need tens or hundreds or thousands of nondescript men – only some few men, of a definite character, real men, not abstract formulae; not somebody (no matter who) doing something (no matter what), but the “man who gets things done” – i.e., a given task, in a given place, in given circumstances and under given conditions.

A horde of “effectives” is not necessary for effective action. What is wanted is a few judiciously chosen persons, invited to occupy key positions, men capable of accomplishing the work expected from them.

The action will initially develop with and through these persons and the bulk of the effectives can afterwards be recruited, inspired, organized and directed. Otherwise the inertia of the mass will paralyse the team.

It is obvious that the search for, the choice of, and the instruction of these few key people for clearly defined tasks is especially important. “Give me six men of this stamp and with them I will change the face of the universe,” exclaimed Weishaupt, the founder of the Illuminati of Bavaria after meeting his henchman, Knigge.⁴ This was perhaps an obvious exaggeration. It nevertheless reveals in a most striking manner Weishaupt’s realization of the importance of cadres so far as action is concerned.

Therefore, methods which ignore the concrete situation and disregard the personal aspect in order to organize everything according to abstract formulae or numerical calculations are bound to be futile. One needs to preserve a keen perception of man as he really is, and in all his aspects, if only so as not to be depressed by those absurd assessments of people that we hear only too often. So and so, we are told, is so exception-

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ally capable in this sphere, so competent in another, so perfectly suitable in all sorts of ways. The prodigy concerned could do virtually anything – if he but wished to. In actual practice, alas, he has no such inclination – or else he just cannot do what he is supposed to be capable of. Or perhaps he is simply a coward – or sick – or his wife won't permit him – or he is finicky – or he prefers bridge, hunting, fishing, golf, or comfort – or he has just been transferred to Hong Kong – or he is too much occupied with his work – or the night air gives him a cold – or he has to go to bed early.

No matter what may be his supposed qualities, such a person can be discounted when it comes to action. Alas, how many people are there, both men and women, who answer to this description? They are real people all right, who really do exist, but for all practical purposes they are simply part of these “nominal effectives” we spoke about earlier.

For when it comes to action, it isn't enough that there should be admirable people, theoretically capable of saving the world, but who in practice choose to hide themselves away in the seclusion of their homes, where they will probably die without having ever done anything beyond thinking noble thoughts and assuring us that they are entirely with us in spirit.

This is all very fine. But it amounts to nothing. When it comes to the crunch, a multitude of these lukewarm, well-wishing idlers constitutes an infallible recipe for defeat. Let us therefore consider men as they really are, taking into account everything with which we have to reckon, not only what certain folk might be capable of doing if they wished, but also their willingness and the real possibility of their ever resolving to do anything.

In effect, many men promise to be there, to do this or that, on a given day, but excuse themselves at the last minute, because their real capacity to act does not correspond to their desire or to their sincere intention. If therefore we neglect to take into account all the foregoing considerations, we shall be sure to reap a harvest which will consist only of disillusionment, defections and ineffectiveness.

The discovery of the right man for the right job is always decisive. And to find him what does it matter if rivers and mountains have to be crossed. By contrast, it may be useless, sometimes even dangerous, to organize a gathering of twenty thousand people.

The coming into action of a single man may be an event of national or even world-wide significance. For instance, Luther⁵ by himself

subverted the religious loyalty of half of Europe. St. Louis-Marie de Montfort⁶ was personally largely responsible for the intense faith of the western provinces of France. And what might one not say concerning the international influence of Marx, Engels and Lenin?

Consequently, it is anything but absurd to suggest that one man may be potentially capable of influencing the social and political orientation of a district, or of a professional association. In fact we can point to several examples where this has happened. In how many groups and movements have we heard it said that there was nothing to be done in such and such a dead and alive hole – until the day when the said “hole” suddenly exploded into action – simply because the right man had turned up, the man who could do it, knew he should do it, determined he would do it, and kept on doing it.

5. The Ideal Thousand. All these considerations prompt us to propose a rough outline, in terms of cadres, of what would be required to initiate action of a general character, which would be flexible, based on interconnected groups, and co-ordinated: action which while costing very little would nevertheless be effective.

Our “ideal thousand” would be composed at the top level of leadership of the concerted action of 5, 10, 15 people working together with a wide degree of latitude according to varying circumstances, physical and psychological. We must recognize that, at this level, such a team is quite indispensable to fruitful action.

At the level immediately subaltern to this, it would be necessary to train or give an appropriate formation to some 15, 20 or 30 leaders capable of guiding, counselling and animating certain specialized sectors of practical action, without preconceived notions concerning “the Party,” or an ambition to impose an artificial or totalitarian unity.

This kind of loose-knit organization would inevitably imply taking into account the immense variety of tasks involved in co-ordinating action in the interlocking network of groups. It would also have to take into consideration the varying importance of the organisms affected by such action.

All this might require let us say 20 or 30 men at the top leadership echelon, 40 to 50 at the second level, 300–400 at the third echelon and perhaps 500–600 at the fourth echelon; roughly speaking, a thousand men in all.

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Those whose concepts do not extend beyond the calculation of electoral percentages will no doubt consider 1000 to be an absurdly, indeed contemptibly, small number. While others, somewhat more realistic, may consider the figure of 1000 to be unnecessarily high. What they forget is that there will inevitably be a certain proportion who will find themselves incapable of standing the pace and who will drop out of activity either wholly or partially.

Having thought of all these considerations we opt for 1000. A mere thousand. But if that 1000 were composed of people adequately zealous and tenacious and with an adequate formation in every respect, they would suffice to constitute a really effective leavening influence, socially and politically, for a country such as France. For this 1000 would not be a party or a movement but rather an animating influence present in all milieux. Their union would derive from their unity of spirit and method of work, not from the material bond of a powerfully structured organization. As exponents of that all-important co-ordinating element, the cultural or doctrinal action of which we spoke towards the end of the previous chapter, they would be animators, advisers, who could be grafted into their natural associations or into whatever sphere in which they happened to find themselves. They would everywhere be supporters of orthodoxy, veritable technicians of the most appropriate means of leavening the social lump. They would indeed be these *praeclari cives* – the élite leadership – of which Maritain⁷ has spoken.

6. *The Thousand.* It is of vital importance to realize that finding, equipping and giving an adequate formation to a thousand strong élite is in every way much more effective than getting together several million individuals labelled with a group or party membership card – people whose action is limited to membership of the group or party concerned, and who will do nothing effective unless there are some of the “thousand” among them directing, animating and educating them, i.e., moulding them into something more than a mere amorphous conglomeration or mass.

We shall make progress only when we have understood the folly of the direct and almost exclusive pursuit of large numbers; only when we realize that we must go first and above all for quality. For it is only thus that we shall be able to influence, organize and give prudent guidance to large numbers of people. This is not a question of underestimating the

importance of numbers, but only of indicating the best way and surest means of reaching out to the multitude, and of continuing to have a beneficial, lasting and decisive influence over them.

It would seem that the leaders of the Revolution have understood, much better than we, the significance of the relationship between quality and quantity. “The most urgent practical task,” we read in Book Four of Lenin’s *Collected Works*,

is to create a revolutionary organization capable of giving the political struggle sufficient energy, firmness and continuity.

We must be careful not to assimilate the organization of the revolutionaries† to that of the workers.‡ The organization of the revolutionaries must comprise principally those whose profession is revolutionary action, men who will consecrate their whole lives, and not only their free evenings, solely to the Revolution. The organization of the workers should be as broad as possible; that of the revolutionaries ought not to be so very large.

How to find, form and furbish the “thousand” is a problem whose solution is more urgent than the reform of institutions. For, as history has shown repeatedly, a serious and lasting reform of institutions is inconceivable without the “thousand.”

In the eighteenth century, Christian France foundered through the defection of those who ought to have played the part of the “thousand” and did not do so; men such as Malsherbes,⁸ for example, who not only refused to combat the progress of subversion but actually helped it.

Moreover, how many enterprises and movements have failed after a magnificent start off in respect of numbers – all through lack of the right kind of leadership, because they did not have within their ranks enough of that indispensable “thousand” to ensure their security and future.

How many systems, on the other hand, though detested by the majority of a nation, have succeeded in maintaining themselves or in promptly making an astonishing comeback after what seemed to be a fatal setback, precisely because they did have their “thousand,” their well trained élite. Moreover, the enemy’s “thousand” are frequently the only people possessed of a sufficiently practical grasp of public affairs.

† The qualitative element.

‡ The quantitative element.

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Needless to say, they are also always determined to make use of their competence in this respect.

Meanwhile, on our side there is only a multitude of good people, full of good but rather vague intentions. They are often much more numerous than the enemy's legions, but usually with little disposition to devote themselves to public affairs, usually in a hurry to get back to their dressing gowns and slippers. Thousands of people who should be capable of acting effectively, but in practice do not do so, who in practice concern themselves with their own affairs, their pleasures and recreations; thousands of people who may as well not exist.

The two greatest problems facing us then are the problem of the "thousand" and the problem of institutions. Without appropriate institutions the zeal of the well-disposed tends to remain frail. Without a well formed and active élite ("the thousand") the best of institutions are liable to be swept aside like sand castles by the tides of Subversion.



Chapter II

People in Their Various Networks

What is meant by “network” in this connection? Man in society is never a solitary individual. He always acts in association with others in a variety of relationships, some natural, some entered into deliberately or by chance. He may be a parent, a tax payer, a student, a peasant, and as such may participate in joint activities within each or all of these categories, and belong to a variety of associations.

But associations in themselves are distinct entities, catering for the needs or interests of different categories within society as a whole. Even the fact that one individual according to the variety of his interests may militate within several such associations does not necessarily give rise to what we call a “network.” This only exists where a body of men, in agreement on the goals to be worked for, consciously link and co-ordinate various associations towards the desired goal. The “network” is the conscious motivating force of associations; it is the ensemble of active individuals who animate and influence them. Such an ensemble acts like a network of meshes, interlocking and holding together a collective entity which would otherwise disperse. It is the leaven in the dough, the motive power of action, the conscious and voluntary element in the category under consideration.

However, there is nothing secret or magical about this. The idea of a “network” implies only that of a special formation within the category or association, a select, active and conscious minority which must continually renew itself.

Just what is, and what can be the effectiveness of action that is specifically doctrinal in the conditions of today?

1. *What a Clique of Ideologues Can Do.* As soon as we ask this question, some people will hasten to remind us that this is an age of engineers and technicians. And this being so, they will hasten to question whether

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any influence can be exercised today by ideologues as such. However they may fear the coming of an ultra pragmatic age, exclusively controlled by those possessing technological competence, they just cannot see how, under these circumstances, doctrinal action could possibly be effective.

Superficially, such a line of argument appears cogent enough. Yet the moment we open our eyes and look around us to see what is actually happening, we can see for ourselves that the very opposite is the case. It is with no little astonishment that we observe to what extent men of experience, such as business chiefs and astute technicians, can be and are in fact manipulated by a clique of ideologues. There are innumerable examples of trades unions, agricultural organizations, professional and family organizations, scholastic and cultural institutes which are in practice directed by elements who have no connection with the experience, competence, responsibilities and knowledge appropriate to these social categories.

One can discover with little difficulty the role of parasitical ideological coteries which have little in common with the basic institutions on which they batten: i.e., families, trades unions, professions, intermediary social bodies and so on. And yet it is these coteries which, so to speak, operate the switches and the service stations. It is they who constitute the decisive centres of ideological pressure within these basic social bodies. By means of conferences, seminars, round tables, opinion polls, etc., they direct everything, without affording any evidence of those experimental, technical and scientific qualifications which are considered to be the foundations of modern society.

An excellent report by M. de Penfentenyo⁹ in January 1966 showed how the nominal directors of enterprises and commissions are, in fact, guided by officials and "experts" working in the background, and how the same names continually keep on cropping up in different connections.

Everywhere the same phenomenon is to be found: men of known competence, experience and scientific knowledge intimidated and manipulated by ideologues lacking any serious scientific or experimental background. In other words, the real experts, technicians, business heads, teachers and agriculturists allow themselves to be hoodwinked by a clique of ideologues who are experts in scientific and technical jargon. The reason for this is that the real authorities are usually too much absorbed in the specialist activities in which they are qualified.

The irresponsible ideologues in question triumph so long as they predominate at the levels at which the basic planning decisions are taken. They succeed in this respect as a result of the mushrooming of societies, study groups, round tables and centres specializing in ideological action. "These ideologues," says Mr. De Penfentenyo,

have formed their own cadres and through them they have captured the universities and schools. They inspire the Press, intimidate the intelligentsia, clerical and lay, and invade the political spheres. Once securely entrenched as directing nuclei within the leadership of trades unions, economic groups or social administrations, they excel in restricting the sphere of action of the natural élites. And this leads to the impoverishment and decline of leadership as a whole. For non-participation in the taking of responsible decisions accustoms leading cadres in these spheres to letting things slide. And so we get the climate of non-resistance and impotence of which the victims themselves complain.

There are two reciprocal causes of this totalitarian trend: abuse of power by the one side, abdication by the other. The former would not be possible but for the aching void caused by the latter.

A technocrat once said: "It is not the State's fault that it has destroyed individual initiatives and strangled the intermediary bodies. Its interventions have been made indispensable by the non-exercise of freedom."

There is a lot of truth in this quip. France and other countries are still rich enough in juridically recognized liberties which the responsible parties never think of exercising.¹⁰

What is the use of having intermediary bodies if, as seems to be the case, they are no longer inspired by that spirit of initiative and individual liberty which is the main reason for their existence? What use is it having these bodies if those who animate them have succumbed to revolutionary fatalism?

In many cases, intermediary bodies have less need of being protected from external aggression than of being revitalized and invigorated from within. Nor would the aim of this operation be to annex them or orientate them in accordance with an ideology indifferent or hostile to their nature – but simply to furnish them with such elements of social doctrine as would permit them to become conscious once more of what they really are, of their true role, of the services and function they ought to perform, and also aware of why their powers are indispensable.

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“The revolutionary current which today sweeps everything before it,” says M. de Penfentenyo,

is the work of a minority of Socialist, Marxist or Masonic ideologues who generally speaking – at least from the outset – lack any share in responsibility for the municipalities, enterprises, schools and other undertakings which they manipulate. And yet they go forward from strength to strength. The number of those truly responsible for these natural communities is legion.

They have the reality of social responsibility and experience. And, in formal terms, they have real power. And yet, having nothing to oppose to revolutionary infiltration but a faith and a will that have scarcely any doctrinal foundation, they give way to these revolutionary pressures.

From this it follows that, if they are to be effective, the cadres in question need a solid doctrinal formation more than anything else. It is also obvious that this doctrinal formation must be provided as an integral component of the social action that is required within these various milieux. What is necessary is a doctrinal formation that is in close contact with real problems and real responsibilities: a doctrinal formation that emerges within the context of a veritable network of human relationships.

In the words of M. de Penfentenyo:

It is the very nature of things and concrete experience of them that provide the indispensable context within which to arrange for any serious social or political formation. Consequently it is necessary to avoid the dangers of a purely theoretical or bookish diffusion of ideas, which might lead to a purely abstract approach, incapable of grasping the various requirements of the actual situation which are often varied and complex.

So there are two forms of one-sided or inadequate formation which have to be avoided: on the one hand, a “rule of thumb” professional or technical *savoir faire* insufficiently enlightened by the general background provided by doctrine; and on the other hand, a brilliant doctrinal formation lacking sufficient contacts with concrete reality, without which it is impossible to see social and political life in true perspective.

The most competent of technicians and professional men who nevertheless lack a solid doctrinal formation soon become the playthings of

the ideologues. On the other hand, doctrinaire intellectuals cut off from concrete reality are found to be unbearable by the obvious absurdity of their intellectual flights of fancy.

It can thus be seen that the formation of good animators should avoid two things in particular: on the one hand, the priming of especially bright people with social and moral principles in the hope that they may be capable of animating a social milieu of which they have virtually no concrete practical experience; on the other hand, the provision of technical or professional training appropriate to certain posts or employments for certain people who are ignorant of practically everything outside the narrow field of their specialization.

To bring into being an effective political and social élite, its cadres must have a sufficiently basic doctrinal formation giving them an ability to see the world at large in proper perspective, and at the same time competence in their own field. In other words, they need a general formation that is in close contact with social reality. By far the best formation is that which is obtained in contact with the realities of life by people who are thus responsive to the real needs of pulsating humanity.

2. *Respect Human "Grass Roots."* Besides, it is within their natural associations, that is in their natural environment, that people find the most favourable conditions for their development and are able to yield the greatest return in terms of effective action.

In this connection, we recall our first attempts at the doctrinal formation of groups of militant workers. To avoid having too many meetings, we at first thought it possible to group these workers along with some students. This had an immediate double effect. On the one hand, a depressing timidity on the part of some workers who became aware in this atmosphere of their lack of intellectual knowledge; on the other hand, a tendency to demagogy with a proletarian edge, arising from the urge certain other workers felt to keep upsides with these young "bourgeois" types.

But the same workers, at home or in their workshop or factory, in contact with their equals, became at ease again. Neither boastful nor timid; fully yet prudently aware of their capacities; no tendency to exaggeration, yet gifted in many ways; rational, prudent, subtly aware of those matters pertaining to their trade and way of life, listened to and respected as experts and fully appreciated for their virtue and courage. Whereas out

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of their element, they were immediately in a state of confusion, as a result of inhibiting timidity or self-assertive bombast.

In order to be effective therefore it is necessary to respect the individual's "grass roots," and to recognize the potentialities which stem from the function, the status and the country of origin of an individual or of a category of persons. For it would be a great mistake to think that the "thousand" of whom we have spoken could or should escape from those circumstances of time, place and associations, which normally condition social and political action.

3. *Some Exceptions.* All this does not rule out the possibility of numerous exceptions. Nor does it dispense us from the duty of making the most of such people. History is full of exceptions. It must be recognized that at times exceptional people had much more impact on their society than would have been normally possible. Wise action therefore requires a twofold perception: to recognize what is normally required and yet to be aware that there are exceptions to every rule.

It is well known, for instance, that the peasantry is the most peaceful and least revolutionary of social strata. But this did not prevent the peasantry of La Vendée¹¹ from holding the French Revolution in check during its early days. Again, at the time of the Reformation in Germany, the peasants were the most savagely subversive element.

The influence of the intellectual élite of philosophers, writers, artists and teachers is normally an immense one; yet it was twelve poor Jewish fishermen, most them illiterate, who turned the world upside down by announcing the "good tidings" of Christ.

Country girls usually help their mother around the farm until they get married. Not so Joan, however, who, in God's name, was a warrior and whom (as Villon says) "the English burnt in Rouen Square."

What can monks do in the immediate problems of political life? They can become the arbiter of Europe if their name is Bernard; or they can break up that Europe, tearing Christendom apart, if they are called Martin Luther.

The miner's special skill is in the hewing of coal. But there was one miner, Thorez,¹² who became the leader of the French Communists. Consequently, it behoves us to look out for the exceptions.

4. *Let Each Attend to His Own Responsibilities.* The fact remains, nevertheless: the rule is the rule. Such is the basis of life in general. Thus, it is that the history of the peerage is normally written by peers, that peasants are normally best fitted to appreciate and to attend to what requires to be done in the agricultural sphere, and that for military action it is usually best to choose a soldier.

These are no doubt mere statements of the obvious. Yet there are some people for whom this particular penny has yet to drop. For example, there are those who, impatient to take over power, think they are being realistic when they propose to arrange for the technical instruction of the members of the government which they hope to constitute: to groom in advance the future Chancellor of the Exchequer, the future Lord Privy Seal, the future Commander-in-Chief and the future Lord Lieutenants! Is this not how the Revolution operates, they ask?

It is indeed true that sometimes, in its initial phases, the Revolution has been obliged to choose and technically instruct its future chiefs from subaltern elements, and to provide specialized schools for that purpose. But, thank God, for us such a cumbersome process is far from being necessary.

Our principal need is to provide certain people with a sound doctrinal formation, not to provide technical instruction for élites or pre-designated chiefs. This is the right order of doing things, because our action is not “dialectical” but aims instead at unifying. We have no need to revolutionize. We do not seek to displace or destroy one class of citizens for the profit of another class, or to erase from social life the members of one tendency or party, in order to entrust all posts to the leaders of some other party or tendency, which is what, basically, constitutes revolutionary dialectics. We must be very careful not to accept the Revolution’s terms of reference, for then we should ourselves be taking part in the very process we seek to eliminate altogether.

We have to consider all classes, all categories of citizens in accordance with the justice of the natural and divine order: each in his own place, each organized and appraised according to his function.

If it should appear to be necessary to make a clean sweep, here and there, in order to re-establish the temporal City on its true basis, it is still quite absurd to suppose that the chiefs and élites of society have to be formed artificially, as if society had no previous existence. The technical training of pre-selected cadres is quite pointless if our social and politi-

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cal action is conducted with due prudence. For in a normal society these élites and leaders already exist.

The formation of a future Chancellor of the Exchequer, Command-in-Chief or Attorney General is all the less necessary when everyday one can meet in the streets worthy lawyers, Generals versed in their profession, and clever financiers, etc., in whom all that is lacking is a knowledge of sound doctrine: people fully up to date in their own specialized fields, but virtually illiterate concerning Christian social doctrine.

Consequently, since these jurists, financiers, generals, professional leaders, peasant élites, teachers and so on exist, it is more in conformity with the right order of action to win over and give a doctrinal formation to those who are already *technically* competent. Elementary respect for the natural order of things thus also implies a considerable economy in both time and money. Our task is not to destroy but to revitalize an existing social order which, though vitiated, still has valuable resources which it would be criminal to destroy or neglect.

5. *The Cadres Already Exist.* The truth is that it is both true and false to say that we lack the necessary cadres. They are there all right, technically instructed, practically in the right places, as the normal leaders of contemporary society. Some, no doubt, may have been won over to the Revolution but with many of them this is only a superficial and unwitting surrender. A good scouring (both intellectual and spiritual) would suffice to transform some of them into ardent and able workers for the Christian restoration of the social order; and this could come about more rapidly than we think.

Are we not much more widely spread throughout all spheres of society than the first Christians about whom Tertullian speaks? The problem we face derives not from the non-existence of Christians, or from their absence from the City, but from their lukewarmness, their tepidity and lack of fortitude.

When we can say: see how these Christians know their social doctrine (which Pius XII has said cannot be ignored without danger to Faith and Moral Order†), and how they implement it, our aim would be all but achieved. Given such Christians, a consensus of sane opinion would soon make its weight felt from one end of society to the other. This is a

† Allocution to Italian Catholic Action, April 29, 1945.

pre-condition for any kind of social reform that is thorough-going but not subversive. Such a consensus of opinion would also indicate that the desired moral reconstruction of the social order was imminent.

6. *Need for a Sense of the Hierarchy of Social Relationships.* This winning over of élites, needless to say, implies that we must have a keen perception of the possibilities of each of the élites: their strong points, their weak points, their normal reactions, their class (or caste) spirit – and also of the hierarchy of relations between them, at least so far as action is concerned.

There are all sorts of networks of relationship. Some are professional, depending on status; some are local; some arise from groups, parties and societies; some are sporting, some cultural; some private and based strictly on friendship (but these, it is true, often tend to be complacent and inward-looking, less active and enterprising than professional associations bent on defending rights and interests).

There are associations which are based solely on the fact of residence in the same district or the same block of flats; some arise from common memories or resemblances. There are ideological or cultural bonds. We also have parish choirs, regimental or old boys associations, etc.

Some associations have comparatively few members but are important because their members occupy key positions; others are composed of modest folk and draw their strength from their numbers, their zeal or their solidarity.

There are associations which are powerful through the force of circumstances, as a result of particular events, because of temporary considerations, or because of the political régime that prevails. Hence, for example, the exceptional influence exercised by the “Resistance” at the time of France’s liberation from the Nazis.

The associations or networks which are normally most influential are those which impinge on the highest social functions (judiciary, military or professional), or which forge public opinion (writers and journalists).

Lawyers, teachers and doctors tended to go into Parliament under the Third Republic. Today similar strata in Asia, Latin America and Africa have a world-wide significance, precisely because the Revolution seeks to play a major role in these parts of the world.

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Indeed, there might even be associations which derive solely from a will to combat the effects of revolutionary subversion. If, as we have said, our action should have a cementing, unifying influence, it is contrary to the spirit of this kind of action that we should accept as a matter of course the fissions, the social disruptions engendered by the Revolution.

If at one time in history, freemasons could seriously entertain the objective of one day having a freemason on Peter's Throne, it is surely unthinkable that in this day and age we Catholics should consider it impossible to take advantage of certain fissures in contemporary society or to initiate any kind of action in hostile milieu. Is this attitude of mind not a blindingly obvious indication of our lack of resolution and courage?

If we had sufficient resolution, we should refuse to regard anything such as this to be impossible. We should instead realize that things said to be impossible can usually be broken down into a series of smaller steps each of which is possible. In the words of Weishaupt, head of the Bavarian Illuminati: "Anyone who seeks to change everybody at once will change nobody."

To impose the same standard of action on all and sundry is to condemn everyone to impotence, by taking away from each the means natural to him, and in which he could excel. When St. John Bosco tells us that we must use the talents of everyone, this does not mean using them indifferently or in the same way, but each according to his talents, his state of life, his freedom of action and his associations.

The rule is to reject no one, to despise no association out of hand, to seek to work within, sustain and animate first of all those which are most important and influential, without forgetting those which are more humble or remote from us. We should not consider even our enemies as being definitely incapable of being influenced by our action. All things are possible with God, if we resort to spiritual means such as prayers and retreats.

If the Communists have the audacity to train their militants to win over Catholics, even the clergy, to their cause, it is surely unthinkable that we do nothing to bring back revolutionaries, even simple unbelievers, to Christ the King.

7. *Each According to His Capacity.* We should, of course, pursue and seek to influence those who are most promising. But without despising

those whom Providence happens to put in our way, apparently fortuitously. We should at least examine what these can do and what can be expected from them.

Let us beware above all of our whims and fancies. Let us force ourselves to look a second time at those whom we may have dismissed at first sight because they happened to rub us up the wrong way.

Those with modest capacities should be asked to undertake activities within their capacities. Even the mediocre have been known to render inestimable services when so employed. On the other hand, it may be necessary to bridle the will to power of a few. Or to remind others of the duties which their rank, their function or their education requires them to fulfil.

Many excellent employers have an uneasy conscience today because they do not know how to reply to such catchwords as “the onward march of history” or the “inevitability of Socialism” – when even a modest knowledge of doctrine would suffice to expose the absurdity of these subversive fallacies.

An appropriate course of action is needed to appreciate what action can be expected from different social strata. For it is not enough to activate those who wish to act. The form of action proposed should not appear to deracinate them or take them out of their natural milieu.

This, incidentally, was one of the weak points of the uprising in the Vendée. Peasants, who by natural inclination and immediate interest could not forget their duty to attend to their farms, were continually torn between their duty to get in the harvest and to cultivate their fields on the one hand, and on the other hand their duty to be at their posts in the *maquis* to combat the armies of the Revolution.

Plans of action should therefore be adapted to the conditions of life, the character and customs of those involved, but without the interests of action in general being sacrificed in order to secure this harmony.

It is useful to distinguish the normal action of a network or association from what may be extraordinary, temporary, even accidental. Thus, under a parliamentary régime, under a government by assemblies, the association of lawyers assumes disproportionate significance because oratory plays such an important role under such a régime. Let us, therefore, not despise this association simply because in our modern democracies we may think that lawyers enjoy greater influence than they ought to have.

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8. *The Need to Be Active on All Strata.* The need for involving all kinds of strata in the social struggle is often insufficiently understood. This can have dangerous consequences.

As soon as a cause is served by too narrow a fraction of society, the Revolution very quickly seeks to “insert the dialectic” by opposing the rest of the nation to that group of citizens. It must be admitted that very rarely do we encounter the admirable spectacle of social solidarity displayed at provincial level by the peasants of La Vendée, who overcame the apathy of their natural leaders, the nobility, by forcing them to lead them into battle against the armies of the Revolution.

It is much easier to cultivate intensively a single category of militants, thereby obtaining an apparently homogenous troop who will be content to follow one or two simple maxims for action. The fact remains, nevertheless, that however dynamic it may seem, this kind of action is the least effective of all.

If the single category is the working class, the social question will be reduced to the problem of wages and working conditions. If it is ex-servicemen, the aim will be “to stand shoulder to shoulder as at the front” without any possibility of indicating how or why.

These are legitimate preoccupations but they do not take us very far. They tend to give rise to a state of affairs where the hypertrophy of one or two powerful social groupings threatens to jeopardise the stability of the social structure as a whole. This danger is encountered more frequently and is much more imminent than is commonly realized. The dialectical development of the Revolution always profits from such one-sided overemphasis: from the dictatorship of the class, of the military, of a parliamentary bourgeoisie, of a synarchy of technocrats. The glory, the fruitfulness of political action worthy of the name consists in the development of a multiple yet homogeneous social order, harmoniously diverse and hierarchical, from an action which seeks not to destroy but to build and consolidate.

An example of this could be seen in Christian France where all that had been anarchic in the feudal heritage was slowly absorbed and reorganized; where local barons, after a long struggle with the Crown, were promoted to the role of a national and international aristocracy; where a thriving yeomanry, the common folk of towns and cities, the tradesmen and merchants, developed into an immense variety of cultured middle class citizens.

What is needed, therefore, is a political and social action that is continually scanning what could be described as the geographical map of the social order: watching out for the weak points, noting the strong points, in order to take advantage of the latter and come to the aide of the former.

Quite obviously, the influence that a minister can have is incomparably greater than that of an ordinary trades unionist, however zealous. Consequently, the action of each association must be considered according to its function and importance. "If I succeed in winning over a king," wrote St. Alphonsus of Ligouri,¹³ "I shall have done more than if I had preached hundreds or thousands of missions."

This shows that all associations or social functions are by no means equal. There are some with double, treble, even a hundred times more influence than others. There are certain modern functions which, while not possessing the powers of a traditional monarch, nevertheless exercise no mean influence in the general direction of public affairs.

It is all the more important therefore that subversive forces should be prevented from gaining control over these commanding heights of the map of the social order.



Chapter III

The Clergy and the Religious Orders

The preceding chapter discussed associations or networks of relationships in general, but there are some social categories of considerable influence which deserve to be studied in greater depth.

Foremost among these are those eminent men who, having taken Holy Orders or adopted some religious rule within the Church, are generically termed “clerics,” to distinguish them from the laity. While the management of temporal things organized in accordance with God’s will belongs properly to the laity, the clergy and religious orders are more directly responsible for divine things and for the care of souls. So we can say that the clergy and religious are more specially concerned with the supernatural, with prayer, with spiritual doctrine and to a lesser extent with temporal affairs.

It is, however, quite impossible to distinguish between the characteristic roles of clergy and laity and to understand the distinction between them without first distinguishing between the spiritual and the temporal power. Here we assume that the doctrinal basis of this distinction is already known, and that we need only to allude to it insofar as it affects political and social action.

1. *Their Supernatural Activity.* Can there be a supernatural action in the social and political domain? Those who aspire to be powerful in the temporal world certainly do not seem to place much reliance on this kind of action.

But how is it possible to be a Christian, how can we fulfil the injunction in the dogmatic Constitution *De Ecclesia* of the Second Vatican Council, that we should “bring such light and order to the worldly business that it may be performed and developed in Christ’s way, and may give glory to the Creator and Redeemer,”¹⁴ if we do not have recourse to Him?

Is it possible that in the country that was Joan of Arc's¹⁵ the majority of Christians have lost all sense of God's intervention in temporal affairs? Are we perhaps subconsciously afraid of shocking the BBC and our secular humanist contemporaries? How they would positively shudder at the very thought of God's intervening politically in affairs of state!

Poor Joan of Arc! Against her she had not only that host of time-serving politicians in no way disposed to play the humble role of lieutenants of the King of Heaven, but also bishops and clergy anxious to placate these contemptible politicians.

If at the end of that terrible Hundred Years War, Heaven was won over by the prayers of those French people who refused to believe that God was indifferent towards their country, how should that same God, who does not change, refuse us the graces of peace, social order and political sanity, which it is our privilege and our duty to ask of Him?

How St. Thomas More,¹⁶ Chancellor of England, "the King's good servant, but God's first of all," would have scorned the suggestion that God can be indifferent to political questions!

When Our Lord prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, He lamented that it was to be beaten to the ground, with all its people, leaving no stone upon stone, "because thou didst not recognize the time of my visiting thee."† If this dispersion of a nation, the annihilation of a kingdom (events eminently political) had as their cause religious infidelity, how can the importance of the supernatural aspect of political action possibly be denied?

Is it rash to suppose that a contrary attitude on the part of the Jews might have averted so catastrophic a disaster? Evidently, therefore, supernatural influence does condition social and political action. Indeed, Psalm 126 says so quite explicitly: "Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."

Consequently, absolute priority of place in the hierarchy of social unity, and in the action which seeks to restore that unity, must belong to the priests, because they are the men of sacrifice, and to the religious, because it is they who sing the divine praises. It belongs in short to all those who are specially dedicated to the life of prayer.

What action could be more supernatural than that of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and recourse to the good offices of the Holy Virgin

† Cf. St. Luke xix:43-44.

and the Saints? But do we realize this? Do we really believe this – in practice?

It is for the priests and religious to offer Mass for the intentions we have been speaking of. It is for all of us to have the Masses said, to pray and get others to pray, to offer to Heaven our sacrifices great and small.

This is the first and most important of all Christian social and political actions. Hence the existence of the corresponding religious orders and associations – especially those which are known to be most dedicated to the cause of Christ's Social Kingship. Let us above all have recourse to those men and women who give themselves up to prayer. Let us seek to mobilize their support for the cause of Christ's Social Kingship. Or, if they are already won over, let us unite our prayers with theirs.

If the contemplatives of a nation are the object of general indifference, how can we expect God to bless that nation? Let us realize, therefore, that we need the supernatural action of the Orders and associations dedicated to prayer. Above all the prayers of monasteries and convents, of both monks and nuns, the supernatural intercession of the Brides of Jesus Christ for the social triumph of their Beloved. If we have faith, we must be continually confiding our intentions to those who pray without ceasing.

2. *The Social Influence of the Clergy.* The influence of the clergy must never be underestimated. For peoples live and achieve salvation only through their élites. As Blanc de Saint-Bonnet has stated: "The clergy constitutes the first and noblest aristocracy of the people. It is indeed from this spiritual aristocracy that all other aristocracies derive."†

It is impossible to conceive of any grave serious social collapse in history which did not derive from a previous spiritual collapse on the part of at least some of the clergy. When Christian society is enfeebled or breaks down, it is always as the consequence of some heresy. Never in history has a heresy developed unless from the outset the priests have been enlisted in its service. Almost always it is priests who have betrayed their vocation who have blazed Subversion's trail by providing the pride and cupidity of secular politicians or princes with arguments appearing to justify their criminal folly.

It was through the treason of the Chief Priests and Doctors of Law that Jesus was handed over to Caesar's representative to be judged. Simi-

† *La Restauration*, Book III, Chapter XVIII.

larly, it is almost invariably a clique of ordained Scribes and Pharisees with a supporting phalanx of perverted lay intellectuals (many of them, incidentally, former seminarians) who provide Caesar with some apparent justification for the crucifixion of the Lord's Mystical Body. The Revolution which split Christendom asunder and has since then subverted human society incessantly emerged from cities and countries where a heretical or schismatic clergy had already been cut off from unity with Rome: from London, Amsterdam, Geneva, Berlin – and later Moscow. As for France, Jansenism,¹⁷ Quietism¹⁸ and Gallicanism¹⁹ had subverted the clergy extensively for a century prior to 1789.

The clergy's influence is always decisive. This is true whether or not they have the faith and charity which society expects from them and which they ought to have. When they lack these qualities, so much the worse for their flocks and their fatherlands.

In his address to the Second World Congress of the Lay Apostolate, Pope Pius XII stated: "The layman has the right to receive from the priest all spiritual aid necessary to achieve the salvation of his soul and to reach spiritual perfection; when it is a matter of the fundamental rights of the Christian, he may put forward his demands; here the meaning and the very purpose of the whole Church's life is involved, as well as the responsibility before God of both priest and layman."

It has been said that a dubious clergy produces revolutionaries; that a mediocre clergy engenders indifference and impiety; that a virtuous clergy makes honest folk; but that God alone can raise up saints.

"The clergy can be accused only of showing too much condescension towards us," wrote Blanc de Saint-Bonnet.

Charity leads them into all the regions withdrawn from the light they bring – so much do they abhor all that takes us away from God.

For two centuries, clerics have been studying our worldly ideas so as to penetrate our minds, even going so far as to borrow the idiom that attracts the admiration of men in order to speak to us. Without realizing it they found themselves seeing the world through our spectacles, and, like us, thinking with the mind of the world. From then on the great catastrophe was in preparation. For thenceforth it was the human rather than the divine perspective which prevailed.

The first duty of the clergy is therefore to distrust the ambitions of the contemporary world and to be wary of the contagion of temporal

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influences. Their essential role is to be the representatives of God and of eternal values in our midst, to be witnesses of the Absolute, Guardians of the Faith, morals and sound doctrine. Their duty is to be the incorruptible defenders of all that which transcends our disputations and quarrels.

This alone would suffice to justify the distinction of the two powers: spiritual and temporal – a distinction indispensable to protect the guardians of supreme principles from the temptations involved in the management of temporal affairs. For doctrinal imperatives can appear to be most inconvenient to those who engage in the affairs of this world. There is always an insidious desire to twist doctrine in accordance with the demands of expediency.

In order that clerics, in whatever circumstances, may be able to remind us in a spirit of complete detachment of the sovereign principle which the State ought to respect, it is indispensable that they themselves should not be immersed in worldly struggles. For once this happens they are no longer able to fulfil their true mission.

“What is it that the laity expects from us?” asks Fr. Lagrange.²⁰ “The answer is clear,” he said.

They have recourse to us in order that we may transmit to them the wisdom of the saints, or at least the knowledge that makes us Christians, the Catholic truth as taught by the Church. Can it be required of us, in addition to this, to show a supererogatory competence in agriculture or in industry? On the pretext of showing sympathy towards all that is human or social, as the modern saying goes, must the priest be up to date on problems concerning which the specialists are still seeking a solution? No, this is not what the world wants from us. Men seek sympathy from us and we make a mockery of them. Thus to the industrialist who thirsts for the word of God, we speak of his business or his blast furnaces. Do you think that a literary man will be pleasantly surprised that we have read his latest novel? They look out for our halo and see only a hat of some kind or another. By all means let us get to know whatever we can learn. No one will say we should not. But let us subordinate all things to the sacred science that is demanded of us.

The specific power of the cleric is rooted in the supernatural order of things and it is in this context that we owe them obedience. Let us, therefore, have a wholesome desire for the purity and orthodoxy of our priests. Let us not be afraid to demand from them what it is their duty

to give us. That and nothing else. This will favour both their sanctity and ours. It is for us to help and sustain them. If they know that they are dutifully listened to, and that what they have to teach us is intelligently understood, they will be all the less afraid to present in its fullness the doctrine of salvation: the doctrine of the Pontifical Magisterium. They will then not be tempted to instead give us Teilhardism²¹ or sociological drivel in their sermons.

3. *Clergy and Laity.* The Clergy themselves know and teach that public affairs, and the implementation of doctrine in a manner appropriate to time and circumstance, are essentially the responsibility of the laity, for these are matters which come within the province of the temporal power. Nowadays, given the democratic constitution of most States, the laity as a whole are involved, one way or another, in the exercise of the temporal power.

Not that this temporal power is entirely autonomous. For it ought to be subject to the spiritual power, but only to the spiritual power as such: i.e., the spiritual power *qua* guardian of true principles, and teacher of faith, morals and doctrine. The temporal power is in no sense subject to a “spiritual power” which arrogates to itself the direction, the organization and the direct government of the temporal power.

In other words, the temporal power is bound to receive and to accept loyally what the spiritual power has a mission to give. All that it has to give concerning the life of the soul and the spirit, concerning the formulation of the Faith and the canons of morality, and also concerning the corpus of doctrine generally. But having received this from the spiritual power, the temporal power is master in its own house. It is for the temporal power to decide how the affairs of the temporal order should be governed.

For example, it belongs to the spiritual power to declare that the amputation of an arm or a leg is morally lawful in order to save the rest of the body, but its authority stops there. It is for the surgeon, not the priest, to decide whether in certain precise circumstances, this surgical operation is really necessary.

The spiritual power can declare morally lawful the jettisoning of cargo from a vessel so heavily loaded that it is likely to be submerged by the waves. But it is the captain of the ship who must decide whether such a solution is actually necessary in the case of an actual storm.

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Similarly, as a family man, I have an imperative duty to follow the teaching of the spiritual power of the Church in my conjugal life, in the direction of my home and in the education of my children. I must see to it that my little community is enlightened, warmed, sustained and held together by the sacramental life, the piety and the intelligence of Catholic doctrine. All of which things depend undeniably on sacerdotal authority. But when this is said and done, the government of my household and the conduct of my home belong to me alone, not to the parish priest, still less to the curate. I ought to help them and love them as my fathers in the Faith, but it is not for them to meddle in the administration of my temporal affairs.

