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THE PHILOSOPHY OF MODERN  
REVOLUTION

by

Reverend James Joseph Maguire, C.S.P., MA.

A DISSERTATION

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TO MY MOTHER



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## PREFACE

THE purpose of this dissertation is to examine the philosophy of revolution as it is embodied in the more significant modern revolutionary movements, and to evaluate this philosophy in the light of Thomistic principles.

In this day and age it is hardly necessary to present a lengthy apologia for a study of revolution. Though it savors of the bromidic, it is none the less true that ours is an age of revolution; or at any rate, it is true that we of today are acutely "revolution-conscious." This is obvious from the very flood of dire predictions, of critical self-appraisals and of theories of collapse that deluge our book marts. Though it be granted that a good deal of this is sheer hysteria, it must still be admitted that much of the fear is justified, and much of the criticism is valid. The very march of political events itself forces us to the realization that we are living through a period of crisis and transition. The present war is one such symptom, but even before its outbreak it was apparent that the seeds of unrest were germinating in our culture. It is over twenty-five years since Bolshevism came to power in Russia; and since then its disruptive influence has come to be felt in every corner of the civilized world. In that quarter of a century we have witnessed also the emergence of Fascism and Nazism. We have been disquieted not merely by the realization of their military menace, but also by the realization that similar forces might well come into being elsewhere. In this connection the universal spectacle of economic disorder and depression has hardly been reassuring.

Obviously no thinking man can evade the responsibility of examining the character of these Behemoths which have arisen out of the social deep. But how is such an analysis to be conducted? One way is by an examination of the political and economic panaceas proffered by modern revolutionary movements and by a parallel appraisal of our own social structure and ideals. Need we observe that this type of analysis has been widely undertaken? We are in the possession of a huge literature on all the various phases of such an analysis; some of it, at least, is of abiding and definitive value.

That such an analysis is both invaluable and indispensable is not to be denied. But what is debatable is whether or not such an approach leads to an adequate understanding of the true character and essential temper of these movements. Such an understanding demands a clear conception, not merely of the formally expressed propositions of the current economic and political platforms of the various revolutionary movements, but also a clear conception of the possibilities of development latent in the inner dynamic of each movement. In the lack of such a true understanding there is a real danger. Fastening upon surface divergencies in political and economic panaceas, one may be led to commit oneself to positions whose tragic falsity is revealed only by the march of events. Such was the plight of our contemporary leftist intelligentsia; they were redeemed from it only by the occurrence of the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939.

It is impossible today to escape the query suggested by the following statement of Souvarine.

The old vocabulary is ill-adapted to express new historical phenomena. The new terms, Bolshevism and Fascism, in themselves empty of political meaning, were necessary to describe hitherto unknown social movements and their empirical ideology. In the final analysis, these movements show so many similarities, and are open to so many mutual plagiarisms, they borrow and exchange so many things from one another, that the same word "totalitarian," another addition to the modern vocabulary, becomes them both perfectly. Mussolini began by imitating Lenin; Hitler continued by imitating Mussolini and Stalin; the latter in turn copies his two rivals, especially in their worst features. At long intervals the three dictators, with Stalin as leader, follow one another in the way in which they educate and discipline their subjects by bringing them into line, throwing them into prison and putting them to death. It is hardly possible that so many analogies between Bolshevism and Fascism in word and deed, in means and methods, in institutions and types of men, do not reflect some historical relationship, unless one admits the possibility of a complete divorce between the essence and the form.<sup>1</sup>

To this suggestion Rauschnig returns a negative answer.

<sup>1</sup> Boris Souvarine, "Stalin, A Critical Survey of Bolshevism," N. Y., Alliance Book Corp., 1939, p. 673.

It might be tempting to demonstrate a close relationship between Fascism, Bolshevism and National Socialism, to describe each of them as special type of the dynamic movement, the doctrineless movement, and to find distinctions between them only in the degrees and shades of their revolutionary impulse, or in the historical occasion of their initial phase. . . . This assertion is justified insofar as Stalinism is nothing more than the jettisoning of the Communist doctrine of the Russian Revolution and its development into something else."

Borkenau answers in the affirmative.

We have now finished our description of the totalitarian revolution. We have attempted to demonstrate how in different ways, it is fundamentally always the same. We have tried to trace its roots in the structure of our modern industrial society. We have attempted to prove that a totalitarian regime is essentially an inevitable outcome of the laws which govern the development of our modern society. The totalitarian revolution is in fact, as we have said, the Socialist revolution which Marx has foretold; though the agent of this revolution has not been the proletariat. . . . Ideals are always disappointing after they have been fulfilled. Yet it is futile to deny that what has come into being, is in fact, in the main outline what Marx predicted.<sup>2</sup>

It will of course, be obvious that we intend to lend no unqualified approval to any of these statements, but they do give some indication of the nature of the problem undertaken in this study. We shall attempt to analyze what we have called the inner dynamic or essential temper of these movements. In doing this we shall not take as our point of departure the similarity in the ultimate political fruits of these three creeds, nor shall we restrict ourselves to the three movements already mentioned. Indeed we could not do so, if for no other reason than that Russian Communism traces its origin to Marx, Mussolini appeals to Sorel and to the Syndicalism Sorel professed, and this in turn stems from nineteenth century Anarchism?

<sup>2</sup> Hermann Rauschning, "The Revolution of Nihilism," N. Y., Alliance Book Corp., 1939, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> F. Borkenau, "The Totalitarian Enemy," London, Faber & Faber (preface dated 1939), p. 239.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ch. I, *passim*.

In fact the characteristic features of the modern revolution are already apparent in nineteenth century movements. (This is a point which shall be discussed in greater detail in the body of the dissertation.)

In analyzing these movements we shall take as our starting point, the character of the appeal they make, and the nature of the hope held forth as an inducement. It is as *revolutionary* movements that we propose to study them. Our aim is no mere comparison of the various political and economic panaceas. Our methodology is in many ways analogous to that of Mannheim's "sociology of knowledge." Like Mannheim, we are attempting "to comprehend the theories and their mutations in close relation to the collective groups and typical total situations out of which they arose, and whose exponents they are."<sup>5</sup>\* We shall therefore, examine the ideologies which serve to rally these movements, we shall inquire into the nature and scope of the complaints they express and we shall scrutinize their various concepts of the factors and forces involved in the process of social transformation.

That each movement is in some sense the product of a particular historical situation and that each has adopted its own type of philosophical formulation is beyond cavil. Yet in speaking, as we have, of a philosophy of modern revolution, it will be obvious that, with Mannheim, we hope to discover for this "specific social situation" (*i. e.*, modern revolution) "certain modes of thinking and possibilities of orientation."<sup>8</sup> The possibility of achieving such a result can, of course, be demonstrated only by the actual investigation. Nevertheless we may say (anticipating our conclusions) that in the ideologies of the various movements, we do find embodied certain philosophic principles, certain basic specifications which are independent of the changing forms of the ideologies, in the sense that they reappear dressed out in very varying philosophic guises and

<sup>5</sup> Karl Mannheim, "Ideology and Utopia" (An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge), N. V., Harcourt, Brace, 1940 (2nd imp.), p. 156.

*e Ibid.*, p. 157. However, it must be kept in mind that while Mannheim's aim is to construct "a psychology which would be socially and historical[!]" relevant" (K. Mannheim, "Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction," N. V., Harcourt, Brace, 1940, p. 15), ours is to ascertain the philosophic principles embodied in such modes of thinking.

terminologies. It is in the body of such basic principles that we find the essential philosophy of modern revolution.

In the second section we shall attempt to evaluate and criticize this revolutionary philosophy in the light of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. This latter section is however, more than a mere critique, in the negative sense of the word. In that criticism we shall attempt to indicate some of the fundamental inter-relationships of the various movements and to draw out the practical implications of the revolutionary principles. All of this is possible only when we are able to view the revolutionary philosophy from the vantage point of an adequate metaphysic and an adequate concept of the nature and destiny of man.

To Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen, under whose direction this dissertation was written, the author owes a great debt of gratitude, not only for constant aid and encouragement, but for many personal kindnesses as well. He is indebted also to the Rev. Dr. Ignatius Smith, O.P., and to the Rev. Dr. Charles Hart for their reading of the manuscript and for helpful criticisms. He is deeply grateful to the Paulist Community for the opportunity to engage in graduate study and he wishes to thank all the members of the community of St. Paul's College, Brookland, D. C., who have been so generous with their aid and so unflagging in their interest. He is especially appreciative of the invaluable assistance rendered by his brother, Gerard E. Maguire, C.S.P.



## Part I

### Exposition





## CHAPTER I.

### THE NATURE OF MODERN REVOLUTION

There are few words in our modern lexicon that are used more frequently, and defined less precisely than the word "revolution." Modern developments have not simplified the task of definition, but in no case however, was it an easy one. Such phrases as e. g. "Industrial Revolution" or "revolution in science" have, of course, been generally regarded as more or less extended uses of the term. Yet the difficulty remains even after such usages have been prescinded from. Typical of what might be called the classical concept of revolution, is its description as "the intervention of force in place of law." <sup>1</sup> As such it connoted the idea of barricades and street-fighting. In line with this notion it might seem satisfactory to define revolution as the violent or extra-legal transfer of political power. Yet two objections can be raised against such a definition.

The fact is that neither the violence nor the change of governing personnel is indispensable to the notion of revolution. If there has been a radical change in the form of government, or even in the extent of the State's power, we also speak of a revolution, even though the change was effected through seemingly legal channels.

Revolution may be defined as a radical or organic change in the constitution of government, accomplished either peacefully or violently. Or it may be defined to be the successful resistance to established authority, by which a new form of authority is established and instituted.<sup>1</sup>

We need only think of Hitler's accession to power, which in the last analysis was achieved through more or less parliamentary methods.

<sup>1</sup> "La révolution, c'est l'intervention de la force en dehors de la loi." Ch. Remusat, article, "Révolution" dans le "Dictionnaire des Sciences Politiques," from M. Ralea, "L'Idée de Révolution dans les Doctrines Socialistes," Paris, Rivière, 1923, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Clark, "The History and Theory of Revolutions," reprint from the *Princeton Review* for April, 1862, p. 5.

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The second, and more serious objection is that such a definition fails to express the complete scope of the modern revolution. Today we are no longer able to think of revolution in terms of "purely political" transfer of power.

Although a fundamental change in the political organization of a nation has been accepted for many generations as a satisfactory definition, it is quite obvious that in our day it has come to mean more than that. Since the Bolsheviks have come to power in Russia we have been forced to think of revolution as a fundamental change not only in the political but also in the economic organization of society.<sup>3</sup>

Thus a recasting of the social order is, at least in modern times, a far more important characteristic of revolutions, than a change of the political constitution or the use of violence in the attainment of the end. This aspect of revolution distinguishes it also from the coup d'état, rebellion and insurrection with which it is sometimes confused.<sup>4</sup>

Today the "social revolution" is generally accepted as the revolution par excellence. The distinction between the "purely political" and the "social" revolution is not, however a recent one. It was already formulated in the first decades of the nineteenth century.

The political revolution only effects a transfer of power from the hands of one group to those of another through violent means; the social revolution attacks the very structure of society.<sup>5</sup>

Proudhon utilized this distinction to differentiate the desired Anarchist social revolution from the periodic governmental changes that France underwent in the first part of the nineteenth century.

We can perhaps, best delineate the modern concept of revolution by citing Burnham's description of the three chief constituents of the social revolution.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Hunter, "Revolution, Why? How? When?", Harper and Brothers, N. Y. 1940, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> A. Meusel, article, "Revolution and Counter-Revolution," in the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, Vol. 13, p. 367.

<sup>5</sup> "La révolution politique ne fait qu'opérer un transfert de pouvoir des mains d'un groupe dans celles d'un autre par des moyens violents; la révolution social s'attaque à la structure même de la société." Ralea, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

1. There takes place a drastic change in the most important social (economic and political) institutions. The system of property relations, the forms under which economic production is carried on, the legal structure, the type of political organization and regime are all so sharply altered that we feel compelled to call them different in kind not merely modified in degree . . .

2. Along with the changes in social institutions there go more or less parallel changes in cultural institutions and in the dominant beliefs which men hold about man's place in the world and the universe . . .

3. Finally we observe a change in the group of men which holds the top positions, which controls the greater part of power and prestige in society . . . 6

*It will be* obvious that this is not intended as a general or universally valid description of revolution. Nevertheless we do believe that it does represent what the man of today regards as a revolution. When we of today think of revolution, we think of it in terms of Communism, Fascism, or Nazism; and this is what revolution means according to these three movements.

This is the phenomenon which we have called modern revolution. We shall analyze it by studying the more significant of the "revolutionary" movements in which it is embodied. In this category we must include not only Communism, Fascism and Nazism, but also certain nineteenth century movements. Though the modern revolution first became an accomplished fact in the twentieth century, it is obvious that the concept of modern revolution was already formulated by Marx and the early Anarchists. We shall then, consider Anarchism, its three chief exponents, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin; the classical Marxism of Marx and Engels and Leninist Marxism, French Revolutionary Syndicalism, particularly as expressed by Sorel, and Italian Fascism and Nazism.

That the revolution envisioned by these movements is social as well as political is obvious even to the casual observer. Whatever may have been the circumstances under which each developed, or whatever may have been the hidden motives of individual leaders, the movements themselves have been presented to the world as crusades

«James Burnham, "The Managerial Revolution," N. Y., John Day Co., 1941, pp. 5-6.

for more or less thorough-going revisions of the whole structure of society.

Yet even this fact, which has been so widely recognized, does not, in itself, give us an adequate and complete picture of the essential temper of these movements. Any attempt to define the modern revolutionary movement solely in terms of its political and economic panaceas is superficial. The attitude of each of those movements must rather be characterized as a wholesale dissatisfaction with the existing order. While the revolutionary attitude finds its primary expression in a criticism of the economic system and the political order, its roots are deeper and its ideal is more inclusive. It is with the whole man and not merely with the conditions of his material existence that the modern revolutionary is concerned. The zeal with which he pursues his economic and political aims takes its ardor from the conviction that under the existing conditions, man is, somehow degraded and dehumanized. While any attempt to encompass the ideal of the modern revolutionary in a single phrase is difficult and dangerous, as a working description, we may say that the modern revolutionary is concerned not merely with the factors of material existence but also, and in fact primarily, with man's moral condition. What is envisioned is a transformation, not merely of man's environment, but of man himself.

#### *Revolution in Anarchism*

In Anarchism one senses at once a strong note of moral indignation. The Anarchist hatred of the State stems from the conviction that man has been corrupted and debased by government and authority. Property, he regards as another form of slavery. The Anarchist feels that government and property bring out the worst in man, that life under these conditions makes man selfish, rapacious, unjust and cruel. All forms of compulsion must be accordingly abolished in order that the spirit of antagonism may die, and that out of the free, creative activity of the people themselves a new "spirit of voluntary cooperation" may be born.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Manifesto adopted at the Geneva International Congress in 1882. (Reproduced in full in E. V. Zenker, "Anarchism," G. P. Putnam's Sons,

### *The Nature of Modern Revolution*

This concern with the moral conditions of society is the constant preoccupation of Proudhon, "the father of modern Anarchism."<sup>8</sup> It is in terms of an ethical advance that he pictures the goal of the revolution.

What does society want today? That its tendency toward sin and poverty should become a movement toward comfort and virtue.<sup>9</sup>

N. Y., 1897, pp. 288-290). Actually the word "Anarchism" is loosely used to apply to a great variety of movements and currents. Edmundo Gonzalez-Blanco lists ten such applications ("Los Sistemas Sociales Contemporaneos," Ancha, Barcelona, 1930, pp. 43-112). It is, in fact, amorphous even considered simply as a purely political revolutionary theory. "There is no one body of theory that may be specifically labeled "Anarchism" and it is scarcely possible to discuss the subject except in relation to the work of its more important exponents. Of these the Frenchman, Proudhon, and the two Russians, Bakunin and Kropotkin, are easily the most important. Proudhon formulated the idea and gave it a name; Bakunin advanced the idea and organized the Anarchists; and Kropotkin reduced the idea to writing and developed the first unified or systematic theory of Anarchism." R. E. Westmeyer, "Modern Economic and Social Systems," Farrar-Rinehart, N. Y., 1940, p. 294.

<sup>8</sup> Though Proudhon is invariably associated with Anarchism, his own ideas are not always clear and consistent, nor is it easy to classify him among the various types of social reformers. (Cf. Westmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 295) It must be kept in mind that in this study we are primarily concerned with Anarchism, and that we are dealing with Proudhon only insofar as he manifests typically Anarchist doctrine. It must also be kept in mind that we are primarily interested in his philosophy and not in the details of his social or economic panaceas. Fortunately for our purposes Proudhon has developed his concept of the Anarchist philosophy of revolution in his work, "The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century" (transi. J. B. Robinson, London, Freedom Press, 1923). The most comprehensive analysis of Proudhon's views is "The Political Theories of P. J. Proudhon," by S. Y. Lu. (Columbia U. Ph.D. thesis, M. R. Gray, 1922). Cf. also, J. Duprat, "Proudhon, Sociologue et Moraliste," Alcan, Paris, 1929.

Cornu has shown that though Proudhon "Considere que le destruction de celui-ci (the bourgeois state) est la condition préalable et necessaire de toute transformation sociale" he was nevertheless, the defender of the middle class. "C'est cette position intermédiaire qui explique et sa doctrine et son action" (A. Cornu, "Utopisme et Marxisme" in "A la Luminiere du Marxisme," Tome II, p. 138. Editions Sociales Internationales, Paris, 1937).

<sup>9</sup> P. J. Proudhon, "General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century," trans. by John Beverly Robinson, London, Freedom Press, 1923, p. 79.

In listing the aims of the revolution, he has no hesitation about transcending the categories of economics.

1. The indefinite perfectibility of the individual and the race.
2. The honorableness of work.
3. The equality of fortunes.
4. The identity of interests.
5. The end of antagonisms.
6. The universality of comfort.
7. The sovereignty of reason.
8. The absolute liberty of the man and of the citizen."

The triumph of the revolution is to be the establishment of "justice."<sup>11</sup> In defining his notion of "justice," Proudhon grows lyrical to the point of obscurantism. It is the essential law of human relationships, but it is more than a law. It is a power of the soul and an attitude of mind. He even ventures to apply to "justice," Spinoza's definition of substance.<sup>12</sup><sup>18</sup>

Justice is a power of our soul which makes us affirm what is just, independent of all interests; makes us desire above all other things the public security; and which attaches us to the city more strongly than to our family or to what relates exclusively to our own egoism. By its law of equilibrium and its formula of reciprocity, it could establish order and create unity, in a word, bring all variable and contradictory phenomena to a general and constant law.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 243-244.

<sup>11</sup> "Ce que donne vie à la Révolution est un élément positif, expression de la conscience universelle, que la Révolution a pour objet de déterminer et de construire, pour le salut et la gloire de l'humanité: c'est la Justice." P. J. Proudhon, "De La Justice dans le Révolution et dans l'Eglise," Paris, 1858, Vol. I, p. 19. Cf. J. Chabrier, "L'Idee de la Révolution d'après Proudhon," Paris, 1935, pp. 13-17.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 600 ff.

<sup>18</sup> S. Y. Lu, *op. cit.*, p. 63. Berth points out that though Anarchism really denies the social character of liberty, in this concept of "justice" Proudhon

The establishment of "justice" is not to be a legal enactment, but an ethical development. Behind these manifold phrases, lurks the vision of a new humanity. If we would seek a term of comparison, for Proudhon's concept of the realm of justice we can best use Isaiah's description of the "new Jerusalem."

In Kropotkin also, the sense of resentment against the existing order crystallizes in a burning indignation at the moral depravity which accompanies it.

It is not only against the abstract trinity of law, religion and authority that we declare war. By becoming Anarchists we declare war against all this wave of deceit, cunning, exploitation, depravity, vice—in a word, inequality—which they have poured into our hearts. We declare war against their way of acting, against their way of thinking.<sup>14</sup>

The Anarchist revolution is the prelude to moral rehabilitation.

By flinging overboard law, religion and authority, mankind can regain possession of the moral principle which was taken from them.<sup>15</sup>

Kropotkin clearly manifests the typically integral character of the Anarchist outlook.

A revolution is a swift overthrow in a few years of institutions which have taken centuries to root in the soil, and seem so fixed and immovable that even the most ardent of reformers hardly dare to attack them in their writings. It is the fall, the crumbling away in a brief period of all that up to that time composed the essence of social, religious, political and economic life in a nation. It means the subversion of acquired ideas and of accepted notions concerning each of the complex institutions and relations of the human herd. In short, it is the birth of completely new ideas concerning the manifold links in citizenship.<sup>16</sup>

really constructed "une, theorie de la force collective, et une exposition d'une doctrine métaphysique de l'être conçu essentiellement comme groupe." Edouard Berth. "Les Nouveaux Aspects du Socialisme," Rivière, Paris, 1908, pp. 38-40.

<sup>14</sup> "Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets," edit. Roger Baldwin, Vanguard, N. Y., 1927, p. 99, "Anarchist Morality."

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>16</sup> P. A. Kropotkin, "The Great French Revolution," trans. N. F. Dryhurst, Putnam's, N. Y., 1909, pp. 2-3.



Kropotkin was a Russian, as was also Bakunin, the third of the great Anarchists. It is significant that the Anarchist denial of government and property bears a marked resemblance to that characteristically Russian phenomenon known as Nihilism. Indeed, Bakunin, the most extreme of the Anarchists, is hardly understandable without some knowledge of Nihilism.<sup>17</sup>

Nihilism was above all a pervading and oppressive consciousness of the radical defects of the social order of the nineteenth century Russia. But the Nihilist outlook enshrined too, a confession of the guilt of the intelligentsia. Recognizing the unhappy lot of the masses, men of culture and intellect became conscious also of the gap that separated them from the common man. Inspired by a passion for the redemption of the masses, they realized that their very culture divorced them from the life of the masses, and that this divorce was at least in part responsible for the misery. Willing to bend all their energies to the cause of this crusade they concluded that for the sake of this goal, all ideas, all culture and all accepted values must be sacrificed. They concluded that society as it then existed, was evil and must be destroyed. Out of that destruction a new man would be born.