The same reasoning applies if I happen to be a business chief. I have an imperative duty, as such, to be inspired by the Catholic doctrine on work, social questions and economic problems. I must constantly see to it that my factory is not a centre of spiritual pestilence, and that it does not result in the moral subversion or the physical emaciation of my workers. With discretion, I must act in a spirit of spiritual and corporal charity towards my most immediate neighbours, my employees. This said and done, however, I am still the “boss,” not the parish priest. He can, indeed, call me to order if I fail to do my duty as the spiritual magisterium teaches that I should. I must take from him the true social doctrine of the Popes. But not the fashionable doctrine of political coteries, not the blatherings of “Catholic” Marxism. I have the right to show the door to the progressive priest who comes into my premises to sing the praises of Karl Marx and to encourage the class war.

That these two jurisdictions, the spiritual and the temporal, are sometimes difficult to delineate in no way diminishes the necessity for distinguishing them clearly, and this is important for well-ordered action. In fact, it is impossible to act correctly if we are mistaken concerning the sphere in which we operate or concerning the rights we have to engage in action.

What then is our sphere of action as lay people? What are our rights concerning action in the temporal sphere? Have we a right to engage in it without a “mandate,” without being under the direction of the clergy?

The truth is that an ecclesiastical mandate is unnecessary to allow a layman to exercise a right, still less to accomplish an elementary duty of his life as a layman, such as to marry, bring up children, practice a profession, play his part as a citizen or serve his country in a Christian fashion.

It would be quite monstrous to suggest that his being a Christian should result in the restriction of a person's freedom to exercise his rights and comply with his most elementary duties as a Christian.

This would indeed be a most hideous manifestation of what has been described as "inverse clericalism": the kind of clericalism which seeks to promote and inculcate Naturalism and not the doctrine concerning the universal and social Kingship of Christ as taught by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical letter, *Quas Primas*.

Concerning this we must speak bluntly. Either clericalism does not exist in the Church – in which case a Christian layman, invoking Christian social doctrine ought, when acting in the temporal order, to be able to combat Liberalism, Socialism, Progressivism, Communism, etc., without having any "mandate" from the hierarchy.

Or a mandate *is* necessary even to accomplish a duty so obvious and necessary as the defence of the temporal city – in which case we must have the honesty to admit that clericalism is rampant.

In reality, as has been made clear by the distinguished French Jesuit, Fr. Bigo,²²

Christians can also group themselves in organizations which belong to lay society rather than to the Church: organizations such as workers trades unions, employers associations, farmers unions and institutes of all kinds. These may be open to non-Christians and people without any religious beliefs at all. They may be inspired by Christian doctrine without referring to it explicitly. But they may also openly profess this doctrine in order to benefit from the enlightenment, strength and unity it brings, and to reach the larger more widespread audience it guarantees. Such open profession of Christian principles in no way transforms them into movements under ecclesiastical control, nor does it take away from their character of organizations belonging to civil society.†

As Jean Madiran²³ has said:

If the men of the Church, in the interests of the world-wide pastorate, think it their duty to refuse their support to the defence of certain countries, they certainly cannot seek to dissuade citizens from defending the humble honour of their paternal homes, the freedom of their city, the legitimate interests and the very life of their country without criminally abusing their authority.

† *The Social Doctrine of the Church*, p. 102.

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Moreover, the chances of the disappearance or survival of certain political forces, social classes, peoples and civilizations are constantly being modified by the action of laymen. It is the laymen's duty and vocation so to act, without thinking themselves bound to accept a speculative forecast arrived at in a given situation, even if it should turn out to be accurate.

For example, it might appear certain, at a given moment, that Communism was destined to triumph in a certain country or group of countries. In the light of this appraisal of events the men of the Church would take whatever apostolic steps and precautions as would seem to be indicated. They are the judges of this, and responsible for it to God. But if, as a result of this appraisal of events, the men of the Church were to try to persuade the Catholic body to dissociate themselves from all efforts to resist Communism in the temporal sphere, then these men of the Church would be positively ensuring the victory of Communism by demobilizing, dispersing or paralysing resistance to it. It is precisely when Communism has every chance of winning over a country that it behoves us most to lessen its chance of success, to reverse what seems an inevitable trend. Then is the time for us to make history instead of submitting to it passively.†

Of course, this means strife: strife in the temporal order. In this epoch of public opinion, this age of radio, press and television, of ideological and psychological warfare, it could be that the clergy might, quite legitimately, prefer to contract out of this strife. Bearing in mind the Church's apostolic responsibilities, they may deem it prudent not to offend too much today those whom they may seek to evangelise tomorrow. That, however, is their affair.

But it is the duty of the laity to give battle and to stand on guard in defence of home and country. Since the victory often goes to the side which, though considered to have no chance, was able and willing to fight tenaciously and well for hearth and home, it would be criminal treason on the part of the clergy to forbid that struggle, or to enervate resistance, simply on account of a wholly speculative appraisal of circumstances. That clerics encouraging non-resistance under such circumstances may do so on allegedly apostolic grounds in no way mitigates their offence.

That certain clerics esteem it preferable to say nothing about Communism, or even to act as though it did not exist, is also their affair. They begin to abuse their authority criminally only when they seek to impose a

† *Itinéraires*, No. 67, p. 203.

policy of non-resistance on the laity in the name of Christian orthodoxy or apostolic unity.

As has been said by an author little suspect of anti-clericalism, Jean de Fabrègues,²⁴ “The clergy, when as clerics they wish to take over the conduct of the temporal world, are more capable of sacrificing the Christian world to the ambiguities of clerical power.”

From these considerations it can be perceived how indispensable is a precise and intelligent distinction between the spiritual power and the temporal power, and how decisive it can be – in the interest of the sanctuary no less than in the interest of the City. Only this distinction can offer to the apostolic and evangelising clergy, on the one hand, and to the civil, social and political action of the laity, on the other, the freedom which is indispensable to their respective and complementary missions. This alone makes harmony possible – without either betraying the interests of the temporal order or crippling the spiritual apostolate of the clergy.

Think, for example, of St. Francis of Assisi, dreaming of winning over to Christ the “Miramolin,” or great Sultan of the Orient, and embarking at Ancona for the Holy Land. Is it conceivable that, simply to facilitate the success of his spiritual mission, he could have demanded the withdrawal of those who were then mounting guard in the East, or in the Mediterranean, to prevent the Barbary pirates from plundering Christian coasts and scouring the seas for Christian slaves?

At this epoch, there was such widespread awareness of the role of these two powers, which are independent yet complementary, and inspired by the same spirit, that such foolishness was quite unthinkable. Thus when the first Franciscans set out for North Africa, where many were martyred, their heroic ambition was not seized upon as an argument for lessening vigilance on the part of the political powers charged with defending the persons and goods which go to make up the earthly city.

There was in all this an indication of divine wisdom. For the Order established by Providence is so wise and well integrated that we cannot but learn much from it if we observe its harmony. It has for long been observed that God always attaches a lively interest (or pleasure) to the accomplishment of each noble human obligation. It would, therefore, be contrary to divine prudence that the duty of performing any task should normally fall on any one person or class when there is another person or class which has a greater interest (or pleasure) in performing the task in question.

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Now it is a fact that the duty of temporal or civic defence has not normally the same immediate, direct and obvious interest to the cleric, as such, as it has for the layman. The cleric is and must be too detached, personally, from those interests, to be their effective and natural defender in accordance with God's plan. The better cleric he is the more detached he will be. The father of a family, however, has an interest as well as a duty to defend or preserve to his last breath certain interests which the cleric can view in a spirit of pious detachment.

This detachment from temporal goods or the exclusive preference the priest should have for spiritual things is likely to cause the cleric to misunderstand the importance of certain values which the father of a family would at once appreciate. For daily experience enables the layman to appreciate, better than would the soundest reasoning, what these values represent for the peace, the material and moral harmony and continued existence of his home.

This layman's world should most certainly be inspired from above by the doctrine which the cleric should expound and defend. But only the layman, who has a more direct interest in these matters than the cleric, knows how to defend these interests to the end. Only the layman will defend these interests beyond the point where the cleric would be tempted to capitulate.

Either the cleric is not well versed in the affairs of the world – in which case, if he meddles in temporal matters his ignorance is like to result in ridicule or disaster; or he is only all too involved in worldly affairs, in which case this will normally be to the detriment of his true mission, the care of souls, and his duty of witnessing to spiritual and doctrinal truth.

The priest's essential task is to teach sound doctrine, not to implement it.

Only some very rare and very great saints have known how to give themselves to the works of both orders, spiritual and temporal, without prejudice to either; without their political role detracting from the even greater supernatural benefits deriving from their apostolates; without their spiritual detachment being harmful to the defence of the temporal city which they considered also to be their duty.

But as against these outstanding exceptions, history teems with examples of clerics devoured by worldly ambition, the obsequious lackeys of some Caesar, or the flatterers of Popular Opinion; priests, presump-

tuous and sterile, authors of havoc. For one St. Bernard,²⁵ how many Abbé Gregoires²⁶ or Cranmers!²⁷ How many Tallyrands!²⁸ How many Jacobins or progressivists! For one St. Ambrose, forbidding the Emperor Theodosius to enter the church at Milan,²⁹ how many prelates are there whose one fear is to be denounced as “reactionary” in the columns of *The Guardian*, *The New York Times* or *Le Monde*?

There are two forms of danger which ordinarily accompany the involvement of clerics in temporal affairs. First, a tendency to make light of many good things which are still eminently worthy of respect and capable of being defended. This may arise from a misplaced spiritual generosity or fervour, or from a sort of pious demagoguery, a childish desire to show the extent to which the Church can be “detached,” indifferent to tradition, ready, even eagerly impatient to join in the famous “onward march of history,” and quite unafraid of innovations of any kind.

How many base actions and betrayals have been committed out of a frantic desire not to be classified as being “of the Right” (once it had become obvious that the Left was in the ascendant)?

The second form of clerical danger is a rigidity of principle, a purely idealistic concept of things; a brutal, immediate and inflexible application to temporal affairs of doctrinal notions which may be strictly correct but which are too abstractly conceived and imposed, without any regard for the innumerable conditions of time and circumstance – without consideration of what is actually possible. As if Christ Himself did not measure out His message of truth according to the capacity of His hearers.

Innumerable indeed are the evil effects deriving from these two forms of clerical excess. On the one hand, errors of the Savonarola type; on the other hand, clerics such as the worker priests who went over to the Revolution.

It is, therefore, not difficult to understand why priests should not be openly associated with action in the political and social sphere. This is undesirable even when the action concerned is in full conformity with the Church’s teaching. For either this action will be effective against the progress of statist, socialist totalitarianism or it will not. If it is not, it is almost certain that the Revolution will find no difficulty in inscribing the priests involved in its blacklist no matter how numerous they may be. On the other hand, if the action undertaken is effective, there will be such an outcry, and so many Press campaigns of denunciation launched by the Revolution, that the secular and regular priests involved will almost cer-

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tainly receive orders from their bishops or Superiors to withdraw from so compromising an enterprise. They would thus be forced to abandon the laity with the fight at its hottest. This, far from being scandalous, would be merely a return to the normal order of things, but with this difference – that a withdrawal *in such circumstances* would look like a rout. It would inevitably have a disastrous effect on morale.

By all means let us seek support, spiritual assistance and advice from learned, prudent and holy priests, whenever this is possible, but let us not have them openly involved in the temporal conflict.

4. *Avoid Confusion and Opposition Between the Two Powers.* The decisive importance of determining what precisely constitutes the sphere of the temporal conflict cannot be overemphasized. For this is the sphere of lay initiative and decision, the sphere within which the cleric has no right to take advantage of his collar and the psychological influence it allows him to exert, in order to interfere in affairs which do not come within his province.

There are many questions – such as the use of Latin, the liturgy, the catechism, sacred music, etc., – concerning which the laity may express their wishes and opinions, and even make criticisms (a right which the Council has recognized), but concerning which the laity cannot possibly have powers of decision, since these questions come directly within the province of the spiritual power – i.e., of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Only those in a state of pitiful mental confusion, and lacking all practical sense, could possibly imagine that it might be possible for one and the same organization to conduct (by similar methods) two entirely different kinds of initiative: one of them coming within the sphere of the temporal power, the other within the sphere of the spiritual power.

We do not act or behave in the same way in other people's houses as we do when at home. Similarly, it is quite impossible to act, write, speak, organize or intervene in a sphere where the authority legitimately belongs to others in the same way as we would in a sphere where the authority is ours.

Consequently, where the action envisaged is temporal by nature (i.e., in the sphere where freedom and power of decision belong to the laity) the appropriate organizations, the representations made, their direction, and even their manner, will and indeed must differ radically as compared with the manner and direction of representations made by quite different organizations where the action envisaged concerns the spiritual sphere.

If we fail to understand these distinctions, as some excel in doing, we shall succeed only in developing confusion and creating problems which are quite insoluble. Only if these two spheres, the temporal and the spiritual, are clearly distinguished will it be possible for both clergy and laity to find a sure basis for effective, complementary and harmonious action.

Moreover, it is only if this distinction is respected that action in the temporal sphere will be able to avoid innumerable temptations, snares and difficulties which are liable to give rise to countless defections and the most lamentable confusion.

5. Filial Respect for the Clergy. Only this distinction affords the most zealous of the laity a field of action where they can operate freely without being threatened by two perils to which many have fallen victims. On the one hand, there is the danger of contention and endless dispute with those whom the novelist, Michel de Saint-Pierre,³⁰ calls “the new priests.” On the other hand, there is a danger of being neutralized by these priests.

Disputes with them are painful and exhausting. They are apt to develop bitterness which can overshadow the soul and harden the heart. They bring little result – their usual end being a hardening into rigid and definitely hostile attitudes. There are, in fact, comparatively few people who are able to “have it out” with their parish priest in a tone of conversation that is calculated to preserve mutual respect. Many people, who are essentially in the right, soon find themselves in the wrong, perhaps because the argument they thought a clever one turned out to be no good at all. Or again, in writing to a bishop, how many people realize afterwards that the scriptural, dogmatic or canonical references they quoted were scarcely appropriate, or that the tone of their letter was all wrong.

6. But no Clericalism. With some rare exceptions, this kind of intervention is an enormous waste of time. But there is the opposite danger which consists in allowing oneself to be circumvented and neutralized in the temporal order by the “new priests.” This is just as real and can be no less disastrous.

Lay people are not infrequently dissuaded from resisting subversion because such and such a priest has scruples in this matter, or because some ecclesiastic they listen to considers Marxism to be much less dangerous than is commonly supposed, or because some curate does not hesitate to describe the encyclicals as completely outmoded, or because Marxists are

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more and more warmly applauded by clerics who patronize “progressive” Catholic societies, or because these same clerics are forever denouncing orthodox priests and layfolk as hopelessly reactionary.

These influences are all the more dangerous in that, as often as not, they are found to be echoed in certain newspapers and pamphlets sold in the churches – publications which the laity are sometimes peremptorily urged to support. The result is that many laymen consider it a duty, against their own better judgement, and contrary to the evidence of many heartrending disillusionings, to listen and follow the clergy in this matter.

*This happens because these laymen are not sure enough about the right which the Church itself has conceded to them, not to be bound to obey the clergy in such matters; and because these laymen are not sufficiently alert to, and penetrated by, the divine wisdom of that fundamental distinction between the spiritual and the temporal.*³¹

7. *Restore the Temporal Power of the Laity.* The temporal struggle, then, is the only one where the layman can struggle against subversion without losing his peace of mind. For there he knows that he is, in a sense, at home. Lay initiative in this sphere will be all the more effective, fruitful and satisfying in proportion as the limits of the two spheres – the temporal and the spiritual – are better known, understood and respected by both clergy and laity (in much the same way, neighbours live happily and in peace with each other when each respects the boundaries of the other’s property).

The two dangers we have referred to will be more easily avoided when the layman feels authorized to say to the clergy: “I respect and love you as my father in the Faith. I recognize how much I have to receive from you concerning the doctrine of the Church, for I am not the kind of Christian layman who never ceases clamouring for permission to profess a doctrine other than the Church’s own doctrine – Marxism, for example.

“I hold fast to the teaching of the Popes. My only ambition is to be able to help in the implementation of that doctrine, which is the only hope of our salvation. However, this same doctrine of Mother Church also recognizes that we layfolk have a sphere of action of our own – in which we are free to develop autonomous initiatives.

“I do not think it wrong that we should ask the clergy to leave us in peace to do precisely this. Nor do I consider it in any way sinful to ask certain clerics whether their obsession for certain forms of dialogue are

not likely to do more harm than good. This would seem to be particularly true concerning certain dialogues with Communists, the net result of which has been to create the impression that Communism is now quite acceptable to the Church, and to create a most favourable atmosphere for more extensive communist subversion of our society. And I consider it my duty to resist such subversion.”

Finally, if as a result of the prevailing confusion, we do not want to see the disappearance of the most indispensable features of social, political and civic life, it is quite imperative to restore, at least to an élite, a keen sense of the lawful autonomy of the laity in the temporal order, and a similar awareness of the limits of clerical authority in this sphere. In short, we must work indefatigably to restore the temporal power of the loyal Christian laity.



Chapter IV

The Importance and Dangers of Certain Social Categories

The influence of the clergy cannot be over-estimated but there are also other social categories whose importance it is imperative not to ignore. It is not our intention to enumerate them all, or to treat them exhaustively. We wish merely to indicate the more important of them and to say what must be said concerning these categories.

1. *Writers, Journalists, Professors, Orators.* Next after the clergy we come to the part to be played by those who can also be called “clerics” or “clerks.” These are “clerics” (or “clerks”) in the etymological sense of being the best instructed and most influential of the intellectual élites: writers, journalists, professors, orators and all other kinds of learned men and women. They are all of them layfolk, and, for better or worse, they exercise an influence on public opinion equal to if not greater than that exercised by the clerics of the sanctuary.

Who would say that a pastoral letter entrusted to some religious weekly newspaper is normally likely to obtain a greater hearing than an article by Fesquet³² or Mauriac³³ in *Le Monde* or *Figaro*? In what concerns us particularly (the political and social struggle), this category of people wields tremendous influence, so much so that the cause which does not have a sufficient number of these people in its service is at a great disadvantage.

How then can we increase their usefulness in the service of the natural and Christian law? What young people can we expect to be courageous enough to dedicate their lives wholly to working for the establishment of a Christian Social Order?

It is not at all a risky business to seek a career as a writer or journalist if one is ready to keep pace with the famous “onward march of history,”

but what hope is there (i.e., if by hope we do not mean hope bordering on adventurism and imprudence) for young people of being able to earn a livelihood by engaging in the struggle to resist revolutionary subversion?

Is it surprising that the proportion of thinkers, writers and journalists in the service of the counter-revolution decreases year by year, while the proportion of those enlisted in Subversion's ranks continually increases?

It is taken for granted that there is no money in defending the cause of Social Order and Truth, while everyone knows that service to the Revolution is exceptionally rewarding in terms of this world's goods. Contemporary society is very far removed from St. Paul's advice to Timothy: "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching."†

It is equally far removed from the realism which inspired Lenin to say:

We must train up men to consecrate to the Revolution, not only their free evenings, but their whole life. It is therefore the duty of the Party to help every worker who shows sufficient promise as an agitator, an organizer, a propagandist, an effective distributor of revolutionary literature to be able to do this work full time. No worker having talent as an agitator or showing sufficient promise as such should be allowed to go on working eleven hours a day in the factory. We must so arrange it that he lives at the expense of the Party."‡

This is what is thought and practised by those who pass for being less well off, but which would never occur to the comfortable and economically secure bourgeois classes. Accordingly, it is necessary to insist that even the holiest of causes is doomed if it is found to be manifestly incapable of providing elementary subsistence for (and consequently the renewal of) a sufficient number of full-time workers and leaders. Among the latter, who would deny the importance of those who have a facility to reach a wider audience through their talents as writers or orators?

This does not mean that everything should be subordinated to them. It is simply a question of insisting that their influence should be

† 1 Timothy v:17.

‡ *Œuvres complètes*, T. IV, p. 58.

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appropriately appraised and rewarded. For their influence is considerable and is indeed irreplaceable.

On the other hand, their influence is not without its danger because of the public influence they are able to command, the very factor which makes such people a force to be reckoned with. What is not sufficiently understood is that these talented folk must not be permitted to sweep all before them or drag everyone else along in their wake.

It is normal that impressive talent should be attractive and able to command popular attention, that a great writer or orator should be read and listened to more than others. But the message they have may be insufficiently practical, comprehensive and complete. That is why so many actions deriving from lectures, articles or books often turn out in practice to be ineffective if not disastrous.

It is true that in order to be effective, an action needs the impulse and impact that only good writers, orators, etc., can give it. But this does not mean that these are the only true men of action, or that to be an effective man of action one must be an orator or a journalist.

Alas, many people are convinced that once a well phrased article has been published, or all the seats in a hall have been filled, no more needs to be done to launch a particular campaign. God preserve us from despising the power of good articles or successful meetings, but God preserve us also from the illusion that social and political action consists exclusively of article-writing and hall-filling.

Writers, journalists and orators, who are on the side of the angels, must certainly be encouraged, supported and sustained. But we must beware of them whenever they would have us believe that what they are doing is all that requires to be done. It would, however, be a serious and disastrous error to despise the service of exceptionally talented men, simply because at times such people may be difficult to put up with. The supposed realist (he is really an idealist in the philosophical sense) who imagines that it is wise and even virtuous to have no truck with great men because of their foibles is simply displaying a radical incapacity for effective social action.

Writers, journalists and orators are rather like other artists: if one wants to enjoy their talents one has to put up with their whims and caprices. Without making a hard and fast rule out of this somewhat caustic reflection, it is only elementary prudence to recognize that authors, publicists and speakers of renown can be ticklish to handle. They are

frequently very forward, aggressively single-minded, stubborn, arbitrary and touchy, and greedy for applause. But all these are minor things by comparison with the decisive influence their talents can have.

The ideal, of course, would be a writer or orator of talent who, being fully aware of the effectiveness of his role, is, nevertheless, able to realize that, to be successful, action must include his own contribution yet also extend to fields which elude him, or of which he has no knowledge. However brilliant a soloist he may be, the really great man desires most of all to contribute to the harmony of the entire choir.

2. Men of Influence and Action. This is a difficult category to be specific about. But it is necessary to consider it, in that it resembles the one we have just studied. What we have in mind are dynamic men of influence and action who can be of decisive use in spite of some disadvantages.

We are not referring to men lacking in principles or faith, adventurers to whom no honest cause could or should look for support. The men we have in mind are of quite a different calibre. They are men of worth, whose good intentions and trustworthy character are beyond all question. Their prudence, their competence, their shrewdness are manifest in the conduct of their own affairs. From what one can see of their diverse talents, it is not at all difficult to visualize the good they could do if they could only be persuaded to commit themselves to "fight the good fight." As it is, alas, they remain aloof. Even worse! They are occasionally seen to perform wonders in the company of people of an entirely different stamp. For this reason they tend to be regarded with suspicion if not with hostility.

This is a most unfair reaction and one that can have disastrous consequences, in that it may result in alienating this category of men, whose worth would be better appreciated if we but took the trouble to get to know them. Being men of action in the highest degree, with a veritable passion for getting results, their very vices are a function of their outstanding positive qualities. By nature impatient, they find the preparations and the drudgery of a slow formative process hard to endure. Moreover, nothing is more calculated to exasperate them than the mediocrity which more often than not characterizes our people, whose hamhandedness in action betrays a woeful inadequacy in implementing the doctrine they are forever extolling verbally.

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Let us, therefore, see these talented influential men of action in proper perspective. Just as even the best of generals is dismayed by mediocre troops and inspired by the sight of soldiers on whom he knows he can depend, these captains of civil society would almost certainly be enthused if we were able to let them see the civic and social equivalent of a number of crack regiments.

It is our duty to keep in touch with these valuable if somewhat difficult men. It may be well worth our while keeping them in the picture concerning what progress is being made at those humbler levels. For once we are in a position to show them a body of cadres as intelligent and fervent as they are competent and versatile, there is much more than a mere possibility of their talents and zeal being placed at the service of our cause.

In the meanwhile, it is essential to prevent their desire for concrete results from tempting them to take elsewhere, even to the enemy, talents which, sooner or later, will be found necessary to the cause we serve. Maintaining contact with such men is, therefore, a form of action of no mean importance. It is certainly not to be despised.

3. *Business Chiefs, Officials and Experts.* Modern democratic life shows clearly that in order to influence the masses, it is necessary to have enormous financial means – Press, radio, television, a university monopoly,³⁴ or powerful influential networks such as are possessed by Freemasonry or by International Communism. But it is also easy to demonstrate the effectiveness of another form of action: action through the natural influence of the associations that normally exist – such as professions, kinships, locally elected representatives, parents associations, youth associations and the intermediary bodies in general.

Power does not belong entirely to the politicians. The directors of the social communities just mentioned also possess real power, even if, out of negligence, they very seldom exercise it. Then there is the hierarchy of officials who, perpetually involved in the mystery of administration's enmeshed cogwheels, are charged with the preparatory work for decision-making. They also possess considerable influence, as do also those responsible for supervising the execution of the often contradictory orders and decrees which characterize the jungle of our increasingly socialized society.

The directors of natural associations tend by their very nature to oppose totalitarianism, since the latter means the extinction of the former.

Thus, no very great effort should be required to remind these people of the essential purpose of the communities which they direct, of the need for these communities to enjoy autonomy, in order that human responsibility may be recognized and human rights exercised at the grassroots level.

As for the officials charged with responsibility for executing the decisions of the administrative authorities, these are most often chosen without being too meticulously screened politically. Among this élite, men particularly aware of what happens when a zeal for planning is carried to extremes, there must be many who would be most receptive to a social philosophy inspired by the natural law and Christian principles. Since there would be no question of their being asked to join a movement or take out a subscription, practical doctrinal action leading to practical results could be undertaken with very modest means among these cadres, no matter what régime might be in power.

Obviously, this does not exclude political action on classic lines, but it should be recognized that such political action as it has been conducted hitherto by the so-called “national” parties,³⁵ has yielded very meagre results and setbacks. Quite obviously a thorough-going revision is called for here.

Freemasonry and the Communist International have discovered how to keep ideological action going among influential élites and to get them to take measures fully inspired by their ideas, no matter what government is in power and irrespective of election results.

There are hardly more than a score of experts and influential people at the departmental level.³⁶ It is therefore by no means unreasonable to suppose that a small number of zealous animators with the right kind of formation could obtain appreciable results by applying their talents with intelligence and competence with a view to enlightening and reinforcing this potentially effective élite. Here, too, it is important to remember the inanity of the argument which consists in saying: “I don’t like these kind of people. They have so many defects and are open to criticism in so many respects.”

It is necessary to remind ourselves that if we are prepared to work only with such people as we like and have no faults, we had better get these people together to establish a ghetto and abandon all hope of working for the establishment of a Christian Social Order.

4. *The Fighting Forces.* Whatever ravages may have been caused in the Armed Services by the revolutionary spirit and its dialectical opera-

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tions, the Armed Services still remain an invaluable reserve of men who are both ardent and generous in the service of society. No doctrine of social, political or civic action would be relevant which ignored the men of the forces or underestimated the part which they can play in the restoration of social order.

Anatole France,³⁷ by no means suspect of complacency towards the Armed Forces, has some excellent passages on the military virtues which were and still remain the indispensable basis of peace and the defence of human communities. These military virtues are those of self-sacrifice, devotion to duty, courage, honour and patriotism. In our epoch of Total War and obligatory military service,³⁸ these virtues are more necessary than ever. Also necessary, however, are the lessons and examples which soldiers worthy of the name can and must give the nation.

Since he is more exclusively devoted to the service and defence of his country, the soldier is normally more sensitive to anything that threatens it. He is usually quicker to react and more courageous in offering his services whenever they appear to be needed.

No realist could possibly despise such a body of men. But the use of such men, nevertheless, calls for reflections analogous to those we have made about some of the other categories. Above all, it is necessary to beware of the kind of action which the military are only too prone to recommend whenever they embark on civic ventures.

There are, it is true, many military men to whom the following criticisms do not apply. In other words, there are soldiers who have a clear understanding of the complexities of social life. The fact remains, nevertheless, that while the sense of order, of hierarchy, of authority and of command are common among the military, by no means all of them understand that these notions must be conceived in an entirely different way in civil life as compared to those within the fighting forces.

By contrast with the harmonies normal to social life, which is characterized by diverse liberties, and governed by an authority which is multiform and complex, military life seems to be rather more crudely rank-conscious and much less spontaneous in every way. In military life, authority descends by successive steps from a supreme chief. It is more elementary and artificial, more consciously planned. It is not without good reason that a country where State control extends everywhere is likened to a barracks. This is not to say that the subaltern ranks of the army cannot take a large share in initiating and improvising. The fact remains,

nevertheless, that in the Armed Forces, everything depends much more strictly on orders from above.

In the social, civil and political spheres, hierarchy and subordination are not conceived in such a simple fashion, as proceeding uniquely from a relationship with the sovereign power. The lawful authorities and social liberties, at each level, are by no means mere margins which the supreme central authority leaves open to the initiative of mere subordinates, for the subordinates in question are citizens, with such freedom and independence as this implies.

It is wholly erroneous, therefore, to suppose a simple analogy between what the citizen can and must be in civil life, and what the soldier can and must be in military life. Hence why it is quite impermissible and utterly confusing to make a straightforward transposition into civil life of concepts which are quite legitimate in military life. It is true that this may be less true in rudimentary societies where the lack of depth in civic life, and the non-existence of intermediary bodies, is such that the organizing impulse must come either from above or from without. But even in this case, great precaution is necessary, as colonial experience has shown.

In the work of social restoration, therefore, we should always be rather wary of the military tendency to apply a military concept of order to civil society. For then, we should have a type of action much too formal for application to ordinary social life, with authority as it were coming from outside. To use a metaphor we have already used, the military concept of action is orthopaedic rather than medicinal.

But this attitude of mind is not altogether surprising when we recall that the army is an essential organ of the State's power. Is it not indeed the sword of the State? It is thus not unusual for military men who are not particularly well versed in social and political affairs to have leanings towards methodically planned and centralized solutions coming from above through the "usual channels." But are not these the usual methods of State constraint? This also explains the temptation, which was particularly rife in the French Army, for military men to think in terms of having recourse to Mao's methods in order to combat the Revolution.

Deo gratias, this defect is not incorrigible. Nor is this fault by any means common to all soldiers. However it is well to be alive to its existence, for then it can be countered by an appropriate course of instruction designed to give an adequate understanding of social problems, and point to methods which can be effective precisely because they are adapted to

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the extremely varying requirements of a harmonious development of society.

5. *Youth.* The importance of the younger generation for the future of the City is so obvious that its demonstration is quite superfluous. Youth is the time of generous impulses. Youth is the promise of the future. If the promise is to be fulfilled, the impulses of youth must not be despised. This, however, gives rise to two difficulties

The first problem is to decide what our attitude ought to be towards youth's enthusiasms. The second is how to prevent the problems which are likely to have a passionate appeal to young people from being presented to them as being the concern of youth alone, and from being considered by them solely from the standpoint of their own interests. For this would be the surest way to incite each young generation to become wrapped up in itself, so destroying all promise for the future.

Taking the first difficulty, how should we behave towards the enthusiasms of youth? Is it prudent to hold aloof from them until we see how they turn out; to wait until the young have ceased to be young before inviting them to play an important part in civic action or in certain cases to devote themselves wholly to it?

We do not think so.

Of course, great prudence and deliberation is necessary here. It would be criminal to urge young people indiscriminately to throw themselves exclusively into the social and political action however little desire they feel for it. But having said that, it is puerile to imagine that any serious recruitment of an élite disposed to busy themselves about the salvation of the City is possible only after the people concerned have already become inextricably involved in business and professional affairs, and in the daily routine of family life. For this reason, we insist – not however without emphasizing the need for great discernment – that the recruitment of young people, generously disposed to offer themselves to work in diverse ways for the reconstruction of society, is one of the most important aspects of our civic and social action.

Without this recruitment, our cause will be served only by a diminishing body of unorganized amateurs and totally ineffective dilettantes. We should remind ourselves, therefore, that young people will fulfil the promise of a harmonious future only insofar as the most generous impulses of their best elements are appropriately channelled.

The variety of missions and functions open to the young is enormous. Leaving aside the classic roles of writers, journalists, lecturers and orators, possibilities of active commitment and of radiating influence exist in all walks of life. In present circumstances, taking advantage of these possibilities may imply a considerable sacrifice, but this the generosity of youth is not afraid to face. Very many will seek out a professional arrangement which will enable them to “fight the good fight” with much greater freedom, even if it means a smaller salary and more modest worldly prospects.

The second difficulty, and our second duty, is to prevent young people from considering youth to be an end in itself. As has been said, with mock cruelty, youth is a condition which time, alas, inevitably cures. Youth is essentially a stage in progress towards a riper age, in which youth finds not only its end but also its realization.

In order to interest the young in the affairs of the City, the City is too often presented as a City of the young, which is as false as it is ridiculous. For a City of this kind would have nothing in common with *the* City; that is, the human community which includes everyone from the cradle to the grave, including indeed, the dead, the living and those yet to be born. Consequently, unless one has in mind only a holiday camp, to speak of a City of Youth is either wittingly or unwittingly a dialectical exercise which polarizes one generation against another.

We do not deny, however, that it is possible to interest young people in the affairs of the City by beginning with what appeals to them most of all. It is, however, quite another matter to talk as though it were possible for young people as such to have a social policy all for themselves, directed by themselves exclusively, and of no concern to anyone else. Though the immediate effects of this kind of presentation may be extraordinarily exciting, the fact remains that there is no surer means not only of trifling with youth’s enthusiasm, but also of disgusting the young people so exploited. For when the young people so exploited grow up into adults they are bound to become aware of the childishness of the enthusiasms which excited them so much while they were teenagers.

The only sound method ensuring a real political education for young people is not to be afraid of asking from them the effort necessary to understand the problems of the real City, the City they share with all other generations, including the aged.

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We are not treating the young with due respect when, as so often happens, we ask them to confine themselves solely to the more mechanical aspects of political action: actions such as bill posting, pamphlet distribution, running errands, or kicking up a shindy at demonstrations, etc. It is indeed precisely because so many young people have experienced only this aspect of political and social action that once they come of age, they cannot conceive of politics as being worthy of serious consideration by any reasonable person.

However difficult it may be progressively to initiate a generation of young people into the realities of political life, there are no short cuts or magic formulae whereby such difficulties may be avoided. The slow but sure and straightforward approach is the only means of effecting that political development of young people, which the temporal City needs so much in order that it may renew itself and survive.



Chapter V

Action on the “Masses”

Hitherto, we have insisted almost exclusively on the importance of personal action, and action in and through the various associations. These constitute the skeleton of society, and if they have (at least potentially) a considerable influence on “public opinion,” it would be wrong to imagine that public opinion is created and sustained by them alone.

Public opinion is a fickle entity, so much so that, under the pressure of a striking event or a whirlwind campaign, it can momentarily free itself from the influence of the various associations, for, while the influence of the latter is profound, it takes effect more slowly.

It would therefore be a major error to suppose that direct appeals to public opinion serve no purpose – that it suffices merely to work in and through the various associations. For a handful of clever people, who are both resolute and unscrupulous, can under certain circumstances take advantage of an abrupt upsurge of public opinion (or of public apathy) to seize power and then remain in power by means of force and terror: a typical revolutionary method of work.

It is essential to point out that subversive action differs fundamentally from normal, legitimate political action. If need be, the Revolution can dispense with slow preparatory methods (not that it usually does, however) and concentrate on the organization of a few well-prepared coups. For once in power, the Revolution does not hesitate to terrorize public opinion in order to stay in power. So far as we are concerned, however, such an approach is ruled out in advance because it is contrary to the public well-being. Christian social and political action can never dispense with the work of meticulous, profound and lengthy preparation of its cadres. This takes time.

On the other hand, this does not mean that we cannot take advantage of favourable events if the opportunity presents itself. We certainly

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must not leave public opinion to be influenced only by the forces of Subversion. We need, therefore, to have recourse to action with a wider and more general influence than is possible through the associations.

In point of fact, the influencing and exploitation of public opinion tends nowadays to have quite disproportionate significance. For that reason we cannot ignore the need for certain forms of mass action, and action designed to influence the masses, without imperilling our cause.

Hence the need for publications with a wide circulation, illustrated magazines, demonstrations, congresses and, if possible, the use of radio and television. Alas, these methods presuppose large resources – some of which, more often than not, are monopolized by the totalitarian State. This explains the extraordinary methods which have occasionally been employed by the Revolution to reach world opinion when other means were not as yet at its disposal. An example of this was Castro's abduction of a celebrity.

This kind of action has its advantages and disadvantages. Its advantage is that it is nothing if not topical and seeks to exploit emotions and passions precisely when they are at fever pitch. Another advantage is that it is grounded on information known by everyone, not on a body of doctrine exclusive to an élite grouping of cadres. This enables it to reach out to the masses most effectively.

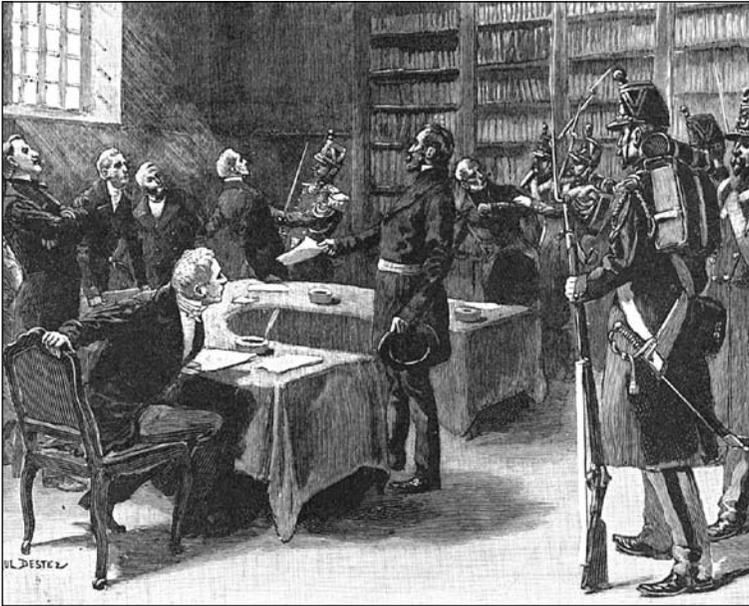
But here also is its Achille's heel, for without dependable cadres who have had an adequate formation, political and social reform can never be securely based. Hence the shortcomings of action based exclusively on the immediate exploitation of some event or other. Such action may be exciting, even intoxicating, as it strikes first here, now there. But it is a form of action that is difficult to sustain. It is indeed as capricious as the events on which it depends. Today, a victory; tomorrow, a rout. Today, circumstances making possible the seizure of power; tomorrow, circumstances pointing the way to exile or the scaffold.

This kind of action is therefore both vulnerable and dangerous if it alone is relied upon. On the one hand, it lacks continuity, consistency and subtlety; on the other hand, it requires much preparation, yet it is difficult to control. Tending by its very nature to excess, and forever seeking publicity, it can very easily get out of hand. On the one hand, a single setback when spirits are already low can lead to irreparable disaster; on the other hand, momentary success can induce a most imprudent insolence deriving from an entirely false sense of security. Indeed, when everything

is taken into consideration, there is no form of action more vulnerable – unless its deficiencies, the setbacks experienced, its lack of continuity, etc., are compensated for by the action of well formed cadres.

Only a cause which had dependable cadres, who have had an adequate formation, can hope for lasting triumph. It is cadres that matter. Suppose, for example, that tumultuous events conspire to make possible the overthrow of a certain system or party, and that the success gained has nothing more behind it than the gregarious might of a spontaneous popular movement. No matter how pure and righteous may be the movement in question, if the overthrown system or party alone has at its disposal a sufficient number of well-trained cadres, you may be sure that before long it is they who will again have the reins of power in their hands.

We have indeed seen this kind of thing happen so strikingly of late that there is no need to give examples of what is implied.



Conclusion

The Church's Example

In concluding this part of our work, since it deals with cadres, or people, it is appropriate briefly to observe the action of the Church throughout the centuries.

Widely differing sections of the faithful have been gathered together in innumerable congregations, monastic orders, third orders,³⁹ seminaries, noviciates, convents, houses of retreat, etc., so that all might work in accordance with their vocation, their age, their status in life, their preferences, their natural affinities. What an immense variety of action has been accomplished through these associations of the faithful: prayer, mortification, acts of spiritual and corporal mercy, every conceivable form of the apostolate, each complementing the other harmoniously.

At the same time, however, consider with what admirable intelligence mass action has been conceived. The very word "Church" itself means "an assembly." Consider the means of communication employed: the services of Sunday and holidays of obligation; the liturgy; processions; pilgrimages; Eucharistic Congresses; popular education by unique visual aids – the very Gospel preached in stone and stained glass. What wisdom there was underlying these forms of mass action and popularization.