Nihilism is the negative of the Russian apocalyptic. It is a revolt against the injustices of history, against false civilization; it is a demand that history shall come to an end, and a new life outside or above history shall begin. Nihilism is a demand for nakedness, for the stripping from oneself of all historical traditions, for the setting free of the natural man upon whom there will no longer be fetters of any sort.<sup>18</sup>

This sense of guilt (that is at the same time a sense of moral resentment) and this "inverted apocalypticism" appear in their fullness in Bakunin's frenzy of destructive fervor. Bakunin constantly

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Max Nomad, "Apostles of Revolution," Little, Brown & Company, Boston, 1939, pp. 214-215; E. de Cyon, "Nihilisme et Anarchie," Michel Levy, Paris, 1892; "Hidden Springs of the Russian Revolution," personal memoirs of Katerina Breshkovskaya, edit. L. Hutchinson, Stanford U., 1931, Ch. II.

<sup>18</sup> N. Berdyaev, "The Origin of Russian Communism," Geoffrey Bles, The Centenary Press, London, 1937, p. 49.

appealed for a destruction that was to be "total, complete, universal and merciless."<sup>19</sup>

The need of revolution can be no other than the destruction of all powers—religious, monarchical, aristocratic and bourgeois—in Europe. Consequently, the destruction of all now existing states, with all their institutions—political, juridical, bureaucratic and financial. . . . <sup>20</sup>

We glimpse the moral aspect perhaps even more clearly in his "Appeal to the Slavs."

<sup>16</sup> Revolutionary Catechism, Art. 24, "L'Alliance de la Democritie Socialiste et L'Association Internationale des Travailleurs," A. Dawson, London; O. Meisner, Hamburg, 1873, p. 94. The Catechism, found in the possession of Bakunin's disciple, Nechayev, was first published by the Russian government. Bakunin's admirers tried to maintain that it was the work of Nechayev. "To their great dismay, however, one of the oldest and most trusted followers of Bakunin, Michel Sazin ("Armand Ross") in his Reminiscences, published in 1925, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, came out with the frank statement that he himself had seen the original manuscript in Bakunin's handwriting." Nomad, *op. cit.*, p. 227. However, even before this it was generally recognized as Bakunin's work. Cf. "Michael Bakunin's Social-politischer Brief-wechsel," Einleitung, Michael Dragomanow, trans. B. Winzes, J. G. Sotta'schen, Stuttgart, 1895, pp. 371-380.

"L'Alliance, etc.," the work in which it is included was published by the Hague Congress of the International of 1872, as the result of the debate between Marx and Bakunin. In addition to the catechism it included a number of other documents, the most significant of which is the "Statuts Secrets de l'AUiance." Its authenticity is unquestionable. Cf. "L'Alliance," pp. 118-132; H. Iswolsky, "La Vie de Bakounine," Librairie Gallimand, Paris, 1930, 10 edit., pp. 208-213.

<sup>20</sup> "Le but de la révolution ne peut être autre que la démolition de toutes les puissances et de tous les pouvoirs religieux, monarchiques, aristocratiques et bourgeois en Europe. Par conséquent, la destruction de tous les Etats actuellement existants avec toutes leurs institutions politiques, juridiques, bureaucratiques et financières," L'Alliance, p. 125. Bakunin develops this also in "L'Empire Knouto-Germanique et La Revolution Sociale," "Oeuvres," Paris, P. V. Stock, T. 2 (1907), p. 370 ff.

"He (Bakunin) preached destruction so long as there was anything left to destroy. He preached rebellion even when there was nothing left to rebel against. He was less interested in the constructive work of building up the new order," E. H. Carr, "Michael Bakunin," Macmillan, N. Y., 1937, p. 149. For further evidence of Bakunin's eulogy of destruction see pp. 46-48, 70 *infra*.

## *The Philosophy of Modern Revolution*

We must overthrow the material and moral conditions of our present-day life. We must overthrow from top to bottom this effete social world which has become impotent and sterile and could neither support nor sustain so great a mass of freedom. We must first purify our atmosphere and transform completely the milieu in which we live; for it corrupts our instincts and our wills, and contracts our heart and our intelligence.<sup>21</sup>

### *Revolution in Classical Marxism*

A thorough disgust with the whole of the existing order is no less apparent in Marx.<sup>22</sup> For Marx the revolution was never merely a question of economic rehabilitation. If he speaks principally of economic development it is only because he regards economics as the ultimate determining factor of all the characteristics of the social order. Economic transformation is simply the lever which is to overturn the "whole superstructure of juridical and political institutions, as well as religious, philosophical and other ideas."<sup>23</sup> The outlook of Marx is integral; he is fighting not merely for a new economic system but for a new conception of society and a new view of life.

In spite of his pretense of scientific amoralism,<sup>24</sup> we can discern

21 "Il faut renverser les conditions matérielles et morales de notre existence actuelle, renverser de fond au comble ce monde social décrépît, devenu impuissant et stéril, et qui ne saurait contenir, ni comporter une si grande masse de liberté. Il faut auparavant purifier notre atmosphère et transformer complètement le milieu dans lequel nous vivons, car il corrompt nos instincts et nos volontés en rétrécissant nos coeurs et nos intelligences." The text of the "Appeal" is reprinted fully in Josef Pfintzner, "Bakunien Studien," Quellen und Forschungen aus dem Gebiete der Geschichte," Prag, 1932. The passage quoted is from page 102.

22 The literature on Marxism is, of course, enormous, but we wish to call attention especially to Charles J. McFadden, "The Philosophy of Communism," Benziger, N. Y., 1939, and to the adequate bibliography given there.

23 F. Engels, "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific," trans. E. Aveling, International Publishers, N. Y., 1935, p. 51.

24 "If we say, 'That is unjust, it ought not to be,' that has nothing whatever to do with economy, we are only stating that this economic fact is in contradiction to our moral sentiment. That is why Marx has never based upon this his Communist conclusions, but rather upon the necessary overthrow, which is developing itself under our eyes every day, of the capitalist system of production." Engels in the preface to "The Poverty of Philosophy," by K. Marx, transi. H. Quelch, Charles Kerr & Co., Chicago (1934?), p. 14,

in Marx a strong note of ethical pathos. The struggle for a new order based on the Socialist mode of production is in reality a crusade to lift man out of the degradation and debasement incident to his economic slavery. It is not so much the injustice of the capitalist order which fires Marx as the dehumanization which this entails. Private property alienates man from himself. By destroying this alienation the proletarian revolution is to effect the reconstruction not merely of the material conditions of existence but of man himself.

With the seizing of the means of production by society, the production of commodities is done away with, and therewith the mastery of the products over the producers. The anarchy within social production is replaced by conscious systematic organization. The struggle for individual existence ceases. Then for the first time, man in a certain sense is finally cut off from the animal kingdom and steps out of animal conditions of existence into really human ones. . . . It is the leap of mankind from the kingdom of necessity into the kingdom of freedom.<sup>25</sup>

Marx expresses the same thought in "Capital."

Just as the savage must wrestle with nature in order to satisfy his needs, and to maintain his life and reproduce it; so civilized man has to do it and he must do it in all forms of society and under all possible modes of production. With his development the realm of natural necessity expands, because his wants increase; but at the same time the forces of production increase, by which these wants are satisfied. The freedom in this field cannot consist of anything else but the fact that socialized man, the associated producers, regulate their interchange with nature rationally, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power; that they accomplish their task with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most adequate to their human nature and most worthy of it. But it always remains a realm of necessity.

Beyond it begins that development of human power, which is its own end, the true realm of freedom, which however, can flourish only with that realm of necessity as its basis.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> F. Engels, "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science" (Anti-Dühring)/, Charles Kerr & Co., Chicago, 1935, p. 295. Cf. A. Cornu, "Karl Marx, de l'hégélianisme au matérialisme historique," Alcan, Paris, 1934, p. 338.

<sup>26</sup> "Capital," by Karl Marx, edit, by F. Engels, transi. E. Untermann, Chicago, Charles Kerr & Co., 1909. Vol. III, pp. 954-955.

This represents a turning point in history. History is divided into two sharply differentiated parts—the past, the realm of necessity, when man was a slave to economics, the future, the realm of freedom, when man by the victory of the proletariat has dominated his environment. With the triumph of the proletariat, conflict will be eliminated. Progress will no longer be dialectical, i. e., by conflict, but unilinear. Thus in the Marxist ideal is embodied the Nihilist desire for a new life outside of and above history.<sup>27</sup>

When Marx spoke of the “development of human powers” he was not employing a euphemism. He does not hesitate to admit that the transformation he envisions, is so far reaching as to include a change in man himself.

Both for the production on a mass scale of this Communist consciousness and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of man on a mass scale is necessary.<sup>28</sup>

#### *Revolution in Leninist Marxism*

Lenin in commenting on the Marxian formula for the new order (“from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs”) <sup>28</sup> declares quite frankly that this ideal presupposes a psychological and ethical transformation.

The State will be able to wither away completely when society has realized the rule: “from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs,” that is, when a people have become accustomed to observe the fundamental rules of social life, and their labor is so productive that they *voluntarily work according to their ability*. “The narrow horizon of bourgeois rights” which compels one to calculate with the hard-heartedness of a Shylock whether he has not worked one-half hour more than another,

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Berdyaev, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-118.

<sup>28</sup> Marx Engels, “The German Ideology,” edit. R. Pascal, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1938, p. 69. Also, “In revolutionary activity change of self coincides with change of circumstances.” *Loc cit.*, note. Cf. 3rd Thesis on Feurbach.

<sup>29</sup> Karl Marx, “Critique of the Gotha Programme,” International Publishers, N. Y., 1933, p. 31.

whether he is not getting less pay than another—this narrow horizon will then be left behind. There will then be no need for any exact calculation by society of the quantity of products to be distributed to each of its members; each will take freely “according to his needs.”

From the bourgeois point of view it is easy to declare that such a social order is “a pure Utopia,” and to sneer at the socialists for promising each the right to receive from society, without any control of the labor of the individual citizen, any quantity of truffles, automobiles, pianos, etc., even now, most bourgeois “savants” deliver themselves of such sneers, thereby displaying at once their ignorance and their self-seeking defense of capitalism.

Ignorance—for it has never entered the head of any Socialist to promise that the highest phase of Communism will arrive; while the great socialists in *foreseeing* its arrival presupposed both a productibility of labor unlike the present and a person not like the present man in the street capable of spoiling without reflection, like the Seminary students in Pomyalovsky's book, the stores of social wealth and demanding the impossible.<sup>30\*</sup>

The idea of a “mass change in human nature” <sup>31</sup> haunts Communist thought. It is the necessary presupposition of their visions of the classless society. They believe that under a socialist regime, greed, selfishness, laziness, injustice and oppression will disappear. Finally, one day, man's psychological make-up and ethical outlook will have become so far transformed, that no compulsion of any form will be necessary, and the state (i. e., the dictatorship of the proletariat) will be able to “wither away.” <sup>32</sup>

Freed from capitalistic slavery, from the untold horrors, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually become accustomed to the observation of elementary rules of social life. . . . They will become accustomed to obeying them without force, without coercion, without subordination, without the special apparatus of coercion which is called the “State.” <sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> From Lenin's “State and Revolution,” appended as a note to the “Critique of the Gotha Programme,” p. 111.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Manifesto of the First Congress of the Communist International.

<sup>32</sup> Engels, “Anti-Dihring,” p. 292; Lenin, “State and Revolution,” p. 74.

<sup>33</sup> Lenin, “The State and Revolution,” N. Y., 1935, p. 73.