Popularization: the word is scarcely ever used except in a pejorative sense, but was it not necessary to bring the most exalted of truths within the reach of the humblest of folk? Is this not precisely what the Church has achieved by means of her symbolism, by means of the catechism – expounding in the simplest terms the truths underlying mysteries that even an eternity would not permit us to discover. In the same way, incidentally, was not the *Syllabus of Errors*³⁹ an admirably comprehensive and easily comprehensible tabulation and condemnation of modernist errors?

But not even the foregoing gives anything like a total picture of Mother Church's achievements. If she knows intuitively how to act so

as to reach the masses, and how to work through an infinite variety of associations, she knows also how to work through individuals. Hence the innumerable examples of audacity which an exclusively natural wisdom would have considered to be pure madness: a St. Francis Xavier,⁴⁰ sent almost single-handed to evangelize the Far East; a St Louis-Marie de Montfort able to restore the Faith to Western France; a St. Francis de Sales⁴¹ reconverting Le Chablais⁴² from Calvinism to Catholicism in six short years.

Consider the acute sense of perception of the superiors who were able to see so many different kinds of exceptional qualities in such a variety of saints, and to give them missions such as these without hesitation!

Such marvellous achievements would undoubtedly have been impossible but for the Grace of God. Nevertheless, they also give us a glimpse of what can be achieved through the influence of a single person of real worth.

This is a good note on which to end this part of our work, concerned as it is with the problem of cadres, of people – i.e., “the workers” in the vineyard. We shall next proceed to study the provision of these “workers” with appropriate “tools” - i.e., the problem of means, techniques, methods, etc., calculated to improve, sustain, multiply and prolong the effects of action.

Notes.

1. Ernest Psichari (1883–1914). French military officer and Catholic writer; the grandson of Renan.
2. And, one might add, the efforts made by the British Humanist Association to de-christianize the educational system in Great Britain. –Editor, *Approaches*
3. Fr. Charles de Foucauld (1853–1916). French military officer turned religious and then hermit; a great apostle of the Catholic faith in North Africa. Marie-Joseph Laperrine (1860–1920) was a French General who brought order to the Sahara in 1917; he was a close friend of Fr. de Foucauld.
4. Adam Weishaupt (1748–1830). Renegade Catholic who became a Professor of Canon Law at Ingolstadt and then turned against his Jesuit formation. He founded the subversive Masonic sect known as the Bavarian Illuminati in 1775, which is believed to have founded the *Skull and Bones* in the USA in 1833. Baron Freiherr von Knigge was a freemason who entered the Illuminati in 1780, taking the name Philo. He was a great advocate of the work of secret societies and was

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instrumental in bringing about the Congress of Wilhelmsbad in 1782 which sealed the alliance between Illuminism and Freemasonry. The representatives at the Congress were delegates for more than 3,000,000 members around the world.

5. Martin Luther (1483–1546). A German Augustinian monk who led the great religious revolt of the 16th century, and thus became the titular head of what became known as the Protestant Reformation, although frequently he was more at odds with his “fellow Protestants” than he was with Rome. Ordained a Catholic priest in 1507, he began preaching heresy ca. 1518 and was excommunicated in 1520.

6. St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort (1673–1716). French priest renowned for his missionary efforts, canonized in 1947. He was the founder of the Daughters of Wisdom and the Company of Mary.

7. Jacques Maritain (1882–1973). French philosopher and writer; one of the foremost proponents of Thomism in the twentieth century.

8. Chrétien Guillaume de Lamoignon de Malesherbes (1721–94). French minister of state who ended up supporting Louis XVI in spite of a life of compromise with liberalism. His liberal policy as director of the press permitted the publication of the *Encyclopédie*; he opposed the dissolution of the parlement in 1771 under pretext of a fear of royal absolutism, and he campaigned extensively for the civil rights of French Protestants and Jews. In 1792, at his own request, he was appointed a defender of Louis XVI for his trial. He was soon afterward arrested and guillotined as a royalist along with his daughter and grandchildren.

9. Michel de Penfentenyo. Coming from the Penfentenyo family well-known in Europe, he was a contemporary of Ousset – frequently featured with him at Lausanne conferences (*vide supra*, p. 61, note 1) – and a prolific thinker and writer; the author of *Aux Sources de la France*, a book on France’s cultural and historical heritage, and of *Les Fondations de la France*, a sequel to the former work covering the period from Clovis to Charlemagne.

10. In Britain, too, there are lots of freedoms which in practice are no longer used, while official interference and domination continually increase. The “men in Whitehall” put into force measures considered good for us, and in most cases – such as *Central European Time* (camouflaged as “daylight saving”) and decimal coinage – they scarcely trouble to inquire what the general public would like. We grumble, but we do not kick, except under extreme provocation. –Editor, *Approaches*

11. La Vendée. The region of West France with a strongly Catholic and monarchist population. In defense of the Catholic religion, the locals – made up

largely of peasants and minor nobles – took to the battlefield ca. 1793 against the Republican government set up by the French Revolution. They were subject to tremendous persecution and frightful massacres as a result.

12. Maurice Thorez (1900–1964). Born into a poor family, he had become a coal miner by the age of 12. He joined the French Communist Party in 1914 and became its Secretary General in 1930. He was elected to the French Parliament in 1932, and helped to put together the left-wing party alliance that became the Popular Front government of Leon Blum. He was Chairman of the Communist Party until just a few months before his death.

13. St. Alphonsus of Ligouri (1696–1787). An Italian priest and theologian canonized in 1839, declared a Doctor of the Church in 1871 and sometimes called the “prince of moral theologians.” He founded the missionary Order of the Redemptorists and played a leading role in the fight against the Jansenist heresy.

14. *Lumen Gentium*, 31.

15. Or in that which used to be Mary’s Dowry. –Editor, *Approaches*

16. St. Thomas More (1478–1535). Chancellor of England during the reign of Henry VIII, he was martyred for his fidelity to the Catholic Church and for his refusal to accept the King as Supreme Head of the Church. He was a man of great learning and wrote numerous religious and historical works in both Latin and English.

17. Jansenism. In spite of the definitions of the Council of Trent on the subjects of Grace and the Supernatural, Cornelius Jansenius (1585–1638), Bishop of Ypres, claimed to find in the works of St. Augustine the true doctrine on Grace – thus implying that the true doctrine was being ignored or denied in the Church. His book to this effect, however, was only published two years after his death, and the historical record suggests that he intended to some extent at least to submit himself and his doctrine to the judgment of the Church. Not so his followers, such as the Abbot of Saint-Cyran, who eagerly promoted his doctrines, thus forcing Pope Innocent X to condemn in 1653 five propositions taken from Jansenius’s work.

18. Quietism. A heresy of deformed Christian mysticism stemming from Pantheistic and Gnostic errors. The Quietist system was elaborated by the Spaniard Michael Molinos, a popular spiritual director in late 17th-century Rome. He claimed that perfection lay not in training and supernaturalizing one’s natural powers, but in seeking their annihilation. It led him to say that exterior good works and spiritual acts were useless for sanctification, and that Catholics should not seek to practice virtue or even to avoid vice. Molinos and his system were condemned in 1687 by Pope Innocent XI.

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19. Gallicanism. A 17th-century heresy which arose in France and those countries on her eastern borders, which sought to minimize Papal prerogatives in the interest of the State and the State's bishops. Systematized in the 1682 Declaration of the Clergy of France of 1682, it maintained that papal definitions were not infallible *in themselves*, but only after acceptance by the Universal Church, and that the authority of a General Council was above that of the Pope.

20. Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange (1877–1964). French Dominican philosopher and theologian who taught at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome and served as a consultant to the Holy Office. A zealous promoter of the doctrine of St. Thomas and the author of numerous theological books and articles.

21. Teilhardism. A reference to the teaching of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. (1881–1955), whose evolutionary and theological doctrine was widely held to be incompatible with the Catholic faith, although he was never excommunicated.

22. Fr. Pierre Bigo (d. c1995). A master of Catholic social thought, Fr. Bigo worked in Chile for 32 years on various Catholic social projects, and his scholarly works on Christian society contributed to the corpus around which the academic movement *L'Action Populaire de Paris* was formed.

23. Jean Madiran (b. 1920). French Catholic writer and political and religious activist. Early on Madiran worked as editor for *L'Action Française* and published his first book in 1944, with a preface by Charles Maurras: *The Political Philosophy of St. Thomas*. With French journalist Louis Salleron (1905-1992), Madiran founded the review *Itinéraires* in 1956, and it became a leading critical journal of post-Vatican II reforms within the Catholic Church; he has been a key political figure at *Présent* (a French political periodical sympathetic to conservative and traditionally-minded Catholics) since its foundation in 1982.

24. Jean de Fabrègues (1906-1983). French Catholic thinker, author, and journalist, extremely active in religious and political circles of the 1920s and 1930s. Fabrègues served as secretary to Charles Maurras for a time, and founded the journal *Réaction* in 1928. With Louis Salleron he worked with the journal *Combat* and later became the editor of *France Catholique*.

25. St. Bernard (1090–1153). A Doctor of the Church, remembered chiefly for his reform of the Cistercian monastic life, beginning with his founding of Clairvaux in 1115, and for his preaching of the Second Crusade at the behest of Pope Eugenius III.

26. Abbé Henri Gregoire (1750–1831). A Catholic priest who passed to the side of the revolution in France when the definitive split occurred between its leaders and the Papacy. He became a Constitutional Bishop (of what essentially became the State Church), a member of the Convention and, under the Empire which followed, a Senator.

Jean Ousset

27. Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556). Made Archbishop of Canterbury in England in 1533, it was he who, acting willingly under the orders of King Henry VIII, drafted up the “divorce” from Queen Catherine in favor of Anne Boleyn. By this and other acts he provided the impetus for the royal claim to ecclesiastical supremacy in England, creating the Church of England out of a schism from Rome; under Edward VI, Cranmer’s sympathy with the Protestant “reformers” was on full display.
28. Charles Maurice de Talleyrand (1754–1838). Also known as the Prince of Benevent, he became a renegade Catholic bishop who sought to spread Masonic ideas in monarchist circles in the period preceding the French Revolution. He was a member of various governments from 1790 onwards.
29. A reference to the public penance which St. Ambrose (c340–397), then Bishop of Milan, compelled the Emperor Theodosius to perform as a result of his having ordered the massacre of 7000 Thessalonians in retribution for the murder of his officials by Thessalonian rebels. According to Theodoret, the Emperor said later of St. Ambrose, “I know no bishop worthy of the name, except Ambrose.”
30. Michel de Grosourdy, Marquis de Saint-Pierre (1916–1987). Catholic author, who produced novels, pamphlets, poems, travelogues, historical studies and religious works, including *The New Priests*.
31. Emphasis added by the Editor of the *Approaches* edition.
32. Henri Fesquet. French author and journalist; for many years, the Religious Affairs Correspondent of the French daily, *Le Monde*. Through his contacts with liberals he was able to write *Diary of the Council: Day by Day* in 1967. Other works include *Tomorrow the Faith* (1987), *The Catholicism of Tomorrow* and *Expecto or The Reflexions of an Interred* (1988).
33. François Mauriac (1885–1970). French author and journalist who worked for the daily, *L’Express*; he was the Leader of the Catholic Left, which led him to support the Republicans actively during the Spanish Civil War. He was also a member of the French Resistance, and he won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1952.
34. In France, the Universities are under the control of the State. –Editor, *Approaches*
35. Meaning conservative in this connection. –Editor, *Approaches*
36. Corresponding roughly to our County Councils. –Editor, *Approaches*
37. Anatole France (1844–1924). French man of letters and member of the French Academy.
38. M. Ousset is, of course, speaking of France. –Editor, *Approaches*

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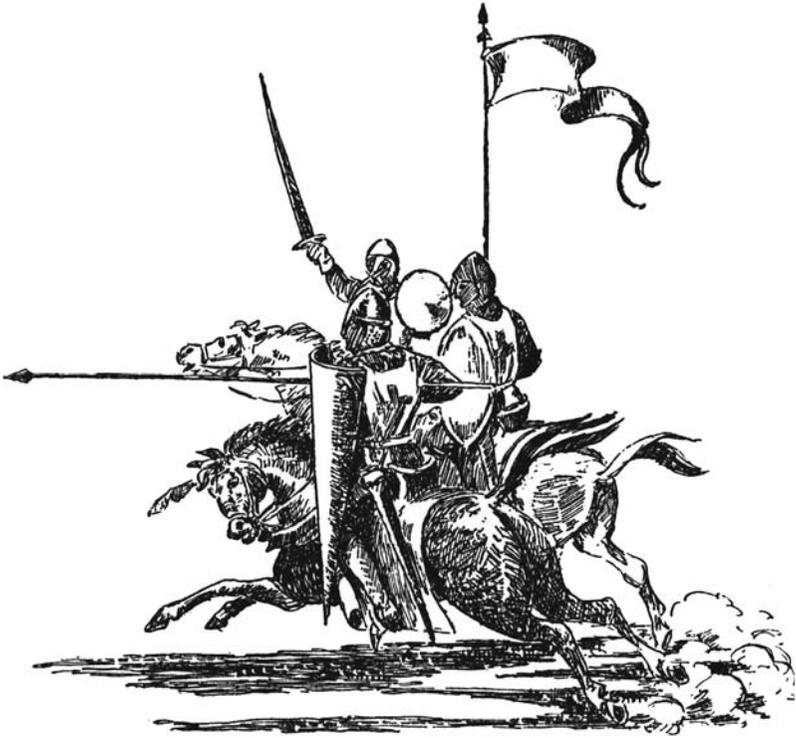
39. *Syllabus of Errors*. An encyclical promulgated by Pope Pius IX in 1864 which condemned, as incompatible with the Catholic faith, 80 propositions on subjects such as philosophy, the Church, civil society, and modern liberalism. Hated by liberal Catholics, it was erected as a barrier to religious modernism.

40. St. Francis Xavier (1506–1552). A great missionary Jesuit, who was a personal friend of St. Ignatius, the founder of the Society of Jesus. St. Francis was a leading figure in the missionary efforts in Japan and the Indies, and was canonized in 1622.

41. St. Francis de Sales (1567–1622). Bishop of Geneva and Patron Saint of Journalists. His preaching played a vital role, during the Counter Reformation, in the conversion and re-conversion to Catholicism of those who had abandoned the faith as a result of the Protestant “reform.” His efforts were tireless, and included personal contacts, writings, and debating Protestant leaders in public.

42. Le Chablais. A region of southwest Switzerland divided into three parts: French, Valaisan and Vaudois.





“...we believe that it should be relatively easy to save society, but only on condition that a number of good folk should apply themselves to the action involved, in the necessary manner and with sufficient perseverance. Our worry is not that it is radically impossible to save society, our worry is that those members of society who are apparently most fitted to work for its salvation will not set about this task, or only half-heartedly.”



“...only the vile prefer treason to war, intrigue to the sword, infamy to death. To arms, therefore, to defend Honour, sovereignty, and the nation!”

– Gabriel Garcia Moreno

PART III

INSTRUMENTS AND METHODS OF WORK

Preliminary Observations

We have already discussed the problem of men and the groups and networks they set up to further their aims. Next we must examine the means by which men act, and the ways in which they can make their action more effective. Having studied the craftsman we will pass to a consideration of the tools he needs to facilitate his work. This field, too, is subject to the same laws that applied before.

It can never be sufficiently repeated that if social or political action is to be successful, it must take full advantage of the diversity of human talents.

Now since the variety of instruments available is as great as the diversity of talents among men, the duty to deploy this potential to its fullest capacity entails the obligation of using the maximum variety of forms of action, as outlined in the previous chapters of this work.

In other words, like every real craftsman, we need to know what the essential tools of our trade are, how they complement each other, and what is the relative value of each. This indeed is our first duty, which we must never forget. For there are good, bad and indifferent tools, and we must be able to select the best. It is imperative to develop an instinct for selecting the right tool for the right job; and the meticulous selection of tools must always be made with a view to the objective being pursued. We must firmly reject the temptation, to which even the best of us succumb, to seize the first tool at hand, regardless of the consequences, or to adopt routine solutions whose futility is being constantly demonstrated by experience.

Let us cultivate the appreciation a real craftsman has for his kit of tools, and let us build up a set of tools ideally adapted to the particular

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needs of our struggle. Let us beware of the false spirituality of those whose misguided zeal and sincerity of intention is accompanied in practice by a neglect of and scandalous indifference to the proper method of selecting the right tools for the job. On the contrary, we must methodically and scrupulously develop the art of choosing the appropriate tools, the best tools available. Perfection itself, if possible, must be our goal.

For a long time our cause has suffered from numerical inferiority. It is, therefore, all the more important to compensate for this quantitative deficiency by the qualitative superiority of our action. Nevertheless, we must not seek impossible standards of perfection. For if it is true that a good craftsman knows the right tools that are needed for the job, nevertheless in his hands even a poor tool may be made to turn out a fine article. Whereas a bad workman invariably blames his tools, the rigid perfectionist will not even lift his hand to the work until the perfect tool is found.

The point we are trying to make is roughly this:

It is vital that, as far as possible, only good tools should be used. In other words, let us choose the appropriate methods of social and political action. But once we have said this, we must insist that, when necessary, it is still possible for a good craftsman to achieve excellent results even when poorer and inadequate tools are all that are available. Thus, once again, we return to the cardinal question of the training and formation of men.

So, without making the mistake of saying that tools have no intrinsic value, or that the workman himself is the only measure of their worth, we can and ought to make a very serious study of the relationship between the workman and his tools.

To take an example. What could be better in itself than a religious institute? Can one imagine any organization more admirably suited for certain types of action? Yet, at times, even some of the best of these have had little indeed to be proud of. One community may remain faithful to its role, while another lapses into scandalous laxity.

Going to the other extreme, it is not always the ideal tool which will in fact, in any given circumstances, produce the best result. Even a poor tool will achieve good results in the hands of men who understand that in such and such a case, it is wiser to use what is immediately to hand rather than to exhaust oneself searching in vain for tools that are unavailable.

It is astonishing how many rickety institutions have served as a starting point for remarkable developments, simply because they were

directed by men of skill and determination. A marvellous example of this is to be found in the feudal chaos out of which the early Capetian Kings¹ contrived, with untiring patience and without provoking any really serious crises, to lay the foundations of the French Nation, simply by adapting and improving the most positive and desirable features of the society in which they found themselves.

With this we conclude our opening remarks, which are intended to prevent our taking a too doctrinaire attitude to the discussion on tools and methods which follows.



Chapter I

Doctrine and Money

Though they differ greatly, these are the two most universal tools.

1. *Doctrine.* May we describe doctrine as a tool? It seems repugnant to good sense and right feeling to do so. For medicine, the art of healing, is more than the doctor's tool: it is the very soul of his profession, the reason for his existence as a doctor.

In the same way, doctrine is much more than the tool of the man of action. It ought to be the inspiration, his *raison d'être qua* man of action. As indeed it is when doctrine is considered as the very expression of the order to be observed, defended and served.

But when doctrine is considered not under this aspect, as what it is in its essence, but instead only as something which has to be diffused in various forms, in this sense doctrine can be regarded as a tool.

It is just the same with medicine, which cannot in itself be considered simply as the doctor's tool. But we can so consider the courses of training and the various formulae which ensure a wide diffusion throughout the world of a more complete and harmonious knowledge of the science and art of medicine.

Indeed, do we not use the word "medicine," in a restricted sense, to indicate those drugs and medicaments which are really tools of the medical profession or part of them?

It is from this angle and in this sense that we shall speak of doctrine in this part of the book – not of doctrine in itself but only insofar as it can be formulated, developed and communicated.

Never before has Catholic social doctrine been so clearly set out, or so easily accessible – especially since the pontificate of Pius XII, under whom the work of elaborating and explicating the political and social thought of all time reached its summit and culminating point, giving us a comprehensive exposition of doctrine, illuminating all human problems both individual and collective.

Moreover, it is not true to say, as some do, that this has made choice more difficult; that the superabundance of doctrine encourages people to pick and choose among several options. However widespread this opinion may be it cannot stand up to examination. At first glance there does indeed seem to be a variety of systems and formulae, but on looking at them closer it can be seen that what these are concerned with is some partial prescription limited to this or that particular sphere, problem or question. But they are not sufficiently comprehensive, exalted or complete to be considered as the supreme and permanent rule of human order – which is what doctrine is in the true sense of the word.

In fact there is not such a wide choice after all. The social doctrine of the Church as presented even to non-Christians, when looked at merely from the standpoint of reason, can be seen to be the ideological world outlook which is most all-embracing, most methodically formulated, and clearest and firmest in its defence of the fundamental rights of *all* men – be they of a different religion or an opposing school of thought.

Not only is this attitude of non-believers to Catholic social doctrine in no sense incoherent or illogical, it is becoming more and more frequent. One of the blessings of the pontificate of John XXIII was to have shown to what extent non-Christians were prepared to welcome enthusiastically the social, civic and religious wisdom of this doctrine, while otherwise rejecting its supreme and supernatural conclusions. Everyone will remember how world-wide and also (it has been remarked) inter-confessional, was the success of *Pacem in Terris*.² Yet this encyclical was essentially a comprehensive resumé of the social doctrine of the Church from the time of Leo XIII to that of Pius XII. This can be seen from the constant references in footnotes to the encyclicals and allocutions of Pope John's predecessors.

If the supernatural perspectives of the Faith carry doctrine much further than could reason on its own, the fact remains that only Catholic social doctrine has insisted on respect for a natural order acceptable to all men of goodwill. Is it possible to conceive of a better "tool" in the service of the human community than this continual outpouring of sound doctrine?

Quite apart from its being true, it is also much more simple to handle than the Communist ideology, which is essentially "dialectical" and grounded in contradictions. Yet contrary to what is commonly believed, these contradictions are far from being the principles of easier

and more economical action. Instead they compel the Communist Party to keep up a gigantic apparatus solely to communicate to its troops what “orders for the day” they must observe. This in turn leads to endless deviations which make frequent and pitiless purges indispensable.

By contrast, and despite what “progressives” may say, an instructed Catholic has no need to be kept constantly up to date on what his “number one boss” may be thinking at the moment. For, insofar as he is an appropriately informed Catholic, he already knows all that is essential. It is not in following the Pope (or the Popes) that one risks finding oneself obliged to profess the opposite of what one affirmed only the previous evening. Obviously, therefore, our dispositions can be more flexible and adaptable, yet less onerous than those of the Revolution – and still be essentially *one* in space and time.

If it is true that society has never before been so threatened, it is also true that never before has the remedy for its ills been so clearly propounded; never before have the laws of sound organization and of social and political wisdom been presented in so complete, simple and practical a fashion.

2. *The Timeliness of Doctrine for the “Empty Souls” of Today.* We are speaking of a doctrine which could and should be more readily listened to, understood and applied.

We may look back to the times of Pius IX, Leo XIII and St. Pius X. Then the teaching of the Church was as true as it is today, but it had less chance of success. For the world was then hypnotized by the prestige of “modern” ideas, bedazzled by “science” and its possibilities, and also by the myth of inevitable “progress.” The “Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World” then seemed to be just around the corner.

“Citizens, the nineteenth century is a great one,” wrote Victor Hugo³ in *Les Misérables*: “but the twentieth century will be happy! Then there will be nothing similar to past history. We shall not have to fear, as we do today, the rivalry of nations breaking out into a clash of arms with hapless people arbitrarily partitioned by some Congress. Nor shall we have to fear the strife of two religions, confronting one another like embattled mountain goats on the bridge of infinity. There will no longer be fear of famine, of exploitation, of prostitution through distress of circumstances, of misery from unemployment, of the scaffold and the sword, of battles and the chance brigandage of an eventful world. One might almost say: ‘There will be no more news. There will be only happiness.’”

Our own generation has been cruelly disillusioned. It is perhaps somewhat more open-minded. "Many turn Communist," stated the Rev. A. Never, S.J., in *India Going Red*, "not for the hopes of material gain, since they already have a sufficiency, but because empty minds which experience a void within them provide as good a breeding ground for Communism as empty stomachs."

Looked at simply from this angle, Catholic doctrine appears to be the only one that is not already discredited by the experience of the past century. Some people, no doubt, will reply that since it has not been put to the proof, by any large scale or serious experiment in implementation, it is, in consequence, difficult to pronounce upon its value. But is this in fact an accurate judgement? The general diffusion throughout the world of the revolutionary spirit has, of course, hitherto been scarcely favourable to the social doctrine of the Popes being applied to concrete situations. But there are two ways in which a doctrine can be verified by experience – positively or negatively. By its implementation or by its rejection.

However much sound doctrine may be derided, suppressed or rejected, its truth shines forth all the more clearly when the evils of the times obviously derive from the contemptuous manner in which its principles have been ignored.

After the promulgation of Pius IX's encyclical, *Quanta Cura*, and its accompanying *Syllabus of Modern Errors*, a Frenchman wrote: "We are no longer allowed to be both intelligent and Catholic. This wretched Pope has condemned all that the most moderate men of his time are thinking."

But human experience itself has since refuted this fatuous observation. Speaking on the occasion of the centenary of the *Syllabus*, which was published in 1846, the distinguished Dominican, Father Bruckberger, summed up the lesson of history in the following magisterial terms:

There should have been no one better equipped than Christians to confront our deceitful and violent century. Christians have been warned, not only by Sacred Scripture, but more recently by an extraordinary document, which was spurned as retrograde and reactionary, but in which I see a Charter for human liberty for the twentieth century, if only it had been read and understood in time, and above all, obeyed by Christians. This document is the *Syllabus*, which is now exactly a hundred years old. Dubbed retrograde, this document has turned out to be simply prophetic. The *Syllabus* is a catalogue of propositions judged to be dangerous to the faith of

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believers and to the survival of human society. And on this account they were condemned as false and pernicious. Here are some of these condemned Propositions over whose historical implications I would ask the reader to ponder:

“The State is the source and origin of all rights and so is the title holder of a right which is not subject to any limitations” (Proposition 39).

“An injustice crowned by success is no offence against the sanctity of the law” (Proposition 61).

“The violation of the holiest of oaths or the commission of every sort of criminal and injurious action, provided this is done out of love for one’s country, is not to be reproved but should be considered permissible and even worthy of the highest praise” (Proposition 64).

If the *Syllabus* had been understood and fully obeyed by European Christians, Europe would have been spared Hitler and the various Fascisms; Russia would have been spared Lenin and Stalin; France would have been spared some less startling but not less subversive experiences. Indeed I cannot see in what respect human freedom could have suffered more. But this generation of European Christians is a collection of noodles who can be enticed to jump on no matter what bandwagon. And instead of being ashamed of themselves for not having listened to Pope Pius IX, they are such fools that they are instead ashamed of the *Syllabus*.

If what we have just read can be written about the *Syllabus*, which is often presented as the most odious of documents, what praise could not be given to the great number of pontifical texts which have not suffered such opprobrium, and which constitute the most universal basis which could possibly be offered in the service of civic action?

3. *Money*. Although money is radically different from the doctrinal arm, it nevertheless resembles doctrine in that it surpasses most other means of action by the potential it can unleash. Nothing indeed happens or can happen without money being involved in one way or another.

It can not only procure the tool which is indispensable for the workman, it also maintains the workman himself. It can, of course, serve the best ends or the worst – from the advancement of the Kingdom of God

to the progress of Subversion. It can be the price of the apostle's bread or the contribution made by Jewish bankers towards the foundation of the French Communist daily newspaper, *L'Humanité*.

Alas, while the coffers of the Revolution enable Communists to spend millions on their campaigns, poverty is our lot. An elementary sense of realism requires this truth to be reckoned with. It would be as futile to deny it as it would be disastrous to persist in living beyond our means.

The works which God loves are those poorest endowed, for His power shines out all the more when it triumphs in spite of a lack of material means. This is the divine way of testing those who seek to engage in the service of Christ the King. Too much easy money softens the will and encourages complacency through the impression it gives of power and security. So a measure of poverty is not necessarily an obstacle to action. It makes for alertness and encourages ingenuity. It can both temper the soul and stimulate energy.

All the same, what we need we need, and militants in a penniless cause have all the greater duty to consider what can be done to procure the indispensable means of action. Without in any sense failing to abandon one's will to the Divine Will, it is not only permitted but demanded by prudence that we be realistic and have no illusions about the money situation.

It is a very odd thing that so many Christians, though attached to the social doctrine of the Church, find it normal that the struggle which this implies should continue to be conducted with grossly insufficient means. It shows that their attachment to the truth is purely platonic, and that they have no sense of commitment or any intention of doing anything practical to implement the truth. Such people wish with all their heart for the triumph of sound doctrine – on condition that the sacrifices entailed are borne by others. Such people want God to grant victory to a cause in which the pretended “faithful” confine themselves to applauding the efforts of a handful of lone fighters who are left to bear the pains and the sacrifices of the combat!

Leaving aside the powerful means at the disposal of the Revolution, explicitly intended for that end, and considering only the progress in the Church of that movement which was long ago condemned by Pope Pius XI, in *Ubi Arcano Dei*, under the name of “juridical and social modernism,” it is immediately obvious that here we have to contend with people

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who know only too well how to synchronize various means of action in order to attain their objectives.

In publishing firms and centralized printing houses, the number of full-time employees who gain a comfortable living by dishing out “progressivism” is far in excess of anything we could hope to have even in our wildest dreams.

Consider a youth movement, for example, employing a full-time staff of a hundred, for very dubious reasons. Is it prudent or realistic to accept this as normal and yet to cry out against “megalomania” when we solicit the money that is indispensable to maintain a team of some ten or fifteen men full-time to organize the most basic form of anti-subversive activity?

If this disproportion is still not enough for our purists, so much the worse. In fact, it is even greater than we have indicated. Not only do well-paid full-time workers abound in the service of “juridical and social modernism.” This already well-staffed cause enjoys an additional advantage that thousands of pounds would be insufficient to obtain. For also working for this cause are hundreds of clerics and religious, men and women, who help by public speaking or by writing articles, by secretarial services, by many preparatory works or studies, or by offering the use of their premises. In these ways they give “juridical and social modernism” the almost gratuitous bonus of incalculable material advantages.

But it is not merely “progressives” we have to reckon with. When it is realized that behind them stand the real forces of the Revolution, Masonry and Marxism, it can be appreciated how terrifying (and supernaturally significant) is the disproportion in material terms.

4. *Is It Futile to Reckon on the Help of Benevolent Clerics?* Not only are we poor, but it is a fact, an inexplicable and probably scandalous fact, that we cannot and should not reckon on any gratuitous supplementary aid, comparable with that given to the cause of “juridical and social modernism” by the clerics and religious we have just mentioned.

With some rare exceptions we must take it as a fact that if the struggle for a Christian social order enjoys the encouragement of a fairly large number of clerics and religious, such encouragement seldom if ever takes a practical form.

God forbid that we should be ironical, and still more that we should despise the supernatural value of the prayers which we are sure these clerics and religious are offering to the Lord on our behalf. Nevertheless,

a realistic sense of action requires us to give warning that it would be imprudent to expect anything else from these friends.

We are not complaining about this, but it leaves a feeling of dissatisfaction at the bottom of the soul. It is comprehensible that clergy and religious should reject an invitation to participate directly in the affairs of the temporal order, since this would be contrary to their vocation; and that they have no call to follow the example of too many of their *confrères* who are “progressivist” or have leanings that way. But there is an immense field between such frontline engagement, and the auxiliary acts and practical support which not only tie in with the duties of priests but are also indispensable to Christian social action. There are many tasks and services which the clergy and religious could undertake, which would correspondingly relieve both the minds and the purses of the laity struggling against subversion.

Naturally, we were not exactly enthusiastic when asked to admire an essay by a friendly monk which turned out to be a study of “the notion of heat in St. Thomas Aquinas.”

But even this was nothing as compared with the request of another religious to a group of laymen already over-burdened by their civic apostolate, asking them to produce simple but strikingly orthodox catechetical texts – a work much more relevant to the competence as well as to the mission of a cleric.

This is one of the disabilities from which we suffer. Not only are we poor. We must also recognize that it would be futile to rely on getting any dependable and significant support from friendly clerics and religious. We must rely only on benevolent laymen, already over-burdened by family or professional responsibilities. Hence why we are unable to do enough, or do it with sufficient regularity; hence also the amateur nature of much of what we produce. Token honoraria, absurdly low salaries, unpaid articles: such is the lot of those who seek to serve the Social Kingship of Christ. We struggle under material difficulties while the regular troops of the Revolution and its “fifth columns” work full-time, benefiting by all manner of professional and technical resources.

This is another reason why the problem of finance has to be thought out with brutal frankness. Since we cannot do without money, it is necessary to set about finding what is honestly required for more effective action, and also to think about how to use it to best advantage, without waste, seeking to make what we come by yield a hundredfold.

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5. *Maximum Use of Resources in a Struggle That Yields No Material Return.* Hence the necessity of planning in terms of the money we may reasonably hope to obtain. The best thought-out schemes, and the most imaginative organizational plans will be contrived in vain if, in order to function, they presuppose money that will never materialize.

In this sense, therefore, there is no point in envisaging plans for social or political action unless it is possible that sufficient finance will be available to make them practicable. But even here it is impossible to generalize, so varied are circumstances and financial and psychological possibilities.

Some projects which may demand considerable outlay may produce significant returns. Thus in the long run they may be less burdensome to sustain than other less costly initiatives which give no financial return or become increasingly costly to maintain.

There are other forms of action for which little money is available but which occasion little or no financial problem, in that people have become accustomed to supporting them. A kind of popular consensus operates in their favour. Undoubtedly, in this sphere, what people are accustomed to is a factor that must be reckoned with.

Finally, there are some initiatives which will elicit little support, at least for a time, because they are out of the ordinary run and propose unfamiliar methods of work. Such initiatives will be very difficult to get going. Those in charge of them, if prudent, must think hard about the cost factor. In such cases, it is wise to make provision for auxiliary means of financing them. It may be possible for one project to be grafted onto a commercial business; for another it may be necessary to organize a service of collectors, to establish a "fighting fund," etc. But as a whole it is futile to imagine that initiatives indispensable for the re-establishment of a Christian social order are ever likely to be self-supporting.

To expect too much in terms of generous benefactions is to risk being cruelly disillusioned. The state of mind of those whom we generally call "the rich" warrants little basis for hope. Disregarding scandalous sinners in this category, whose frivolities provide the daily bread of the glossy magazines, we must take account of (or rather, not count on) the snobbishness and intellectual mediocrity which condition the reactions of most of smart society; the clichés that pass muster for principles in such milieux; the superficial veneer of those in the "right set," the outward show, the "couldn't-care-less" attitude of mind which derives from wealth, not to mention the itch for popularity which makes so many princes,

aristocrats and wealthy persons want to show off their advanced opinion. The entire climate requires to be changed; a work of re-education to be accomplished: the re-education of character no less than of mind.

The indications of common sense notwithstanding, the very kind of action that is most indispensable to the well-being of the temporal order is no longer regarded as a public service, even by those who are most favourably disposed. With an irresponsible indifference that is quite literally scandalous, such people regard this so necessary form of social action as being the responsibility of some profession or other.

How would Tommy Atkins⁴ in the trenches have reacted if, in addition to fighting the enemy, he had had to pay for his own ammunition? This does not mean that in the conduct of a war the notion of economy should be discarded. It does mean that the essential purpose of an army is to guard the integrity of the nation, and that this must take precedence over the balancing of the budget, or profit and loss considerations.

Either the struggle for a social order conformable with the natural and supernatural will of God is a "public service" or else it is but an imprudent waste of time and energy. Unless the best elements in society understand this they understand nothing.

While a public service has a duty to watch over the economy of its means, it would be quite wrong to compare it to a commercial undertaking operating on a profit basis that can expect its revenue to increase as its activities increase and the volume of business expands. With a public service, this is not the case. It is not when the soldier is most fully engaged with the enemy that material conditions are at their easiest; it is quite the reverse that it is true.

6. *Some Financial Principles.* In a revolutionary society, as Fr. De Clorivière pointed out, the play of material interests and the circulation of money are governed by the laws and the spirit of the Revolution. It is impossible, therefore, for anyone who wants to fight against the spirit of the Revolution to hope to enjoy the support of a revolutionary society as such and taken as a whole. Consequently those who want to undertake an effective struggle against the Revolution should be guided by the following principles:

(1) Since money problems are likely to be their Achilles heel, they must be completely independent of all institutions directly or even indirectly connected with the revolutionary spirit or its manifestations.

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(2) As far as possible, *those who pay should also be those who fight*; if only to avoid all possibility of “dialectical conflict” between those who contribute and those who spend what is contributed.

(3) Those who contribute towards the “fighting fund” should be *as numerous as possible and also as regular as possible in contributing*. This is the best way of not having to be dependent on isolated and ephemeral acts of generosity; and also of being invulnerable to the economic or political vicissitudes of society.

(4) The money will often have to be *raised not only from those possessing a surplus but also from those who have little more than the bare necessities of life*.

The Revolution itself had no hesitation, in Algeria and Vietnam, in putting pressure on the poorest of peasants to raise the money necessary for its struggle. We have certainly no thought of advocating similar methods of fundraising, but we do find it remarkable that the idea of a “public service,” and of contributing to it, should be more readily admitted on the side of Subversion than on the side of those who pretend to be the partisans of social order.

Let us not have any illusions, however. Our cause is fated to lack the wherewithal for a long while ahead. Hence we should have recourse only to the best thought-out, tried and tested plans. These should be properly directed and wisely implemented. We are too poor to have any time for organizations that swallow up resources and yield little in return. As far as possible, we should prefer forms of intensive action which produce the maximum returns in human terms for the least possible expense in terms of both money and personnel. Above all, we should avoid those forms of action which from the outset call for heavy overheads, many full-time employees, and involve interference with the domestic lives of those involved.

On the contrary, prudence obliges us to prefer those forms of action which permit each to be active in his own milieu and to fulfil the duties of his state of life without being troubled by social or psychological upsets. Finally, we must prefer such forms of action as do not involve an excessive budget.

In this connection, without denying the usefulness of certain forms of action, it might be useful to underline the degree to which some prove more costly than others which, bearing in mind our means, it would in consequence be wiser to prefer in the interests of effectiveness.

This does not mean to say that we object to the use of the forms of action to which we are about to refer. Who, for example, can deny the value of a newspaper? But it does mean that we ought to think seriously before adopting such courses of action ourselves, for in these enterprises setbacks, losses and amateurism are inadmissible and would prove disastrous.

Let us quote some examples.

(1) The Press. The cost ten years ago of launching a French daily newspaper (which failed) was over £500,000, and the annual cost of running a weekly with a circulation of 40,000 copies was then about £75,000.

(2) So-called Mass Movements. Before the split in its ranks, the Christian Trade Union Confederation claimed to have a membership of some 400,000 which meant that its annual budget was somewhere in the region of £750,000, exclusive of subsidies.

(3) Youth Movements. Their budgets reach considerable sums, since these movements tend towards a structured formula and are no longer based on voluntary work. The Scouts, for example, have a full-time staff of 115 employees and secretaries – and their budget is estimated at somewhere in the region of £750,000.

(4) Action Through Films. *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, by the Marxist, Pasolini,⁵ is said to have cost over £1,000,000.

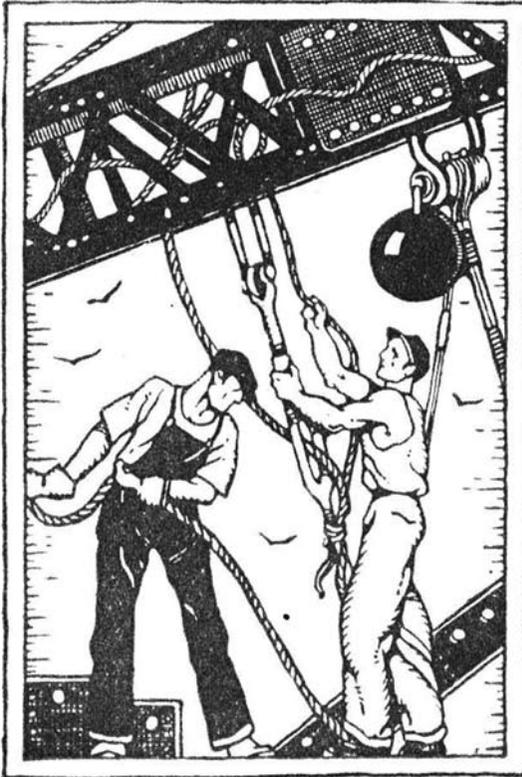
(5) “Moral Re-Armament.”⁶ According to Cardinal Suenens, in 1953 “Moral Re-Armament” employed a full-time staff of 1,500 throughout the world. It is easy to understand why effective ideological movements (of which the Communist Party is a particular example) have always relied basically on networks of people engaged in ideological work. For this kind of action is simple, adaptable and economical by comparison with the preceding formulae.

(6) Let us now compare these figures and influences with the work of *Cité Catholique* (which eventually blossomed into the complex of associations and initiatives now voluntarily affiliated to and guided by the International Office). Although in 1958 the *Cité Catholique* was considered to be the best organized and most active element among *counter-revolutionary movements* (according to a Report by a French Government Department), it had a total annual budget of no more than £10,000, which included all expenses – including the cost of a monthly bulletin,

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the publication of handbooks, staff salaries, office expenses, travelling expenses in France and abroad, and so on.

What we have just said gives yet another reason why we should reject anything in the nature of those vast plan-happy, universal, centralizing, totalitarian pretensions. For such Leviathans are as ungainly as they are voracious.



Chapter II

The Means of Action

The means of action are innumerable. They can vary and be adapted in so many different ways that it is indeed impossible to enumerate them. So in what follows we shall not attempt to do so. The sole aim of this chapter is to register a number of points of reference, basic kinds of action, the many combinations of which cannot be visualised.

For example, a newspaper, a meeting or a party can each be a means of action in itself. That is indeed one possibility. But another possibility, not susceptible to methodical examination, is the combination of, say, the newspaper, as a form of action, with other forms of action: meetings, parties, demonstrations, etc.

For while there are newspapers which are only newspapers, there are others which serve as the organ of a Party, or which organize lectures, congresses, etc. It all depends on the personality and the intention of those in control, on the nature and tone of the newspapers in question, and on the circumstances under which they function. Apart from certain minor considerations, what we have said about newspapers can also be said about all other forms of action.

It is best to confine ourselves to the examination of general principles according to a simple scheme. We therefore propose to list forms of action under the headings "Looking," "Listening," and "Meeting." This makes the following scheme of classification possible.

(1) Looking: comprising the forms of influence or action which reach us through the faculty of vision:

(a) Correspondence, letters of all kinds. How much energy can be tapped and channelled by the sending, regularly, of really good letters.

(b) The printed word in all of its forms: books, reviews, journals, illustrated magazines.

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(c) Tracts, booklets, posters, exhibitions, drawings, caricatures, albums of photography, museums.

(d) Bookshops, publishers, printing presses, message delivery services.

(2) Listening: comprising the forms of influence or action where a number of people listen to the words of an orator, preacher or actor without (normally) any sort of dialogue being established:

(a) Lectures, speeches, sermons, courses.

(b) Radio and television broadcasts.

(c) Gramophone records, music, singing, cinema, theatre, *son et lumière*. These are very influential. Many people are acquainted with history and literature only through radio or television. The “Moral Re-Armament” movement (MRA) makes great use of the theatre for its propaganda. The campaign in favour of the “popular theatre” is definitely a left-wing or Marxist operation.

(3) Meeting: comprising those forms of influence and action where information is received through the eyes and ears, but where the principal aim is to establish contacts, exchange ideas and form alliances:

(a) Dialogues, interviews, conversations, discussions.

(b) Social evenings, cells, meetings, sessions, congresses, pilgrimages.

(c) Associations, rallies, movements, parties, trades unions, clubs.

(d) Seminaries, cadre training schools, centres of formation and documentation.

(e) The numerous links of friendship, capillary action.

Whole treatises could be written about each of these – still further treatises about their natural and indispensable interactions. For the power of all these means can be increased tenfold when they complement each other. This presupposes an adequate understanding of both the strong points and the limitations of each means, and also of the ways in which the latter can be compensated for. To facilitate judgement on these points, we list Nine Criteria by which the significance of the various means of action can be appraised.

(1) The Fundamental Notion of Unity in Respect of Doctrine and Strategy. The complementarity of different means is in fact inconceivable

unless with reference to a superior unity. Lenin censured those around him who tended to despise ideological formation. But doctrinal formation is even more imperative for Christians. If each unit in an army claimed to be fighting for a different ideal the unity and strength of that army would be seriously compromised.

So while it behoves us to encourage the use of a variety of means in order to increase tenfold the possibilities of effective action, this variety should never make us lose sight of the indispensable unity of minds and hearts on which all else depends.

We can go even further than this however. Even doctrinal unity is not enough in itself. If we would fight effectively, a certain systemization of methods is also necessary. A free and easy unity of minds will achieve little if there is not also a certain unity in our methods of action

(2) The Notion of Social or Psychological Harmony Deriving From Common Interests or Concerns. Unity of thought, unity in our strategy are obvious elements of power, but respect for social harmony is equally important. Consequently, forms of action which neglect or disturb this harmony are to be avoided. Preference should be given to those which permit of persons being employed where they are and as they are. Or to put it another way, everyone will devote himself to action with all the more zeal when the means proposed correspond more closely with the hopes and fears of the little world in which he lives.

(3) The Notion of Continuity or Frequency. The form of action which sustains interest through continuity is more effective than a form of action which involves breaks or intervals of inaction.

(4) The Notion of Mutual Support. Some very effective forms of action have the disadvantage of leaving those involved too much on their own. Since no one is immune to discouragement, there is an advantage in means of action which allow for mutual strengthening of purpose.

(5) The Notion of Relative Simplicity Concerning What Is Said or Done, or in the Functioning of the Apparatus. Teaching that is above most people's heads, that is needlessly recondite, or involves pointless erudition sterilizes action. Hair-splitters rarely show much zeal in spreading truth. They tend instead to study certain aspects of the truth indefinitely.

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It is also important that the functioning of the work proposed should be understood by people of ordinary capacity. Beware, therefore, of complicated formulae, which require what is usually lacking – full-time workers, lots of money, premises which are difficult to obtain, etc. Prefer rather such adaptable forms of action as can fit in with the most capricious of timetables, and operate successfully from the humblest of premises.

(6) The Notion of Economy. We are poor. This can be taken for granted. Consequently, as far as possible, we should choose forms of action which give a high return at the lowest cost.

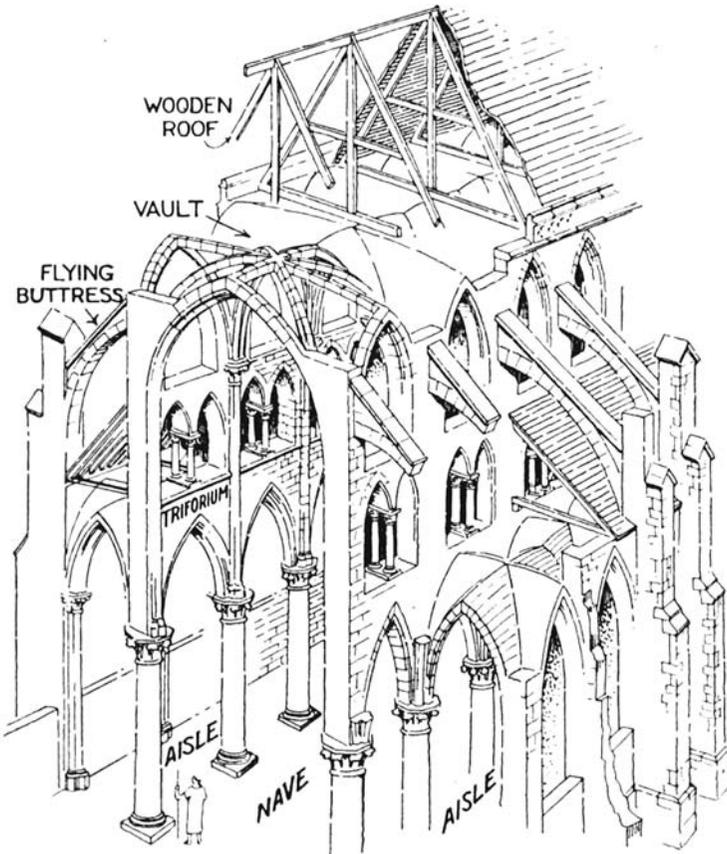
(7) The Notion of Security Including Survival in Time of Persecution. At any moment the Revolution may once more begin to persecute ferociously. It is, therefore, wise to envisage the kind of action which can continue no matter what happens and in spite of everything. If the leadership should be suppressed or function intermittently, this deficiency at top level must not cause action at the grassroots level to be abandoned. Thus forms of action which do not depend on a single person or group of persons are most desirable. Preparations should also be made for someone ready to step in without delay in the event of the leadership's being put out of action.

(8) The Notion of Continual Improvement. Remember that routine is the death of action. Whoever does not seek continually to improve his methods of work is already out of action, perhaps without suspecting it.

There must therefore be concern to seek maximum effectiveness by continually perfecting means and methods. The forms of action adopted must be capable of easy improvement so that each improvement does not provoke a sharp crisis within the organization.

(9) The Notion of Moral Obligation. This aims at reminding us that there are means which are morally impermissible and that, in certain circumstances, even certain perfectly legitimate means must be avoided if they quite needlessly provoke serious misunderstanding, for then the remedy would be worse than the evil. Bear well in mind that in order to be fruitful (and thus acceptable) some forms of action require a slow labour of preparation of opinion, and the formation of an élite.

We suggest these Criteria merely as a guide. It would, however, take too long to attempt a detailed criticism of all forms of action in the light of these Nine Criteria. It would, moreover, be a tiresome exercise burdened with repetition. We deem it, therefore, sufficient to think hard about some of the most characteristic means at our disposal in the light of these Criteria. Such lessons as emerge from this can then be applied to the study of parallel cases.



Chapter III

Looking

1. This, of course, implies consideration of whatever is read. Correspondence, for example. Consider how many initiatives can be stimulated and sustained by well-written letters: personal letters, in manuscript; but also letters with multiple destinations; letters passed from hand to hand, as Pascal's "Provincial Letters"⁷ were; or circular letters, typed or duplicated. At the present, there are many of the latter, some of them having a very wide circulation.

At this level, we can already speak in terms of the printed word. One needs only to mention the printed word to appreciate how great is the influence of this medium. For printing includes everything from the briefest tract or poster to books, reviews and newspapers.

Today it is impossible to think in terms of ideological warfare without reference to the printed word. It would indeed be criminal to underestimate its power.

Who would deny the role of printing in preparing the way for the French Revolution? The printers of Amsterdam or London kept up a more or less clandestine distribution of printed matter by travelling peddlers throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. "Little books which we are at pains to distribute skilfully," wrote Voltaire,⁸ "which we give to reliable people who distribute them in their turn." Since then, the role of the printed word has become increasingly important.

So much so, indeed, that we now have recourse to printing as a sort of reflex action, without thinking. Anybody who wants to start any sort of action can scarcely think of its not taking the form of a periodical or a book. Though they are only means, such forms of action appear as ends in themselves, so that the success of a journal or the sale of a book becomes the sole criterion of the success of the cause in question.

This is a dangerous illusion which produces a distorted conception of action, tending to make it appear as a function of the relationship between writers and readers. The former write, the latter read. Getting subscriptions for a periodical, or sales of a book: such is the beginning and end of action in the eyes of many people. Thus the most zealous do everything to find new readers, which is all right as far as it goes, but it is nevertheless a very rudimentary concept of action.

A splendid army indeed! With a headquarters staff which writes and an army of readers, who for the most part are quite content simply to take pleasure in reading fine articles. When only the headquarters staff acts, and the troops do no more than read *communiqué* after *communiqué*!

How could this possibly suffice to contain the contemporary forces of Subversion?

It would be unjust, of course, to deny that the writer's influence does indeed represent a form of action, but the same title cannot be claimed for those who are content to read a good article or good book just for the pleasure of doing so. No heroic effort is necessary to immerse oneself in reading an excellent review. Is it not, on the contrary, a pleasurable and comforting experience?

It is true that what is read can at the same time be a considerable stimulus to action by the reader. But this scarcely compensates for what happens when the reader is only a reader and not a doer. Of course, it is much more pleasant to dip into a fine article than to goad people into action and to see that they put their backs into it.

A comparison is possible here with the hearty rations which we know to be indispensable to the morale of an army: always provided, however, that the quality of the rations stimulates the combatants' will to do battle and does not merely give them the sense of well-being that comes from a well-filled stomach. Similarly with the printed word, which can either inspire action or be so much pap for an army of layabouts.

2. The insufficiency of the printed word in the absence of a supporting, distributing network is particularly evident now that the printed word has ceased to be what it was in the early part of this century – the only powerful means for the rapid diffusion of ideas, orders and slogans. The Press no longer has a monopoly of information and propaganda. The radio, cinema and television are daily becoming of greater importance.

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The events in Algeria (or more recently in Czechoslovakia) have shown what a decisive part transistor radio sets can play in periods of “troubles” or when barricades are in the streets.

Moreover, the Press that is really free, and the publication and diffusion of books that are really independent, continue to meet with ever-growing difficulties. The big circulation press which not so long ago boasted of its power to thunder against tyranny and oppression is enslaved and more and more passive under the growing yoke of totalitarianism. In many countries, radio and television are already officially controlled by the State.

Since, therefore, the printed word in its most powerful aspects appears to be beyond our reach, it would be foolish to hope to conquer by means of this weapon alone. Should we then discard it from our arsenal? By no means. We should simply cease to expect from it what it is incapable of yielding.

In competition with the powers of modern propaganda, the effectiveness of a little weekly or review, which scarcely makes both ends meet, is derisory if reckoned solely in terms of one publication in competition with another. But this is no longer the case if the little weekly or modest review is sustained by a close-knit network of active friends and supporters. In other words, the zeal of a few individuals must succeed in counterbalancing the weight and power of a vast but amorphous multitude.

It is remarkable how much the volume of printed matter has lessened the impact of the printed word. The sensitivity of public opinion has been blunted by this proliferation of contradictory verbiage and refuses to react to it. It is certain that the “little books” disseminated by the friends of Voltaire before the French Revolution had a much greater impact on the popular mind.

There are now too many reviews, too many newspapers, too many books. As a consequence, titles and headlines have to become bigger and bigger, more and more sensational, before the public will bat an eyelid or stir a finger. Many take in a review but read only one or two articles, and many books do not have more than their first few pages cut.

It is understandable that when leaflets or private circular letters purporting to give inside information are well written, serious and intelligent, they not only tend to multiply in spite of their high costs of subscription, but also to reach a public out of all proportion to their restricted circulation.

And it is also comprehensible that a really worthwhile publication with a moderate circulation that can rely on networks of ardent supporters can exercise a much wider influence than even a newspaper with a circulation that is the envy of its competitors.

An English commentator has pointed out that the wider the circulation of a newspaper, the less influence it tends to have. This is certainly paradoxical, but would indicate that British people do not buy their papers to be influenced or informed, but rather to be amused and to pass the time. It is certainly undeniable that although in 1945 three quarters of the British Press was against the Labour Party, it was the latter which nevertheless came to power by a sweeping majority over the Conservative Party, although the latter was led by Winston Churchill, the nation's popular war leader. Similarly, in France, the Communist Party gets four million votes from electors who, though regular readers of the non-communist press, are politically influenced by the militants of the Party.

This shows what are the true sinews of strength. Above all, it shows what can be accomplished by the zeal of a few who ensure the power of the printed word by using it as a means of extending their influence. In the quotation from Voltaire cited earlier in this chapter, the importance of the revolutionary action did not consist so much in the "little books" themselves as in the network of "reliable people" who read and distributed them.

The writing is not enough, however indispensable and valuable it may be; there must, also and above all, be people who will radiate their influence everywhere around them. "Communism wouldn't worry anyone," a Marxist leader said recently, "if its influence had been limited to the diffusion of *L'Humanité* or other periodicals."

It is astonishing that many authors who, though fully aware of the methods and the power of the Revolution, continue to expect to have their works pushed and widely distributed through the normal trade channels. What is the use of knowing the strategy and tactics of the adversary if in the actual struggle against the Revolution one behaves like a political illiterate? As a result of a kind of complacent snobbery, extremely precious documents either do not see the light of day or are published under the worst conditions for being widely diffused and read. Yet had these same texts been diffused by enthusiastic networks of militant advocates of true social order, they could have exercised a really powerful influence, and could also have earned a reasonable sum of royalties for the author. As it

is, alas, too often such documents merely gather dust in some publishing house, which, though it may have a reputation for elegance, is unwilling to compromise itself by a display of uncharacteristic zeal.

Alas, we have relied too much on the power of the printed word alone. The generations before us certainly lacked for nothing in this respect. They had the discourses and encyclicals of Gregory XVI, Pius IX, Leo XIII and St. Pius X; the works of Cardinal Pie, de Maistre; *L'Univers* of Veuillot; and in English the writings of Belloc,⁹ the Chestertons¹⁰ and Mgr. Ronald Knox,¹¹ to name only a few. The Revolution then had against it a force, in print, as rich and as powerful as its own. But while the Revolution has always known how to use literature (like the *Encyclopaedia*), its real chiefs were never mere publicists. They were instead men such as Desaguliers,¹² Weishaupt, Nubius,¹³ etc., and nearer to us, Engels, Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Mao.

We have had marvellous writers, admirable thinkers, and, God knows, it was important to have them. Thanks to them we have had printed works of exceptional quality. If our influence has continued to decline it is because we lacked a sufficiently enduring network of human associations, well-instructed, constantly renewed and utterly determined in their dedication to the cause.

3. Having said this we must nevertheless emphasize the merits of the printed word. Briefly however, for in a study such as this, we cannot deal in detail with all its possibilities. What we have to say will refer principally to books, periodicals and newspapers, which are the weapons of the social and political combat *par excellence*.

However, as we have already indicated, it can happen that in the hands of an exceptional craftsman even a mediocre tool can yield quite disproportionate results.

Thus the poster, a secondary medium, showed unsuspected possibilities recently when the courage and wealth of Coty (the perfumer) resulted in placards as high as houses, visible from afar, bearing concise and striking texts which were veritable articles.

Similar observations might be made about drawings and caricatures, etc. But we shall confine our attention to the printed word as we know it today, considering it in the light of the Criteria listed in the previous chapter.

From the point of view of Criterion One (doctrinal and strategic unity), it is undeniable that printing is the most appropriate means of realizing that unity of minds and hearts, which is indispensable to fruitful action. It can be adapted to all kinds of public opinion, it can respond to the most diverse needs: from the children's illustrated missal to the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas.¹⁴ It also includes fashion reviews, trades unions bulletins, news magazines, publicity leaflets and Stock Exchange quotations. All spheres of society which can thus be reached, interested, defended or educated by means of the printed word (ref. Criterion Two – the notion of social harmony and common interests).

As for Criterion Three (continuity and frequency) the printed word in the form of a periodical has become the clearest indication of the life of a movement. If the publication should stop or be late in appearing, the movement is thought to be dead, the organization destroyed or moribund. There is no more effective means of governing the continuity of political and social action than the regular issue of a periodical.

This brings, as a bonus, the moral support and mutual strengthening called for by Criterion Four.

Is there anything easier than the purchase of a book or a subscription to a review (Criterion Five – simplicity)? The possibilities of printing are constantly progressing. As for the text, the most simple is no less printable than the most obscure.

As for Criterion Six (economy), the techniques of printing are such today that no association is so poor as not to be able to afford some kind of printing for propaganda purposes.

There are also limitless possibilities in terms of Criterion Seven (security). Many secret printing presses under the occupation of France indicated what is possible even in times of persecution.

As for the possibility of continuous improvement (Criterion Eight), how many journals began very modestly but eventually developed into magnificent publications?

Finally (Criterion Nine – moral obligation), nothing prevents printing from respecting it completely. If it is true that the worst ideas can be spread by this means, prudence and sanctity can equally be served by the printed word.

So the printed word passes muster on all counts.

Chapter IV

Listening

“The first of all apostolates is that of the Word,” stated Father Ramière.¹⁵ “Nothing can take its place.” In *School, Culture, Trade*, H. Charlier¹⁶ writes:

Speech merits special attention as a mode of expression because it is the most familiar and the most necessary for the manual worker. In writing, painting, dancing, music or drama, the means of expression are more sophisticated and less integral to habitual daily activities. Written language and written examinations put the self-taught person at a disadvantage. When faced with pen and paper, he feels only half himself, just when he has something to say.

Precisely because it presupposes more direct personal contact, communication that involves listening is more alive and compelling. Without under-estimating the considerable influence exercised by top class writers, it is especially orators and preachers who attract people. A good article or book can have an enormous influence but the influence of the spoken word is at once wider and more penetrating.

Besides, there are many people who cannot really read, and many who can but read little. Especially among ordinary folk, propaganda is circulated principally by word of mouth. Hence the importance of leaders at grassroots levels. The influence of the article rarely succeeds in overcoming the effect of daily conversation. It is easy to defend oneself against a book: one has only to close it. It is harder not to listen to one’s workmate, to one’s neighbour in the workshop, to a relative or friend. Moreover, as often as not, books, reviews or newspapers are read only after they have been recommended or spoken about.

Action by means of the spoken word can take two forms. The action may be one way – where one person speaks to an audience that listens, as in the case of sermons, broadcasts, speeches, lectures and lessons,

etc. Alternatively, it may be through an exchange of words: as a *dialogue* involving two or more persons. This adds to the power of the spoken word alone, the much greater impact of personal contact by means of which people really meet one another.

For, in one sense, there is really no “meeting” at all, properly so-called, when a number of listeners come together to hear a sermon, a talk, a lecture or a lesson, or even less so when they sit together listening to a radio broadcast, or in a cinema or theatre. These people are only *listening*. Though sitting side by side, they may not exchange a word or make contact with their neighbour. They are passive, if not apathetic or inattentive.

That is why we have chosen not to study these two kinds of action by the spoken word together, postponing to the next chapter our discussion of those forms of action which involve both looking and listening but where, into the bargain, contacts and exchanges are made and alliances established. Talks, lectures and classes are, as we have said, one-way affairs, not “meetings” strictly speaking.

We hasten to add, however, that this is a matter of classification, for reality can be much more complex. If there are lectures where everyone goes away without speaking to his neighbour, there are others where precious contacts are established and friendships cemented; contacts which add considerably to the impact of the spoken word.

1. *Lectures*. Lectures can certainly have a great influence. Indeed the establishment of a sufficient consensus of opinion is inconceivable without them (Criteria One and Two – notions of unity and social harmony).

For a series of lectures to be most fruitful, previous agreement among the speakers is necessary. There must be a more or less common vocabulary, and analogous schemes of thought. Unfortunately, it is in the very nature of lectures to encourage individualism, the desire to be original and to shine, and this is not without danger in respect to Criterion Five (easier understanding of what is said or done).

Frequency and continuity (Criterion Three) are relatively easy to guarantee (i.e., if one sees to it), but the security of any large gathering is more difficult to ensure in case of persecution (Criterion Seven).

Mutual comfort and solidarity (Criterion Four) are readily assured, but there is danger that the rather formal atmosphere too often found at

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lectures may inhibit discussion and thus prevent clarification concerning what has been inadequately explained or understood.

As regards economy (Criterion Six), lectures can vary enormously – from those to small, select audiences in a friend's house, to others which necessitate leasing an expensive auditorium and involve lecturer's fees, etc.

2. *Classes*. By this we mean such talks as are explicitly pedagogic. These are obviously superior as regards Criterion One (intellectual unity); to teach something well there is nothing better than an appropriate course of instruction. But psychologically, alas, lectures can be very off-putting. It is, therefore, necessary by parallel initiatives to compensate for this disadvantage. Little imagination is required to envisage the disadvantages in question.

Unless the teacher happens to be truly exceptional, enthusiasm for classes is most unusual. The master speaks, the pupils listen; and as sound teaching implies insistence on principles, first and at length, this kind of activity is generally lacking in dynamism.

The very superiority of the teacher may even be a danger, by discouraging frank discussion. Out of timidity, students will be chary of contradicting, or of admitting the extent of their ignorance. Moreover, since the classes we have in mind cannot be as frequent as those in schools or colleges, where the pupils meet their teacher every day, there will always be some lack of intimacy. And because of the time factor there is less opportunity for those concerned to chat together informally.

The didactic and clearly dogmatic character of classes is also liable to produce the kind of classroom mind that knows nothing of nuances. Yet the social and political struggle, more than any other, requires a very keen perception of the complexity of the real world. Since we have been reproached with living in the past, we should make all the greater effort to show that not only do we live in accordance with timeless principles but also that we are intensely aware of the concrete demands of our times.

Now, in classes which present things all too succinctly, the listener grasps no more than the most general principles and hence runs the risk of appreciating only the logical coherence of these principles. To listen to, understand and approve what the master says are the principal steps by which pupils make progress. While in one sense this suffices for know-

ing and professing the truth, it is by no means enough if one is to be able effectively to radiate influence in one's milieu.

For the pupil who is every inch a pupil, taking an all too characteristic course of lectures, everything is divided and classified in relation to what is true or false in terms of ideas. He knows nothing of the painful progress or of the difficulties encountered in a personal struggle towards the light, which is why classes are much less effective than is commonly imagined.

As regards Criterion Five (simplicity), it is obvious that class instruction is impossible without a teacher. If it is of great value the influence of a class may be considerable, though limited in radius, since only the inhabitants of the town or district who are free at the appointed day and hour can attend.

As regards psychological harmony, common interests, frequency and continuity, mutual support, security, economy, continual improvement (Criteria Two, Three, Four, Six, Seven and Eight), the formula of "lesson" or "class" is so variable that any precise judgement is impossible.

If there are some classes that involve all kinds of people, others are homogenous in composition. If some are costly, others are free. If some are vulnerable (in case of persecution), it is nevertheless possible to organize classes very discreetly.

Frequency too can vary enormously. But this kind of action can nevertheless be progressively adapted to suit innumerable demands of time, place and circumstance.



Chapter V

Meeting Others

Under this heading, we mean to include all modes of action and influence where contacts, exchanges, friendships and dialogues can be established, though of course they also involve both looking and listening.

Such gatherings can vary enormously, and it would be impossible to assess their advantages precisely since these depend on how they are organized. For if there are some congresses which look impressive but bring people together without them really meeting one another, there are others where fruitful contacts are made and invaluable associations and friendships established. It all depends upon how things are done and on the care taken to direct things properly. Although all these forms of action cannot be appraised in a few words, some useful general observations can be made about some of them.

1. *Public Meetings, Congresses and Rallies.* The interest, and consequently the advantages, deriving from public meetings, congresses and rallies result from the considerable influence these can have (if only for a short time) on the morale of those who attend them or hear them spoken of.

Such events can boost morale enormously. Meeting together, people are able to appreciate that they are not isolated. They become aware of their strength and of such progress as has been made.

Occasions such as these can be a public demonstration of faith – provided, of course, that they are successfully organized. Otherwise, the effect can be disastrous, the very opposite of what was intended, by discouraging those whom it was intended to invigorate.

Thus from the standpoint of Criterion Four (mutual support), these forms of action are most desirable provided that certain risks are guarded against. But while useful, these forms of action have decided limitations.

The morale-boosting enthusiasm engendered as often as not is essentially emotional, sentimental and subjective. Even when speeches and reports are sound and constructive, it would be vain to imagine that profound doctrinal action is likely to result from gatherings such as these.

Judged by Criteria One and Two (sense of unity and social harmony) , therefore, they can be seen to be of limited value.

As for the sense of frequency and continuity (Criterion Three), it is clear that these forms of action leave much to be desired. Their cost (Criterion Six), the disruption they occasion, the difficulties inherent in organizing such gatherings, the leasing of accommodation, the provision of stewards, not to mention the problem of finding a sufficiently large audience: all this means that such gatherings can be organized only now and then.

But occasional gatherings, as these are, which result in a significant but superficial impact, as these do, cannot possibly form the basis for a serious, lasting and profoundly influential action.

As for Criterion Five (ease of functioning) such meetings call for readily available speakers; and really effective orators are in very short supply. Moreover, this type of initiative is either quite inconceivable or highly vulnerable in times of persecution (Criterion Seven). Given interference with the operation of top level leadership, such action is out of the question.

As for the idea of perfecting one's means of operation (Criterion Eight), the mass-meeting type of gathering is much too inflexible and invariable in form to permit of much room for improvement in technique.

The collective euphoria which is the aim of such meetings is much too delicate a blossom to stand up to the blast of self-criticism. At such gatherings, therefore, the emphasis is rather on disguising omissions and faults than on denouncing and correcting them. As for the practical resolutions which are the stock-in-trade of such gatherings, everyone knows how much the inevitable motions and declarations of intent are worth. They are drafted in far too general terms for anyone to feel personally "committed." They are applauded. Everyone is happy. That is about all that can be expected from this type of gathering.

Finally, in regard to Criterion Nine (moral obligation), it must be observed that this kind of gathering is particularly susceptible to inflammatory influences, and that a crowd, insufficiently stewarded and guided

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by a sufficient number of animators, can be swayed by a mob mentality contrary to the organizers' will. Under such circumstances there may be regrettable scenes and a most undesirable atmosphere. Such occasions can dangerously provoke human passions, and it is therefore imperative that mass meetings should be strictly controlled and the audience guided by well-trained groups of animators. But this in turn calls for forms of action that are not only complementary but also preparatory, and much more seriously thought out than the types of action we have just been discussing.

2. *Seminars, Training Courses for Cadres, Retreats.* Under this heading we include all formative functions which gather together a few people for a limited time at some appropriate centre, be it a hotel, an abbey or a retreat house, etc.

This is a very valuable kind of meeting, for it permits the participants to get to know one another well, to form sympathetic relationships and to accomplish more serious work. It is a Christian formula, *par excellence*, like that from which the Church emerged radiant and fearless at Pentecost after ten days in the Cenacle, one which under the name of "closed retreat" needs no further recommendation. The Communists indeed have thought it indispensable to ape it to their own advantage.

"No one who has not actually experienced it," wrote Albert de Mun¹⁷ – the founder of Catholic Circles for Workers – in his *My Social Vocation*,

can know the worth of several days passed in meditation, withdrawn from the noise and turmoil of the world and of business affairs, days given over to reflection and sincere self-examination. I would go so far as to say that there is no more salutary or effective preparation, for private or public life, for family duties or for social responsibilities, for ordinary mortals or for men immersed in affairs of State.

The retreat became for us a veritable school of application. All those who took a truly active part in our ranks, all the devoted agents of our propaganda received their formation in these retreats. There, by a severe education of mind and spirit, characters were tempered that nothing could subsequently shake. There, in an upsurge of chivalrous piety and generosity of soul, timid Christians were transformed into ardent apostles. There, in the intimacy of long conversations, fruitful friendships were formed on the indestructible basis of a strict community of ideas.

Discipline was strict. We observed it with military precision. Regardless of status, men from all walks of life and of all ages took part: soldiers, magistrates, industrialists, landed proprietors, etc.

This passage reveals how well this type of meeting measures up to Criterion One (intellectual and spiritual unity), to Criteria Four and Nine (mutual comfort and support, and moral integrity). Its weak points are: it is somewhat cumbersome, it involves difficult organization and can take place only at infrequent intervals (Criteria Three, Five and Six).

Although the retreat is almost perfect as regards intensity, spiritual development and education of the will, it is however less well adapted to the development of a doctrinal formation which is both lengthy and meticulous. Silence and recollection do not constitute the indispensable conditions for such an achievement. Of course, it is a good thing to preserve a certain spirit of detachment, but it is also undeniable that it is invaluable to exchange opinions. Hence what the Middle Ages described as “disputations.” Such experiences are indispensable to a formation that is profound, in tune with life and alive to the complexity of real life. For this it is necessary to speak out, to confront what one believes one has understood with what one must grasp in actual fact.

These different requirements cannot be found within the context of the basic rules of the classic retreat, notwithstanding the latter’s merits. Thus seminars and training courses for cadres are on the doctrinal, intellectual, political and social planes what retreats are on the spiritual plane.

But here again the disadvantage is that this is an expensive means of action, especially when it is a question of the very desirable object of organizing permanent and properly equipped institutions for these purposes. The recruitment of suitably qualified teachers and lecturers adds to the difficulties, which implies a weakness from the standpoint of Criteria Five and Six (simplicity of function, and economy).

Temporary sessions or intermittent training courses can to some extent overcome these difficulties, especially where the well-known hospitality of certain religious communities allows the expense of such arrangements to be reduced. But the spacing out of sessions is an inevitable consequence of this providential solution (Criterion Three – frequency and continuity).

As a whole this is a serious defect. But this form of meeting still remains valuable. It can be made to answer almost perfectly to the

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demands of Criteria One and Two (intellectual unity, common interests, etc.). It has, besides, something of the virtue of a course of studies, through the close contacts which it permits between those conducting the course and those attending it. This encourages a more harmonious assimilation of teaching (Criterion Five).

It also has merits in terms of Criteria Eight (continual improvement) because it is ideally suitable for the best kind of self-criticism. This is why the Communists make such great use of it; in multiple stages of instruction and diverse training camps where many previously timid adherents have been transformed into ardent revolutionaries. Such, however, are the limits of the advantages of this kind of action. Unless cadre-training sessions, study courses and seminars are integral to a more comprehensive plan that can exploit their advantages fully, the benefits derived are limited in both time and space. Unless those involved can be integrated within sustained initiatives, the fact of having been cloistered for several days can indeed be discouraging. Men may come away feeling they have been “doped” and mesmerized by an abnormal atmosphere.

Consequently, this kind of meeting is unsatisfactory as regards Criteria Three and Four (frequency and mutual support), and Criterion Seven (security and survival). Criteria Six (economy) rules out any hope of our one day possessing a permanent cadre-training school serving the cause of the natural and Christian law. Yet Communism has all kinds of training schools: federal, national and international. Let us, however, have no illusions. For a long while yet we shall be too poor to hope for anything more than the precarious hospitality of religious institutions.

3. *Circles and Cells.* At first sight, *cell* activity sounds most unattractive. In fact, however, the *cell* or *circle* could be described as the most authentic, most personal, most versatile of all “meetings.” It provides a context for dialogue properly so-called: which is, in the first place, an exchange of views, a conversation involving two or more persons. Several successive statements from the same platform, or a series of articles by various authors, can never constitute a true dialogue. It is only by an abuse of language that the word “dialogue” is used to describe relations and contacts between groups, parties, peoples or nations.

The reality of dialogue differs greatly according to whether it is a question of a conversation involving a few people or whether it is one of those journalistic or televised debates in the course of which everyone

must prove that he is in the right before the series of articles ends, or before the last second of the programme in order to avoid losing face. These are farcical “dialogues” motivated by publicity or propaganda. Far from being conceived for the benefit of those carrying on the “dialogue,” their aim is to condition the minds of multitudes of listeners, viewers or readers. Such performances have nothing in common with true dialogue, which is essentially “a conversation involving two or more persons.”

“Persons” is the key word. Persons are very different to beings deprived of all but a simple attribute, a single facet: that of the label pinned on them or which serves to classify them. Such persons can be in disagreement on many points, but in profound union on many others. They may be sullen neighbours, perhaps, but their wives get on together and their children are inseparable friends. Dialogue is always possible between such people, because to this extent and in these conditions, the Christian and the Jew, the Communist and the enthusiast for the Encyclicals, know each other as coming within categories other than these alone. They can thus converse in a much broader and more flexible fashion, without finding themselves immediately restricted by the realization that they are on opposite sides.

From this we can realize to what extent the gregarious structures of our mass societies are inimical to the conditions for a true dialogue. For under the yoke of an all-pervasive totalitarianism, social institutions are no longer tailored to human dimensions. If then, as is claimed, the City of men must be a “City of Dialogue” in order to develop properly, it is indispensable that the City should be rich in social bodies intermediate between the Family and the State, because no fully human dialogue is possible except within small groups, because it is within these groups that men get to know one another personally and are able to speak more cogently about themselves and about what they know.

It is in this spirit that circles, cells and groups should be conceived. These are little groups of people, brought together through their sympathetic association as neighbours or by sharing the same circumstances; having similar interests or occupations; or through ideological or cultural affinities. They agree to systematize these affinities giving them a certain order and a more precise, positive direction, instead of allowing these natural affinities to provide the whims and caprices of talkative neighbours with raw material for interminable chatter to no purpose.

Such is the essential role of the *cell* or *circle*.

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How does evil make such progress, if not through bad company, sinful conversation and dangerous liaisons? The cells and circles of which we are speaking seek systematically to reverse this process, by a methodical cultivation of good company and purposive conversations. How many people thus actually form groups without as much as suspecting that even a small measure of systematization would suffice to increase tenfold the beneficial influences radiating from such initiatives?

Such difficulty as *cells* imply does not derive from the principle of *cell* activity as such. It derives rather from the work it is proposed to achieve through a *cell* or *circle*, or from the study which is demanded. But can anyone sincerely believe that we can give proper direction to the struggle which is the subject of this book without study or hard work, without any serious effort towards cultural formation in depth?

The Revolution has always known and still knows how to make its disciples work. Are we really convinced of the necessity of imitating the Revolution in this respect?

Once the need for hard work is admitted, however, it cannot be denied that the study circle is certainly the best and most dynamic means of giving oneself to the work that simply must be done.

Let us recall the “salons” of the eighteenth century, the provincial “academies,” or the Masonic “lodges” where a generation notorious for its frivolity was, nevertheless, initiated in revolutionary ideas and methods. These were *cells* and *circles* in action undoubtedly. If one is reluctant to describe them as “study circles,” it is only because one dare not dignify by so honourable a term the criminal follies which were diffused by such means.

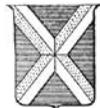
As an expert on study circles for women, Charlotte Jullien, has observed:

What organizations are sufficiently attractive to respond to the imperative need for formation that everyone feels today; and which are also flexible enough to be adapted to all circumstances, all types of characters, all degrees of culture, and yet also sufficiently powerful? Can it not be said that the study circle, applied exclusively to the formation of an élite, will crown all our endeavours and supply us with leaders and cadres? It will be a hidden strength, a principle of cohesion, of activity and fruitfulness: in short it will be the soul (of our movement). By its dynamic methods, the study circle is in full accord with those educational specialists who insist that the teacher should continually appeal to the pupil's intelligence and

experience. The ideal class, it seems, is that in which the master says least and the pupils are given most opportunity for personal activity. It can readily be observed that the effort of research engraves truth deeply into the mind, and the joy of discovery makes one love it; which is what the study circle method tends to do. It makes a constant appeal to the personal activity of all its members, all of whom it seeks to activate. It addresses itself to all faculties, makes use of all capacities. In these frequent and intimate meetings, firm friendships are consolidated. The activity thus inspired is not intermittent, but constant if the cell meetings are frequent enough. The personal effort involved sustains interest from one meeting to the next.†

These few observations give us a comprehensive idea of the potentialities of *cell* activity. It allows people to meet together in full psychological harmony, with common interests and concerns (Criterion Two). It can be reasonably frequent and so excellent in respect of its continuity of influence and mutual support (Criteria Three and Four) though its very intimacy reduces somewhat its expansive force: its constantly small numbers can lead to lassitude unless something else is done to overcome this. Its facility in understanding doctrine (Criterion Five) is greater, and its economy in expense of money and effort (Criterion Six) more evident than in other kinds of gathering. As for security (Criterion Seven), it can be invulnerable provided its flexibility is thoroughly understood, since it stands closer than any other to the spontaneity of relationships which men are bound to have with one another.

As for continual improvement (Criterion Eight), everything in history that is most durable and most profound bears witness to its effectiveness. It is the kind of meeting where self-criticism can be most fruitful and most friendly. The circle does not uproot anybody: each can be thoroughly himself, with no change of bearing, speaking his normal idiom, with none of those changes of tone or attitude which are customary and conspicuous in larger and more formal gatherings.



† *Women's Study Groups* (Desclée de Brouwer, 1936).

Chapter VI

A Difficulty to Be Resolved

1. In spite of these qualities, the value of cells and circles is far from being established, because with regard to the fundamental Criterion One (spiritual and doctrinal unity) a serious objection can be, and has been, put forward. This is the complaint which Pope Pius X made in his letter of August 25, 1910, against the circles organized by the French movement, *Le Sillon*: that they were “intellectual co-operatives” where each participant was “at one and the same time both master and pupil.” It was for this reason that the *Sillon* movement ended in disaster.¹⁸

The difficulty can be framed in this way. Where can one find someone to direct a circle or group with sufficient competence, prestige and authority to dissipate errors, and enough knowledge and wisdom to discern them as they arise?

If it is admitted that each circle requires the presence of a qualified leader, it is clear that the number of cells or circles will be lamentably small. The tendency would therefore be to favour large gatherings in order to profit by the authority and guidance of such leaders as could be found, which would transform *cell* meetings into lectures or courses of instruction. If, on the other hand, one insists on multiplying cells or circles indefinitely, how can they be prevented from becoming “intellectual co-operatives”? Such is the basic difficulty.

2. To resolve this difficulty a series of considerations under five headings appears to be necessary to explain how the doctrinal orthodoxy of cells can be preserved.

(1) There Is No Neutral Zone Between Truth and Error. The first point to be noted is that if there were no way of escaping this difficulty it would be necessary to prohibit any serious discussion or spontaneous

conversation concerning any important truth. Such a solution would be worse than the evil it sought to remedy. For clearly, most people are influenced mostly by what is most talked about, and by what they are themselves accustomed to talking about. Thus if the social doctrine of the Church were a subject which ought not to be mentioned more often than once every fortnight or every month, and only in a certain place at a given time, and solely in the presence of a master, this would obviously be the surest way of preventing the cultivation of an appetite for the truth. The Revolution would then have nothing to fear. Its ideas would triumph for while everyone could speak freely about them, free discussion of the truth would be virtually impossible.¹⁹

The absurdity of thus “censoring” the truth is all the more obvious considering that Christians read, listen to, or watch whatever they like, as it appears – in newspapers, reviews, magazines, novels, musical shows, films, television – without apparent embarrassment, and without deeming the presence of a qualified master to be necessary. Nevertheless, when it is suggested to these Christian readers of Teilhard de Chardin or *The New Statesman*,²⁰ etc., that they should study Encyclicals or pontifical allocutions, they are up in arms at once, their consciences uneasy. Suddenly they are afraid of deviating from the truth and refuse to embark on such a perilous enterprise without a mentor – as if papal prose were more dangerous than the outpourings of a corrupt and corrupting Press.