### Revolution in French Revolutionary Syndicalism

This interest in moral rehabilitation is even more strongly emphasized in Revolutionary Syndicalism.<sup>34</sup> Its economic and political

<sup>34</sup> There is a "reformist" syndicalism which differs considerably from "revolutionary" syndicalism. However "by common consent the term 'syndicalism' when used without any qualifying adjective means revolutionary syndicalism." Westmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 308, footnote.

Syndicalism developed out of the trade-union movement in France at the end of the nineteenth century. It represents an amalgam of different revolutionary theories. As Levine points out in his authoritative study, there are three different ways of regarding revolutionary syndicalism.

"To the anarchists, Revolutionary syndicalism is but a partial application of anarchist ideas. M. Yvetot, secretary of the section of the Bourses, said at the recent Congress of Toulouse (1910): 'I am reproached with confusing syndicalism and anarchism. It is not my fault if anarchism and syndicalism have the same ends in view. The former pursues the integral emancipation of the individual; the latter the integral emancipation of the workingman. I find the whole of syndicalism in anarchism.'

"To the revolutionary socialists in the Confederation (of Labour) syndicalism is the primary and fundamental form of revolutionary socialism. It does not exclude, however other forms; on the contrary it must be completed by the political organization of the Socialist party, because it has no answer of its own to many social problems.

"The third group of revolutionary syndicalists regards syndicalism as self-sufficing and independent of both anarchism and socialism. This group like the first, emphasizes the fact that there is an irreconcilable antagonism between syndicalism and political socialism. 'It is necessary,' writes Jouhaux, secretary of the confederation, 'that the proletariat should know that between parliamentary socialism which is tending more and more toward a simple democratization of existing social forms and syndicalism, which pursues the aim of a complete social transformation, there is not only a divergence of methods but particularly divergence of aims,'"

Louis Levine, "Syndicalism in France" (2nd revised edition of "The Labour Movement in France") *Studies in History, Economics and Public Law-Faculty of Political Science, Columbia U.* Vol. XLVI, No. 3, Longmans, Green, N. Y., 1914, p. 200. On the various tendencies in French Syndicalism, Cf. also. Rene Garmy, "Histoire du Mouvement Syndical en France," Bureau d'Editions, Paris, 1933, Vol. I, pp. 189-198.

Though Levine's study is now out of date as a study of the Syndicalist movement taken in the concrete, it still represents an accurate expose of revolutionary syndicalism as such, for the simple reason that since the first War, Syndicalism has not developed as a revolutionary theory but has rather tended to lose its distinctive character and become simply another modified form of

ideal is simple to the point of naivete; <sup>35</sup> that ideal seemed possible to the Syndicalists only because they believed that in the very struggle to attain it, man himself would be transformed. The class struggle would, they were convinced, generate in the proletariat a sense of solidarity and a spirit of unselfishness. In the spirit engendered in the workmen by this struggle they saw presaged the very qualities that would make the new order possible.<sup>36</sup> Thus envisioning a psychological as well as an economic and political transformation, Syndicalism regarded itself as the power capable of regenerating the world.

It (Syndicalism) leads the workers to battle; it calls them to action, and shows itself as the power capable of regenerating the world.<sup>37</sup>

Socialism. Cf. Garmy, *op. cit.*, Vol. II passim; Westmeyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-322; M. R. Clark, "French Syndicalism of the Present," *The Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 38, pp. 317-327.

<sup>35</sup> "The worker desires to be the lord of the means of production which are employed in his particular undertaking. ... In contradistinction to Socialism which is the result of armchair study, syndicalist ideas spring direct from the mind of the ordinary man, who is always hostile to 'unearned' income obtained by some one else. Syndicalism, like Socialism aims at the abolition of the separation of worker from the means of production, only it proceeds by another method. Not all the workers will become the owners of all the means of production; those in a particular industry or undertaking, or the workers engaged in a complete branch of production will obtain the means of production employed in it. The railways to the railway men, the mines to the miners, the factories to the factory hands—this is the slogan." Ludwig Von Mises, "Socialism," transi. J. Kahane, Jonathan Cape, London, 1936, pp. 270-271. "Syndicalism has never been anything else but the ideal of plundering hordes." *Ibid.*, p. 275. Syndicalism moreover held that the State would have to be abolished and that in its place would be established control by the syndicates themselves. C. F. Levine *op. cit.* pp. 136-137.

<sup>39</sup> "Dans les groupements syndicaux, il essaie d'organiser la liberté, d'éliminer toute autorité et d'accoutumer les ouvriers à se passer de maîtres. Plus de centralisme étouffant, plus de pouvoir coercitif, mais un large fédéralisme, une complète autonomie, une extrême souplesse dans le mécanisme, intérieur, un, appel constant aux sentiments d'initiative, de responsabilité et de lutte, qui transfigurent la personnalité ouvrière en lui donnant son maximum de tension et d'énergie. H. Lagardelle, in "La partie Socialiste et la Confédération du Travail." Rivière, Paris, 1908, p. 25. A further elaboration on this theme involves a description of the Syndicalist doctrine of "direct action." This is treated extensively in the fourth chapter. Cf. p. 58 ff.

<sup>37</sup> V. Griffuelles et L. Nice, ex secrétaires de la Confédération Generale du

Syndicalist ideas found their most complete expression in the doctrine of Georges Sorel.<sup>38</sup> His chief concern seems to have been the lack of an adequate ethic in the society of the day. Indeed as / Pirou, his sympathetic biographer admits, Sorel's revolutionary aspirations appear to spring not so much from a consciousness of the needs of the proletariat as from a conviction of the moral disintegration of society as a whole.<sup>39</sup> His constant theme is the inability of the bourgeoisie to inspire and maintain a decent society—a society based on principles of solidarity, cooperation and unselfishness.

Sublimity is dead in the middle classes and they are doomed to possess no ethic in the future.<sup>40</sup>

Travail," "Les Objectifs de nos Luites de Classes." La Publication Sociale, Paris, p. 38.

<sup>38</sup> Though the name of Sorel is invariably associated with Revolutionary Syndicalism, he was not, as is sometimes thought, the inspirer of the movement. He simply elaborated the ideas which grew up in the practical movement. Cf. Levine, *op. cit.*, p. 155 ff. But we must not, however, suppose that he did not have a considerable influence on the movement. Though he did not inaugurate the movement, the workers did turn to him for the expression of their ideas. *Loc. cit.* Jaurès ironically dubbed him the "metaphysician of revolutionary syndicalism."

<sup>39</sup> G. Pirou, "Georges Sorel," Riviere, Paris, 1927, p. 58 ff. In fact though Sorel is best known for his syndicalism, he frequently changed his social doctrine. Cf. F. D. Cheydeur, "Essai sur l'Evolution des doctrines de M. Georges Sorel." Theses Lettres, Grenoble, p. 114. "Sorel's main interest was in advocating irrationalism and romantic heroism in political life, and to these two doctrines his other ideas are subordinated. For a while Sorel saw in Syndicalism the finest embodiment of irrationalism and romantic heroism and hence preached Syndicalism. But he was prepared to admit that he might be mistaken on this point; that irrationalism and romantic heroism might be better expressed in some other political creed, in which case he was perfectly willing to change from syndicalism to the new ideology. Late in life he switched from pure syndicalism, with its anarchistic dislike of a sovereign political unit, to bolshevism, with its ideology of an omnipotent and despotic state. At other times he flirted with the French revolutionary monarchists." William Montgomery McGovern, "From Luther to Hitler." Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, N. Y., 1941, p. 428. Freund says of him, "Es gibt nirgends einen wirklichen inneren Bruch. Was man von Edmund Burke gesagt hat: he changed front but he never changed ground, gilt auch von ihm." M. Freund, "Georges Sorel, der revolutionäre Konservatismus," Klosterman Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1932, p. 40.

<sup>40</sup> Georges Sorel, "Reflections on Violence," transi. T. E. Hulme, B. E. 4



His complaint is that in the capitalist social order that is no force capable of producing "that enthusiasm without whose cooperation no morality is possible."<sup>41</sup> The whole system must therefore be eliminated. He professes pessimism, declaring that "the pessimist regards social conditions as forming a system bound together by an iron law which cannot disappear except in a catastrophe which involves the whole."<sup>42</sup>

The new morality which he desires will result however, not so much from the economic transformation itself as from the very struggle by which this was accomplished. To be more precise, it will be the product of proletarian violence. This is the focal point of his theory.

It is to violence that Socialism owes those high ethical values by means of which it brings salvation to the modern world.<sup>43</sup>

### *Revolution in Fascism*

Fascism represents an interesting study in the development of a revolutionary ideology. Originating as a movement designed to avert the chaos that threatened Italy in the post-war period, its point of departure was opposition to Marxism and a conviction of the necessity of force and determination.<sup>44</sup> Its attitude was typically expressed in Mussolini's statement.

Huebscb, N. Y. 1912, p. 269. In the "Illusions du Progress" (2nd edit. Paris, 1911), he shows the general connection between democratic ideas and the economic conditions of the time.

<sup>41</sup> "Reflections," p. 294.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 11. "Le socialisme est une question morale, en ce sens qu'il apporte au monde une nouvelle manière de juger tous les actes humains ou suivant une célèbre expression de Nietzsche, une nouvelle évaluation de toutes les valeurs. Il pose devant le monde bourgeois comme son adversaire irréconciliable, le, menaçant d'une *catastrophe* morale, plus encore que d'une *catastrophe matérielle*." Sorel, "Matériaux d'une théorie du prolétariat" Rivière, Paris, 1921, (deuxième édition), pp. 170-171.

<sup>43</sup> "Reflections," p. 295. This point will be elaborated in the next chapter.

<sup>44</sup> L. Villari, "Italy," Scribner's, New York, 1929, contains a pro-Fascist but adequate and scholarly account of the rise of Fascism. A. Rossi, "The Rise of Italian Fascism" (transl. E. & D. Wait, London, Methuen, 1938), is a good

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Our program is simple: we wish to govern Italy. People ask for programs. But there are too many programs already. Italy does not need programs of salvation. What is needed is men and will power.<sup>45</sup>

Yet after two years Mussolini was forced to admit that this would never do. This simple activism was in itself insufficient as an ideological bulwark. He declared that if Fascism was to retain its hold and to develop it would need a more pretentious and appealing doctrine.

If Fascism does not wish to die, or worse still, to commit suicide, it must now provide itself with a doctrine.<sup>46</sup>

From our present point of view, the significant thing about the doctrine then elaborated is the insistence on the "ethical character"

account of the events leading up to the seizure of power. Herman Finer, "Mussolini's Italy," London, V. Gollancz, 1935, is an excellent treatment of the whole subject.

For the structure of the Fascist state cf. G. Lowell Field, "The Syndical and Corporative Institutions of Italian Fascism." Columbia U., N. Y., 1938. This work also contains an excellent and impartial introduction on the development of Fascism. Cf. also F. Pitigliari, "The Italian Corporative State." P. S. King & Son, London, 1933; Schneider, "Making the Fascist State," Oxford U. Press, N. Y., 1928, G. Salvemini, "Under the Axe of Fascism," Viking Press, N. Y., 1936, gives a scholarly account of the movement after the accession to power. Luigi Sturzo, "Italy and Fascism," trans. B. B. Carter, London, Faber and Gueyer, 1926. G. Megaro, "Mussolini in the Making," Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1938, a revealing account of Mussolini's early life. B. Mussolini, "My Autobiography," Scribner's, N. Y., 1928.