Basically the error consists in believing in a sort of undefined “neutral zone,” where neither truth nor error is proclaimed from the house tops. It is therefore imagined that the danger consists in seeking to expand somewhat one’s knowledge of the truth; that this might result in a flight of foolish fancies previously dormant.

Can it really be accepted that Catholics are threatened by error only when they decide to apply themselves to the study of pontifical doctrine? As though they were not threatened by all manner of error as a consequence of the suppression of Catholic social doctrine!

The problem, therefore, is not one of knowing whether Catholics are liable to begin saying foolish things once they start studying the Encyclicals. It is rather whether studying them is likely to make them less or more foolish. Similarly, one might ask if the study of mathematics is likely to enable us avoid making errors in calculation, or if math textbooks should be proscribed in order to protect children from errors in calculation.

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The truth is that the actual situation in no way corresponds with the assumed existence of a neutral zone. There can be no question of Catholics being more in danger of falling into error by founding a study circle than by not founding it. Actually, error is all-pervasive, and Catholics have no need to form themselves into groups in order to echo it daily. It is indeed quite inconceivable that those who seek to study the truth should be more prone than those who ignore it and prefer to imbibe and regurgitate all the errors of the day.

Obviously there may be some confusion at the outset, but can it be said that there is greater danger in conscientiously persisting in studying the truth than in neglecting to study it? Such is the problem.

When St. Pius X wanted to introduce Communion for young children, he had to overcome opposition expressed in somewhat similar terms. "These children are too young. Their intelligence cannot properly grasp what is put before them. Their understanding is incomplete," he was told. But this argument ignores the progressive character of intellectual development which proceeds step by step, slowly but surely. To have the truth, it isn't necessary to appreciate all possible shades of meaning. What the young child grasps can be correct as far as it goes, however rudimentary his notions are, even though he cannot conceive of the difficulties with which philosophers or professional theologians must grapple.

How foolish it would be, therefore, to be surprised if a group of peasants failed to appreciate the importance of developments in learning which would excite the interest of an intellectual. What appears to them to be true, in commonsense terms, does not cease to be so because they have little appreciation of its more profound implications.

An extremely fruitful action is possible provided that circles or cells are organized with respect for natural affinities, and for professional or social background. Peasants among peasants will assimilate and radiate the truth in peasant fashion. In turn, workers among workers will assimilate and radiate the truth as it appears to workers, and so on.

It could even be said that a too learned person, culturally too far above the average of his group, could embarrass the others by too brusquely making them aware of unsuspected difficulties.

The first Christians were in much the same kind of situation. They did not have at their disposal a surfeit of learned intellectuals to direct their modest apostolic gatherings. "The majority of those who had been initiated into the Christian life," wrote Eusebius, the historian of the early

Church, “traversed the most distant countries to make known the name of Jesus Christ. Thousands of pagans who heard their words, at once opened their hearts to the adoration of the true God.” Yet the development of Christianity by these methods was so rapid that the early centuries could boast of their martyrs as being an immense crowd – “*multitudo ingens*” as the laconic Tacitus puts it – without the Church being ruined as a consequence of their loss.

Deviation is undoubtedly to be feared, but, in their own way, the Communists too dread deviations. How then is it possible to explain their enthusiasm for working through cells if it is impossible to prevent cells from deviating?

But Pope Pius XII too was an enthusiastic advocate of cells. In his address to the Second World Congress of the Lay Apostolate in 1957, he stated: “Catholic cells which must be created amongst the workers and in each factory and in each place of work to bring back to the Church those who are separated from her, can be constituted only by the workers themselves. The Catholic cell must be active in the workshop, also in trains, buses, in the families and districts. Wherever it is active, it will create the right atmosphere, will exercise a good influence and radiate a new conception of life.”

The Pope is here issuing a command. How indeed could the cells envisaged by the Pope all be continually and meticulously guided by some properly selected “master.” When in Pius XII’s own words: they “can be constituted only by the workers themselves”!

(2) Love for Papal Teaching. This is the second category of considerations capable of facilitating comprehension of what could and should guarantee the doctrinal orthodoxy of circles and cells.

Doctrinal orthodoxy is essentially a function of the indispensable love and uncompromising loyalty which Catholics should have for the teaching of the Sovereign Pontiffs. However great may be the complementary influence of good methods, sane organization and strict discipline, this can never dispense us from reference to the supreme criterion: constant, familiar and indefatigable attention to the source of doctrinal infallibility here on earth. It is only in its light and in one’s love for it that methods and organizations can thereafter be considered relevant.

If this spirit and this love are lacking, such organizations, discipline and methods as emerge cannot but lead to disaster. The presence of

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“authorized” masters would not prevent such circles or cells from becoming “intellectual co-operatives,” but would rather make their deviation all the more dangerous in that, having official approval, they would thus seem to have the seal of orthodoxy.

There are numerous examples in history of bodies which, in spite of the dignity of the participants, were in effect nothing other than “intellectual co-operatives.” Such, for example, were the Synod of Ephesus, nicknamed the Robber Council,²¹ which favoured the Eutychian heresy; the Council of Basle,²² which was hostile to the Holy Father; the assembly of the Bishops of England, which chose Henry VIII, not the Pope, as the head of the Church of England; the Abbey of Port Royal, which preferred to follow Jansenius rather than the Sovereign Pontiff; the assemblies of the Gallican clergy of pre-Revolutionary France, which were more favourable to regal pretensions than to the protests of pontifical authority; and also those convents and abbeys of the nineteenth century, which, in spite of the condemnation of Freemasonry already pronounced by Rome, went on sheltering the “lodges” within their walls.²³

The “intellectual co-operatives” of our time are to be found in these circles or groups of clerics and laity, with or without authorized masters, who insist that Rome is a brake on progress whereas they are its motive power, the established Church of tomorrow (especially that master group, IDO-C, constantly fomenting the “corrosive criticism” about which Pope Paul VI has complained); or among those teams of priest workers (mandated or not) who exhibit more admiration for Marxism than for the social teaching of the Popes; or in those so-called “Christian” trades unions which for so long took advantage of the title “Christian” to paralyse and misdirect the impulse that could and should have been given by the CFTC (the French Confederation of Christian Workers), while waiting for an opportunity to reject, with the second C, any reference to Rome’s teachings.²⁴ Yet what an ecclesiastically privileged situation was theirs! Consider also how many “authorized teachers” they had following them for so long!

A sufficient guarantee against deviations cannot therefore be found in any single method, or solely in the apparatus of a strict organization. Doctrinal security cannot obviously be dependent on the mechanical virtue of discipline as such.

However valuable such discipline may be (and its value is enormous), its importance cannot be more than secondary. The rule cells must

follow is to hold fast to everything calculated to increase their love, knowledge and understanding of Rome's teaching, and to beware of everything which tends however subtly to diminish the interest, love, confidence and admiration which they should have for Rome's teaching.

Strong in love and desire for this knowledge, it is much wiser and safer to work without any "authorized" guide than to seek locally for some pretentious know-all more concerned about his personal opinions than about humbly helping to make pontifical doctrine better understood.

(3) **A Printed Course.** This is the third category of considerations capable of facilitating comprehension of what could and should guarantee the doctrinal orthodoxy of circles or cells.

Since, according to Pius XII, "cells can be constituted only by the workers themselves," instead of waiting for the reassuring presence of one of these exceedingly rare "reliable guides," it is much better and more practical to use the services of dependable printed guides (books, pamphlets, bulletins, etc.). What we are indeed proposing is something along the lines of a veritable correspondence course in basic essentials: a course that has been closely studied, censored, used extensively and improved upon in the light of experience.

No opinion polls, of course; none of those questionnaires which, even when there is no intention to deceive, create the impression that the best established truths can still depend on the ebb and flow of opinion. When it is a question of something that must be inculcated at all cost, it is scarcely prudent to begin by appearing to put it to a vote.

By all means let us strive as much as possible to prove, to justify and clarify the statements enunciated. But let it be known that here we are dealing with Rome's authentic teaching, not encouraging discussion for its own sake. Granted that some discussion is necessary, but its aim should be not only to make the truth known but also to get into the habit of speaking about it, so that everything is seen in its light. One of the main advantages of working in cells is that it makes such fruitful discussion possible.

In the presence of a master, the humblest (or perhaps the most timid) keep silence, embarrassed to admit that they have not understood. But in a small group the atmosphere is different. There, even those less well-informed are not afraid to express their objections or to say that they do not understand. By doing so they stimulate the cell as a whole, for

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everyone else then strives to enlighten them, thus encouraging a more complete assimilation of what has to be learned.

(4) *Stick to a Well-Defined Task.* This is the fourth category of considerations capable of facilitating comprehension of what could and should guarantee the doctrinal orthodoxy of the circles or cells.

We have to know and say clearly what we want: and even more so, what we do not want, what we will not have or do at any price.

Shun all gimmickry which, through seeking to reach a greater number, tends to obscure the end which is being pursued as well as the means of attaining it. Most deviations stem from a desire to achieve success more rapidly by methods which may perhaps seem more attractive superficially, but are not the right means; that is, means which will allow effective and lasting results to be achieved.

By all means let there be redoubled efforts and a sense of urgency. But only in furthering the tasks which the group in question has proposed to itself. Contrariwise, beware of publicity, “drum beating” and bluff, insofar as these are alien to the work in hand. Publicity and all its works and pomps are to be proscribed as essentially inimical to the work of formation to be undertaken by the cells.

Thus unmasked and rigorously resisted, the temptations to twist and slant the group’s effort in order to reach a vaster audience can be contained without difficulty. Hence the need for courageous vigilance born of a clear understanding of the end to be sought. This prevents the group from trying to do everything at once.

So stick to a precise task, well-defined, and to this alone. If it appears that something else ought to be done (as is frequently the case), say quite firmly that this “something else” is indeed “something else,” distinct from the work immediately in hand. Refuse to take on more than you must; and, if necessary, put your foot down hard.

(5) *As Far as Possible, Restrain Emotion.* This is the fifth category of considerations capable of facilitating comprehension of what could and should guarantee the doctrinal orthodoxy of the circles and cells.

Emotions should be restrained as much as possible: through humility, through being systematically on guard against pride, through the beneficent virtue of “capillary action,” in which everyone has dealings with only a small number of other people.

There is nothing so effective as small numbers for damping down the ardour of those in quest of glory. Even when the number of those involved in cell work increases, the cell still has this advantage. For the cells simply multiply in number, without each cell becoming larger. At the grassroots level (i.e., the level of effective action), there will continue to be the humble work of small groups of friends among whom bluff is out of the question – bluffers being almost immediately resented and frozen out.

Those who seek to shine, those who can be enticed to work only as a means of gaining human respect, will have little pleasure in that pursuit when their audience numbers only six, eight or ten persons. The homely atmosphere and even the lack of formation of some cell members will soon combine to put a stop to (or convert) those who wish to join a cell for the wrong motives, and with little intention of undertaking serious work; which, as a bonus, brings this further advantage – the spontaneous division into small groups which is intrinsic to cell work makes a movement so constituted more difficult to infiltrate. For each cell, considered as such is too minute to merit the attention of the infiltrator.

Such then is a very summary description of the techniques of working in circles or cells. Such are the indispensable elements of a truly fruitful “capillary action.” It is an old formula which is forever new. It is a form of action whose effectiveness has continually been demonstrated throughout history, little though this has been understood and made use of in practice.

Many studies have appeared in our own days whose authors have no difficulty in demonstrating that this formula is more dynamic and relevant than ever. From these works it can be seen that it is no longer the vast organization, exemplified by the political party, which has the most influence in determining public opinion, but little groups with far-reaching ramifications.

“Though the Jacobin Club (which caused such a stir in the French Revolution) may now be ‘old hat,’” states the French writer, Henry Théry,²⁵ “there are many other clubs which have proliferated recently, some of which are well-known or are beginning to be prominent: Clubs such as the ‘Jean Moulin,’ ‘Citizen 60,’ ‘Positions,’ ‘Cercle Tocqueville,’ etc.”†

† *Les groupes sociaux, forces vives?* (Editions du Centurion, 1964).

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To be sure, groups and circles which do not favour a certain “interpretation of history,” or resist the famous “winds of change,” do not have the same appeal. But the author, nevertheless, has to admit that these groups “appear in a great variety of spheres.”

On this note, we conclude with a further quotation from Henry Thery: “Groups,” he says, “are springing up and multiplying so constantly that, as an American sociologist has said, society increasingly appears to be ‘a co-ordinated system of differentiated groups.’”



Chapter VII

Methods Of Mass Action

1. Under this heading we include those coalitions, mass organizations and political parties which many tend to consider as the only instruments for effective action, the only means of achieving social redemption. Can these possibly have a role?

Yes, but with certain qualifications, provided there is no question of accepting their claim to take precedence over all other forms of action. Such organizations tend to suffocate social life insofar as they seek to monopolize – when their only position is one of opposition, when they seek self-justification by suppressing opposition, and consider they are making progress only when they can contrive to suppress or absorb other organizations which they should regard as being complementary. Or when they are motivated by an inexhaustible quest for an ever-increasing mass membership.

In a vain attempt to achieve its objectives, an apparatus so gigantic must plan everything systematically down to the very last detail. The effect of this cannot but be to mutilate action by suffocating initiative, while increasing administrative hypertrophy ordinarily derives from each attempt to do more or do better. This in turn means enormous expenses, gigantic premises and a veritable army of full-time employees.

Their very size makes them especially vulnerable. Being pre-occupied with administrative problems rather than with the initiation of effective action, they are ordinarily slaves to routine, cumbersome, slow-moving and inflexible.

This incapacity to face up to the various requirements of action results in their specializing, limiting themselves to one or two forms of activity, which are then, of course, presented as panaceas. Whatever in no way corresponds to the chosen forms of activity, without this being admitted, is treated as if irrelevant, the argument being that the influence

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of the totalitarian steamroller not only suffices, but is also more rational and more concentrated in direction. All complementary activities which would, in fact, complete the work in hand are declared to be illegitimate rivals and consequently open to condemnation.

In this respect the totalitarian and destructive character of French Catholic Action is a classical example of this kind of organization. It is a heavenly body intolerant of satellites. Everything must fit into its scheme of things. It is significant to observe what has become of those age-old methods of piety and sanctification (Third Orders,²⁶ Congregations of Mary, etc.) under this régime. But then it would be surprising if after condemning totalitarian uniformity in the temporal order, the Church could apply it to her own organization without this causing harm.

It goes without saying that the peril of totalitarianism, of uniformity in action, commences only when everyone tends to consider his special activity as all-sufficient for the full success of the desired action. The totalitarian peril does not stem from the pride that every good workman takes in his particular kind of work. It is but natural for the born writer to show a liking for publication, or a born orator for the public platform.

Provided that these preferences are not exclusive there is no harm done. It is otherwise however when it is argued that only writers are effective or that only oratory can ensure success. The truth is that each is indispensable and has a role to play. A proper formation implies an appreciation of the need for all manner of specialized activity, whatever may be the direction in which one's own special talents predominate.

Paradoxically, every unitary or totalitarian concept of action has a double effect: of absorption and of demobilization. On the one hand, it absorbs everything that comes within its sphere of influence. On the other hand, it demobilizes effort, because when confronted with its claim to be omni-competent, others leave it to get on with the job, considering themselves useless and superfluous. Relying on the great central organization, people stay at home. Thus potential activists become mere spectators. The result is that in a short time only a very small number of people remain active in any way, and a multitude of varied and adaptable initiatives simply go out of existence.

But that is not all! These organizations soon become prey to the suspicion, the lack of dynamism and the vulnerability to which all leviathan organizations are prone. Being incapable of progress, reform or renewal they become excited and exhausted through demarcation disputes and

questions of precedence within the mafias who control the immense totalitarian apparatus.

All the energies which within a pluralist context would result in a host of complementary initiatives, and a spirit of continual dynamic renewal, are regarded with disapproval by the totalitarian mind which sees such activities as disturbing influences threatening to make the totalitarian set-up collapse.

No hound can run after two hares at once, says the proverb. But when it is a question of pursuing fifteen or twenty hares simultaneously, there is a need for fifteen or twenty hounds.

In terms of pure reason, the formula of a single omni-competent organization charged with responsibility for accomplishing all kinds of tasks undoubtedly seems attractive. What indeed could appear more convenient?

Is it not natural, from the standpoint of convenience, for the members of such a body to expect it to do everything for them? There is nothing so annoying and troublesome as having to enrol, subscribe and contribute in several separate places. It seems, therefore, so practical and sensible to have one "supermarket" type of organization.

However seductive it may seem, the analogy is alas most misleading. It is relatively easy to sell hats and casseroles, electric lamps and carpets in one and the same place, but long experience has shown that a unitary type of organization cannot possibly adapt itself effectively so as to be capable of the various forms of action that are indispensable to the success of the political and social struggle.

Let us therefore pay no attention to those whose speeches show all too frequently that they cannot conceive of effective action except in terms of the fusion of all existing organizations. We are not, of course, arguing that the requirements of the social and political struggle do not demand a high degree of unity. What we deny is that a fusion of organizations would mean greater effectiveness and thus favour success.

There has hitherto been no lack of spectacular coalitions on our side. But what has become of them? Has the Revolution been checked? On the contrary. Indeed, it seemed intuitively to appreciate how to exploit the weaknesses this implied, and proceeded to break through this puny defence line with all the greater élan, in that this kind of set-up seemed to justify the concentrated mobilization against it of all the Revolution's resources.

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Experience has been sufficiently conclusive. We have seen mass movements hastily assembled around some leading figure, but without doctrinal and strategic unity; without serious preparation; without dependable cadres; without anything effective being done to sustain and derive advantage from the mass membership recruited at the outset.

2. What follows applies only to the existence of a single, officially approved, Catholic political party.

It is undeniable that, in our parliamentary society, there is much to be said for political organizations which explicitly claim to be Catholic and inspired by the social doctrine of the Church. Thus while one should have no illusions as to the prospects of success such organizations are likely to have, is it not desirable that people should elect to parliaments men who have both an aptitude and a will to reform or even frame laws in accordance with Christian principles and the Natural Law? This can be done only by appropriate organizations – political parties. Provided that such parties are conceived in a pluralist sense (which rules out the notion of one, officially approved “Catholic” party), they can be an effective means of resistance to, and perhaps even of victory over revolutionary subversion; on condition, needless to say, that the animators and cadres of such parties have received an adequate formation that is doctrinal as well as strategical and tactical.

3. In light of what has just been said the dangers which might arise from the foundation of a single Catholic party can be readily imagined. For, if it is a good thing that all parties which call themselves Catholic should profess Catholic doctrine, it is better still that neutral parties and organizations should also be animated by Catholic doctrine and profess it, even unconsciously.

Is this asking too much – given the frequency with which Catholics subscribe to Marxist ideas without even realizing it? Great victories are ensured by the unifying conquests of minds, not by material, organizational uniformity. A cause is getting near to success when its principles are professed by those who do not consider themselves to be among its supporters.

The kind of action that tends to confine a monopoly of ideology and its radiation to one organization is consequently the most sterile imaginable, and one that is doomed to defeat. Consider in this light the

prohibition of the use of the name "Catholic" except where it is officially sanctioned.

Let no one say that without this precaution there is a risk of compromising Catholicism. As Jean Madiran observes:

Risk is the normal accompaniment of life and an inevitable concomitant of any action. Of course one needs to guard against such a risk; but to think in terms of ensuring its radical and systematic suppression is to condemn oneself to inconsistency, to immobility and nothingness. For errors, setbacks and compromises, and a failure to distinguish adequately between the religious and the political are not peculiar to the laity, but appertain rather to weak and sinful men.

Under Napoleon III, a bishop took advantage of a public act of his pastoral ministry to praise the beauty of the Empress, which prompted an irreverent layman to enquire whether the plenitude of episcopal power conferred a special aptitude for judging feminine beauty.

Neither this impertinence nor this kind of episcopal direction should be taken too seriously. It remains true that many who have analysed (some in a just spirit of criticism, others hypercritically) past failures to distinguish the religious from the political have ascribed this failure principally to Churchmen rather than to the laity. Centralizing and monopolizing all overtly Catholic activities under the direct authority of the hierarchy, and condemning all activities deriving from the free initiative of the laity to a sort of religious anonymity, does not make the situation any better in this respect. It may indeed rather aggravate it; for the risk of not adequately distinguishing the religious from the political is a permanent one. Indeed, the failures in this respect which are most frequent, most obstinate, and perhaps most harmful are those which are unconscious, and stem from the contemporary climate, from intellectual habits, from currents of thought and the dominant sociological propaganda. It is sometimes impossible even for ecclesiastics to discern such failures as they arise. Moreover, the psychological and historical implications of a failure adequately to distinguish the religious from the political is aggravated by conferring more solemnity and a more official character on enterprises which have the monopoly of the Catholic name. Such failures assume much more serious dimensions than they would if a multiplicity, and an infinite variety of different and simultaneous politico-religious enterprises in the sphere of lay

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initiative in the temporal order, were allowed to be called “Catholic” (even if at times some such initiatives would require to be publicly disowned).†

Is it not curious in this day and age, when there is such obsession with “*pluralism*,” that there are so few prepared to advocate this kind of pluralism?

4. The foregoing applies to a Catholic party insofar as it is the only Catholic party, even where it does not enjoy official ecclesiastical support.

Even when the leaders of such a party have been prudently selected, the fact remains that the reality of the single Catholic party cannot be other than what it is: i.e., unitary by its very nature, and in a sphere where complexity and diversity should be the rule. Hence the risk of a Catholic tyranny that would be all the more odious because of its sanctimonious and moralizing nature.

If this Catholic organization is powerful – which is what it exists to be – heaven help Catholics who are against it. But the power of such a party will always be equivocal. A Charlemagne, a St. Louis, a Louis XIV, were Christian Kings, but not only by the title of being Christian. In other words, they were respected by their subjects in their capacity as Heads of the State. The Rite of Coronation added a Christian gloss to their already existing political sovereignty insofar as God had willed them to wield authority. But it did not make them more exemplary Christians than their subjects, nor did it entitle them to exercise political sovereignty simply because of their being Christians.

There was thus no danger of misunderstanding. When a Charlemagne, a St. Louis or Louis XIV went wrong, they compromised only themselves. Christians they undoubtedly were, but they were in a completely different position from the kind of organization we have been considering: a Catholic organization whose Catholicity is its sole reason for existence.

When such a Party goes wrong, it is Catholicism that will be held responsible. When it is defeated, it will be held that the Church has been routed. Besides, what guarantee can there be that such a party will not be infiltrated by dubious elements, by opportunists or even clearly

† *The Cité Catholique Today*, pp. 39–40.

subversive elements? It would therefore seem that the formula of the single Catholic party would be rather difficult to justify. It would indeed seem to be relatively tolerable only in a mainly Protestant or unbelieving country – in a country where a Catholic minority may have an interest in maintaining a common front to avoid the worst, to ensure the defence of elementary rights.

5. But, it may be objected, if Radicals, Socialists and Communists are working to bring into being a State that is radical, socialist or communist, what should Catholics be doing? Are they not scattered among political associations, the best of which do not guarantee a quarter of what the Christian conscience has a right to insist upon? Why, therefore, should Catholics be discouraged from reuniting in one party in order to work more effectively for a truly Christian social order?

But, as we have seen, this is not strictly a matter of setting up a unique Catholic Party. What seems to be really desirable is a union of Catholics, at least on the essentials of the Church's social doctrine. We are not denying that it may occasionally be desirable to form a common front of all the Catholics in a given country – in certain limited cases, in an hour of extreme peril and a crying necessity, as at the time of the foundation, by General Castelnau, of the National Catholic Federation²⁷ in which members of Parliament from various parties collaborated.

But quite apart from the fact that the unitary form of organization may not be the most effective, even in such extreme cases, it would seem that this is seeking to establish concrete unity before the establishment of doctrinal unity within the fold. Is it not obvious, moreover, that when such a party pretends to include the generality of Catholics, it threatens to be torn apart by internal quarrels? When it is not, it is because it is the party of only one clan, of a single political tendency within the Catholic body.

The only unity possible among Catholic forces in temporal affairs is the unity of a consensus of opinion, deriving from and maintained by acceptance of the Church's social doctrine on the part of men and women belonging to a great variety of political organizations.

"The richer life is," wrote Dom Delatte, "the more is this reflected in a great variety of organs and functions. Differentiation combined with rigorous unity is to be found only among the higher forms of life. A rigorous but living consensus of opinion, an organic federal bond, can

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similarly make a variety of energies conspire together in the same design, assigning to all a share in the common enterprise, while co-ordinating their action, and giving them that solidarity which ensures the health and the growth of the living being.”†



† *The Epistles of St. Paul Situated in Their Historic Context*, p. 356.

Chapter VIII

The Use of Force and Secret Organizations

Contrary to what may be imagined, it is not only and inevitably soldiers and ex-servicemen who show preference for these methods. They also appeal to the generous enthusiasm of young people, and even more so to some categories of theoreticians, intellectuals and scholars.

In short, they are likely to appeal to all those who, by reason of their age, their somewhat artificial way of life, and the intellectual nature of their activities, tend to be more or less out of touch with the mind of ordinary people. For in the perspective of their enlightened ignorance, everything seems to be much simpler than it in fact is. Thus whenever they get the impression that things are not going as they should, as a consequence of subversive activities, their immediate reaction is to insist that such people should be taken by the scruff of the neck and kicked out (or put “inside”) to prevent them doing anymore harm.

The extreme ingenuousness of this solution is what one would expect given the simplicity of the concepts which these amateurs have of social and political questions. We have particularly in mind those *airy-fairy* clerics and religious who know nothing of the work-a-day world, and professors who never come down off their ivory towers from one year's end to the other. Such people consider the stark reality of action at grassroots levels as being too base for their consideration. They sneer sceptically at those who concern themselves with making humble and methodical preparation for action. While capable of making the most subtle distinctions so long as they remain within their own special sphere, they become rash, imprudent, foolhardy bunglers whenever they think in terms of action. They have time only for planning on a grandiose scale and they are quite oblivious concerning the innumerable fiascos in which such methods have resulted in the past. But one should perhaps expect those who live in the clouds to have a rather panoramic view of the varied requirements of the political and social struggle.

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Those who are permanently engaged in highly intellectual pursuits think of everything in terms of “universals” and “essences.” So when the pure intellectual is brought up against the thicket of distinctions, obstacles and difficulties which constitute the humble realities of the world of concrete action, his reaction is that of a giant who trips over a bramble bush, one of impatience, of violence and of brute force. His tendency is to reduce action to some immediate and simplified operation: “It suffices to...We have only to...Try a violent coup...Take over power...Etc.”

We have been familiar with this kind of talk for thirty years or more, a plethora of street demonstrations, rioting, secret organizations, stores of arms, “cloak and dagger” stuff, dreams of a White Freemasonry,²⁸ etc.

Violence, reinforced as required by some kind of secret apparatus, constitutes the beginning and end of action in the eyes of such people.

1. *Recourse to Force.* However, it is far from our intention to suggest that every resort to force is illegitimate. Two recent examples to the contrary may be mentioned: that of Pius XI who immediately recognized the legitimacy of the reconquest of their country by the Catholic Nationalist armies of Spain, by promptly sending a Nuncio to Burgos; and that of Pius XII who at once offered encouragement to the heroic Hungarian insurrection in 1956. It is clear therefore that there are occasions when violent action and even armed insurrection can be said to be legitimate.

Apart from the formidable difficulties concerning the prudence of resorting to armed insurrection, it must also be pointed out that unless the society in question as a whole is in a sufficiently healthy state, this kind of action cannot possibly hope to be fruitful or to have positive long-term significance. For violence, as such, is not a curative measure. It can indeed rid the social body of a harmful parasite, when the body in question has been only recently threatened or superficially attacked; but it has never been and never will be sufficient in itself to restore health, that is to say, order, or rather the will to order, in a social community that has been profoundly contaminated by the Revolution.

It was possible to save Spain in 1936 by resort to force because it had been only superficially penetrated by the revolutionary spirit. Its Catholicism was sufficiently strong, as was its awareness of its vocation and its historical significance. But when every fibre of a country's being has been permeated by a hunger for the falsehoods that spell its death, it

is futile to imagine that it can be saved by force alone even if a coup were to prove successful.

As for making use of certain so-called revolutionary methods, it might well be possible to learn some valuable lessons concerning matters in which the Revolution excels, such as street fighting and mass demonstrations, for example. But apart from the fact that these procedures are not essentially revolutionary, it is clear that there is no possibility that such measures could restore social and political order, even should they succeed in attaining their immediate objectives.

How many political actions, at first victorious, have nevertheless ended in final defeat? At the outset it seems that all that is necessary is some kind of "rising," for at this stage, the stage of rejecting the *status quo*, one is in opposition. But no sooner has the former "establishment" been thrown out than everything becomes more complicated. Then it is realized that success in striking down the enemy has been followed by paralysis at the very moment when everything else should have been plain sailing. An example of this was the sequel to May 13, 1958, which resulted in De Gaulle's return to power.

Thus something more than this is necessary. As Blanc de Saint-Bonnet has said: "What hopes are there for a political resurgence unless a right idea of man has first been re-established by education? Once more there will be a multiplication of bayonets in order to replace reason by force. But what will happen if those who speak in terms of bayonets are not themselves reasonable? Society will flounder, notwithstanding the bayonets."

This is not a condemnation of bayonets. It simply means that force alone cannot ensure unqualified success unless it is within the context of a much more comprehensive plan which is specifically designed to exercise a therapeutic influence socially. This can nevertheless be the work of a minority.

The majority of the French in 1789 continued to be Catholic and Royalist. Yet religion was proscribed and the monarchy was overthrown, because the majority was amorphous. The leaders, the aristocracy, the clergy, the world of "salons," those who set the tone and formed public opinion, were either won over to the new ideas or at least very much disturbed by them.

Now whenever in any country the élite strata cease to be aware of their society's essential vocation, or of what must at all costs be defended,

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their arms fall from their hands. When one is no longer convinced of the justice of one's cause, or when one feels utterly isolated, one cannot possibly fight as one should. Even if one does fight, in these conditions one does not fight to win, but in desperation, defending oneself by selling one's life as dearly as possible.

In other words, in the absence of a sufficient cultivation of minds, in order to help, sustain and prolong the armed conflict, unqualified and lasting success is out of the question. Otherwise power seized at twelve noon is lost five minutes later. For when power depends only on brute force, it is morally and psychologically impossible for it to be held for any length of time. Even the Revolution, which in principle has no scruples in employing terror, knows only too well that this cannot be a normal method of government. Hence why it mobilizes all means of instruction, propaganda and intellectual formation to brainwash the generality of men into accepting the new revolutionary régime.

Alas, it is much easier to recruit men for violent action. There is never any shortage of volunteers when passions are aroused by the action proposed. But only an absurdly small number of people are prepared voluntarily to work, study and act, patiently and persistently, in obscurity.

How many people there are who have been, and would again be, ready to die in a heroic struggle to defend their country; but who will not stir even their little finger to defend her by civic action against the internal forces of disruption! – which caused de Bonald²⁹ to observe that “the revolution that derives from principles is much more inflexible than that which comes from character and temperament.”

2. *Secret Organizations.* As we have said, for many people the only form of action considered to be effective is violence, reinforced as required by some secret apparatus. Let us now examine the second object of these temptations – the power of secrecy.

Does not Freemasonry proceed under the cover of secrecy? In reaction to this consideration, many people think in terms of creating a “White Freemasonry” or something along similar lines. The reply to this is made earlier by our being able to quote from a specialist on such questions, Fr. E. Barbier,³⁰ author of a book entitled *Masonic Infiltrations of the Church*.†

† *Masonic Infiltrations of the Church* (Desclee de Brouwer, 1919), p. 249.

To form secret organizations, either purely religious or mixed politico-religious organizations, can be a great temptation for active and restless minds, in periods of social chaos and Jacobin repression, when the freedom of men of goodwill is restricted in a thousand ways, when the powers that be combine to prevent a salutary attempt to restore order.

However, even then, the principles of all forms of Catholic action remain invariable, which is always to work in the open. All else is illusion. There is also the experience of others which should serve to warn us against the danger of being trapped in a snare of our own making. Consider, for example, what goes on in the English-speaking world, where organizations of this kind abound, disguised as philanthropic or mutual aid societies.

The surprising thing is that there are Catholics who excuse or even applaud initiatives of this kind.

Without saying more, we shall appeal to the argument which should be decisive for the sincere believer: that of the authority of Holy Church. We shall be content to recall some documents emanating from the Holy See which get to the roots of the problem since they concern the very principle of secret societies. A declaration of the Sacred Penitentiary, dated September 21, 1830, indicates the scope of pontifical Bulls directed against societies of this kind. It lays down: "Associations which profess not to be plotting in any way against the Church or State but nevertheless form an occult society bound together by an oath, come within the scope of these Bulls."

An instruction of the Holy Office addressed to the bishops of May 18, 1884 says: "Besides these societies (Freemasonry and anti-Catholic societies) there are others which are also prohibited and must be avoided under penalty of grievous sin, among which are especially included those which require their adepts to subscribe to a secret rule which they cannot reveal to anyone, and to give absolute obedience to their occult leaders."

In a note on the same page the editor of *Acta Sanctae Sedis* points out that all secret societies come within the Church's proscription, whether or not they demand an oath from their members, in that they are societies contrary to the natural law. In effect, according to natural and revealed law there exist only two perfect and independent societies: the Church and the State. All other societies must be related to one or other of these.

Now a secret society, by the very fact of its being secret becomes independent of both Church and State, which have no means of controlling its organization, its objectives or its action.

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Such a society does not, therefore, have its origin either in natural law or in the revealed divine law. The authority which governs it does not come from God. It is fundamentally illegitimate.

Such is, substantially, the commentary of the decrees of the Holy See.

(On the other hand, it must not be imagined that the foregoing implies that the various societies, intermediate bodies, guilds, academies and associations of all kinds in the temporal order are legitimate only if founded, instituted, governed, animated or directed by the State. Such is not the role of the State, despite the fact that these lesser societies are not independent of the State. Their “right to existence,” as Leo XIII has stated in *Rerum Novarum*,³¹ has been given them by nature itself and civil society has been instituted to protect the natural law, not to destroy it.)

Certain qualifications are, however, necessary in this respect. It should be clearly understood that these decrees are aimed solely at societies which are voluntarily secret as part of their existence. The secrecy which may be forced upon some enterprises in the event of persecution does not fall under the condemnations just quoted. For the secrecy is here only accidental and due to special circumstances.

Such was the plight of the early Church compelled to bury itself in the catacombs. It was not, and did not wish to be, essentially secret. It became so only accidentally, for reasons outside its control. This was also the position of those who during the Revolution organized hiding places for loyal priests. It is the position today of Christians in China or behind the Iron Curtain. It was similarly the position of those in occupied countries during World War Two who sought to rescue Jews from the Gestapo.

The fact of belonging to an organization without letting one’s membership be known to third parties does not in itself mean that the society is a “secret” one. This is the position of some “secular institutes” whose members, notwithstanding their vows, operate in the workaday world. These are discreet rather than secret associations. Thus the mere fact of not proclaiming themselves or not wearing a special uniform cannot be interpreted as meaning that the association in question is “secret” in the papal sense. The organizations the Church has in mind and denounces as “secret” are those which seek to conceal their activity, and the names of their leaders and members from the legitimate authorities.

It does not need any extraordinary effort to understand the extent to which the spirit of this kind of organization is at variance with the ordinary requirements of natural and Christian morality. The secrecy which governs this kind of set-up is bound to give a kind of priority to inclinations towards intrigue, duplicity or deceit, or, at the very least, concealment. In such a society, the systematic shackling of conscience, and the use of language to conceal rather than reveal thought, become a sort of duty to one's state of life. There is a continual and proximate temptation to have recourse to methods and contacts which are all the more questionable in that they are known to be veiled in secrecy and because the form of action in question is conducive to this state of affairs. One comes to have few scruples about methods, and conscience tends to become exceedingly elastic.

Common sense suffices to suggest that if the "children of light" seek out subterranean and secret ways under the pretext of being able to act more effectively, they will inevitably find themselves sooner or later, side by side with the children of Darkness, and in danger of being led astray in that subterranean labyrinth by those children of darkness who understand its secrets much better than do the children of light.

It is well known, also, how clever are the spies and agents of the secret police in planting nuclei of informers in secret organizations. As a police inspector said to us one day: "I am all the more convinced that your work is not organized as a secret society because I confess I have not the least idea of what you are up to. If you were a secret society, I should know a lot more about you than I do, because that is the sort of organization which we find easiest to penetrate."



Chapter IX

Use of Everything in the Right Order

1. Now that we have come to the end of this part, which has been devoted to the study of instruments and methods, what conclusions should we draw? Which instrument, which method should we advise? Our answer is: use them all, but in the right order.

In doing this we should respect the letter of the directives of Pius XII: “Act so that what needs to be done is well-defined, the objectives clearly conceived, and the available forces accurately assessed so that from the outset ignorance will not prevent the mobilization of all available resources, and so that these resources shall be properly co-ordinated and not dissipated on minor objectives.”†

For if all means are good ones, not all are equally valuable or necessary at one and the same time. Nothing is more wasteful than the proliferation of groups with undefined objectives. It is never possible to know what precisely they are seeking to achieve, what means they intend to employ or which they consider to be their special field.

In other words, each group should clearly and prudently decide what should be its particular role, and having done so, should tenaciously adhere to its decision. To be effective, all action presupposes both specialization and an acute awareness on the part of all of the need for a complementarity of initiatives.

Thus while there is a need for mass meetings, demonstrations and congresses (in that it is useful to assemble in strength from time to time), it is also necessary for there to be means of formation, both doctrinally and politically. Hence the need for cells, lectures and training courses, etc.

A large gathering can be planned in different ways. On the one hand, there is the mass meeting which seeks merely to boost morale in

† Allocution of December 10, 1952.

a very general way. But even a large meeting involving a considerable number of people can result in fervent concentration if conducted in a sufficiently disciplined manner.

It is always possible, by seeking to achieve a greater personal impact, to increase the effectiveness of means of action that are far from sophisticated. As, conversely alas, it is always possible to misuse even the most effective means of action as to render them quite ineffective.

What can be said without hesitation is that, given the actual circumstances of today, it is preferable to think in terms of light, flexible dispositions with special emphasis on the need for a multiplicity of varied and complementary groups and initiatives. Such is the only acceptable form of that unity in diversity of which we hear so much nowadays.

We have no hesitation in saying that in many cases it would be better for some organizations with many irons in the fire to go out of existence, not with a view to reducing, as a matter of principle, the number of existing organizations, but with an eye to replacing them by others, better conceived, better adapted and also better distributed along the entire front that has to be held, so as to minimize mutual embarrassment, overlapping, duplication and waste of effort.

The front we are speaking of involves much more than the "social" and the "political" in the narrow sense of these words. It also involves books and the printed word generally (specialist and non-specialist journals, technical reviews, professional handbooks, magazines of fashion, etc.). It includes welfare and social assistance; artistic and cultural matters; and even sporting and athletic affairs (associations such as "open air," mountaineering and sailing, etc.). In short, there is a need for every conceivable kind of initiative so that a positive influence may be exercised wherever there is truth to be propagated, error to be combated, and deviations to be prevented.

With such a variety of fields in which to operate, two groups which are duplicating each other's efforts simply get in each other's way to the detriment of the cause as a whole. While two groups which complement each other promote effectiveness all round.

Unfortunately, lack of money and, still more, lack of trained cadres with a proper concept of action considerably reduce the possibilities of implementing this strategy which implies both specialization and complementarity of effort.

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We have thus no option but to give first priority to means that are most reliable and effective.

2. But how, and by what criteria, can we be sure of choosing the most reliable and effective means? Above all, by awareness of, and respect for, true order, by an appreciation of the true hierarchy of values.

Strive always for the highest possible return in personal terms. In other words, give preference to what concerns the individual human person rather than what appeals to the mass. Prefer that which is thought-out, conscious and derives from an act of the will to that which is merely impulsive and emotional.

This does not mean that we should appeal only to man's intellect. Let us by all means seek to win the whole man, but only after first attaining the highest human attributes, only after we have reached the seat of man's intelligence and will – and thus also of his liberty.

Whatever is hooked from the top is always in equilibrium. Alas, this simple truth, exemplified by the pendulum, is too often forgotten today, especially by those who allow themselves to be attracted by psychological warfare, which is based on the diametrically opposite principle of “hooking from below”: i.e., by manipulating men through the lower powers of their being, which is a radical subversion of right order.

Ignorance of this notion of an order to be respected, of a hierarchy of values to be safeguarded in the psychology of methods, is utterly disastrous. Not that we should think exclusively in terms of doctrinal action. All forms of action can be useful, but only in their rightful place, which is the order of the recommendations by means of which St. Paul taught Timothy the rules of effective action.

“I charge you in the presence of God and of Jesus Christ – preach the Word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching.”†

This is the right order of action:

“In the presence of God and Jesus Christ.” Obviously: for without them, what use is action? As a Russian thinker has said: “If God does not exist, anything goes.”