<sup>45</sup> "Il nostro programma è semplice: vogliamo governare l'Italia. Ci si dice "Programmi." Ma di programmi ce ne sono anche troppi. Non sono i programmi di salvezza che mancano all'Italia. Sono gli uomini e la volontà."

Scritti e Discorsi di Benito Mussolini, *Éditio Definitiva*, Milan, 1934, Vol. II, p. 315. In the early years Mussolini even went so far as to preach individualism (S. D. II, 54) and to declare that the state must play a secondary role (S. D. II, 187). He even asserted that the state should renounce economic functions and leave the field free for private enterprise (S. D. III, 89, 90). Yet at the same time he did not hesitate to express a distrust of liberalism (S. D. II, 53). Nor was he at all abashed at the idea that he might be contradicting himself (S. D. II, 335).

<sup>46</sup> B. Mussolini, "Fascism, Doctrine and Institutions," Ardita, Roma, 1935, p. 33.

of the State.<sup>47</sup>48 The State is not merely the "passive policeman" of the liberal tradition. Fascism recognizes no domain of human life that can be lived apart from the State.<sup>18</sup> It proposes to remake, not merely the conditions of man's life but man himself.

The Fascist State, as a higher and more powerful expression of personality, is a force, but a spiritual one. It sums up all the manifestations of the moral and intellectual life of man. Its functions cannot therefore, be limited to those of enforcing order and keeping the peace, as the Liberal doctrine had it. It is no mere mechanical device for defining the sphere within which the individual may duly exercise his supposed rights. The Fascist State is an inwardly accepted standard and rule of conduct, a discipline of the whole person: it permeates the will no less than the intellect. It stands for a principle which becomes the central motive of man as a member of civilized society, sinking deep down into his personality; it dwells in the heart of the man of action and of the thinker, of the artist and of the man of science, soul of the soul.

Fascism, in short is not only a lawgiver and a founder of institutions, but an educator and a promoter of spiritual life. It aims

47 "The Fascist society is conscious, it has a will, that is why it is qualified to be the ethical state" (S. D. VIII, 84). "The Fascist conception of life is a religious one, in which man is viewed in his immanent relation to a higher law, endowed with an objective will transcending the individual and raising him to conscious membership of a spiritual society." "Fascism, Doctrine and Institutions," p. 9. Cf. Mussolini's speech to the Chamber of Deputies, May 13, 1929 (S. D. VIII, 104-105). This element of Fascism is particularly stressed by J. J. Barnes, "The Universal Aspects of Fascism" (pro Fascist), Williams and Norgate, London, 1928, *passim*. "Through the inadequacy of the individual will and the difficulties of reconciling its autonomy with its subordination for social ends to the will of majority, the State came to be perceived as a vital and perennial totality of these very individuals. This was the title of State to the name of 'ethical': the State alone therefore would be truly free, for no one could lay down rules for it and no one could bind it either inwardly or outwardly. Being free, the State itself would be morality because it was the State. . . . This implies the 'Ethical State,' origin and fount of liberty, morality and right, norm and end of individuals who in the State find unity and sublimation." L. Sturzo, "Church and State," N. Y., Longmans, Green, 1939, pp. 530-531.

48 "The Fascist conception of life is all embracing; outside of it, no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have value." "Fascism," p. 11. Cf. also Speech of Sept. 14, 1929, S. D. VII, p. 132.

at refashioning not only the forms of life, but their content—man, his character and his faith. To achieve this purpose it enforces discipline and uses authority, entering into the soul and ruling there with undisputed sway.<sup>49</sup>

Thus Fascism deliberately assumes the form of a crusade for moral rehabilitation. That Fascism, learning from experience, did this, as it were, in cold blood, is of great significance. It is a conscious testimony to the fact that such an ideology is an essential requirement for a contemporary revolutionary movement.

#### *Revolution in Nazism*

Like Fascism, Nazism originated as a movement designed to remedy post-war chaos?" But unlike Fascism, Nazism possessed, from the very beginning, a more or less complete ideology—the doctrine of the superiority of the Aryan race.

Everything that today we admire on this earth—science and art, technique and inventions—is only the creative product of a few peoples and perhaps originally of *one* race. On them now depends also the existence of this entire culture. If they perish, then the beauty of this earth sinks into the grave with them ... If one were to divide mankind into three groups: culture-founders, culture-bearers, and culture-destroyers, then, as representative of the first kind, only the Aryan would come into question.<sup>51</sup>

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This belief in the inherent superiority of the German race was a basic theme in the Nazi protest against the current social disorder. What they felt most keenly was not merely social disorder as such, but the fact that this should have happened to the superior German people. Hitler explained it all by declaring that Germany had failed to recognize the primary importance of the racial principle<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> "Fascism," pp. 13-14.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. especially K. Heiden, "A History of National Socialism," 1935. F. L. Schuman, "The Nazi Dictatorship," Alfred A. Knopf, N. Y., 1936, 2nd revised edition. H. Lichtenberger, "The Third Reich," trans. and edit. by K. S. Pinson. Greystone Press, N. Y., 1937. (The editor of this edition has added a number of appendices reprinting in full much important source material.)

<sup>51</sup> Adolph Hitler, "Mein Kampf." Reynal and Hitchcock, N. Y., 1939, pp. 396, 398.

If we let all the causes of the German collapse pass before our eyes, there remains as the ultimate and decisive cause, the non-recognition of the race problem and especially of the Jewish danger.

The defeats in the battle-field of August, 1918, would have been easily bearable. They were out of proportion to the victories of our people. Not the defeats have overthrown us, but we were overthrown by that power which prepared these defeats by robbing our people systematically, for many decades, of its political and moral instincts and forces which alone enable and entitle peoples to exist in this world.

The old Reich, by inattentively passing by the question of the preservation of the racial foundations of our nationality, disregarded also the sole right which alone gives life in this world??

The object of the Nazi movement was to correct this neglect and to make the racial principle the governing law of national life.<sup>53</sup> The State, as the Nazis envisioned it ought to make every effort to purify, preserve and protect "the primal, racial elements."<sup>54</sup> It was in terms of this aim that Nazism formulated its political and economic demands.<sup>55</sup> In the Jews, Nazism professed to find the greatest menace to the German race. An admixture of Jewish blood polluted and degraded the racial strain. Jewish "high finance" was responsible for the poverty and unemployment that so hampered the development of the race. Anti-Semitic legislation was, therefore,, a necessary corollary of the racial principle. Consequently Marxism, a supposedly Jewish doctrine, was the veritable *bete noir* of the Nazis. Other measures, such as those for the protection of the small farmer were

<sup>TM</sup>*Op cit.*, pp. 451-452. Cf. also Ch. X, "The Causes of the Collapse," pp. 302-388, "The deepest and ultimate cause for the ruin of the old Reich was found in the non-recognition of the race problem and its importance for the historical development of the people." *Ibid.*, p. 388.

<sup>83</sup> "It had to recognize the eternal values of blood and soil and raise them to the level of the governing laws of life." Hitler, speech of Sept. 6, 1938. "My New Order" (selection of Hitler's speeches), edited by Raoul de Roussy de Sales, Reynal and Hitchcock, N. Y., p. 494.

<sup>84</sup> "Mein Kampf," p. 595.

<sup>55</sup> These were officially expressed in the twenty-five points of the National Socialist Party Program of February 24, 1920. "Hitler's Official Programme," Allen and Unwin, London, 1938. Hitler frankly declared: "Economics is a secondary matter." Speech of September 18, 1922. "My New Order," p. 45.

also related to the racial principles. In an hereditary peasantry, Nazism saw a particular racial value derived from contact with the soil.<sup>56</sup>

These primal racial elements if protected and preserved, would, Hitler promised, give rise to the "dignity and beauty of a higher humanity." "The highest purpose of the folkish state," he declared, "is the preservation of those racial primal elements which supplying culture create the beauty and dignity of a higher humanity."<sup>57</sup> The Nazi struggle was not presented merely as a crusade for economic amelioration but as "an attack for the sake of a new spiritual direction." The question at issue was that of "a new way of life." The movement was "to instill a new faith."<sup>58</sup> Its accession to power was to be accompanied by "a moral purging of the body corporate."<sup>59</sup> Rosenberg's declaration furnished a succinct statement of the proposed ideal.

This is the mission of our century: out of a new life myth to create a new human type.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> The blood and soil theory was especially emphasized by W. Darre. Cf. R. Walther Darre, "Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der Nordischen Rasse," München, J. F. Lehmann, 1929; "Neuadel aus Blut und Boden," München, Berlin, J. F. Lehmann, 1939.

<sup>57</sup> *M. K.*, p. 595.

<sup>58</sup> "That is the mightiest thing which our movement must create—for these widespread, seeking and straying masses a new Faith which will not fail them in this hour of confusion, to which they can pledge themselves, on which they can build so that they may at last find once again a place which may bring calm to their hearts." Speech, April 12, 1922, "My New Order," p. 27. Cf. also Speech of August 1, 1923. *O'p.*, *tit.*, p. 66.

<sup>59</sup> Speech, March 23, 1933, "My New Order," p. 753.

<sup>60</sup> "Das ist die Aufgabe unseres Jahrhunderts: aus einem neuen Lebens-Mythus einen neuen Menschentypus schaffen." A. Rosenberg, "Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts," München, Hoheneichen Verlag, 1930, p. 22. "Das Wesen der heutigen Weltrevolution liegt im Erwachen der rasischen Typen." *Ibid.*, p. 452. "... einen Mythus zu erleben und einen Typus zu schaffen. Und aus diesen Typus heraus, Staat und Leben zu bauen." *Ibid.*, p. 454.

That these various movements are the products of various historical situations, that their political and economic panaceas differ and that their complaints are expressed in terms of different philosophical theories, is obvious. Yet from this survey it has become apparent that what they do have in common is a deep-seated and all-embracing dissatisfaction with the existing order. The revolution they call for is in no case the mere *coup d'état*, or the transfer of political power. What they have in mind is a *drastic* revision of the old political and economic order. Yet the envisioned transformation is to be more than merely political and economic; it is to be psychological and ethical as well. All of the revolutionaries in some measure echo Bakunin's demand that we "transform completely the milieu in which we live." 61 They would remake not merely the forms of social life, but man himself.

This, then, is the distinctive and startling feature of modern revolutionary movements. Political disturbances are not a new phenomenon, and revolt itself is as old as human nature. Yet this agitation for the complete remodeling of society is a thing relatively unique in the annals of revolutionary movements. That men should be drawn to such a crusade is perhaps a symptom of modern man's uneasiness about his culture and civilization; and that men should seek to achieve such a transformation through the agency of politico-social movements is undoubtedly an indication of the secularization of the modern world.<sup>62</sup> But at any rate however, it is this feature which gives a common cast to all of these movements and which enables us to group them together under the common heading of "modern revolutionary movements."

Among certain circles of "scholarly" analysts and "hard-headed" men of affairs, it has become the custom to scoff at the broader pretensions of modern revolutionary movements. Such abstract, "ideal" elements are ignored either on the ground of their seeming absurdity or on the ground of the probable insincerity of those who propose them.<sup>63</sup> Such objections are, however, completely beside the point.

ei Cf. *infra*, p. 10.