“Preach the Word.” In other words, first of all enlighten the intelligence, address the highest powers of the soul, those which make man

† 2 Timothy iv: 1–8.

what he is: a rational animal. Only when these have been enlightened will it be permissible to “be urgent in season and out of season.” In other words, be evermore compelling, so that the message strikes home, so that there is no escaping it.

“Exhort.” Here St. Paul is speaking to the heart and to the feelings, even to the emotions – in the greater service of what the preaching of the Word has previously designated as just and good.

“Rebuke.” In other words, do not hesitate, if necessary, to threaten, even to arouse fear. Not an appeal to the highest motives, but St. Paul does not omit to advise its use when appropriate.

“Be unflinching in patience and in teaching.” In other words, let time do its work, by relying on long-term perseverance.

But never forget the grappling hook from which this entire gamut of varied means is suspended: “in teaching.” For it is only by this sovereign means of acting on the intelligence that the other means can be ordered, regulated and governed in a legitimate manner.

The subordination of the lower to the higher: such is the indispensable precondition for equilibrium in all that concerns action. As soon as this rule is departed from, as soon as precedence is given to the powers inherent in man’s lower nature, disorder and immorality become at once evident: a disorder that is much more widespread than is commonly believed.

Disorder in the printed word, where the wisdom of argument counts for less than the emotional or sensual shock aroused by the title, the text and the illustrations.

Disorder in business affairs, where publicity seeks no longer to convince the client but rather to obsess and mesmerize him.

Disorder in the working world where, by means of techniques which spell “productivity,” the worker is too often reduced to the status of being no more than one of the forces of production.

Disorder in the great factories, where a psychologist is engaged to maintain “good morale” artificially, by purely emotional or sentimental means (music, perfume, etc.).

Disorder in the highest degree, exemplified in the methods of “socio-analysis” and “psycho-sociology,” in various forms of “group dynamics” and “sensitivity training,” which result in annihilating the personality by the mechanics of the group: methods which involve the unconscious mind and anonymity, where personal intelligence finds

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nothing with which to grapple; methods from which even history is banished, because history might give a “determination” to the members of an industrial society which such theorists want to keep in a state of perpetual “becoming.”

Disorder in politics, where the party leaders (our modern Machiavellian “Princes”³²) seek to govern less through reason than by stirring up passions, by appealing to material interests and by satisfying physical appetites. Even diplomacy, formerly so reserved and discreet, has become pathetic, sentimental, mournful or whining, according to whichever mood seems most likely to pay dividends.

Notes.

1. Capetian Kings. A reference to the French dynasty inaugurated by Hugh Capet (950–996).
2. *Pacem in Terris*. An encyclical issued by Pope John XXIII on April 11, 1963, and dealing with the establishment of “Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity and Liberty.”
3. Victor Hugo (1802–1885). Poet and novelist. Following the Masonic revolution of 1848, he entered the National Assembly, but went into exile in 1851. He returned to France in 1870, and became a Senator for life.
4. Tommy Atkins. A moniker given to ordinary British troops.
5. Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–1975). Leftist writer, poet, critic and film director. An extrovert homosexual, he was murdered by his “live-in lover.” Paradoxically, he produced a film, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, which many believe to be not only a work of genius, but also wholly orthodox. He called himself “a Catholic Marxist.”
6. Moral Re-Armament (MRA). A movement founded in 1938 by American Frank Buchman (1878–1961) to spearhead what he called “the greatest revolution of all time whereby the Cross of Christ will transform the world.” It was an outgrowth of meetings that Buchman had with Rhodes Scholars and other Oxford students in the 1920s, and expanded throughout the world in the post-war period. His outlook lent itself to a liberalism decorated with religious sentiment, and today MRA considers itself to be a vehicle for engaging people across creeds and cultures in the process of “remaking the world.” Cf. *Britain and the Beast* by Peter Howard, Buchman’s successor.
7. *The Provincial Letters*. Tracts by Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) in defense of Jansenism written and circulated pseudonymously from 1656–1657 on behalf

of a friend. His reputation for having written the *Letters* stems from the work of his ancestors, Gilbert and Florin Périer, who published them after his death. His reputation further spread thanks to the vitriolic attacks launched upon his writings by Voltaire.

8. François-Marie Arouet (1694–1778). Popularly known as Voltaire, he was the foremost propagandist for subversive and anti-Catholic ideas in the 18th century. He wrote to his follower, Theriot: “It is necessary to lie like a devil, not timidly and for a time, but boldly and always.” He died screaming, vainly it seems, for a Catholic priest.

9. Hilaire Belloc (1870–1953). Poet, novelist, critic, essayist and controversialist. A close friend of Chesterton, Legouis & Cazamian say of him in their *History of English Literature*: “Belloc’s paradoxes are more careful than those of Chesterton; his manner is freer from tricks; while he has not the same vigor, he possesses a more varied and surer charm of expression.”

10. G.K. Chesterton (1874–1936). Although he dismissed himself as a mere journalist, he was, in fact, a novelist, a socio-economic theoretician and a profound lay theologian. Legouis & Cazamian describe him as “the champion of orthodoxy. To this word he has given a more and more substantial meaning.” Cecil Chesterton (1879–1918), G.K.’s younger brother, was an able journalist and writer in his own right.

11. Mgr. Ronald Knox (1888–1957). An Anglican minister who converted to Catholicism in 1917, and became a Catholic priest in 1919. A prolific writer on theological and religious subjects, he produced fine translations of the Old and New Testaments. He was a close friend of G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc and Evelyn Waugh.

12. Jean Theophile Desaguliers (1683–1743). A doctor and Anglican clergyman, he was the son of a Protestant minister who fled France upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He became one of the founding fathers of modern Freemasonry and was tremendously active in establishing lodges in England and on the Continent.

13. Nubius Volpe. The *nom de guerre* adopted by a corrupt Italian nobleman who became the first head of the 19th-century secret sect known as the Alta Vendita, the main lodge of the Carbonari, initially founded as a lay Catholic movement, and later subverted by Illuminist influence to achieve Masonic political aims.

14. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). The official Philosopher of the Catholic Church. His first Summa was the *Summa of Christian Teaching*, which was prepared specially to deal with those who did not have the Catholic faith: pagans, Jews, Greek schismatics and Muslims. His second, begun in 1266, was the *Summa Theologica* for which he is most famous, and which was a beginner’s (!)

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introduction to Catholic theology. Mary Clarke, the Thomist writer, says: "To know St. Thomas is to know the medieval mind at its finest, its most powerful, and, indeed, its most modern. For he is timeless and timely, a man for all ages."

15. Fr. Henri Ramière (1821-1877). Jesuit Father and promoter of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through his sponsorship of the Apostleship of Prayer, a pious association founded at Vals, France, in 1844 by Francis X. Gautrelet. He planned to propose to the council Fathers at the First Vatican Council a consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart, but was unable to do so due to the council's unscheduled recess. His later appeal to Pope Pius IX was in some fashion successful, and the Pope promulgated a formula of consecration to the Sacred Heart which he invited all to recite on June 16, 1875.

16. Henri Charlier. A sculptor and artist of great renown, he wrote extensively on religious and artistic matters. Along with his brother, André, he founded the Charlier Centre in 1979 with the expressed purpose of defending the Catholic and national patrimony of France.

17. Albert de Mun (1841-1914). Military officer who later became an economist. He founded "Catholic Circles for Workers" in the hope of winning them to the Social Teaching of the Church. A member of the French Academy. One of the true founders of the Catholic Social movement in France.

18. For English-speaking readers who may not be familiar with the history of *Le Sillon*, the following information may be helpful. Marc Sangnier (1873 - 1950) was a journalist and orator. In the early years of the twentieth century, he gave excellent service towards restoring order and justice in society by campaigns among the working classes, a service which was fully acknowledged by the bishops and the Holy See. He founded a periodical called *Le Sillon* with which was linked a number of circles of enthusiastic but over-confident and ill-formed young men. He was apparently led astray by his alliances with Protestants and Socialists into the advocacy of a brand of "Christian Democracy" at variance with the Church's social teaching, and into extravagant praise of the leaders of the French Revolution, whom he claimed to be representative of true Christian doctrine. These errors were denounced in an Open Letter by the Pope, who directed that the bishops should take control over the movement. Sangnier submitted humbly to this rebuke, but did not cease during the rest of his life to propagate the same ideas. —Editor, *Approaches*

19. In point of fact, the actual situation throughout the anglophone world is even worse than this, particularly since Vatican II. For the social doctrine of the Church is not only not discussed at all, it is actually frowned upon as a pre-Conciliar irrelevancy. —Editor, *Approaches*

20. *New Statesman*. A once-influential British Socialist weekly magazine,

founded by the Fabian Society in 1912. It tends to the Left of the Labour Party, and, according to one early contributor, was inspired by a combination of Liberalism, Socialism, and Skepticism.

21. Synod of Ephesus. Later referred to by Pope Leo I as the “Robber Council,” it was a council called by the Roman Emperor in 449 to determine whether the heretic Eutyches was justly condemned for denying that Christ possessed two natures. The Council was stacked with supporters of the heresy, and Pope Leo I annulled all of its decrees and convened the Council of Chalcedon in 451 to settle the question definitively.

22. Council of Basle (1431–1449). Convoled by Pope Martin V in 1431, at a time of great tension for the Papacy. The purpose of the Council was to deal with reform in the Church, but the tenor became one of antagonism with the Pope, and the reforms discussed were not implemented for want of papal sanction. The legal and ecclesiastical status of the Council is debated to this day, with St. Robert Bellarmine denying absolutely that it was a General Council because of its limited number of bishops and a good number of deviant decrees.

23. U.S. freemasons claim that George Washington’s masonic apron was made by French nuns, in Nantes. –Editor, *Approaches*

24. The CFTC was the *Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens*. Since World War Two, the CFTC was heavily infiltrated by progressive neo-Marxist Catholics who rejected the social teaching of the Church and eventually – in 1964 – succeeded in even transforming the second “C” for Christian into “D” for Democratic, the CFTC being thus transformed into the CFDT. This, however, merely resulted in splitting the movement, so that whereas there was originally one Christian trades union confederation, now there is a rump CFTC which embraces approximately 25% of the original CFTC membership and the CFDT, whose neo-Marxist leading cadres have sought to outflank the Moscow-controlled CGT, so that in many respects the CFDT is further to the Left than even Moscow’s trades unions satraps. Hence the CFDT’s affinity for Trotskyism. –Editor, *Approaches*

25. Henry Théry. A political sociologist of the 1960s.

26. Third Orders. These are attached to various Catholic religious orders: the Dominicans, Franciscans, Benedictines, etc., to allow lay people, living in the world, to follow the rule and charism of the particular Order without giving up their lay status or their position in the world.

27. General Noel Marie Castelnau (1851–1955). Chief of Staff to General Joffre, Commander-in-Chief of the French army from 1914–1917, and head of the French National Catholic Federation, an anti-Communist and anti-Liberal movement founded by him ca. 1925, along with Xavier Vallat of *L’Action*

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Française and Pierre Taittinger of the Young Patriots. It became, next to *L'Action Française*, the leading French anti-Liberal movement of the period.

28. White Freemasonry. In this context Ousset intends the setting up of a secretive structure with the explicit purpose of achieving Catholic goals. However, White Freemasonry is also the name given to those associations which, although not Masonic in structure, promote Masonic ideals, such as the Rotary International, the Lions and the Round Table.

29. Viscount Louis de Bonald (1754–1840). French politician and philosopher. Initially favorable to the French Revolution, he turned against it with the passing of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and went into exile in 1797. Against Rousseau's ideas he wrote *The Theory of Political and Religious Power* in 1796.

30. Abbé Emmanuel Barbier (1851-1925). Leading anti-liberal of his day; author of *A History of Liberal Catholicism*.

31. *Rerum Novarum*. The encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII on May 15, 1891, which sought to direct people's attention to the terrible social injustice consequent on both Capitalism and Socialism. Known as "The Workers' Charter," it was believed to have been largely drafted by Cardinal Manning of England, whose work amongst the English working classes was respected by Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

32. A reference to *The Prince*, a 1513 work by Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), who became Secretary and Chancellor to the Florentine Republic in 1498, and was therefore brought into contact with the realities of the political and religious world of his day. Upon his retirement, he gave himself to study and writing. *The Prince* is his most famous work, and is regarded as "the Bible of realpolitik."





“There is no greater fallacy than to consider a general conversion an indispensable precondition for the establishment of an order of society conforming to Christian principles and the natural law. For the essential purpose of such a social order is precisely to facilitate a more general and more lasting conversion of men.”



EXECUTION IN LA VENDEE.

“We must never transform a passing, contingent situation, which the Church has been obliged to tolerate, into a political ideal.”

– Cardinal Mercier
Pastoral Works, Volume 3

PART IV

SITUATION AND CIRCUMSTANCES

Chapter I

Situation, Circumstances

We have looked at the human dimension of action in our second part, and at the question of *tools and methods* in Part III. It is now time to look at a further aspect, that of the circumstances which form the background to any action.

It does not matter whether we use the words “circumstances,” “situation” or “current events.” In each case we are talking about the factors of time and place that are bound to determine, to some extent, any action we may undertake.

1. *Men, tools and methods, and circumstances* are the three inescapable aspects of any action. If we ignore any one of them, our action will be at the best inadequate and at the worst will almost certainly fail.

It would be ridiculous to concentrate on anyone of these elements and leave the others out of account, and it is really not much more sensible to pay close heed to two of the elements if in so doing we completely ignore the third. Each factor is essential. All must be given due weighting when we plan our actions – the situation, the attendant circumstances are no exception to this rule.

What indeed would be the use of training a chosen team of collaborators, providing them with a methodology and a range of essential equipment – “the tools for the job” – if such a team lacked all sense of timing or tactics, all flexibility, if they did not know when to “dig their heels in,” when to make strategic retreats or concessions...in short, did not know how to *adapt to the circumstances*?

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Not that we are recommending complete opportunism. The situation is a factor, and an important one, but it is only one of the factors determining our action. It determines only *the way we move to our goal*. It must not be allowed *to determine the goal itself*.

Yet that is what so happens if, as is the case for too many people, our actions are purely *reactions*, automatic adaptations to each turn and swing of the changing external situation in which we find ourselves. As an example, we could point to the sort of journalist who is so immersed in the day-to-day succession of events, so tied to the rhythm of the teleprinter, deadlines, “going to press,” that he is incapable of any long-term view, any perspective wider or more comprehensive than that of “today’s news.” The speed and pressure of such activity is such that one does not even realize that one is “getting nowhere.” One is not so much taking the situation into account as becoming a slave to it.

We have said that all three aspects – *men, tools and circumstances* – are inseparable parts of any action. This does not mean that they are all of equal importance. Thus, it would be true to say that time spent on training men and improving tools and methods is never wasted whatever the circumstances, for without trained men and proper tools even the most favourable circumstances cannot be exploited, while even the worst setback can be faced more successfully if men and tools are at a peak of readiness.

Obstacles and difficulties tend to loom disproportionately large in our eyes, but nevertheless there is almost always *some* solution, some way out, if one is prepared to seek it. It is more often a case of men failing to measure up to the situation than of the situation being unfavourable to men. Far too frequently, alas, good opportunities are wasted because men lack the training to seize them or the tools to turn them to advantage.

Proper training of our manpower, the availability of the right methods and tools are thus more crucial factors in any action than our third, the “situational” factor.

But once this hierarchy of relative importance has been established, it is still important for us to cultivate a feeling for the situation. Circumstances are bound to affect and influence our action to some extent. For example, our behaviour and our choice of methods will not be the same in a “popular democracy” as in a Catholic State.

A study of situations is thus necessary if we are to deploy our human potential effectively and make the best use of our instruments.

In a “pluralist” society, for example, one where different basic beliefs (religious and moral) rub shoulders, we shall expect to have to make compromises, limited and partial agreements, and concessions as the “lesser of two evils,” and our efforts will be concentrated on seeing that such compromises, unsatisfactory as they are, cause as little harm as possible, and on working towards their improvement wherever and whenever possible.

In such situations one must keep abreast of the trend of events so as to utilize every opening that presents itself, while taking care not to shock or antagonize one’s temporary allies. For while it is true that St. Paul recommended us to preach the truth “in season and out of season,” St. Augustine did well to observe that the Apostle to the Gentiles mentions “in (season)” first, and leaves “out of season” until second, as a course to be undertaken only when clearly necessary.

2. All action takes place within a framework, against a background. This background consists of circumstances of time and place, and the events surrounding the action.

The situation, insofar as it is applicable to any given action, can vary in scope and nature. It may be more or less generalized, more or less long-term; it may be national or international. It may even be quite localized and small-scale. Some events, some situations are “global,” as we say nowadays, whereas others may affect only a single country or region, perhaps even only a single parish. Some events have long-term repercussions, so that the “situation” has an extension in time, while others are over and done with in a week or a month, and hence have to be tackled immediately. There are events which as it were inaugurate a new period in history, an “era” as Joseph de Maistre said, while others are no more than everyday incidents of purely local interest. The so-called French Revolution (as Pius XII called it[†]) is an example of the former category, since its repercussions continue to affect world affairs more than a century and a half later, both inside and outside France.

There are thus generalized, global, international events; and there are historical, geographical and psychological events and situations having reference only to a given country. There are events whose consequences extend over centuries, and others, happy or disastrous, that are the affairs of a day only.

[†] Letter establishing Our Lady of the Plateaux at Montpellier as a minor basilica.

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Now, the events generally accepted as being of major importance may well in fact prove to be more important than those generally accepted as of less consequence. But it would be a grave mistake to rule these apparently “secondary” happenings out of our calculations. For it quite often happens that an event without major significance when it occurs is skilfully seized upon and blown up into a world-shaking event by interested parties. Its new importance, though an artificial, “created” one, is nevertheless a fact and one which must be taken into account from then on. An example of this would be the capture of the Bastille by the Paris mob in 1789.

The lesson to be learnt from this is that no event is too small or unimportant to be worth exploiting and turning to the advantage of our action. History is rich in examples of great victories and shattering defeats that have hinged at some critical moment on veritable trifles. Had Louis XVI understood the real significance of the events of July 14, 1789, if Henry VIII had seen the possible consequences of his divorce quarrel with the Pope, the history not only of the French and English monarchies but of Europe and the Faith itself might have been very different. So true is it that what appears at the time to be a mere incident, of quite secondary importance, may turn out to be (or may by skilful exploitation be magnified into) a hinge upon which history turns.

The word “situation,” as we are using it, thus covers an immense variety of circumstances, since it can stand for facts as different as medieval Christendom, the English “Reformation,” the French Revolution, the assassination of President Kennedy, or the success of Tom, Dick or Harry in the local elections.

Herein lies the difficulty, for how can one grasp and fully understand an event in all the complexity of its contributing circumstances, the interplay of motivations and influences, and the as yet unknown factor...its consequences? An element of mystery will always subsist here. One feels that this “situational” aspect of our work is one in which there is most scope for God’s direct intervention. One can see the importance, in this field, not only of prayer, but of the power to distinguish between the promptings of grace and of temptation, the ability to weigh up the pros and cons so as to decide on the best and holiest course of action to adopt; the ability to live in and draw inspiration from the supernatural world of grace in the midst of our action within temporal society. One remembers the justified pride with which St. Joan of Arc replied to those who

opposed her plans: “In the name of God, I tell you that the counsel that My Lord gives me is surer than yours. You thought that I was mistaken, and it is you who have been proved wrong.”

The fact remains, nevertheless, that God does not normally work through miracles, and while He wants us to pray to Him, He also expects us to use our hands and minds, to seek out what is wise and rational and put it into effect.

In this context good sense and reason tells us to study *situations*, not in any dilettante or anecdotal fashion, but so that we may grasp their essential inwardness and understand their basic mechanisms.

This underlines the advantage of making a serious study of history, both as a mine of events and actions, and as a teacher from whom we can draw valuable lessons for our own action. By studying history we can develop in ourselves a feeling for situations, and thus increase our chances of success even in cases where our personal aptness or our tools are not of the best.

We have to recognize that the web of events (in the broadest sense in which we are using this word) is the inescapable background on which our action must be fought out. Whether the ground is favourable or not, we have to accept it, weigh up its drawbacks and advantages, and use it for the best. It is no use criticizing and rejecting it, for, good or bad, it constitutes for us in the “here and now” the field that God’s providence has entrusted to us, for us to clear and plough and make fruitful in His name whatever it may cost us in tears and labour.

We have to learn how to work in the “here and now,” not in a past that has gone forever or a future that has yet to be born. The *present situation* is our launching pad, however distant it may seem to be from our goal. We must do this *even if all effort looks utterly useless!*

We must remind ourselves that the best way to tackle and succeed in any enterprise – even one that looks impossible – is to take the first step, and to take it in the right direction. If we proceed step by possible step, each tiny objective gained will open up a further possibility of onward progress. Tackled this way, the *impossible* can be broken down into a number of small but possible actions, one has begun to move forward, a psychological blockage has been destroyed, and the *impossible* itself will begin to look much less monolithic and forbidding.

It is only if we cultivate a sensitive feeling for circumstances that we can discover these small, *possible* steps. It may be that our defeat of

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yesterday may open up possibilities for a success today or tomorrow, for there is no one like God for drawing straight lines with a crooked ruler. What Frenchman in 1905 would have thought that the law passed by the anti-clerical establishment of his day, nationalizing church buildings and fittings, would, sixty years later, serve to defend the sanctuaries of France against the spoliation of their sacred objects by a new generation of “anti-clericals” – this time the new breed of iconoclast priests?

History sometimes produces surprising reversals or changes of direction. The secret of action consists in recognizing them and knowing how to make use of them, for although obviously we are not going to be able to reverse the whole direction of events by our personal and random tinkering with its works, sometimes quite a small push or twist of ours can set it rolling in a different direction and at a different speed.

It was this that made Charles Maurras¹ write: “Even the smallest initiative of a single man or group of men, when it is properly organized, can result in a surprising variety of effects and long-term results. As soon as one realizes this fact, one becomes completely proof against despair.”

Gustave Thibon² puts it in another way: “Is there any lesson better calculated to bring out the manhood and determination of the younger generation than to show them that none of the heritage of the past is safe from attack, no promise for the future can be counted on, and that today’s reality depends entirely on their own loyalty and courage,” to which we could add: “their own capacity to grasp and exploit situations as they arise.”

The wheel never stops turning, events are forever renewing themselves. Our goals remain the same, but our tactics must be flexible, adaptable. The methods we choose for today’s action must not be allowed to crystallize into hard-and-fast rules, fixed formulae that can cramp our work in the future, slow it down and reduce it to impotence.

As an example of what is to be avoided we may cite those people, clergy or layfolk, who in this “post-conciliar period” have tried their hardest to mummify the Church in an effort to adapt it to “our times” – as though “our times” were not merely an ephemeral moment, constantly passing to give way to yet another “times.”

Surely it is obvious that if we have a true feeling for the situation, we shall not erect the passing circumstances of a day or a period into an eternal dogma, the detailed exigencies of one moment into an unchanging rule. Such a way of understanding and grappling with “the event”

is an insult to true dogma, a betrayal of the very meaning of the word “doctrine.” A real feeling for circumstances implies the ability to distinguish between what is permanent and what is passing, changeable. With such an ability we shall not be tempted to tie ourselves too indissolubly to today’s circumstances, since this would tie our hands, prevent us from adapting to the circumstances of tomorrow, and thus slow down our progress towards our goal, the only unchanging element in our work.

One thing needs repeating in and out of season. It is infinitely better to admit the fact when one has had a setback than to try and pretend that the setback is, in fact, a success in order to “save face.” It is always possible to recover from a setback that one has frankly recognized as such. It is psychologically far more difficult to recover the lost ground if one has surrendered to the defeat to the point of persuading oneself and others that the apparent defeat is in fact the attainment of the goal one had been aiming at all the time. If we have such a reaction we are beaten right from the start.

There is no worse distortion of the “feeling for situations” than the evolutionist view according to which all that *is* is good, all that happens is for the best. For one thing, how can we develop any discrimination as to what is or is not desirable in society if we have decided in advance that whatever happens is by that very fact desirable and to be welcomed? For another, how can we have any absolute goal outside history, a goal determined by the Divine and Natural Law, how can we have any concept of an ultimately unchanging natural order if we elevate history itself, the sheer blind succession of events, into some sort of “messianic” inevitability, outside our control or God’s intervention, to be accepted as “good” however horrible it in fact may turn out to be?

The only things it is permissible to treat as absolutes or elevate into “dogmas” are the absolutes themselves – the supreme truths, and the ultimate Reality who is their Source.

If we begin treating secondary and contingent states of affairs as though they were absolutes, dogmatic “fixtures” as it were, we shall be forced into one of two possible choices.

Either our proposals (thus dogmatized) will be in themselves satisfactory and in accordance with doctrine, but by their very perfection (relatively speaking), they will seem unattainable in this imperfect world, and thus will not gain general acceptance. Or our proposals will too easily gain general acceptance because they seem to fit easily into this imperfect

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world, in which case we shall not have set our sights high enough – we shall have adapted to the *situation* instead of adapting the situation to our goal. In either case we shall have crystallized, enshrined, given a sort of permanent and absolute value to what is after all no more than a temporary expedient, however valuable it may prove at the time.

If we do this, if we codify and institutionalize what we have found effective at one point in our struggle, if we enshrine it in a set of rules and adopt it as an unchanging principle, we shall find ourselves “stuck with it,” and the adaptation that was useful at one stage of our action will turn out to be a brake on our further progress.

Or, to put it in another way, when one has to try and cover a backlog of ten years work in as many weeks it is not a good idea to encumber oneself with methods and formulae doomed by their very practical and doctrinal inadequacy to become speedily outmoded.

One day’s plan of battle is rarely of much use for a later day’s operations. If we erect the orders of one particular day into immutable principles, the temptation will be to remain stuck at the level of the day.

Let us get out of the habit, then, of returning constantly to the well-worn methods that always worked so well in the past. Let us cultivate instead a forward-looking, experimental attitude. The man of action weighs up present circumstances before striking, he then selects the methods and tools most likely to succeed in these circumstances, but he is never mesmerized by the present, for he is constantly looking beyond the “here and now” to a tomorrow in which truth will triumph.



Chapter II

Four Types of Situation

Now that we have introduced the *situation* as an element of our action, it is time to analyse it in greater detail, to see what concrete forms it may take in particular cases and how we can react to and make use of them in the service of our goal.

We cannot, of course, hope to isolate and analyse every possible type of situation. The variety of possible circumstances is well-nigh infinite, and even where two situations appear to be exact parallels, a closer look will always reveal some small (but important) difference. We must, therefore, not be misled into seeing identity between two situations where there is only simplicity. The tiny difference, apparently one of detail, may in fact be of crucial importance for the nature of the situation and may imply a radically different approach on our part. A sensitivity to the true significance and implications of such apparently minor differences, therefore, constitutes a major part of what we mean by “a feeling for situations,” and we should try to develop this sensitivity in ourselves to the utmost.

But we cannot enter into all the possible “nuances” within the confines of this book. We must restrict ourselves here to analysing a few of the most significant types of situation, and, with our eyes on the state of the world today, we have picked out five characteristic forms.

(1) The case of a society totally hostile to Christianity and the natural order.

(2) That of a society whose institutions are founded on the Church’s doctrine and whose consensus of opinion is favourable to Christian values.

(3) That of a society that still retains institutions based on Christian principles and conformable to the natural law, but where the prevailing consensus and the spirit of the Establishment is increasingly “revolutionary” in the broad sense.

(4) The case of a society where the institutional structure is “revolutionary” in spirit (either Marxist or Liberal), but whose members are in the main fervent and active Catholics.

(5) The case of a society whose structures and institutions are contaminated by the Revolution, in our broad sense of the word, and where the consensus has split into wide and deep differences of belief – the so-called “pluralist” society.

We shall deal with the first four types in the present chapter, reserving Chapter III for an extended analysis of the pluralist society.

The five forms we have outlined above do not any of them necessarily correspond to any actual or existing state of affairs in any given country. Social and ideological reality is always too complex to be reduced to simple archetypes. If one looks at any actual society in the past or at the present time, one is likely to find that it contains elements of more than one of the five types we have isolated above.

Thus, it has been known for a society thoroughly Christian both in its structures and its spirit to be undermined over quite a short period by the infiltrations of Freemasonry into key positions. This was the case with a number of Christian monarchies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and in particular of Austro-Hungary in the period of *Josephism*.³ On the other hand, one can cite examples of societies which despite their anti-Christian “Establishment” and the deep divisions of belief among their people still retain a rich heritage derived from their original Catholicism. Here, all that is needed to reform their structures and reduce the divisions in men’s minds is to revitalize their Catholicism and make it more aware of its present responsibilities and opportunities. This is the case, for instance, of France today.

1. *A Society Totally Hostile to Catholicism and the Natural and Christian Order*. This is the worst possible situation one can be faced with (though even here the case is not hopeless). The actions open to one might be restricted to that ultimate and irreducible minimum which no régime, however hostile, can forbid or prevent, namely prayer (in private or within the family, even if community prayer proves impossible) that His “Kingdom come”; the exercise of an active, supernatural *patience* and *long-suffering*, and the *offering up* of one’s personal sufferings, even one’s life itself; the offering of one’s country’s humiliations and tribulations to the compassionate intercession of Our Lady, the angels and the saints.

Beyond this personal spiritual action, one may be able to do little more than help to keep God's truth alive among the small remnant of the faithful, using the most discreet means, and sometimes even working in secret and underground.

We foresee an objection here: that such activities belong properly to the straightforward spiritual apostolate of the Church rather than to our civic action, and that they ought therefore to come directly under the control and guidance of the clergy.

This is true, up to a point. But in such a hostile situation, the clergy (especially the faithful ones) are far more vulnerable than layfolk, who may well be obliged to take over work that the clergy are physically no longer able to carry out, or are unable to carry out effectively, or may even be sabotaging, since in a revolutionary state the clergy will have its traitors as well as the laity.

Faced with such a situation the layman clearly has the responsibility of being as well informed as possible. He will want to be proof against being misled or betrayed by traitor priests. He will develop a healthy mistrust of "apostolic" movements of the "Pax"⁴ type. He will try to develop and deepen his knowledge of the faith so that, even in the absence of a spiritual director, he can smell out and reject the inevitable leftist doctrinal deviations. He will try as far as possible to keep tuned into what Rome has to say – not the shifts of Vatican diplomacy, but her essential doctrinal teachings.

As a complement to this basic apostolic activity, a further action will become necessary, one of formation, of training to provide intellectual, spiritual and moral support for those key men and women whose firmness and loyalty can be relied on however disastrous the circumstances – men and women capable of keeping the faith alive (and passing it on to others if at all possible), capable of ensuring that the doctrine is spread, whatever happens, however long the bad days may last.†

Such a formative action will be measured by quality and intensity. The maximum effort will be made to use to the best advantage possible

† "The greatest misfortune a period or a country can suffer," wrote Mgr. Freppel,⁵ "is for it to weaken or abandon the truth. One can recover from any other blow; one can never recover from a sacrifice of principles. Men's characters may weaken at certain moments, and public morality may be impaired to some extent by vice and bad example, but nothing is finally lost so long as the integrity of true doctrine remains undiminished. For while doctrine remains, men and

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the few instruments and methods that remain possible in such circumstances. Publicity and propaganda are obviously ruled out. Our methods will be chosen so as to draw the least possible attention to ourselves, and to be as nearly invulnerable to detection and infiltration as we can make them.

Here networks based on natural relationships are likely to prove most effective. Such relationships, founded on family ties or friendship or a common professional, local, cultural, sporting or recreational interest, exist in all societies, however ill-ordered or dictatorial. The natural network is at all times our basic formula for action in any situation. In the tragic circumstances of a totally hostile and anti-Christian environment such as we are envisaging it is likely to be our only means of grouping and training the key men and women to whom our action is addressed. This is because, properly handled, such networks can evade detection and suppression longer than other forms of organization, while giving the best chance of worthwhile results. The natural network has spontaneity, of its very nature. It is the sort of association that ceaselessly springs up again however often it may be dispersed. It thus has high survival value, forming a quasi-impregnable defensive position while the storm is raging, and from which one can launch out into wider activities once the storm has passed.

This is indeed what has happened in the past and is still happening. One has only to think of the history of the Church, and of the countless persecutions she has undergone from the Roman catacombs to our present era of the Iron and Bamboo Curtains. The company of the faithful has survived all these vicissitudes with the aid of its two fundamental methods – prayer, and action through natural networks.

2. A Society Whose Spirit and Institutions Are Fully Conformable to the Church's Doctrine. It is hardly necessary to warn readers that such a soci-

institutions can sooner or later be made good, for one can always return to what is good if one has not lost touch with the truth. But we should be robbed of all hope if we lost sight of those principles without which nothing solid and durable can ever be built. Thus the greatest service a man can make to his fellows in periods when the faith grows weak and is obscured is to assert the truth fearlessly, even if no one listens. For this is like a pathway of light opened into men's minds, and even if his voice does not succeed in drowning the surrounding hubbub for the moment, it will at least be welcomed in the future as a harbinger of salvation."

ety, though common enough in history, is very rare nowadays. We can still draw some very useful lessons from it to guide our action today.

Our previous case was an example of the worst possible situation one can expect to meet. This one, by contrast, represents the most favourable possibility, for the social order here can be considered Christian in essence.†

Yet even in such a society, we cannot rule out all risk. The danger here derives from the fact that men feel that, the goal – namely a Christian society – being to all appearance achieved, there is no need for any further effort, and so they tend to rest on their laurels. In our previous case *inaction* was *imposed* by the hostile environment; here inaction is the result of *complacency*. The environment is healthy, everything seems too easy and so there is no urge to action.

To put it another way, in the hostile environment of our first example, one feels one can do nothing because of the risk one runs, whereas in the present case one feels no need to do anything at all because everything seems to be going well.

But, as St. Pius X reminded us in his *Letter on the Sillon Movement*, the “maintenance and defence of a Catholic social order demands a constant defensive effort. Every day we have to build and rebuild it again on its natural and divine foundations, in the face of the continually renewed attacks of unhealthy utopianism, revolt and defiance of God.”

We cannot rely on Christian institutions as a permanent and invincible rampart behind which we can be safe without further effort on our part. Many a republic, principality and kingdom has enjoyed such institutions, and where are they now? Surely this is proof that passive resistance alone is insufficient for the preservation of a Christian society, and is likely to become less and less effective today as revolutionary pressures intensify in penetrative and disruptive force.

Ever since Protestant nations were established in the sixteenth century, they have constituted power bases and launching pads for the spread

†When we say “essence,” this does not mean that such a society is perfect. Nothing human can be perfect, and here too one will find regrettable imperfections and blemishes. But there are imperfections and imperfections. Those that arise from human fallibility and sinfulness may well be grave imperfections, but they are nonetheless accidental. Quite another thing are the abuses that arise not merely from man’s predicament, from Original Sin, but from a fundamental perversion of principles, from the formal declaration of evil as a constitutive basis

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of subversive ideas. Their existence should have called forth, right from the outset, a continuous intellectual, defensive reaction and, what is more, a counter-offensive on the part of all the Catholic nations. Unfortunately, this was not done. No serious resistance has ever been organized in the West against the various trends emanating from England, Prussia and the Russian revolutionary intellectuals which have flooded into Catholic Europe in the knapsacks of the wandering “preachers” of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the deluge of tracts and pamphlets printed in the Protestant and liberal cities of Amsterdam, Geneva, London and Berlin.

Thus, while in the Protestant countries the adepts of the “Reformation” were enthusiastically swept along on an intoxicating wave of new ideas, the intellectual élite in the Catholic countries dozed complacently in the illusory shelter of their age-old institutions. Hardly anyone recognized the threat to our societies constituted by the spread of the masonic lodges or realized the urgency of making an effort at least as energetic as that of our enemies.

Yet there was no lack of human culture or of religious fervour during that period. All that was lacking was awareness of the danger.

Complacency is the most dangerous illusion that any existing régime can fall into. There one is firmly in the saddle, and there seems no reason why tomorrow should not be the same as today, so that finally any threat to the existing state of affairs comes to seem so unthinkable that once ceases to take the slightest precaution.

When one is subject to general hostility and persecution, as in the case of our first example, one’s choice of action is severely limited by the situation itself. But in the Christian society we are discussing here, the very fact that a wide range of activities is open to one in itself can lead to a euphoria and a state of complacency that results in little actually being done. Plenty of large scale, quantitative activity may be engaged in, since there is no shortage of time, money or manpower, and such activity, by

for society. There is thus an essential difference between evil committed *despite* and *against* the law when that law is still regarded, even by those contravening it, as being a justified norm for society, and evil enshrined in and proclaimed by the law of the land as official doctrine. Thus, the private lives of Louis XV of France or Henry VIII of England were no doubt scandalous, but the scandals were less grave, in themselves and in the consequences, than the latter king’s so-called divorce from his queen Catherine, or our modern divorce laws.

its very scale, is impressive and spectacular to outward appearance. But humble day-to-day work in cells and networks tends to be scorned, as being too slow and finicky, useful perhaps at some particular crisis but a waste of time when any other method of working is possible.

Yet the training of an élite and capillary action are just as necessary within a fully Christian society as in a hostile and persecuting environment. The tuning up and strengthening of men's minds, hearts and wills implied by these methods are just as essential as is the spreading among wider circles of an awareness both of true doctrine and of the nature of the Revolution. We do not give much for the chances of any more or less Christian society if it neglects such precautions on the pretext that it is "in power" and sees no immediate threat to that power.

In these days of "psychological warfare" more than ever, the unity of the nation needs safeguarding through the development of a whole series of networks closely linking the State itself with the principal centres of the nation's energy. Only well-trained and grounded networks can be relied on to transmit, explain and gain support from the nation as a whole for the decisions and measures taken at the top. Neither radio nor television can perform this role adequately unless they are backed up by the more human and personal action of such networks.

Alas, in those countries that we persist in regarding as Christian, total reliance is placed on the mass media and on the large scale and quantitative activities of mass organizations. The scope and potential of such methods and organizations is indeed enormous, but if it is to be more than purely superficial, it needs to be catalysed, humanized, personalized by the action of live and effective networks.

The countries where the Revolution has triumphed have not fallen into this error. Communist leaders do not argue that because the State and the national spirit are now Marxist, no further effort is needed. On the contrary, they are at pains to double their revolutionary State apparatus and economic and legal structures by a whole framework of ideological training and agitational practice among key workers in every field of national life.

If only such networks existed in countries such as Argentina, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, French Canada, etc.! No wonder the revolutionary spirit is gaining ground even in such bulwarks of the Faith.

3. *The Case of a Society Which Still Retains Institutions Conformable to the Natural Law and Christian Principles, but Whose Spirit Is Already Infected by, if not Won Over to, the Revolution.* This is the case of France on the eve of 1789. It is the case of all Catholic societies when their Christianity loses conviction and begins to be eroded by the spirit of Revolution. Even more than in the other cases we have mentioned, salvation here can only come from a massive, intensive, well-timed and well-organized ideological counter-attack. Any clumsiness in its execution could well be fatal. Once again, such a counter-attack is impossible in the absence of a trained, conscious and determined élite. Unfortunately, such an élite is often just not there when it is most needed. In this case, all one can hope to do is to play for time. No rules can be laid down for such action. Everything here will depend on the common sense, political genius and ability to manoeuvre of whoever is at the helm of the ship of State. If that person happens to be a Louis XVI of France or a Charles I of England, then nothing but disaster can be expected.

At least historical experience has taught us one lesson: in such circumstances, any attempt to calm the storm of revolutionary pressure and agitation by an “appeal to the people,” the convoking of the “States General” or any such “democratic” or para-conciliar formula is about as much use as pumping petrol on a burning house.

By contrast, a demonstration of calm and non-provocative force can be decisive. We shall never know how much bloodshed France might have been spared if Michel de l’Hospital⁶ had not disbanded the sixteenth century equivalent of the police force just prior to the outbreak of the Wars of Religion, or if Louis XVI had not dispersed his most trustworthy troops on the eve of the French Revolution.

There are circumstances, in fact, where to disarm the State amounts to arming the political factions. Hence Michelet’s⁷ famous phrase on the Chancellor of Catherine de Medici: “To the tempestuous waves of the sea, to the fury of the elements, to chaos itself, he said: ‘Be ye kings!’” (Unlike Our Saviour and exemplar, whose “Peace; be still!” was a proper and effective response to disorder and agitation.)

This does not alter the fact that, even in such tragic circumstances, the real remedy – by which we mean the one that promises a real and permanent way out of the predicament – can only lie in the creation or re-animation of an élite of socially-conscious and responsible Christians. Such an élite may already exist, but has perhaps lost awareness of its own

identity or confidence in its ability to cope with the situation. An intensive campaign will thus be necessary to prevent it from giving further ground and to restore its self-confidence and its sense of civic responsibility. If this can be done, the situation may be saved by the sheer fact of the existence and activities of such an élite, always provided that the social structures of the country have not yet been “revolutionized” and so can be set to resume their normal and healthy functioning without too great a jolt.