¶ Cf. C. Dawson, "Progress and Religion," Sheed & Ward, New York, 1938, pp. 240-241.

63 Cf. e. g., H. Rauschnig, "The Revolution of Nihilism" (transi. E. W.

The very fact that each of these movements *has* appeared in such an ideological dress, the very fact that the revolutionaries themselves have chosen ethico-psychological ideals as the rallying ground of their movements is in itself sufficient to imprint a distinctive character on each of these movements.

Moreover it would be a serious mistake to assume that such "ideal" elements have no psychological effect upon the masses. Actually there is in all men an incurably idealistic strain. The common man is not nearly so prosaic in his outlook as might sometimes appear. He always fights better if a struggle is presented as a crusade, and he always prefers to think that his wars are waged not merely for "bread," but for "liberty."

It is a comment on the essentially mystic character of the human race, that even extreme discontent with existing conditions, though voiced by the most eloquent publicists and reenforced by the strongest economic incentives never of itself produces a real revolution. If such a revolution is to eventuate a dynamic of a genuinely spiritual and religious kind is necessary.<sup>64</sup>

Dickes), Alliance Book Corporation. Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1939, p. 49, and passim. Rauschnig, a disillusioned Nazi, made a best-seller out of the thesis that Nazism is a "doctrineless dynamism." Yet there is a certain confusion in his analysis because at one time he uses this phrase to designate the sheer cynical opportunism of the leaders and at another time to designate the romantic irrationalism of the ideology itself. Yet these are in fact, very different things. In the first case, "doctrineless, dynamism" implies a cynical disregard of all principles that might stand in the way of personal aggrandizement. In the second case it involves a disregard of all absolute values other than the value of the developing "Volkgeist" or racial spirit. Though Rauschnig's books are invaluable storehouses of information, his ideological analyses are faulty precisely because he confuses the "irrationality" born of cynical self-aggrandizement with the glorified irrationality born of belief in the Aryan race. Writing as a cynical party-member, and as a disillusioned and resentful one at that, he fails to realize, or at least to portray, the function that the ideology plays with respect to the mass of the people.

We have discussed Rauschnig's attitude in particular because, as Viereck points out, Rauschnig has been influential in leading many Americans to underestimate the part played by the ideological formulas. P. Viereck, "Metapolitics," Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1941, p. 214.

<sup>64</sup> Lyford P. Edwards, "The Natural History of Revolution," U. of Chicago Press, 1927, p. 90; cf. also, G. Le Bon, "The Psychology of Revolution," transi. B. Miall, T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1933, passim. It may also be ob-



At any rate, the modern revolution does present itself in such a light. On all occasions it maintains its spiritual, or at least, ethico-psychological character. This ethico-psychological orientation is then an indispensable clue to the true understanding of modern revolution if for no other reason than the fact that it is so consistently adopted.

served that the fact that ordinary man does understand the fine spun arguments involved in an ideology is no indication that such arguments have no influence upon him. Pareto's verdict is essentially just and true to fact: "The plain man admires them ('fine spun theological disquisitions') without understanding them, and that admiration serves to endow them with a prestige that is carried over to the conclusions. That was the case in our day with Marx's Capital." V. Pareto, "The Mind and Society" (transl. of "Trattato di Sociologia Generale." edit. Arthur Livingston), New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1935, Vol. III, p. 895, § 1416, no. 3.

## CHAPTER II

### IRRATIONALITY AS MANIFESTED IN THE CONCEPT OF *NECESSARY PROGRESS*

#### Introduction—Revolutionary Irrationality in General

It will have already become apparent that none of these revolutionaries are content merely to present a complaint or a platform. Nor are they satisfied with a mere analysis of the tactical problems involved in the seizure of power. Each of these movements presents in some particular form, a broad conception of life, of society and of the underlying factors involved in social development. It is in terms of such a philosophy that their complaints and hopes are expressed. For example, the Nazi complaint is that society is degenerating because the significance of Aryan blood is ignored and Nazi hope is predicated upon confidence in the creative power latent in that blood. The object of the revolution, as they conceive it, is to awaken this slumbering power.

"It would seem," declares Edwards, "that in order to carry out any social task of especially great difficulty and danger, a group must be in some way spiritually strengthened, or reenforced in morale." <sup>1</sup> In the last chapter we pointed out that the modern revolutionary movement formulates its proposals in such a way as to give expression to all the longings of the oppressed or disgruntled people. Among these it includes the spiritual and the pseudo-spiritual as well as the purely political or social aspirations. It is precisely in the attempt to lend credibility to such an all-inclusive hope that the revolutionaries present some such broad conception of life as we have referred to. Confidence in the value of a particular insurrectionary technique may engender belief in the possibility of seizing power, but if one is to believe that the revolution will transform the face of the earth and the heart of man, the motives of credibility must be of a more "mystical" or "philosophical" character. The group must, as Edwards

<sup>1</sup> Edwards, "The Natural History of Revolution," Chicago, 1927, p. 92.

goes on, "be made to feel that it is 'carrying out the will of God,' 'altering the course of history,' 'co-operating with the forces of evolution' or something of a like transcendental sort." <sup>2</sup> In other words, it must be made to feel that the advent of this complete transformation is guaranteed by the existence in the social matrix, of certain "transcendental" forces, forces which are either already at work, or which will be evoked by the revolution itself.

Such conceptions are, at any rate, present in the ideologies of all these movements. Our present task is to see if we can discover in these various conceptions, a common element which deserves to be designated as a basic philosophical principle of modern revolution. At first sight, one is of course, struck only by the manifold diversities. Yet a closer investigation reveals that in spite of divergent doctrines and varying terminologies, there are three closely related notions which constantly recur in these ideologies. These are (1) the concept of the primacy and creative value of action itself; (2) the concept of a mystic force or creative power latent either in the mass of the people, or in some special racial group; and (3) the concept of necessary progress, i. e., the belief that society is moving to a more desirable order in virtue of an inescapable law of evolutionary development.

Now it is possible to discuss modern revolution simply by showing how these notions are related, and how one or more of them is manifested in each of the revolutionary ideologies. We shall indeed, do this; in these chapters we shall depart from the chronological order followed in the previous chapter and consider the various ideologies according to this three-fold classification. But as we go about this, it is impossible, however to avoid the further query: may not these three notions themselves be only varying manifestations of a yet more fundamental concept?

As a matter of fact when we actually examine the different ideologies, there emerges the startling conclusion that in all of them, reason is either outlawed or relegated to a position of secondary importance, and social progress is rendered independent of any ingenuity or resourcefulness that reason may manifest. However opposed the modern revolutionaries may be in other respects, all of them have, with

<sup>2</sup> Edwards, *loc. cit.*

an almost clairvoyant assurance, formulated their ideologies in such a way as to dispense the revolution from the necessity of rational guidance. The practical conclusion is in each case, that reason is in no sense, the arbiter of man's social destiny. It is not necessary either to present a rationally elaborated plan of the future order or a rational demonstration of its intrinsic possibility. Reason is never in a position to lay down prescriptions or norms for the practical movement. This is true with regard to prescriptions about purely sociological questions and it is even more apparent with regard to ethical issues. The outcome of each of the ideologies is the theory that the revolution is exempted both from any essential dependence on or criticism from reason.

Indeed, it seems apparent that the very inner logic of revolution demands some such exemption from the direction and guidance of reason. The revolutionary aims at action, but only too often sober analysis and critical reflection counsel instead, doubt and hesitation. Moreover, as Le Bon repeatedly insisted, it is in its very independence of reason and in its immunity to rational criticism, that the strength and driving power of a revolutionary ideology resides.

“Although in its beginnings, a religious or political revolution may very well be supported by rational elements, it is developed only by the aid of mystic or effective elements which are absolutely foreign to reason.”<sup>3</sup>

Though our conclusion as to the basic irrationality of modern revolution will be shown to be derived from an analysis of the doctrines actually contained in the various ideologies and not merely from such psychological, relatively a priori considerations, such considerations do substantiate the conviction that in this irrationality we have a principle basic to the revolutionary mentality. Mannheim declares that we ought to attempt “to comprehend the theories and their mutations in close relation to the collective groups and typical total situations out of which they arose and whose exponents they are.” He points out “that social groups, having a certain type of

structure formulate theories corresponding to their interests as perceived by them in certain situations." "As a result," he declares, "for each specific situation there are discovered certain modes of thinking and possibilities of orientation."<sup>4</sup> The very presence of this basic irrationality in each of the otherwise varying ideologies, does, we believe, indicate that it is this which is the theory corresponding to the specific situation of the revolutionary. The irrationality may be expressed in terms of varying philosophic theories, but it is the irrationality which is the basic note of the philosophy of revolution as such.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Karl Mannheim, "Ideology and Utopia," N. Y., Harcourt, Brace, 1936, pp. 156-157. Mannheim also develops this idea in his "Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction," N. Y., Harcourt, Brace, 1940, pp. 15-35, where he speaks of the need for a "psychology which would be socially and historically relevant."

<sup>5</sup> It must be kept in mind that reason is here taken to refer to the individual human faculty. In modern times the words "reason" and "rationality" have come to be used in a bewildering variety of senses. Much of the blame for this confusion must be laid at the door of absolute idealism. In the philosophy of Hegel, e.g., social development is viewed as rational and a work of reason, simply because it is supposedly the manifestation of the absolute idea. Thus it is that Marcuse, after presenting a valuable analysis of the irrationalism of the positivist philosophy of the school of Comte, claims that this is the exact opposite of Hegel. "The ideological roots of authoritarianism have their soil in the violent reaction against Hegel that styled itself the 'positive philosophy.' The destruction of the principle of reason, the interpretation of society in terms of nature and the subordination of thought to the inexorable dynamics of the given operated in the Romanticist philosophy of the state, in the historical school, in Comte's sociology. There, anti-Hegelian tendencies joined forces with the irrational philosophies of life, history, existence, that arose in the last decade of the nineteenth century and built the ideological framework for the assault on Liberalism." H. Marcuse, "Reason and Revolution; Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory," Oxford U. Press, 1941, p. 418. All that need be said of Marcuse's contention is that he is deceived by an intellectualist façade. McGovern's comment disposes of Marcuse's whole theory.

"To the serious student of political thought it is clear that modern irrationalism, like modern traditionalism has its roots in the Hegelian philosophy. At first sight, to be sure, it does seem rather absurd to class Hegel among the founders of political irrationalism. In the realm of metaphysics Hegel was a thorough-going rationalist. To him, thought and being were the same thing; reason was not only the sovereign of the universe, but the universe

*The Concept of Necessary Progress*

The idea of necessary progress appears in its clearest and most typical form in Anarchism and Marxism. The notion that society was subject to an inescapable, automatically operative process of

itself was nothing more than the concrete embodiment of universal reason. Nevertheless, Hegel's philosophy was based on a revolt against rationalism in the affairs of state. In the first place Hegel insisted that his guiding principle was not mere understanding but reason—that is, understanding plus “spiritual insight”—thus introducing the non-logical or intuitive element. In the second place, Hegel stressed the difference between reflective or conscious reason and creative or unconscious reason, and insisted that all true political developments, the creations and transformations of states must be based upon unconscious and not upon conscious reason. From a belief in unconscious reason to a belief in pure intuitionism or pure irrationalism is only a short step.” William Montgomery McGovern, “From Luther to Hitler,” Houghton, Mifflin Co., Boston, 1941, p. 400.