4. *The Case of a Society Whose Structures and Institutions Are Revolutionary in Spirit – Either Liberal or Marxist – but Whose Members in the Main Are Active and Fervent Catholics.* This case is not too dissimilar to that of the Roman Empire on Constantine’s accession. It is the case of countries where the Catholics have been persecuted but where after long struggles or heroic perseverance, they have succeeded in establishing a position of tolerance if not of full freedom. It is the case of Ireland, of French Canada, of Belgium, the case of the Catholics in most of the Protestant countries, as, for example, England, Holland, certain of the Swiss Cantons.⁸

It is also the case of these new lands, at the outset pagan or Protestant in belief – the United States, the Philippines, for example – in which Catholicism has come to occupy an increasingly important position. It is the case, too, of nations such as Poland and Hungary, which although under a Communist yoke imposed from outside, remain nonetheless firmly and deeply Catholic.

One can see by the examples we give how varied and difficult the appropriate actions are likely to be. They may range from armed insurrection down to simple capillary infiltration. The field of choice is as wide as it is fraught with dangerous possibilities.

We have seen examples of armed insurrection in the Poland of the nineteenth century, in Ireland in the Twenties and the Seventies, in Spain in 1936 and in Hungary in 1956. At the other end of the scale, capillary action operates as a gradual transformation of men’s minds through the persuasive effect of personal contact and example, education and peaceful propaganda.

The two styles of action are as different as chalk and cheese. The one, by its very gradualness and absence of shock tactics, tends to pacify and lull the hostility of the opposition and may finally win its full accep-

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tance. The other is an open, violent declaration of war, possibly inspired by the desire for national independence, as in the case of Ireland in 1916, or of Belgium when it shook off Dutch Protestant hegemony.

How does one know which type of action to choose? The peaceful progress of capillary action is bound to appear preferable in itself. The trouble is that there are circumstances in which it can achieve practically nothing worthwhile, whereas a well-organized and wisely conducted armed action can lead to decisive success.

Thus, in the Spain of 1936, it would have been useless to restrict one's activities to purely capillary action within cells and networks. The situation, the state of the Catholic forces, the nature and style of the opposition, were such that not only was it essential to act quickly and in strength but it was in fact possible to do so. Had conditions been different – if, for example, Spain had been a less deeply Catholic country, or if the Revolution in Spain had adopted a more tentative, moderate and conciliatory approach – wisdom would have counselled a quite different reaction.

The fact remains that such decisions are the most difficult and critical that one ever has to make. They call for a sharper sense of what possibilities are latent in a given situation than practically any other decisions one can imagine oneself being faced with – for so much depends on them.

One's intention is to save the situation, to see if one cannot put everything right in one single swift and decisive action, but there is always the risk, when one stakes everything on one throw of the dice, that one will not only lose what one already has, but will even make things worse, and hasten the triumph of the evil one was trying to prevent. The "revolt of the Generals" during France's recent Algerian troubles⁹ can serve as an example of this.

We can never emphasize too strongly that such a use of force can only be justified if it has a reasonable chance of success. Before undertaking it, one must weigh up all the pros and cons as objectively and calmly as possible, and in all cases make no move until one is sure of holding sufficient forces in reserve. It is always wiser to over-estimate the strength of the opposition, and better to err on the side of too much preparation than of too little.

The use of force above all demands the availability of an élite, not of brilliant talkers or intelligent readers, but of shrewd, practical, trained

and informed militants – not, be it noted, aggressive “sabre rattlers.” The presence of only just a few such hotheads in one’s ranks could be disastrous.

Having laid down the conditions under which the use of force may be justified, we are left with the situations where not only are forceful solutions to be ruled out as almost certain to fail, but where all the circumstances seem to point to action through networks as the wiser choice.

This will be so in societies where although the institutional structures and the general feeling are contaminated by the revolutionary spirit, the intensity of this feeling is diluted, moderate in tone and fairly non-aggressive. Here it is obviously preferable to work along the slower but surer lines of a discreet and unpublicized person-to-person or capillary action. One is working not to overthrow a régime or to forestall such an overthrow, but rather to conquer men’s minds for the truth. In particular to educate into wiser and more objective views and reactions those who tend to have too formal and dogmatic an approach to situations, or who lack patience and begin to suspect treachery whenever the work is not progressing as fast as they would like.



Chapter III

Pluralist Societies

Our fifth case is that of a society whose structures have been undermined by the Revolution, and where there are wide and deep differences of belief. This is the most frequently encountered of our five types. It is the case of modern France, the case indeed of almost all the nations of the so-called “free world.”

In these countries, there remain hardly any Christian institutions respected as such. Not merely has society at large ceased to believe in its obligation to work for the establishment of the Social Kingship of Christ, the mere reminder that such a duty exists is enough to exasperate anyone who hears it.

Three centuries of “separated philosophy”† have done their work only too well, producing the climate of generalized scepticism we know today.

As for that religion of “good manners,” which Simone de Beauvoir¹⁰ tells us was that of her father and his generation, no one either believes in it or wants even to hear of it today.

There are still those who recommend a respect for that natural law which the Church teaches as one of the bases of its morality. But the natural law is treated in isolation, without any reference to God. It is hard to see how the natural law in itself can impose any moral imperative on us when it is separated from its origin and finality in a God who creates the natural order, and is thus the author of the natural law governing that order, rewarding or punishing our observance or contravention of that law. Yet the concept of a natural order is invoked for the most part as a way of avoiding all reference to God.

We must not have too many illusions about the practical utility of an appeal to the natural order. It is far from being a universally accepted

† A term once used to designate philosophy when “separated,” that is systematically cut off from its roots in Catholic theology.

belief, recognized as self-evident common sense by the majority. We cannot, therefore, count on an appeal to the natural order as all that is needed to arouse a unanimous movement in favour of healthy social action or civic unity.

The Catholic Church is practically the only force left that still continues to offer a coherent philosophy of nature, of a natural order and of a natural law.¹¹ It may seem to many of us as less likely to offend and put off our non-Christian or Protestant Christian contacts if we base our appeal solely on the natural law without referring directly to the full Catholic teaching that underpins it. But to do so will not increase our chances of success. The best approach, both in theory and practice, is a quite different one.

1. *On the Theoretical Plane – Teach the Truth, Accept the “Second Best” When It Is Avoidable, but Never Delude Ourselves That It Is in Fact the “Best.”* (1) Our first duty is indefatigably to teach the truth, the whole truth, the full and certain doctrine, to those who are willing to hear and hold to it, however few in number they may be. We shall thus build up an irreducible reserve of people prepared to stand up for the truth and hand it on undiminished however hostile the circumstances.

(2) As a corollary to this, we have a further duty to avoid falling into the trap of canonising the accidental, of according some sort of absolute rightness of whatever happens, whatever shifts and expedients we are forced to adopt – the sort of backward argument that says, “because we have arrived at this particular result, this is the goal we were striving for,” or “because this method was the most effective one last year, it is our standard and proper way of acting, and must be rigidly adhered to in all future circumstances.”

Admittedly we have to face and adapt to real existing situations, good and bad. There is no inherent danger in accepting patent facts, in facing up to realities; it is indeed the only practical way to work. The danger lies in taking “what is,” the particular circumstances that may crop up and the methods whereby we react to them, and universalizing them, giving them absolute validity, making them the yardstick whereby to measure all our action.

Nothing is more likely to confuse people and make them lose all sense of truth than to pass off the judgements, formulae and methods,

the shifts and expedients proper to a particular moment and situation, as having normative and absolute validity in all circumstances.

Situations may be good or bad, our approach to them will range from a triumphant advance, exploiting the weakness of the opposition, to a painful retreat or a shift of terrain so as to prevent our forces from complete annihilation. No foreseeable set of circumstances is likely to be ideal. No method or approach is in its details and application sacrosanct. We have to accept and use the one, be flexible, adaptable in the other. At all times we must see reality as it is, free ourselves from comfortable illusions, call a spade a spade. We may often have to tolerate what is ideally speaking evil, or at least a “second best”; we have to “make the best of a bad job.” What we must never do is surrender to the “lesser evil” or the “second best” by christening it as “good” or regarding it as permanent and normative.

2. On the Practical Plane: Take Into Account the Muddled Thinking Normal to Men in Error, and Appeal to Their Common Sense. What ought we to do on this plane? One thing is certain, and we have often repeated it. It is not enough just to proclaim the truth on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. If we want results we have to take the situation as we find it, make the best of a bad job, draw all the advantages we possibly can from circumstances which in any other respect we may well consider deplorable.

For instance, we cannot but deplore the muddled thinking, the incoherent illogicality so prevalent nowadays. It is obviously, in itself, a bad thing. But, such as it is, we can use it, at least to a certain extent. It is undeniable that our generation has lost its appetite for the truth – at least for the whole truth, a truth developed, ordered and presented systematically. We are uncomfortable in the presence of large-scale doctrinal syntheses. All that is left is our natural, inalienable taste for small gobbets of truth, learned from our own experience or from those who have formed our minds for us.

It was La Fontaine¹² who said, “long books frighten me.” Similarly, our contemporaries are terrified by the sight of the vast fresco of truth. If we cannot interest men in the wide synthesis of truth as a whole, in its systematic totality and unity, there is only one solution left. We must not water the truth down, make it less true, but we can break it down into assimilable fragments, without revealing in advance the final synthesis, the full title as it were of what we are trying to hand on; rather as Socrates,

far from imposing his conclusion at the outset of the discussion, led his disciples by a series of apparently innocuous questions to “discover it for themselves.” The men of today have a horror of being “indoctrinated,” but provided we are aware of this, it is not too hard to get round the difficulty.

Think of the number of Catholics who, quite sincerely, support Divorce, Communism or Euthanasia. Likewise vast numbers of Lutherans and Calvinists know next to nothing of Luther and Calvin. Plenty of communists have never studied Lenin or Marx, and how many Socialists, if asked, could tell you what the word “Socialism” means? A pitiful state of affairs, no doubt, in one sense, but in another, a very fortunate one, for it proves that one can generally afford to ignore the “label” and concentrate on the underlying reality.

Note that we are not recommending playing fast and loose with the meaning of words, far from it. The correct use of words is important, and it is dangerous to confuse them. It is your revolutionary or your totalitarian who deliberately calls a thing by another name so as to mislead people. All we are saying is that it is a waste of time to begin a dialogue with someone one hopes to convert by an argument over “labels” – Communism, Socialism, Catholicism or what have you.

For anyone who understands the meaning of words, *Socialism* implies increasing intervention by the community, that is, usually by the State, in activities or sectors normally considered as lying in the field of private enterprise. There is no known type of Socialism that does not fit this description. Socialism, thus, is a synonym for State control, and ultimately for totalitarianism.

Yet amazingly few socialists seem to realize this. What is more, they spend much of their time complaining not about Socialism as such, of course, but about the State’s obvious incompetence in administering efficiently the sectors it has swallowed, the sectors which, as we know, ought never to have come under its direction anyhow. It is only when we have thoroughly rammed home this point that we shall be able to prove to these good but misguided socialists that it is Socialism itself that they are criticising, and not just certain temporary weaknesses in its administration.

If, sadly, we have to admit that many of our co-religionists are Catholic in name only, we can console ourselves that the same is true of many of our nominal opponents. We repeat: one must look for the underlying reality, and not be mesmerized by the labels people wear.

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I can remember meeting some Lutherans once who were kind enough to express approval of one of my talks on freedom. The thought struck me at the time that they ought not have approved of what I had said if they had been full and consistent Lutherans.

What course was I to follow? Should I transform our dialogue into a head-on clash between two systems of thought, by pointing out to them that the very logic of their Lutheranism ruled out the possibility of any agreement between us? Was it not better to go to the heart of the matter, try to approach the region of truth, emphasize and concentrate attention on “what is” without concerning myself with “labels”? To rely, as I in fact did, on the persuasive effect of single and evident facts, hoping and trusting that in God’s good time these would lead them to the fullness of the truth?

If we operate thus, going straight to the underlying reality instead of to the “label,” there are a host of fundamental truths that we can get over to people who, if we were to judge purely by the “label” they display, ought to reject them, but who in fact can be brought to accept them – the fact being that beneath even the most marked forms of ideological error there always lurks a grain of common sense and a readiness to accept the truth when it is properly presented.

It is to this grain of common sense that we must appeal, this unavowed readiness to accept the truth that we must try to satisfy. Thus, by a patient, piecemeal re-establishment of single truths, one by one, we must work towards a restoration of total truth in all its fullness in men’s minds.

Make no mistake: this tactic does not dispense us from deep and serious study and understanding of basic doctrine. In fact, it makes it all the more necessary. It is no use patly trotting out doctrinal propositions we have learned by heart. We need to assimilate them so well that they inform and impregnate our conversation without being so aggressively obvious that they arouse our opponents instinctive suspicion, their in-built resistance to what they consider as “brainwashing.” We must so present our arguments for the truth that they have all the acceptability of clear and evident common sense and wisdom.

To achieve this, our doctrinal training needs to be orientated not towards pure scholarship as such – today’s experts and scholars have not on the whole shown a very brilliant record for courageous resistance to

evil – but towards an ability to assimilate and use our knowledge practically and effectively.

If such an action is to have any chance of revitalizing each and every corner of the social organism, it must be omnipresent and thoroughly diversified.

Our methods and our timing, therefore, have to be well-timed and flexible so that the doctrine or action we are proposing finds a form adapted to the special needs of each case and each milieu in society.

We cannot expect to convince everybody or proclaim every truth that needs to be proclaimed everywhere and at the same time. In the present state of opinion, an enormous amount of good would be done if we only managed, in each milieu, to sow the seeds of one basic truth in such a way that it gained acceptance.

A concrete example of this can be drawn from the position of Catholic teachers in the French State educational system. Their predicament is a microcosm of the situation we are treating in this chapter. French State schools are, of course, “secular” (the official word is “neutral”). Pupils may be Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim or nothing at all. We thus have the complete range of possible conflicting beliefs in a pluralist society. How are Catholic teachers in such schools to transmit healthy doctrine to their pupils without falling into a double disloyalty to the State, which has employed them to give “neutral” instruction, and disloyalty to that principle of Catholic teaching that insists that the parents right to have their children brought up according to their own convictions must be respected?

It was Pius XII who showed such teachers, in theory and practice, the proper way out of their dilemma. Addressing a group of university lecturers, he said to them in effect: in spite of everything, you feel that you have the opportunity and the duty, without infringing in any way the limitations inherent in your position or the provisions of the law, of doing good, and a great good at that, to the young souls entrusted to you. Can you do it in any other way than through the unseen influence of overflowing grace and prayer?

“The apostle St. Paul,” he said,

unfolds a wide prospect before your eyes in his Epistle to the Romans (i:20). “God’s invisible perfections, His eternal power and his divinity have since the creation of the world been made visible

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to man's intelligence through His works." Are we, by "works," to understand only His material creatures, those immediately perceptible to our sense? Surely it is certain that we must also include the great general laws that rule the world and which, even in the absence of Revelation and Faith, *reveal themselves to our natural reason* if we listen honestly and attentively" (emphasis the author's).

"All the branches of human knowledge make manifest to our intelligence the works of God. His eternal laws and their application to the physical, moral and social progress of the world," continued Pius XII.

What is more, it is impossible for anyone to expound fully and impartially the history of events and institutions without the light of Christ and His Church shining clearly forth in superhuman brightness, even if all specific mention of these or any dogmatic or apologetic insinuation is carefully avoided.

There is such a wide variety of possible cases that we could not possibly take them all into account, even in the most summary way, within the confines of the present work. But we can at least recall to mind the two procedures possible to us in such a difficulty, as Pius XII set them out in the speech from which we have just quoted:

(1) We can prepare men's minds to accept the notion of God by giving them a clearer, more exact understanding of order in the world, order not only on the material, but also on the intellectual, moral and spiritual planes.

(2) We can exhibit historic proofs of the benefits conferred on man by Jesus Christ and His Church.†

We can at least use our agreement on such isolated facts, such fragmentary pieces of the truth, as the starting point for political or social action, even if we cannot persuade our temporary allies to follow us all the way in our reading of the consequences of such small truths and to accept our view of the total truth of which such facts are fragments.

† Surely it is not impossible to point out to non-Christian Frenchmen that the historic fact of Joan of Arc had a spiritual (as well as a material) value. To teach merely that she believed she heard voices would be to fly in the face of the most reliable evidence. For Joan maintained right up to the stake that "her voices had not deceived her." Even if in French secular schools it is impossible to teach that "Jesus Christ has a particular and additional claim to sovereignty over France," we should be failing in historical objectivity if we omitted to teach that Joan

Such action is bound to involve constant compromise. Here, of course, we have to be careful, as we said above, to underline the contingent and transitory nature of such compromises, lest the less discerning fall into the trap of according these *ad hoc* temporary measures all the prestige of a supreme and absolute goal.

It is with this in mind that we recommend reliance not on *one single* system, *one single* formula of compromise, but on a variety of types of action. We urge the simultaneous adoption of more than one, indeed several approaches.† If this is done, there will be far less danger of our temporary expedients being mistaken for permanent goals, and we shall find also that we have greater elbow room for manoeuvre, and thus a better chance of making satisfactory progress towards a better state of things.

One can see the importance of such an approach in a period when co-operation between believers and non-believers is a daily necessity. One is providing meeting points, points of unity in the strict sense, since in fact it is only at these particular *points* that we meet and are united, our doctrines and beliefs at this stage still being different, our agreement being limited purely to the attainment of certain limited objectives.

Before one embarks on such limited co-operation, one has, of course, to be sure that there is a real identity in the goals of the two parties so co-operating. The Reverend P. Descoqs has given good examples of this.

“Suppose,” he writes,

that two groups of men, one Christian and one composed of non-believers, agree to co-operate in the task of transporting a load of heavy timber to the square in front of Notre Dame. The first or Christian group intends to use the beams to erect scaffolding for

considered Charles VII as Christ’s deputy and Christ himself as sole King of France, and that she witnessed to that Kingship and to Charles’ secondary role in a legal deed drawn up by a notary. We are not dealing with *dogma* here, but with historical facts, quite irrespective of the religious or moral opinions of those whose attention we are drawing to such facts.

† In countries where Christians and Muslims live cheek by jowl, for example (Lebanon, India, Cyprus, parts of France, some English cities), what *single* compromise could we arrive at on marriage and the family? Would it be based on monogamy or polygamy? One can see clearly here the impossibility of *immediate* total solutions in a situation where basic beliefs are in opposition. Understanding

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repairing the cathedral; the aim of the second group is to start a huge fire with the timber and so destroy the building. The two groups are in complete accord as to the primary goal to be achieved, namely that of fetching the timber to the cathedral, but their secondary and ultimate purpose is utterly contradictory. Any co-operation between them would thus from the Catholic viewpoint be quite immoral, and to be condemned unreservedly.

But we could equally suppose two such groups, again of Christians and non-Christians, agreeing together to transport the timber to the cathedral, but this time both intending to use it for repairing the sacred edifice. The spirit in which they did this would be different: the first group would be doing so in a spirit of faith and to pay homage to God, while the second group's aim would be purely to safeguard an architectural masterpiece, a part of France's national heritage.

The aim of the second group is a less noble one than that of the first, but is nevertheless an unmixed good. Given this, there can be no injustice or immorality in the two groups co-operating, since both are proposing to co-operate in the same good work.

In the same way, a believer and a non-believer can join to study the conditions for the prosperity of a State. Both of them will note the importance of promoting the welfare of the family as an institution, and to that end, the need to remove any obstacles to its stability and fruitfulness, such as "free unions," the absence of a religious bond, divorce, etc. Both of them will observe the same material fact, the same objective truth; they are thus in agreement on one point. In the same way, Maurice Barres[†] defended churches threatened with demolition by anti-clerical, masonic-controlled local councils in the name of the national tradition alone. The Catholics who supported him in his campaign were inspired by quite different motives. They were nonetheless in agreement with him on what was to be done.

Countless further examples could be quoted. In such a situation one could find oneself faced by an ensemble of demands, materially identical, and capable of providing a basis for a certain amount of common

and cooperation in such a case is possible only on the basis of piecemeal truth, fragments of reality. It would be inadmissible, out of order (in the full sense of the word) to propose as a *panacea*, a final solution, what is merely an expedient. One is indeed safeguarding the essential when one insists on the fact that a "lesser evil" is not the final "good" we are aiming at.

[†] French novelist and politician, 1862-1923.

understanding and joint action, so long as no difficulty arises. Of course, the moment any serious conflict arises, it is likely to mark the end of the temporary alliance, since the two parties do not share the same ultimate principles.

Here, since Catholics cannot lend themselves to any course of action prejudicial to their spiritual interests, they will have to seek means of conciliation that safeguard their essential position.

The rule in such difficulties, as we know, is to “foster, within the limits of what is possible and licit, all that facilitates unity and makes it more effective, to discourage anything that hinders it; to put up, sometimes, with drawbacks that one feels can be ironed out later and which are not sufficient reasons in themselves for the breakdown of a common effort from which we can expect to derive some greater good.”

“The difficulty,” continues Pius XII, in his allocution of December 6, 1953,

arises when we try to put this principle into application. A look around one is enough to show that error and sin exist in large measure in the real world. God reprobates them, but permits them to exist. We cannot therefore give absolute and unconditional adherence to the view that religious and moral error must always be opposed wherever possible, since tolerance must always be opposed wherever possible, since tolerance of evil is in itself immoral. God has not given to human authority any precept so absolute and universal, either in the domain of faith or that of morals. The duty of repressing moral and religious deviations cannot therefore be an ultimate norm for our action. It must be subordinated to higher and more general norms, which in certain circumstances allow of and even perhaps recommend, as the best course to follow, that of not opposing error is so as to promote a greater good.

Here we see the clarification of the two principles on which in concrete cases our answer to the very grave questions of religious and moral tolerance must be based. Firstly, whatever does not correspond with the truth and the moral law has, objectively, no right to existence, to freedom of propaganda or action. Secondly, abstention from suppressing such objective evils by means of legal prohibition and coercive action can nevertheless be justified in the interests of a higher and wider good.

As to the question of fact, that is the question as to whether this last condition exists in practice, this is above all for the Catholic jurist to decide. He will be guided in his decision by a comparison

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of the undesirable consequences due to tolerance with those that the community has been spared because of that same tolerance; then, with the good results that can fairly be forecasted as likely to derive for the community as such from a continuance of such tolerance.

It is a difficult task, as difficult as walking on a razor's edge, to persuade people divided by different beliefs to work together and accept decisions which they can only justify by reasons quite different from those that underlie our own adhesion.

But history is full of cogent examples to prove that such a tactic is not only possible but –relatively speaking – is effective and worthwhile.†

3. *Perils of the Apologist.* Naturally, in this sort of compromise, one runs far more risks than if one concerns oneself only with the fullness of truth, the risks normal to anyone who engages in apologetics, as the Reverend Neyron has described them.‡

If the philosopher and theologian have as their aim to penetrate to the heart and essence of doctrine, “the apologist,” writes Fr. Neyron,

is more directly practical; his aim is to defend the doctrine and get it accepted by his contemporaries. He thus has to take into account not only the truth itself but the preoccupations of those around him, the ideas, prejudices and, at times, downright ingrained errors of his contemporaries. And it is not long before he is tempted to pay too much attention to them, to make the mental habits, views and dispositions of those around him his first concern, and to try to adapt not only the way doctrine is presented but even perhaps, to some extent, the very content of doctrine itself so as to bring it into closer conformity with the views held by those he ostensibly is trying to convert.

† One only has to think of Clovis, before his conversion but already favourable to St. Genevieve and the bishops, or King Ethelbert of Kent, a pagan but with a Christian wife, welcoming St. Augustine and his missionaries to England. There is also the case of the admission of the Jesuits into Russia obtained from Tsar Alexander on the insistence of Joseph de Maistre. And one should not forget the innumerable examples, in France and in the mission field, in which non-believers or pagans showed themselves ready to trust a Church whose beliefs they could not accept. Was it not Thiers, the agnostic prime minister and President of France after the Franco-Prussian War, who offered to entrust the whole of French primary education to the Church?

‡ *The Government of the Church.*, p. vi (Beauchesne édit).

Very frequently he will play down certain essential truths so as not to give offence to current opinions, while unduly stressing other facts or truths more likely in his opinion to lead to a rapprochement....

“The only way,” Fr. Neyron continues,

to safeguard oneself from falling into these traps is to keep one’s eyes firmly and primarily fixed on doctrine, to assimilate it thoroughly, neglecting no detail of it, resolved to make any sacrifice rather than surrender a single point of it. When one has made thoroughly sure of this one can then look around oneself, sum up the persons with whom one wants to communicate, seek out the most appropriate means and arguments so as not to offend them, avoid misunderstanding and finally convince them.

All this brings us back to the constants we have referred to so frequently in recent chapters: the need for serious prior study and formation not only in doctrine but so as to prepare ourselves in prudence and develop a strategic and tactical sense; and, perhaps even more important, the ability to know when, where, how and in what combinations one can use the many different approaches and methods open to us.

For if we want to avoid the traps about which Fr. Neyron warns us, and in particular, not to go too imprudently far in making tactical concessions, it is important not to get stuck in the rut of reducing everything to an illusory uniformity, of oversimplifying situations, of always plumping for the same trite solutions. It is important not to give absolute, permanent value to what is temporary, relative; important above all never to make concessions unless they are really necessary. We must take care not to develop an instinctive habit of conceding ground. The fact that a concession was necessary in case A is no reason for automatically making a concession in case B. It is pointless, in other words, to make concessions in fields, milieux or at times when no one is asking us to make them. There is nothing more ridiculous than the herd mentality of those who, in action or apostolate, slavishly adopt any “fashionable trend” of the moment to the point, say, of expecting Spain to apply formulae that have no meaning except in an American or Indian context, countries with marked and deep religious cleavages, whereas Spain has practically no such problem.

If, therefore, we have thoroughly grasped the nature and meaning of plurality, and have learned how to diversify our response, there is no doubt that we can use the conditions of the pluralist society to carry out action that is at once safe, moral and effective.

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In particular, the right sort of flexible approach to a given situation can help to protect us against the well-known revolutionary technique of the smear campaign, of “giving a dog a bad name,” of alleging us “guilty by association.” If we counter such tactics by a variety of different and apparently unconnected moves and activities, the attack is broken down, dispersed over several fronts, it becomes psychologically more difficult to lump us altogether as “fascists” or whatever the current cant phrase of abuse may happen to be, and the smear campaign loses much of its credibility. Whereas if under such conditions, we attempt to act in a single massive and unitary bloc, we shall be sitting ducks – smeared and discredited, isolated from the people as a whole and vulnerable to those divisive tactics that “dialecticization” (or the creating and fomenting of disunity in the opposition) that the subversive shadow Establishment of today does so well.

If we make our action as multiform and varied as the ramifications of society itself, and by that very fact more beneficent (to return to the image we used in Part One of the present work, more like natural medicine and less like curative surgery), it will in addition be less vulnerable to attack. It will have the double advantage of sharing the same characteristics as the social order we are working to establish, and of being perfectly adapted to the struggle necessary to establish that order.

Notes.

1. Charles Maurras (1868–1952). Polemical journalist and writer on behalf of French Monarchy. Founder of the movement *L'Action Française* (in 1899), which was condemned under the reign of Pope Pius XI, and later rehabilitated in a certain manner by Pope Pius XII. A pro-Catholic agnostic most of his life, Maurras converted to Catholicism shortly before his death.
2. Gustave Thibon (1903–2001). French writer and Catholic orator; considered the chief “thinker” of the Vichy government in France.
3. Josephism. A reference to the practice of Joseph II, Elector of Bavaria in the 18th century, who sought to build an Absolutist State. He required that all prospective Catholic bishops take an oath of allegiance to him *before* their consecration, and all details of religious life and organization were determined by Royal Decree. He was influenced by the works of Justinus Febronius, who diminished papal prerogatives to the benefit of the State.
4. Pax movement. A reference to a pseudo-Catholic religious movement set up

by the Polish Communist authorities in the 1960s, which sought to convince non-Soviet nations that Communism was not anti-Christian and that there was no religious persecution in Communist states. Whilst having almost no influence in Communist countries, it managed to build up a certain credibility in the West through the manipulation of naïve Church men and laity.

5. Fr. Charles-Emile Freppel (1827–1891). Bishop of Angers, France, and a leading apologist for Catholic Doctrine in opposition to the liberalism prevalent during his lifetime. Personally summoned by Pope Pius IX to assist with preparation of *schemata* for the First Vatican Council; served in the French Chamber of Deputies from 1880 until his death, where he became known and revered for his eloquence and his defense of the Catholic position on religious, social, and political questions.

6. Michel de l'Hospital (1506–1573). Chancellor of France from 1560 to 1573.

7. Jules Michelet (1798–1874). Issue of a poor French family, he rose to be the Head of the Historical Section of the National Archives and a Professor at the Collège de France. He was a foremost historian of the Romantic School.

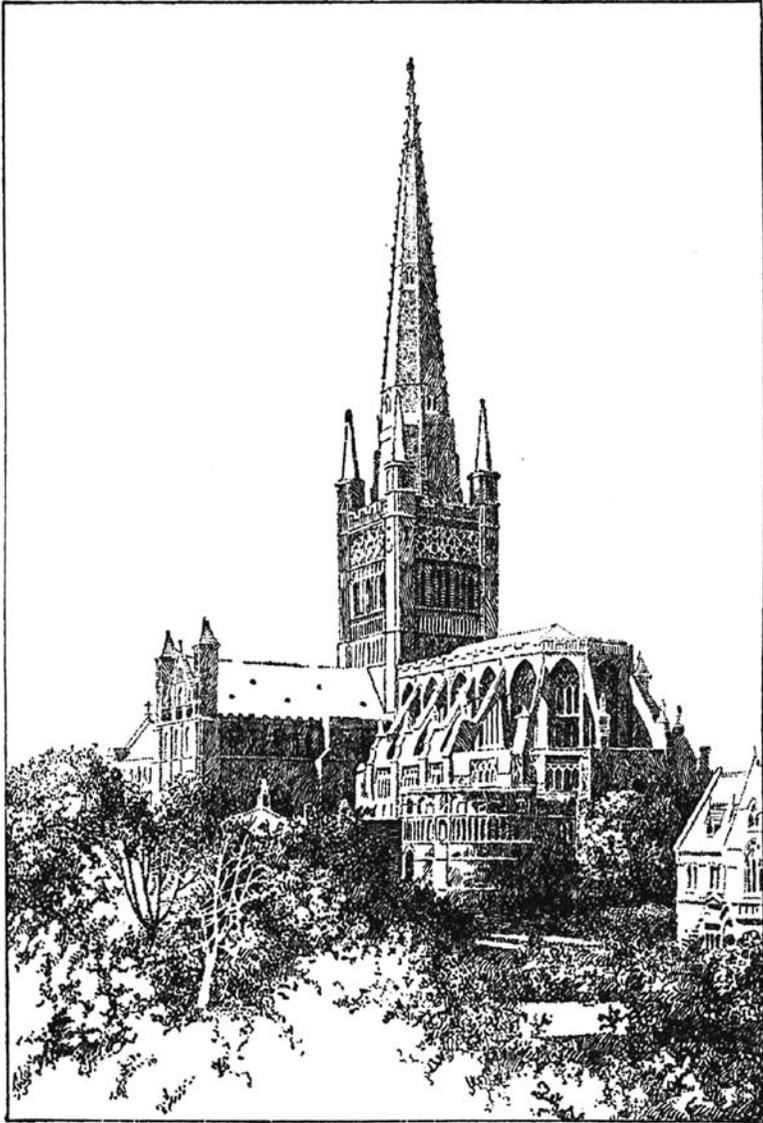
8. While agreeing with Jean Ousset's main thesis, we who live and work in the anglophone world would hesitate to describe Catholics there as being "in the main...active and fervent"! On the other hand, *Deo Gratias*, there still is a minority of "active and fervent" Catholics in the anglophone world and it is they who must constitute the networks dedicated to renewing the temporal order in the spirit of the Gospel. –Editor, *Approches*

9. Algerian Troubles. A reference to the war fought, both militarily and politically, from 1954–1962 between those who wished to grant Algeria "independence" from France, and those who wished to maintain the "union." It was not a black and white issue and as a result divided both the Algerian and French populations deeply. The result was a bloody and dirty war between the various forces on the ground, which involved more than one attempt by military commanders to seize political control of Algeria ca.1960.

10. Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986). An Existentialist writer and social essayist. A close friend of Jean Paul Sartre, she was a Socialist and pro-abortionist. The *Approches* Editor refers to her in his edition as a "French Maoist-existentialist."

11. ...provided one is careful to distinguish between the true expression of the Church's unchanging principles and the fashionable distortions and reversals of that doctrine now being hawked through the Catholic body by so many of its so-called "spokesmen." –Editor, *Approches*

12. Jean de La Fontaine (1621–1695). Famous French writer of tales and fables who became a member of the French Academy in 1684.



“If you will it, it is no fairy tale.”

– Theodore Herzl

On the establishment of a Jewish
State in Palestine

PART V

CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIVES

Chapter I

An Élite

Let us begin by recalling St. Pius X's own words in his letter on the Sillon Movement: "In these days of social and intellectual anarchy, it must be energetically repeated that one cannot build the earthly city otherwise than as God has built it. Every day our task is to build and rebuild it on its natural divine foundations in the face of the continually renewed attacks of unhealthy utopianism, revolt and defiance of God. *Omnia instaurare in Christo.*"†

Such a task, implying as it does a reconstitution of the tissues of society and revitalization of its cells, involves an enormous amount of labour. For that labour *we need men.*

We need an élite of men and women who are not only trained, skilful, resolute and persevering but of the utmost diversity, present throughout every level of society, courageous folk fully alive to their responsibilities. Without such an intense preparatory training of an élite, nothing worthwhile or fundamental has ever been achieved throughout history.

This élite, having thoroughly grasped the spirit of what needs doing, must be capable of suggesting means towards that end and of tirelessly working to direct, steer and foster their implementation.

These men and women must have, as their sole bond of unity, their common loyalty to one doctrine – beyond this they will not huddle together for "safety" in a single monolithic organization. They must be tried and tempered to the point where they seek no unity beyond that of

† Letter *Notre Charge Apostolique*, August 25, 1910.¹

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their common doctrine, their common approach to questions of method and tactics, and their very real comradeship in the service of truth, so that they are neither hampered nor discouraged by their apparent isolation, since it is in the nature of our action that each of us may find ourselves working alone in our different activity or field.

Of such an élite one must be able to say that they are dispersed and yet linked. Their work should lead, through diversity, to an ultimate unity, since it will aim to provide a harmonizing factor, a means of co-ordinating all the forces of sanity and order. Note – harmonizing and co-ordinating, not a massive brigading of all our forces into one unitary bloc, since such an élite will not wish to compromise the diversity and plurality essential to any social action. On the contrary, it should be careful to respect the autonomy of all worthwhile activities, understand their needs and requirements and do all it can to help them. All this while not getting so absorbed in the detail and the natural but limiting self-sufficiency of an individual organization to the point of losing the wider perspective of the struggle as a whole.

The sort of élite we envisage here, whatever the duties, special talents, vocations or functions of its members may be, must be careful never to lose sight of that wider perspective. All of its activities must be ordered with a view to the general strategy of our combat, the establishing of better and more numerous contacts between sister movements, the organizing of wider operations and their proper co-ordination.

Thus the members of this élite, whatever their political opinions may be, whatever form of social action they are committed to, must try to foster in themselves a common spirit and attitude and a wider view, looking through and beyond immediate detail to the broader needs of our action as a whole. Not that we see these men and women as merely formal members of their particular movements, “going through the motions,” indeed, but with their heart elsewhere. Their commitment can only be effective if it is real and heartfelt. But we ask them, beyond all the minutiae of day-to-day activity, to keep the greater end in sight, and to spread this attitude around them. If one is active in trades union affairs, for example, one should be so wholeheartedly, but remembering all the while to see one’s particular action within the broader context of the struggle as a whole. Likewise if one is active in a parents association, a political party, or any other of the many possibilities that exist.

Such an élite, over and above its variety of individual commitments, should constitute a force making for a higher unity, for a wider understanding of the various options open to us, and thus a more effective co-ordination of the different branches and an assurance that they will all pull together towards the same end.

Such men and women should be disinterested, simple and “pure as doves” in their intention; “cunning as serpents,” flexible and adaptable in their actions, the sort of élite Frederic Le Play² was thinking of when he wrote: “Their concern is entirely for the public good; they ask nothing for themselves or their families; they leave aside all glory, all vanity.”

For as Maritain says,[†] it is always “the tiny teams, the little groups of enthusiasts who do the really important work. And it looks as though this is likely to be truer than ever of our own age, precisely because it looks like being (is in fact already) one of mass culture brought about by technology. Now, if never before, the small groups and teams must fight as they have never fought before. Their influence, unseen but powerful, can spread far and wide; in the order of the Spirit they have the same sort of unbelievable force as atomic fission has in the material order.”

The élites are thus power houses, as one can see from the definition that has been applied to them: the smallest possible number of men, capable of setting in motion the largest possible number of other men.

This leads directly to the realization that such an élite cannot be a formally constituted organization with an administrative hierarchy, a chain of command and honorific titles, the whole created in advance and not growing out of the work itself. Surely we have realized by now how ineffective – in fact, counter-productive – such “leader”-ridden organizations generally are, and how little they in fact “lead.”

What we need to realize now is that it is indispensable to set up a civic élite *specializing* in the strategy of political and social action. Now, an élite cannot be set up by a stroke of the pen, or by drafting a paper constitution and rule book and opening a membership list. It has to be worked at and painfully evolved in the course of the action itself. What we have to do is to put all our faculties and opportunities to work in a maximal effort to achieve our goal. As to succeeding, only God can guarantee that.

If the only requirement for knighthood in olden days had been a signature on an application form, even the cowards would have signed

[†] In his recent *Paysan de la Garonne*, pp. 249, 251, and 252.

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on! An élite's sole claim to be so-called lies in the service it renders. Its members cannot be arbitrarily chosen or designated in advance. It is by the quality of the work done that a workman's value can be known.

There has never been any shortage of sage counsellors whose expertise in talking is equalled only by their utter incapacity when it comes to deeds. An élite, by contrast, is recognized not by its words, but by its application, its prudence and its effectiveness in action.

Although theoretical training is necessary, it is just as indispensable to make the best possible utilization of the conditions and types of action that will enable those worthy to belong to such élites to show their mettle.

It would be useless to expect any worthwhile achievement from your brilliant thinkers and talkers who are careful to stay on the plane of theory and not to soil their hands with any of the practical hard work. Such men, forever surprised that any progress could possibly be made without calling on their aid, would only be satisfied if the solid achievements of others were placed under the abstract and dilettante direction of their own experience.



Chapter II

A Certain Style of Action

We are not concerned with action in a vacuum, nor action as a whole, but with a certain form or *style* of action which, at the present moment, seems all the more important to us not only for its intrinsic value but because it is being unjustly neglected.

We use the word “style” since what is needed at this moment is not so much an organization as a method, a way of acting, a strategy, and one that we can recommend our friends to adopt in whatever organization or sector they are active: a style of action that will produce results whatever the difficulties, successes or setbacks, and irrespective of the field in which they are working or the association or party they belong to.

This action involves a permanent effort of vigilance, re-education and co-ordination. It is an essentially “subsidiary” or auxiliary action, in that its aim must be to encourage, consolidate and stimulate worthwhile existing initiatives and, in addition, to help to bring to birth and to foster during their initial phases the new initiatives and bodies that the situation calls for.

This task can be carried out on three different levels.

The first level is the level of the individual, in which one provides assistance, extra doctrinal information or training, or advice on strategy and tactics to a single person, an isolated friend, possibly even someone one hardly knows and whom, once one has given him the reference or argument he needs, one may never see again.

Such work, however humble, is very important. Through it we make sure of our basic recruitment by making new contacts and renewing our forces at the grassroots level. These contacts are purely individual ones. They may often seem fragile and disappointing, but we must not neglect them – a single new contact may open the door to countless fresh possibilities for our action.

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The fact remains that work at this level is still individual, isolated, and by that very fact precarious, however full of promise.

The second level operates on a broader and more organic field than the first. One is providing assistance, supplementary doctrinal training, or information and strategical and tactical advice not to individuals, but to normally constituted associations, parties or groups. These groups, associations or parties may already exist before such aid or advice is provided, or they may be brought into existence as a result of the aid or advice provided.

The advantage of this second-level activity is that it takes place on a much wider scale, it affects and fosters institutions rather than individuals, it is more methodical and durable. It is less subject to the sudden *volte-face*, changes of direction, loss of enthusiasm that mar so many individual initiatives. Above all, it has a more specifically *social* dimension, and by that very fact is far more productive of results.

It is on this level that we can make the junction and cross fertilization between doctrine and practical experience that we spoke of earlier in this book. It is on this level that we can provide worthwhile encouragement and support for the true leaders of the natural communities that make up society, leaders whose number is legion and who bear the reality of social responsibility, but who, for lack of that indispensable supplement of doctrinal, cultural, strategic and tactical training that it is our task to give them, are in danger of never reaching their full political and social potential, and also in danger of giving ground in the face of subverters.

As to the third level of action, it is easy to see its nature and importance. This is the level on which we are concerned with the training, co-ordination, upkeep and renewal of that élite we spoke of in the previous chapter.

Without this élite of men and women, it is hard to see how any progress can be achieved on the two lower levels. For any assistance to or activation of either groups, on the second level, or individuals, on the first level, presupposes a prior or simultaneous planning of the job in hand.

It is on this third level, therefore, that we must carry out an intense, methodical training, education and co-ordination, and psychological, moral and spiritual stiffening of those who have understood the prime importance of this multiform style of civic action and who are prepared to devote themselves, freely and in full awareness of what it entails, to the

setting up and synchronization of the sort of all-purpose organizational framework that this style of action calls for.

There is no need to regard work on this third level as an exclusive option. Apart from a few rare exceptions, there appears to be no reason why our third level volunteers should give up their posts or lose the contacts and opportunities for influencing people that they have built up on the first and second levels. On the contrary, if they do restrict themselves too rigidly to work on the third level on the pretext that they must remain free of lower commitments in the interests of the work as a whole, the risk is that they will end up playing “general busybody” and making no useful contribution in any field.

These recommendations or reservations having been made, it nevertheless remains true that the most outstanding characteristics of militants on the third level must be a clear understanding of the wide variety of talents and services that can be called on, an appreciation of how they complement one another, and an ability to synchronize and co-ordinate them into a wider plan, even if these wider perspectives seem to have little direct connection with anyone’s individual sector.

In other words, one’s first duty on this level, after that of subjecting oneself to the most rigorous personal training possible, is to cultivate a constant and lively sense of solidarity with everything and everyone that can help the cause to which one has committed one’s energies.

Each militant, therefore, has the duty of keeping green within his heart the equivalent – on the civic level – of St. Paul’s constant and universal preoccupation: “the burden I carry every day, my anxious care for all”† – that concern and feeling of solidarity that impelled the Apostle to continue: “does anyone feel a scruple? I share it; is anyone’s conscience hurt? I am ablaze with indignation.”

Nothing, on the other hand, would be more contrary to the spirit of the third level than for its members to set themselves up as a ruling caste, handing on orders to subordinates, to act as *saloon bar strategists*, directing social and political action without direct personal involvement.

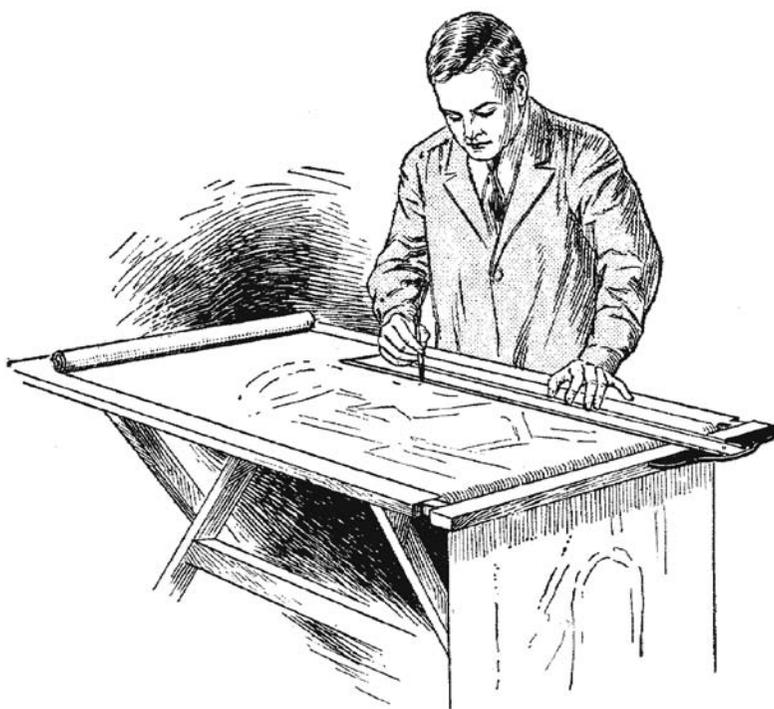
The third level must be that of public servants par excellence, liaison agents in the civic fight, indomitable workers in the task of co-

† St. Paul’s “care” (in his second letter to the Corinthians, xi:28-9) was of course for “all the churches” he had founded; we, transposing his solidarity onto the civic plane, can apply it to all those individuals and bodies who are active in the civic apostolate.

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ordinating as wide a spectrum of forces as possible in the fight against modern totalitarianism.

All that remains now is to set out in greater detail the types of action suitable to each of our three levels.



Chapter III

Notes for Individual Action: the First Level†

1. *The Sine Qua Non of Personal Action and Initiative*. “There is no possibility of satisfying a people’s need for truth,” so wrote Simone Weil,³ “unless one can, to that end, find men who love truth.”

Whatever type of action one envisages we must strongly emphasize the above priority, the prior importance of personal action. Unless there is a certain number of men and women available who are determined to act, and trained so that they know how to act effectively – even in difficult circumstances, even at moments of utter discouragement, all hope of fruitful action is vain.

Even the most brilliant training is useless unless it is followed by practical action and achievement. Unfortunately, there are far too many knowledgeable people who hoard their doctrinal knowledge and their wisdom as though it were a treasure to be hidden from all eyes. What use is a veneer of doctrinal knowledge if one lacks the will to act? At a time when the world is on the way to becoming the nearest thing to an ant-heap that history has ever seen, any “doctrinal orthodoxy” or “spirituality” which does not lead to action is automatically suspect.

The weaker we are in manpower and resources, the more pressing does it become to “think” our action qualitatively, to make up for our material and numerical deficiencies by the supremacy which only exact knowledge and a great love of the truth can give – the supremacy of a *capillary action* which, even at its most rudimentary, implies the training and formation of men and women who realize that they need no “mandate,” no “orders from higher up” before starting the task of spreading the truth,

† This classification into three levels is purely for ease of exposition. It would be quite contrary to the spirit of our diversified and highly flexible action if we were to attempt to break that action down into mutually exclusive watertight compartments.

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and who know, too, that their incontestable rights and their most sacred duties impose on them the further duty of assuming their responsibilities and taking the initiative wherever it lies within their competence.

On the very lowest and humblest level of our work, we have to re-learn the power that can be generated by a single courageous individual, the power of a resolute and tenacious militant – once he has had a suitable training – by comparison with the mass of mindless *sheep* around him.

Great, therefore, is the value of co-operation of a small group of friends gathering at regular intervals to talk over what needs to be learned, known and done.

For this, big powerful organizations are not necessary. All that is needed is to systematize and make use of the normal interplay of friendly relations, family, professional and cultural links, etc., setting them appropriately chosen subjects for thought and discussion. The name one gives to such meetings – groups, circles, cells, teams, clubs – hardly matters.

The first, basic, and indeed the simplest mode of action for the individual is *talking*. One talks to one's family, relatives, friends, the people one meets. It is surprising, and tragic, how timid and hesitant even our best militants are in this respect. It frequently happens that two men may meet regularly over several years before they find out by some chance that they both love and are serving the same cause, a cause that they have not even mentioned to each other until then. How many sons have never heard a single reference to a civic action in which their father has a part?

If everyone took the trouble to speak out when an opportunity arises our possibilities would increase tenfold by the sheer fact of the publicity we should gain.

It is not necessary to become an utter bore, ramming home our *idée fixe* in and out of season, for us yet to have quite a considerable influence on those around us. So many of our fellow men do not know which way to turn. The events of our day are an object lesson in themselves, and are opening the eyes of many to the need to take action. Our job is to recognize those who are only waiting for us to give them a lead, to seek them out and show them what to do.

Many of our friends sin out of “politeness,” “discretion,” an exaggerated regard for *good form*. But the time for drawing room etiquette is long past. How much worse are things to get before men of good will finally decide to take action? Charity has never consisted in allowing error to spread unhindered. Resistance, polemic, anger are not in themselves

culpable. In any case, all that is necessary very often is a short, unbiased restatement of the matter in question for prejudices and misconceptions to be swept away in a trice.

We must guard against falling into the subtle temptation of trying to be popular by always agreeing with everybody. It is so pleasant to be generally considered as a “good type,” who never gets into arguments. But the danger, as Veillot noted, is that “our fear of losing our popularity will finally rob us of the courage to be sincere,” and our popularity, in the end, will be based on our silences, our unspoken denials of the truth.

It would be a great mistake to think that individual action as we have described it requires a long period of silent and solitary preparation. “I am not sure enough of myself. I had better study first, and get into training. Later, when I feel strong enough, I will launch into action.” Such scruples show ignorance of the very varied requirements of our work.

What does it mean to be “sufficiently well-trained to go into action”? Surely it is sufficient, at the beginning, to be only *slightly* trained, if one is going into a *minor* action? If one were going to take over direction of an empire, hesitation would be understandable. But one can do quite a lot of good in one’s own milieu even if one is totally incompetent at the level of wielding supreme power. One can always say what one knows, even if one’s knowledge is not infinite. One does not need to be a cycling champion to be able to ride a bicycle, though of course to begin with, one would choose a small local race and not enter the *Tour de France*.

There is a wide range of different possibilities for action extending from that of the complete tyro to that of the acknowledged expert, and very many of them are quite possible for someone who is neither champion nor past master in the craft. It would thus be a tragic mistake to consider solitary study as preferable to a training which is personal, indeed, but which draws its chief value from an enriching contact with other people and with the work itself.

It is not enough just to *talk*, to state one’s case. One must talk convincingly, and one must convince one’s listeners. The art of persuasion must therefore be studied and exercised in practice.

Each of us individually must strive to show the unruffled serenity and tranquil confidence that are the outward signs of a conviction that is calm because firmly based.

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Where men's minds have ceased to think straight this is most often out of weakness or a lack of coherency and logic. They will thus profess the most crass errors without the slightest awareness of how evil they are. Here it is most important to remain calm. This sort of person is very often sensitive and easily offended, and is likely to retire into his or her shell at the first reply that is in the least cutting or condemnatory. It is a waste of time losing one's temper. After all, our purpose is to convert him, not to irritate him to the point where he breaks off contact.

We have no particular style to recommend or impose on our friends, save to say that the utmost simplicity should be cultivated at all times and in all cases. We should try to speak as clearly and directly as possible and in a lively, human manner. We should avoid all pretentiousness and pedantry. If our tone is too sententious or academic, we shall have difficulty in getting even our best ideas across.

We should, of course, be careful to respect the meaning of words and always use the correct term. There are some important concepts for which only one word is the right one, some words which are habitually used incorrectly, emotively, and so that they obscure the truth. But apart from this one proviso, our speech should remain on a simple, everyday level.

This having been said, we must not forget that there are no easy shortcuts to learning difficult things. The only method is to settle down to determined hard work. Do not say that there is nothing that can be done in your particular sector. This merely means that there is more to do there than elsewhere, since everything is yet to be done.

The proof of this is that in France tens of thousands of people are wishing they could find an effective form of work and action, and most of them have not yet adopted any form – partly through lack of determination, no doubt, but also because no one has bothered to tell them. We must have the audacity to speak out, we must dare to influence people our way, we must cultivate the “cheek” to penetrate into all walks of society. We shall find that we get a far more positive response than we had expected.

Many of us use the pretext that “no man is a prophet in his own country” to excuse ourselves for not trying to win the members of our family, our own children, over to our work. It is true that there are real difficulties here, but let us not exaggerate them. The famous “generation gap” nearly always turns on appearances, matters of outer form and

fashion, and only much more rarely on essentials. We should have no hesitation, therefore, in launching our children, or young people into an action based on methodical training. It is an excellent way of teaching them sound mental habits and of training them in judgement, and this will stand them in good stead in their own studies, too.

Another form of individual action is the distribution of books, brochures and pamphlets having true educative value. It may sometimes even be possible to introduce them to one's immediate circle, as reading or study material.

Note that it is much more preferable to sell such publications than to give them away, not only because one's purse soon empties at this game, but more importantly because the buyer is more likely to read a work he has given good money for than one he has been given *gratis*. He is apt to consider the latter as a mere publicity or propaganda hand-out and throw it away half-read.

In addition, this is a way of getting the "I'm sorry, I've far too much on my plate already" sort of people – and often their regret at not being able to take a more active part in a proposed action is perfectly genuine – to take at least a financial share in our work. In persuading them to subscribe to our periodicals and buy our books and pamphlets, we are giving them the opportunity of supporting the work of those with more time available.

Normally – but of course there are exceptional circumstances where a highly effective militant is condemned to remain solitary; he may travel a lot, for example – the animating of small groups, circles or cells is the natural outcome of individual action.

We use the words "individual action" intentionally, for although groups, circles and cells are a collective phenomenon, their existence, certainly in the first instance, depends nonetheless on actuation by an individual. Very often, the moment the friendly pressure of the cell animator weakens or disappears, the group, circle or cell wilts and dies the death. For such groups depend for everything on the zeal of a single person, which is why we have included them in this section.†

We shall reserve until the second level our study of groups, movements or organisms having a more institutionalized existence, a more collective basis, and thus less dependent on the activation of a single

†Under this heading, "First Level," we classify: assistance given to individuals as such (whether or not they are committed to action within social bodies or

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individual. The advantage of these less organically constituted first level groups, circles and cells is that they do not dispense one from making personal effort and reflection, while all the time one is saved from the perils of complete isolation. They are, in short, the indispensable elements, the ideal antennae of a truly *capillary* action. In them doctrine can be assimilated in a living manner in the course of everyday discussion – what A would have missed is brought out and clarified by B, and vice versa.

In them one acquires the habit of speaking with reasonable fluency and ease on doctrine as it is applied to political and social questions. In them, too, one begins to realize the interest that such subjects can arouse in the listener. One retains all the freedom inherent in personal initiative while profiting from the advantages of working with other people, feeling less isolated, less weak and vulnerable. Discouragement, if it strikes, is less brutal in its impact.

2. *More Detailed Rules for Work in Cells.* On this first level, one can state the essentials in a few simple rules.

Stimulate passive members by direct questioning. Prevent the talkative or “knowledgeable” from monopolizing the meeting so that no one else gets a look in. Watch and check the extent to which ideas discussed and situations envisaged irritate, offend or shock members of the group. Make sure that if sensitivities are ruffled, it is for something essential and not for a matter of secondary importance. Check that everyone is understanding and taking part as well as he can. Try and ensure perseverance and continuity in work.

Members who are absent from several meetings need not necessarily be written off. They may have needed breathing space in which to chew over some difficult proposition, and one may well be surprised to see them turn up again after a certain time, and this time definitely “hooked.”

If one’s work is done thoroughly and one’s doctrine is sound, the result is not in doubt. Truth will make its own way, invisibly, slowly,

groups), help, first aid (i.e., helping people over difficulties that have cropped up), preliminary awakening or strengthening of the sense of responsibility for social and civic questions given to individuals with whom one comes into contact. Such operations may be short-term or of longer duration, informal or systematic, and may include simple conversations, contacts, meetings, working groups, etc.

inexorably, within men's hearts. Once it has gripped a mind, even one resistant to it, it never lets go. So even if a person has balked at the first contact one should not fail to look him up again later. Perseverance in renewing such contacts is an important factor in propagating our ideas.

Do not forget that success is an attraction in itself. Quite a number of our contacts, for no particular reason, will not attend at the outset of a cell. But if you keep going for six months to a year, you will find them joining you merely because you have kept going.

How often should one hold meetings? As often as possible. The difficulty is to know what "possible" means in any given case, for if one asks too much of a group, the excessive strain can kill it.

It is indeed important for the members of a cell to meet regularly and fairly frequently, but it would be wrong to think that the cell only "happens" when it is met in session. In essence a cell is a nucleus of men and women who want to be active and to exercise an influence around them. It is not necessarily at the actual meetings that they are at their most active and influential. The meeting's only purpose is to perfect their training, strengthen their unity, help them co-ordinate their action, etc.

This said, experience has shown that a good frequency is that of the weekly meeting. Meetings twice monthly would be an absolute minimum. With any wider interval no serious work would be done – anyone absent from one meeting would have a two months gap to make up, his training would be nil. We just do not believe that a cell can accomplish anything worthwhile unless it meets *at least* once a fortnight.

What is the best number for the cell? Up to ten at a maximum and never more than a dozen. The fact remains that the work is easier and more pleasant in a group of 5 – 8 than when the circle is overlarge or too small. But there can be no fixed rule. If we sought to discover an ideal number and then imposed it strictly, this could have disastrous consequences.

Each cell has its own psychology; it forms a living whole. If one started moving members in and out of it, unless one were very careful, one would soon have no members left. The intimacy and familiar atmosphere of the cell should be respected, otherwise its discussions lose their freedom and frankness, and the shyer members will hesitate to own up when they do not understand something and will not ask for explanations.

Can cell members be allowed to bring along a friend? In principle, yes. It is a means of spreading our message, and is the most natural

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way of recruiting new members. As a general rule, therefore, we should accept any increase in numbers so long as it does not lead to serious inconveniences (such as excessive numbers, a hold up of the work or the breakdown of the group's friendly intimacy). We say "serious inconveniences," for it is normal, and even desirable, for newcomers to ask questions and demand explanations of things the group has long since mastered. This is an excellent revision exercise for us, but if, of course, the newcomer proves to be the cause of serious trouble, one should not invite him again.

If one feels doubtful about the enthusiasm of the members of a group, it would be wise, at least at first, to avoid studying the dryer and more abstruse subjects. Begin with those topics that will be the most attractive to the newcomer one is hoping to win.

It is, of course, a good thing to follow the logical development of the doctrine. In doing so one avoids repetitions and the need to cast back and forwards again. If one's group consists of convinced and resolute members, this is undoubtedly the best method. But there are many cases where it would be wiser to adopt a more *psychological* order, and to begin with topics chosen to suit the interests, needs and capacities of one's cell members, in the hope that the training and experience gained on these topics will enable them to tackle other, more difficult subjects later on. But, in whatever order one tackles the doctrine, one must never lose sight of the fact that it is a unitary whole and must, sooner or later, be studied in its totality.

One should avoid, as much as possible, a straight reading of the book or article chosen for study during the meeting. The ideal is for everyone to have read the text and to have done his research beforehand, so that the meeting can be entirely devoted to commentary, discussion, illustrations and a study of the further implications of the text. All this is possible. It is in fact being done at this moment. But we must be realistic, recognize that it is difficult and that one cannot always attain it. In that case, we fall back on a reading of the chosen text plus commentary, trying of course to keep the actual reading as short as possible so as to leave more time for discussion.

Surprisingly enough, it is not a good thing to work too slowly and painstakingly through the study texts. If one really wants to grasp the doctrine as a whole in all its magnificent breadth, harmony and unity, one must work through it fast enough to be able to retain the main lines

in one's memory. It is better to read rapidly on, and then return later, perhaps more than once, to the point one had skipped over weeks earlier. In this way one will have gained a deeper and fuller understanding of its importance than if one had kept one's nose glued to one difficult point for weeks on end.

Above ten persons a group starts to grow sluggish and unwieldy, and it is time to think of hiving off a new one. How and when is this to be done? One should here respect the law of affinities, and as far as possible try not to separate people who wish to stay together. The group of friends that made up the initial circle has an interest in continuing its joint studies together for several months, perhaps for a year or two even. To break up this group on the pretext of multiplying the number of cells often merely means that these people will have to start the same subjects all over again. It is obviously desirable for them to extend their doctrinal horizon if they are to obtain an adequate civic formation.

There is a solution that reconciles these two aims, and that is for the original group of friends to found new circles elsewhere whilst continuing their original grouping. The new animator commits himself to watching over the new cell until it can stand on its own feet, while pursuing further studies with his old group.

Our work has no place in it for the drill sergeant, the martinet. Anyone who tries to impose an unnatural uniformity on the cells he works in or directs, or who tries to force on them his own methods of working or action, has clearly understood nothing about our work.

Remember, one of the best ways to commend oneself to others and to bring out the best in them is to entrust them with responsibility. Many of our difficulties arise from incompatibility of temperament. We must do all we can to overcome these, or to get round them. The important thing is to know how to carry on in spite of them. When it becomes apparent that certain members refuse to co-operate because they "cannot stand X or Y" (or perhaps oneself), we just have to find a way of promoting another group in which these grains of sand will no longer jam the works.

One way is to entrust the animation of the new circle to the person or persons who have caused the initial awkwardness. It will not always work, but it is often worth trying.

In all our actions, we must respect the infinite variety of human beings and of things. We shall then be able to vary our arguments and

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methods according to the person to be convinced or activated. If a given contact does not respond to one approach, we can deploy another to which he will.

Anyone who wishes to do well in this field of individual influence and watchfulness must develop a capacity for untiring and obstinate effort, together with a real ingenuity in solving the apparently insoluble problems that arise. Beyond that, he must have sufficient zeal and humility and disinterestedness to be ready to efface himself and take a back seat the moment it becomes clear that someone else would be the better person to handle a given situation, operate within a given milieu or activate a given sort of person.

We must be no more than servants of the truth. The service of truth is the only thing that matters. We must always be ready to disappear or to drop discreetly into the background when it appears that our intervention may be a hindrance or an irritation rather than a help.



Chapter IV

Notes for a More Organic Action: the Second Level

To explain the title more clearly: notes for an action less exclusively dependent on the personal endeavours of a few individuals, or: notes more applicable to inter-group action, a more structured and institutionalized action.

On this level, we are providing assistance to organisms that already exist – or which we can bring into existence, assisting these organisms to improve their efficiency, revitalizing the “*intermediary bodies*”[†] by the introduction of more dynamic elements that bring with them skills and techniques richer in educative values – techniques as varied as the open discussion forum, commissions, “reflection groups,” etc.

One has only to think of the great number of men of character or talent, the groups, movements, unions, clubs, bureaux, periodicals and circles in all countries which, even if they do not always see eye to eye or are in competition with each other, are nevertheless in broad agreement

[†]By “intermediary bodies” we understand “those social groups and human groupings that lie between the isolated individual (or the family), and the State...constituted either naturally...or by deliberate and voluntary agreement... with a view to attaining some goal common to the persons who make them up” (we quote from Michel Creuzet’s *Les Corps Intermédiaires*, Martigny, 1964). Examples of “intermediary bodies” would be:

- local associations (on a village, parish, town, county, or regional level)
- Professional (including trade, craft, guild, industrial, management and trade union bodies)
- cultural (musical, theatrical or folklore associations, local academies, bodies such as Worker’s Educational Association, schools insofar as they keep a certain independence, the Universities, etc.)
- religious (the parish or diocese and their ancillary bodies, with their equivalents in all communions)
- recreative (sporting and tourist bodies, clubs for leisure activities, for collectors, etc.,...)⁴

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on essentials. It would only need a relatively simple effort at synchronization and co-ordination to increase their effectiveness tenfold, without in any way impairing their essential autonomy.

It will always be necessary to recall our essential duty of assisting and fostering the “intermediary bodies,” natural or legitimate, while taking the greatest care to respect the nature and psychology of each.

Society is built up of social bodies – juridical, military, cultural, economic, etc. The life of these bodies will only remain flourishing as a result of the activities and influence of their key members. It is this élite we are trying to reach.

However much personal formation and individual action may improve a person’s scope and effectiveness, they are at the most rather rudimentary formulae. It is very important for us to provide a wider and more fruitful field upon which our élites can exercise their enhanced effectiveness. Depending on whether it falls on stony ground, among thorns or on good ground, the same seed may produce no fruit or a hundred-fold crop.

For those who are active in a political organism or a trades union and so on – provided these bodies are in themselves acceptable, the least we can do is to provide that decisive supplement of doctrine and method needed if those involved are to keep on the right lines ideologically and achieve worthwhile results in their action. We must thus do all we can to persuade the likely leaders of such organisms that a good theoretical and practical training can increase the strength of their militants tenfold.

Action must of necessity adapt itself to suit the infinite variety of human needs and relationships. We must avoid untimely attempts to enforce an unnatural uniformity in the name of unity. Unity indeed there should be in the common spirit underlying all our activities, but this is not the same thing as an enforced uniformity in concrete techniques and methods. Unity is a gradual growth. If we attempt to hurry it on, or impose it from without, we are likely to ruin everything.

We must therefore take care not to rob the members of the groups or associations of their just and natural freedom to take their own initiatives in their special fields. Above all, we must avoid the temptation of seeing ourselves as a sort of High Command, whose directions are practically binding on the associations. Most of all, we must make it perfectly clear that we have no intention of “taking them over.”

There is a natural reciprocity which should be at work here between the more generalized élites and those involved in individual associations. The militant who is too involved in day-to-day action certainly needs the wider view of strategy and the more general doctrinal background which a specially trained theoretician can give him. But, on the other hand, our soundest theoreticians are likely to become odious bores, and utterly ineffective ones to boot, unless they maintain fruitful contact with the grass roots, that is with the concrete realities of day-to-day action.

On this level, it is no longer enough just to “bear witness to the truth.” The materialist mental climate of our time, the decay in intellectual integrity, the spirit of compromise and surrender have wrought such ravages that a simple assertion of the truth no longer makes any impact on the intelligence or touches the heart of many of our contemporaries. “More than merely expounding the truth,” said the Reverend Father Arrupe,⁵ Superior General of the Jesuits, “our task today must be to carry it into practical effect.”

The most rigorous profession of the truth may be no more than an academic exercise, involving not the slightest effort to fight for it. Consequently, it is vital to do all we can to sustain, help, train, encourage and comfort those who are already “fighting the good fight.”

To achieve that end, we should avoid a bookish, academic approach, strong on abstract views and perspectives but weak when it comes to practical applications in the real world.

The life of a society is largely made up of the relations and interactions of one group or institution with another. Our job is to work for a more healthy doctrinal awareness in social life. Such a reform in men’s minds is best effected in a context of real life, real problems, real responsibilities. Actual experience, the reality of things as they are, these are the very stuff on which to work out any thorough-going social training.

All this cannot fail to produce, in those who are working to revitalize the intermediary bodies within society, a greater awareness of the importance of those two vital essentials: doctrinal and theoretical competence, and experience of the realities of social and political life.

Whenever circumstances allow, and one can get all the necessary competences together round a table, it is a good thing to hold short meetings of “brain trusts” to decide on future operations, desirable contacts, approaches that could be made to leading cadres within the various social, political, cultural and economic groupings, etc.

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In the course of such operations – contacts, approaches, visits, we must make it clear that our purpose is not to enrol and subordinate the movement in question to some sort of ideological “High Command,” but to offer theoretical and practical guidance of such a kind that it cannot impair the independence of the said group or movement.

It is not enough to be convinced oneself that one is not trying to take over other groups or individuals. We must avoid everything at all that will arouse such a suspicion in others. Many of those who are already committed to organized forms of action fear, in any approach from outside, that they are being persuaded to change movements, that they are being “recruited,” that one is trying to bring them under some form of control exterior to and alien to their own work. We can only avoid such misunderstandings if we make it clear that we are not “taking on staff,” we are not making a take-over bid, but are just trying to work towards a more general mobilization of all the forces hostile to modern totalitarianism. It is not a question of renouncing one movement for another, but of showing how almost any active commitment can gain in force and effectiveness when supported by proper theoretical backing.

Questions to be studied in this connection will include: the training and preparation of cadres; the decisive importance of just a few well-trained and resolute militants; the need to submit our action to a constant critical analysis; the need to keep clearly in view the ultimate purpose of our work; an understanding of how our efforts in different fields must complement each other.

When one is working in a milieu, even a specific organization, which has remained relatively healthy and sound, one can always exercise some influence whatever constraints or limiting factors one may encounter. But in a sector already seriously contaminated by subversion and revolutionary ideas, a directly and methodically educative action can come up against serious obstacles, and could misfire.

To hope to redress such a situation merely by “addressing a few words,” however well chosen, that commit no one to anything, would be illusory. But it could be just as useless to risk mounting an open counter attack, raising the temperature and creating dangerous tensions. The best solution may well be to invite one’s principal opponent to meet such and such a person – better qualified than oneself, or to get into contact with such a body – more specialized in the particular field.

By such small, gradual steps one may be able to modify and finally improve the ideological climate of the milieu or group in question without provoking an internal crisis. An institution may thus be revitalized without any hostile infiltration, just by simple educative work "on the fringe."

In all this, our essential role is that of a servant. Long experience has taught us that the occasions on which it is worthwhile to put on the pressure, let alone take over and assume command, are rare, and nearly always dangerous.



Chapter V

Notes for Specialists in Our Particular “Style” of Action: the Third Level

1. However disinterested it may be, the type of action we have just been describing could hardly exist at all, let alone develop, without a proper minimum of organizational framework.

If our work on the first and second levels – individual and more organized action – is to be fully productive, we shall need men and women who are, in a sense, specialists in this style of working and who, without being mere theoreticians, devote themselves more consciously to this aspect than our other friends.

It is, therefore, desirable to train and co-ordinate a body of volunteers who will be less members of a particular group, association or party than fosterers of a certain style of working, though, of course, they can in addition belong to their own society or group and carry out their particular political or social combat.

Theirs is not an easy mission, and we must not underestimate the difficulties. The first of these stems from the duality of such a volunteer’s role. For although, as a member of an association, such a man is and can feel himself among friends and comrades, he cannot but feel somewhat lonely in his solitary concern and responsibility for concerting and synchronizing the activities of more than one association.

It is in this respect that he will deserve the title of “animator.” For he is one of those relatively few individuals who are capable not only of working themselves but of getting others to work. He has taken on the task of creating a consensus, of stimulating a variety of groups to give of their best. He is an “animator” because he gives life to the milieu around him, revealing to it its *anima*, its soul. He is the very nerve centre and leader of the battle on the civic plane, conducting a permanent programme of animation, guidance, influence and activation throughout a whole sector

of actions, sometimes very varied ones. He must do all this without getting so involved in one activity that he neglects the others.

While he will do all he can to help those around him, he will nevertheless have to protect himself from getting bogged down in a mass of minor activities to the point where he is unable to carry out his major and irreplaceable role as a co-ordinator, liaison agent and builder of friendships.

It is important for him, therefore, to know when and where to say “no” to any of the detailed activities he is engaged in, not out of lack of generosity, but so that he can devote himself more intensively to his real work, the contribution that only he can make.

This is not to say that he cannot be extremely helpful to those around him. But his chief concern is not to become a slave to all these calls on his services, and to remain free for the essential.

One could take the example of a doctor who lives in the same block of flats as yourself. It is permissible, on occasion, to ask him to help you shift a heavy wardrobe, but it would be a waste of his special talents, and quite unjustifiable, to take him on as a permanent removals man.

The place and organization on which the animator bases his activities are thus secondary. The essential is that, wherever he is and whatever he does, he stays faithful to his wider mission, for in so doing he will be using himself to the best advantage.

Far from despising work in cells, one must never lose sight of the fact that it is the foundation on which we build, the reserve on which we can draw. We must say to ourselves that, however brilliant it may be, no General Staff has ever yet won a victory on its own – that is, without troops. It is an unfortunate fact that so many of our friends attach so much more prestige to staff work than to the training of the troops who not merely fight the battles but constitute the nursery from which future leaders will arise.

All these thoughts go to show how necessary at this level is a really thorough formation, an acute sense of the diversity of needs, a harmonious understanding of the variety of possible talents and resources.

The man who is master of only one speech, one argument, one single recipe for action, one single limited way of thinking, would cut a pitiful and disastrous figure at this level. Yet this sort of weakness is not unknown among those who claim to be “specialists” on this third level.

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The truth is that this third level work we are here discussing is not an autonomous and distinct one, but is inseparable from and continuous with the actions discussed in the last two chapters.

Our distinction between three levels does not in fact mean that there are three different forms of action between which one can choose. It merely indicates a widening range of possibilities emanating from one and the same action. It would be unwise to attempt to destroy what might be called the psychological and social unity of this section.

2. Three elements are necessary if it is to be sure of success and fully productive: (1) an adequate general training, (2) the possibility of putting this training into practice, and (3) the will to act, untiring perseverance.

(1) Adequate General Training. By this we mean not only doctrinal and cultural training in general, but one orientated towards action – strategic at least, if not tactical training. Without such a general formation, long-range and large-scale operations are out of the question, and one is reduced to short-term *ad hoc* projects, drawing what advantage one can from the day's turn of events, forever stopping and starting – a depressing and frustrating way to work.

(2) Possibilities for Putting This Training Into Practice. As for this we are speaking here of possibilities offered by our family or professional circumstances, our circle of acquaintances, the fact that we may be well known, our competences, qualifications, degrees, diplomas and certificates, the fact of belonging to this or that group or society, etc. Obviously, even the best general training will be barren psychologically and socially if its owner can find no leverage whereby to use it within society. He will be dismissed as a mere purveyor of theoretical “castles in Spain,” too impractical to be listened to, an “absent-minded professor” lacking any sense of reality.

(3) The Will to Act, Untiring Perseverance. Clearly without these, one's training and one's possibilities will not lead to anything lasting or worthwhile.

The effective militant, therefore, should possess all three elements. If one or other is missing, the drop in performance is immediate. Take the case of a man possessing a good general culture and training (Element One), determined and persevering (Element Three), but having no more concrete competences, no job, no social or professional contacts, etc. (Element Two). He is to be pitied rather than blamed, indeed! He

may wear himself out trying to persuade one contact after another, but he will finally weary his hearers by his constant harping on ideal, abstract principles and theories, and they will write off his claimed – and possibly genuine – “polyvalency” as “nullivalency.”

Take another case, that of a man well qualified by his competences and his situation (Element Two) and gifted with determination and perseverance in action (Element Three), but lacking an adequate general formation (Element One). Such a person is likely to wear himself out in a series of superficial small-scale actions. Lacking the wider view he will tend to be a day-to-day activist, forever chopping and changing, continually recasting his tactics, and even his goals, in the light of the latest event or situation to crop up, until finally he is almost bound to sink into a feeling of hopeless discouragement. He is, of course, not wrong to pay heed to events as they arise. The Communists are indeed past masters in exploiting these. But Communists have the additional advantage of a good general and tactical training that enables them to see further ahead than the next day, to foresee obstacles and steer round them. If they suffer a setback, they can pick themselves up and carry on without having, like our example, to go back to square one each time.

There remains the case of those who have the general training (Element One) and the “possibilities” (Element Two) but who lack all will and perseverance (Element Three). Unfortunately, these are much more numerous than one would expect. Incorrigibly “genteel,” they are the very incarnation of sterility and inaction. We should do well to waste as little time as possible on them, however interesting may be the ideas and suggestions they bring forward (but have no intention of implementing), however pleasant their company may be.

In brief, and to conclude, it is clear that three elements are essential if our action is to be fully effective: a general training and culture *plus* possibilities for putting this training into practice *plus* will and perseverance. If one of these elements is missing, our action will weaken or collapse. We must do all we can to foster and encourage these three elements.

One category of persons whom we should mistrust above all others are those “Pharisees,” young or old, whose only talent is that of speechifying. By their words one would judge them to be champions of orthodoxy, but on closer observation they prove to have the same tastes, follow the same fashions, react to the same slogans, are eaten up by the same ambitions and imbued with the same materialist and pleasure-seeking spirit as

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the world they pretend to be trying to reform. Their orthodoxy is a mere intellectual pastime, when it is not just a class attitude, the “accepted thing” in their environment.

Such people are not merely not apostles, they are the very opposite. They irritate and repel new contacts rather than attracting them. No words can be too strong for the harm they do. Many are the occasions when their self-satisfaction, smooth volubility, their inability to present the truth in other than a disagreeable fashion have ruined any chances of success for a long time.

Our work, at the best, is neither easy nor very agreeable. So it is all the more important to carry it out in that “joy of the truth” of which St. Augustine spoke. If it is true that “sad saints are bad saints,” then it could equally follow that animators with long faces and a hang-dog air are not worthy of the name animator. St. Francis de Sales was keen that his “Philothea” should be the gayest and even the best-dressed woman in her circle. It seems to us that an analogous gaiety should be the hallmark of those engaged in our fight.

Why indeed should we not cheer ourselves up by having a good belly laugh at the absurdity and stupidity around us, and especially at our own? Yet it would be foolish not to face the fact that such a fight as ours is not easy.

Even admitting that we enter it full of enthusiasm, the difficulties, setbacks and the slowness of our progress will soon deflate the superficial among us. Those who are prepared to devote themselves wholeheartedly and victoriously to it need faith, and a firm faith.

It is no use saying, “this work suits my temperament.” It is just not true. It is not in anyone’s temperament to go on working through repeated disappointments for – to all appearances – paltry and negligible results. It is not natural for anyone to continue working month after month, year after year, exposed to the veiled or openly brutal hostility of a world that has gone over to the ideals of the Revolution. Any purely sentimental impulsion soon evaporates at such a grinding chore. Something more is needed.

This brings me to our constant need to strengthen the supernatural life within ourselves, and hence the necessity to recognize prayer as the primary and basic form of action which informs and inspires whatever we do. In practical terms, this implies the need for regularly going on

Jean Ousset

a closed retreat, organized by priests of unquestionable orthodoxy, and preferably based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.



POPE URBAN II PREACHING THE FIRST CRUSADE

Conclusion

The Need for Prayer

We must pray to the Lord that His “Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven,” that He will make our efforts fruitful, that He will enlighten us, guide us, be our strength and our shield. We must pray that He will raise up a sufficient number of militants and animators, full of a generous desire to serve the cause, and that He will grant them the necessary means and resources.

A short group prayer should precede each meeting or working session. Those of us who have the privilege of knowing consecrated souls should ask them to confide these intentions to Heaven in their prayers. If one could obtain from a sufficient number of priests the magnificent gifts of a Mass, annual or monthly, what a source of grace it would be, and what a source of consolation to know that we are being aided by such means!

Finally, it is absolutely imperative that we should bear continually in mind the need for a profound yet balanced and properly integrated spiritual life: *balanced and properly integrated* – as far removed from dry-as-dust activism as from the spurious mysticisms which dissipate the energy of so many souls.

We should distrust the so widespread appetite for “extraordinary” supernatural phenomena: the craze for visions, revelations, seers and prophecies. Let us not seek to have a *hot line* to Heaven. Contrary to what so many imagine, this is far from being the ideal to seek after.

The ideal to seek is to live the life of pure Faith. St. Paul tell us: “The just shall live by Faith” (Hebrews x:38). Let us, therefore, seek after this perfection, which is *the* perfection here on earth. In this consists the great secret of sanctity – not in a vain quest for the “extraordinary” and for “prophecy,” so often compounded of self-seeking, curiosity, vain complacency and secret pride.

In this connection, let us recall the example of St. Louis who, while at Mass, refused to go to see the miraculous apparition of the Child Jesus. Let us learn to love to live by Faith.

Above all, let us love the Church and think with the mind of the Church, so that we may appreciate what God expects of us, for if we would understand and follow God's will, we must above all things love and obey His Church. On her deathbed, St. Teresa of Avila found only one reason for hope for salvation: that she had lived and was dying as "a daughter of the Church."

To be sons and daughters of the Church: there is the sure and certain way. The Church, our catechism teaches, is the faithful, the priests and bishops united with the Pope. *Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia.*



PIUS IX. AT THE FOOT OF ST. PETER.

Notes.

1. Cf. Pope Paul VI: “It belongs to the laymen...to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws and structures of the community in which they live” (*Populorum Progressio*, 81). –Editor, *Approaches*
2. Frédéric Le Play (1806–1882). French economist and writer, and one of the founders of “Social Economy”; his most important works include *European Workers* (1855) and *Social Reform in France* (1864).
3. Simone Weil (1909-1943). French author, amateur philosopher and social essayist. During her brief life she flirted with Leftism in all its forms, initially preferring Bolshevism to simple Communism and serving as a cook for the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War; she eventually lost interest in the Left and “converted” to Christianity in 1938. She refused baptism into the Catholic Church on more than one occasion.
4. For further reading on this subject, we recommend Marcel Clement’s *Social Programme of the Church*. While M. Clement concentrates primarily on the professional corporations, his exposition is equally applicable to other forms of “intermediary bodies.” –Editor, *Approaches*
5. Fr. Pedro de Arrupe y Gondra (1907-1991). Served as the 28th Father Superior General of the Society of Jesus – the Jesuits – from 1965 to 1983, and upon his election proceeded rapidly to change the Society’s orientation. Though the Society was founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola as the first line of defence of the Papacy, Fr. Arrupe sought to give vent to anti-papal feeling. Therein his leadership was, in the words of Fr. Malachi Martin, “inspiring, enthusiastic and wily.”

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JEAN OUSSET grew up at a time when a number of ideologies were competing for the minds of millions. The Catholic Social Vision – which in its fullness offers a radical and coherent alternative to “Left” and “Right” – then boasted of numerous defenders, who articulated that Vision with uncommon precision, and defended it with boundless energy. Ousset was one of the men who, despite immense obstacles, carried that Vision into the post-War period.

Active in the politics of his day, Ousset served his country and the Catholic cause in various positions. During the heyday of *L'Action Française*, he was secretary to Charles Maurras; during WWII, he was an important functionary in the Vichy government of Field Marshal Pétain; and in 1946 he founded *La Cité Catholique* for the implementation of Catholic Social Principles in society.

Ousset was a serious thinker and a prolific writer. He lectured widely, and his works include *Marxism-Leninism* (1961), *Work* (1962), *The Discovery of Beauty* (1971), and *Reflections on the Notions of Fatherland, Nation, and State* (1977). His magnum opus, *That He Might Reign* (1959), dedicated to the realization of the Social Kingship of Christ, was endorsed by four Bishops – Lefebvre, Marmotin, Morcillo and Gulpide – who contributed Prefaces to the French and Spanish editions.

BY JEAN OUSSET (1914–1994).

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