In the parlance of sociology, rationality frequently means “that a series of actions is organized in such a way that it leads to a previously defined goal, every element in this series of actions receiving a functional position and role” (K. Mannheim, “Man and Society, in an Age of Reconstruction,” Harcourt, Brace & Co., N. Y., 1940, p. 53). This is what is called “functional rationality.” Such a functional rationality is verified in the case of biological organisms. Functional rationality does not in itself imply an ordination of human reason (*op. cit.*, p. 54). In contradistinction to “functional rationality,” Mannheim speaks of “substantial rationality.” “We define as substantially rational an act of thought which reveals intelligent insight into the inter-relations of events in a given situation” (*ibid.*, p. 53). Mannheim's distinction leaves much to be desired but it is at least obvious that in the one case he is describing the character of the system, and in the other the activity of the agent. (It should be clear that a positivistic scheme of social development can easily be classed as a “functionally rational” one.)

As a further example of the confusion that might arise we may cite Stahl's use of the word “rationalism.” He condemned modern revolution for its rationalism because he believed that the existing order represented the ordinance of God. “Rationalismus ist die Emancipation des Menschen von Gott, . . . es ist die Gegenglaube an den Menschen” (Friedrich Julius Stahl, “Was ist die Revolution?”, Wilhelm Schultz, Berlin, 1852, pp. 11, 12).

These notes are presented merely in order to indicate some of the pitfalls that must be avoided. An adequate analysis of current uses of the word “rational” would be a separate and lengthy study. (Some useful suggestions and a short bibliography are to be found in Mannheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-60.)

evolutionary development was a heritage from Positivism on the one hand and Hegelianism on the other. True to the Positivistic tradition, Proudhon defined society as "a superior being endowed with an independent life."<sup>6</sup> Kropotkin regarded humanity as "a whole that evolves simultaneously in the multitude of millions which it is composed."<sup>7</sup> He added, "If you wish for a comparison, you must take it rather in the laws of organic evolution than in those of inorganic moving body."<sup>8</sup> Marx conceived society as a whole which evolved according to the pattern of the Hegelian dialectic. In the class

<sup>6</sup> Proudhon, "General Idea of the Revolution," p. 76.

<sup>7</sup> Kropotkin, "Anarchism, Its Philosophy and Ideal," in "Revolutionary Pamphlets," p. 142. "The revolution we have gone through (Russia, 1917) is not the sum total of the efforts of separate individuals but a natural phenomenon, independent of the human will, a natural phenomenon similar to a typhoon, which rises suddenly on the coasts of Eastern Asia." Kropotkin, "The Russian Revolution and the Soviet Government," in "Revolutionary Pamphlets," p. 256.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Kropotkin gives a more detailed exposé of the nature of this evolution. In nature, progress and evolution result, he declares, from the tendency to seek equilibrium and harmony. "Harmony thus appears as a temporary adjustment established among all the forces acting upon a given spot—a provisory adaptation. And that adjustment will only last under one condition: that of being continually modified; of re-presenting every moment, the resultant of all conflicting actions. Let but one of these forces be hampered in its action for some time and harmony disappears. Force will accumulate its effect, it must come to light, it must exercise its action, and if other forces hinder its manifestation, it will not be annihilated by that, but will end by upsetting the present adjustment, by destroying harmony in order to find a new form of equilibrium and to work to form a new adaptation. Such is the eruption of a volcano, whose imprisoned force ends by breaking the petrified lavas which hindered them, to pour forth the gases, molten lavas and the incandescent ashes. Such also are the revolutions of mankind." *Op. cit.*, p. 121. "Society looks for harmony in an ever-changing and fugitive equilibrium between a multitude of varied forces and influences of every kind, following their own course—these forces themselves promoting the energies which are favorable to their march toward progress, toward the liberty of developing in broad daylight and counterbalancing one another. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>9</sup> This concept of revolution as a special phase of the evolutionary process was also developed by Elisee Reclus, "Evolution et Revolution," Bureau de la Revolte, Paris, 1891. Cf. also P. Kropotkin, "L'Idée Révolutionnaire dans la Revolution," Paris, Les Temps Nouveaux, 1913, p. 13.

struggle he saw that "unity of opposites" from which according to Hegel, all development resulted.<sup>9</sup>

These are of course important divergencies between the Anarchist and Marxist views. Yet the two theories are at one in making the revolution to be simply the expression of an immanent law of evolutionary development. This conception was of special value to those incipient movements in that it imparted a new confidence and hope. Feeble and impotent though their own efforts might seem, they could be confident because they believed that the moving hand of the evolutionary process was irresistibly hurrying society along the path that

<sup>9</sup> "What influenced him most was the Hegelian philosophy. It became the foundation of all his subsequent thought. It taught him (a) the organic conception of society, (b) the evolutionary view of history, and (c) the belief that progress is realized by means of a perennial conflict between opposing elements and forces." F. Hearnshaw, "A Survey of Socialism," Macmillan, London, 1929, p. 214.

McFadden summarizes the five outstanding characteristics of the Hegelian dialectic as follows:

- "1. Hegel believed that the idea is composed of a unity of opposites; or, better still, the idea is a unity of opposites or contradictory elements.
- "2. *Hegel* maintained that the idea progresses toward development by virtue of an inherent impulse. This immanent impulse or self motion which characterizes the idea, is the direct and necessary product of the contradiction inherent in it. The idea is, by its very nature, composed of contradictory elements; contradiction is productive of motion or progression; hence the nature of the idea, itself adequately accounts for its motion toward development.
- "3. The idea develops through negation, that is, the contradictory character of the idea produces a form of motion which turns the idea back upon itself, but always at a higher level. The dialectical interaction of the opposing elements which make up the idea result in what we might call a spiral form of development.
- "4. The universe is a constantly developing process, that is, all reality is inter-related and all things are in a state of continual interaction one upon another.
- "5. The development of ideas is capable of continuing on indefinitely, that is, the idea will always necessarily contain its opposite, and thus it will always be capable of further development through the dialectical process."

Charles J. McFadden, "The Philosophy of Communism," Benziger, N. Y., 1939, p. 33.



led to this desired transformation. The revolution could not be averted and could not be delayed, Proudhon declared. The only course open to the "vested interests" was to yield to it peacefully so that violence might be avoided.<sup>10</sup> The conflict, announced Marx, / was one inherent in the life conditions and social circumstances of the individuals.

At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression of the same thing—with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From the form of development of these forces of production, these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution?<sup>1</sup>

Since the revolution is merely the product of invariant evolutionary laws, men cannot control the course of social development. This was a cardinal principle of Comte.

Theological and metaphysical philosophy do not hold sway today except in the system of social study. They must be excluded from this final refuge. Mainly this will be done through\ the basic interpretation that social movement is necessarily sub- / ject to invariant physical laws, instead of being governed by some kind of will.<sup>12</sup>

One may observe and utilize the laws of nature but one cannot guide them. Proudhon echoes this thought when he declares that society

"I shall endeavor to show by what is passing before our eyes that just as the instinct for conservatism is inherent in every social institution, the need for revolution is equally irresistible; that every political party may become by turns revolutionary and reactionary; that these two terms, reaction and revolution, correlative of each other and mutually implying each other, are both essential to humanity, notwithstanding the conflicts between them, so that in order to avoid the rocks which menace society on the right and on the left, the only course is for reaction to continually change places with revolution." Proudhon, "General Idea of the Revolution," p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> K. Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy," International Library Publishing Co., N. Y., 1904, p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> A. Comte, "Cours de Philosophie Positive," 4th Edition, Paris, 1877, Vol. 4, p. 267.

i must be considered as remote from an}' attempt on our part to remake it arbitrarily.<sup>10</sup> Engels, too, asserts the essentially unconscious and involuntary nature of social development.

This may be viewed as the product of a power which, taken as a whole, works unconsciously and without volition. Thus past history proceeds in the manner of a natural process and is also essentially subject to the same laws of movement.<sup>34</sup>

Since there is no room for voluntary direction, a rationalized blue print of the new order is unnecessary. As the principles of development inherent in the seed determine the nature of *the* mature organism, so the very laws of social development determine the new structure of society. Any attempt to impose a rationally conceived plan upon society is an absurd impertinence and interference.

Marxism is particularly insistent on this point. This is abundantly clear from the savage Marxian rejection of anything savoring of "Utopianism." The earlier "Utopian Socialists" (Fourier, Owen, Cabet and a host of lesser lights) had had an exaggerated faith in reason. Convinced that social evils were due chiefly to ignorance, they contented themselves with formulating plans for the perfect social order. They felt that if men could only be brought to see the value of these schemes, they would be moved to put them into execution.<sup>35</sup> Actually, at the time, there seemed *to be* no other alternative

<sup>18</sup> Proudhon, "General Idea of the Revolution," p. 76.

<sup>14</sup> Letter of Engels to Bloch, Sept. 21, 1890, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Correspondence," 1846-1895, London, 1934, pp. 475-476.

<sup>15</sup> "One and all believed that with proper environment, man would be actually perfect. He was naturally good, but existing environment with its overwhelming imperfections and maladjustments destined him to evil and woe. Hence their utopianistic activities consisted mostly in educating man to a knowledge of the congenial environment and the devising of means to bring it to pass." J. O. Hertzler, "The History of Utopian Thought," London, George Allen and Unwin (preface dated 1922), p. 222.

"La raison de cette différence fondamentale est que l'utopisme, qui naît à une époque où le capitalisme est en voie de formation et où le prolétariat, peu développé n'entre pas encore en lutte ouverte contre la bourgeoisie, ne trouve pas dans le régime capitaliste les conditions de sa transformation et ne conçoit pas la lutte de classes comme moyen d'émancipation. Impuissants à dégager de la société même, des données présentes de la réalité . . . la solution des problèmes économiques, politiques ou sociaux qui se posent à eux, les

than that of appealing to the enlightened understanding of the dominant classes. However with the growth of the proletariat, another alternative appeared. The proletariat, as Marx saw it, could effect the transformation of society. Out of the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the new order was to be born. Thus society's salvation was to come through the development of a force already operative in it. Interpreting this in terms of Hegelian dialectic, Marx substituted a dynamic historical outlook for the static, rationalistic one of the Utopians.<sup>10</sup>

In so doing Marx rejected not merely the excesses of Utopian rationalism but all vestiges of true rationalism. Rationalized planning was outlawed; the future was to be left in the hands of the dialectical process. One could make certain predictions, but these could be only tentative. Marxism considers nationalized planning a hindrance rather than a help. Engels excoriates the Utopians for attempting to do this.

The solution of the social problems which as yet lay hidden in the undeveloped economic conditions, the Utopians attempted to evolve out of the human brain, Society presented nothing but wrongs; to remove this was the task of reason. It was necessary therefore, to discover a new and more perfect system of social

utopistes sont nécessairement amenés, pour les résoudre, à les transposer sur un plan différent, idéologique ou moral, et à recourir à une explication transcendente pour montrer comment s'effectue la transformation de la société." Cornu, *op. cit.*, p. 127. Cf. also, Rene Garmy, "Histoire du Mouvement Syndical en France," Bureau d'Editions, Paris, 1933, Vol. 1, p. 79 ff; Westmeyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-58.

<sup>10</sup> "Proposals to remake the whole social structure on a rational pattern were merely the logical outcome of the absolute and unhistorical thinking of the time. The Utopias were rather fantastic intellectual products because intellect and history had not yet learned to co-operate in anticipating future society. Because they lacked the historical point of view, they lacked knowledge of social movements or how to originate them. With the rise of a theory of history and the thrifty growth of an idea of development or evolution, real Utopias in the original sense have ceased to appear, for the necessity of Supposing an unrealizable state, or the necessity of superimposing a perfect society upon an imperfect one has ceased to be. This change dates from the birth of Hegelianism, and became definite later with the work of Marx, Spencer and Darwin along the lines of evolution." Hertzler, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

order and to impress this upon society from within. . . . These new social systems were foredoomed as Utopian; the more completely they were worked out in detail, the more they could not avoid drifting off into pure phantasies.<sup>17</sup>

Engels sums up the great contribution of Marxism or "Scientific Socialism."

From that time forward, socialism was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain, but the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its task was no longer to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible but to examine the historico-economic succession of events from which these classes and their antagonisms had of necessity sprung, and to discover in the economic conditions thus created, the means of ending the conflict.<sup>18</sup>

Marx's own criticism of the Utopians was equally scathing and was based on the same principles.

Historical action is to yield to their (the Utopians') personal inventive action, historically created conditions of emancipation to fantastic ones and the gradual spontaneous organization of the proletariat to an organization of society specially contrived by these inventors.<sup>19</sup>

For Marx, Socialism is simply "a necessity of nature, the inevitable outcome of the forces underlying social life"; its advent and the character of the social order that it will usher in is "something independent of the human will."<sup>20</sup> Reason cannot intervene to specify the line of development, nor can it prescribe for the coming new order. All this is decided by the interplay of the various factors at work in the social matrix. Reason undoubtedly plays a part in this, because it is from the conflict between man's political, philoso-

<sup>17</sup> F. Engels, "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific," transi. E. Avelling, International, N. Y., 1935, p. 36.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>19</sup> Communist Manifesto. The text of the Manifesto is that reprinted in the appendix to Westmeyer, *op. cit.* The quotation is from p. 551.

<sup>20</sup> Ludwig von Mises, "Socialism," transi. J. Kahane, London, Jonathan Cape, 1936, p. 281.

phic and religious theories and his economic condition that the dynamic of society arises. Yet with regard to the whole line of development this part is, as it were, that of a material cause rather than a formal or specifying cause. In the Marxian view there is, therefore, no place either for social planning or ethical norms. It becomes impossible for reason to say, "This ought to be" or "This ought not to be." Social science and ethics become descriptive and not normative disciplines.

The great advantage of such a theory is that it places the Marxian concept of the coming order securely beyond the need of rational defense and beyond the reach of rational criticism. Marx himself was convinced that Socialism represented "*what ought to be*," but thanks to the evolutionary doctrine he could meet any question about the intrinsic feasibility of the classless society, or any question about the psychological or ethical principles involved in it, by the simple assertion that this was the goal toward which society was evolving. It might be very difficult to prove that this is *what ought to be*, but for the Marxist it is not only unnecessary to prove this, but absurd even to think of proving it. It is sufficient to know that the classless society represents *what is to be*. No problem, no inherent difficulty, no rationalized objection need be taken seriously. The one certain thing is the dialectical development of society; in the course of that development all problems will be solved and all difficulties will disappear. Faith in the dialectic is the solvent of all objections. It is the recognition of this attitude which enables Von Mises to assert that:

Marxism is thus the most radical of all reactions against the reign of scientific thought over life and action. . . . It is against Logic, against Science and against the activity of thought itself—its outstanding principle is the prohibition of thought and inquiry, especially as applied to the institutions and workings of a socialist economy.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 17. Cf. also pp. 28-31, p. 281 ff. This is the verdict, not of a pamphleteer, but of an outstanding scholar, who had himself become the target of abuse for such very attempts to examine the working of Socialist economy. Cf. also Max Eastman, "Marxism, Is It Science?", N. Y., W. W. Norton & Co., 1940, *passim*.

Communist theory is a theory not of the goal but of the process. Its function is to point out which of the immediately possible courses of action will best further the dialectical process. This is particularly evident in Lenin's teaching. Lenin declared, "Without a revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement." -- Superficial observers sometimes hail this as an evidence of true rationalism. This is a complete misinterpretation. Lenin simply meant that the proletariat must be guided in its struggle by a revolutionary intelligensia. It had become apparent to Lenin that the workmen, if left to themselves tended to forget the class struggle.

Taken by themselves, these strikes (of the nineties) were simply trade union struggles, but not yet Social-Democratic struggles. They testified to the awakening antagonisms between workers and employers, but the workers were not and could not be conscious of the irreconcilable antagonism of their interests to the whole of the modern political and social system. It was not yet Social-Democratic consciousness. . . . We said that there *could not yet* be Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. This consciousness could only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only a trade-union consciousness, i. e., it may itself realize the necessity for combining in unions, for fighting against the employers and for striving to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc. . . . There is a lot of talk about spontaneity, but the spontaneous development of the labor movement leads to its becoming subordinated to bourgeois ideology.<sup>22</sup>

If this were to be allowed to happen there would be no dialectical development and no proletarian revolution. It was therefore necessary to have a revolutionary élite who should guide the proletariat along the path of dialectical development. The theory that he called for was simply an understanding of the dialectical process.<sup>24</sup> It was,

<sup>22</sup> Lenin, "What is to be Done?" V. I. Lenin, "Selected Works," International Publishers, N. Y., Vol. II, p. 47.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53; 62. This idea is, in fact, the leit-motif of the work.

<sup>24</sup> In "What is to be Done?" Lenin is dealing with the question of revolutionary tactics. His thesis is that in this matter the masses must be guided by a revolutionary élite who determine the tactical line according to their own deeper understanding of the dialectic. Note the following statement of

most emphatically, not a rationalized picture of the new order. He insisted that the structure of the new order could only be determined from below.

Such workers, average people of the masses . . . are capable (in fact *are alone* capable) of determining the whole outcome of our movement.<sup>25</sup>

His view is adequately summed up in the statement of Stepun that Lenin "contented himself with the faith that the proletariat would soon give the world the prototypal true socialism, providing he succeeded in giving the proletariat an organization typically pure, straight and strict."<sup>26</sup>

In Lenin's view society would be like a railroad train which could only move along the tracks of dialectical development. Reason must guide the train to keep it from jumping the tracks but the path of the tracks can alone determine the direction of the social movement. At best Lenin's theory can only appear as an attempt to rationalize the irrational. But the irrational element always remains the basic and specifying factor. Elliott's generalized verdict is particularly true of Leninism.

Lenin; "The highest task of humanity is to comprehend the objective logic of the economic evolution." "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism," "Selected Works of V. I. Lenin," International, N. Y., 1927, Vol. 13, P. 280.

<sup>25</sup> We quote Hook's explanation of the meaning of Leninist theory: "Scientific knowledge was not merely a disinterested report of objective tendencies in the economic world, but a critical appreciation of the possibilities of Political action liberated by such knowledge." Sidney Hook, "Toward the Understanding of Karl Marx," London, Victor Gollancz, 1933, p. 55.

<sup>26</sup> "What Is to Be Done?," *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 124. Leon Trotsky expresses the same notion: "The revolution has come. It has destroyed the plans of many politicians who had dared to make their little political calculations with no regard for their master, the revolutionary people. The Revolution has come. It has destroyed scores of superstitions, and has manifested the power of the programme which is founded on the revolutionary logic of the development of the masses." Leon Trotsky, "The Events in St. Petersburg," Document 150 in "Revolution from 1789-1906," Documents selected and edited by R. W. Postgate, London, 1920, p. 159.

<sup>27</sup> Fedor Stepun, "The Russian Soul and Revolution," transi. E. Huntress, London, Scribner's, 1936, p. 110.

We can certainly speak of the Zeitgeist of our own day as an intellectualized distrust of the intellect.<sup>27</sup>

In discussing the "rationalism" of Marxism, one must always bear in mind the distinction expressed by Niebuhr:

It is itself a type of rationalism; for it believes in the forming and creative capacity of reason, *though not of human reason*. The creative human force in history lies below the level of reason in the vital impulses which are expressed in the dynamic of class relations. But it believes that these vital impulses are under the simple control of a higher logic, a dialectic of history.<sup>28</sup>

Marxism pins its faith in the "forming power of a dialectical supra-human historical logic." If Marxism wishes to label itself as "rationalistic" its usage can doubtless be justified. What is important is not the word, but the meaning that is attached to the word. And what is certain is that Marxist rationalism implies no faith in or dependence upon human reason.

The position of Anarchism with regard to the function of reason is often misunderstood—due largely to the fault of the Anarchists themselves. Anarchism always remained a loosely articulated body of doctrine. Indeed individual Anarchists are often guilty of more or less conflicting statements. It is not surprising then, that in Anarchism, there should appear seeming elements of Utopianism. Such, for example, is the statement of Kropotkin.

No struggle can be successful if it does not render itself a clear and concise account of its aim. No destruction of the existing order is possible, if at the time of the overthrow, or of the struggle leading to the overthrow, the idea of what is to take place, of what is to be destroyed, is not always present in the mind.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> W. Y. Elliott, "The Pragmatic Revolt in Politics," N. Y. Macmillan, 1928, p. 317.

<sup>28</sup> R. Niebuhr, "The Nature and Destiny of Man" (I Human Nature), N. Y., Scribner's, 1941, p. SI. Cf. also what has already been said about the meaning of "rationalism" in footnote 2 of this chapter.

<sup>29</sup> "Modern Science and Anarchism," "Revolutionary Pamphlets," p. 156.



This savors of Utopianism; but it cannot possibly be reconciled with another equally explicit statement of Kropotkin's.

The revolution bursts out long before a general understanding has come, and those who have a clear idea of what should be done the next day are only a very small minority. The great mass of the people have as yet only a general idea of the end which they wish realized, without knowing how to advance toward that end, and without having much confidence in the direction to follow. The practical solution will not be formed, will not be made clear until the change will have already begun. It will be the product of the revolution itself, of the people in action—or else it will be nothing, the brain of a few individuals being absolutely incapable of finding solutions which can only spring from the life of the people.<sup>30</sup>

In this later statement we obviously find evidence of “the concept of a mystic power of creative value latent in the masses of the people” and also the “concept of the creative value of action itself.” However it is quoted here merely to indicate the confusion that sometimes reigns. The discussion of the other influences shall be temporarily postponed, since we are at present discussing irrationalism in the evolutionary doctrine of Anarchism.

Actually, Anarchism because of its evolutionary theory of society, has been severely critical of Utopianism. Proudhon, in discussing the “Association Theory of Society” goes on to a criticism of all system making.

Association is so much a dogma in the eyes of those who propose it as a revolutionary expedient, something finished and complete, absolute, unchangeable, that all they who have taken up this Utopia have ended without exception in a system. In illuminating with their fixed idea all the different parts of the social body, they were bound to end, and did in fact end, by reconstructing society upon an imaginary plan much like the astronomer, who out of respect for his calculations made over the system of the universe.

Thus the Saint Simonian School, going beyond the idea of its founder produced a system, Louis Blanc a system, as Baboeuf, Morelly, Thomas More, Campanella, Plato and others before them, who each starting from a single principle produced systems.

<sup>30</sup> “Revolutionary Government,” “Revolutionary Pamphlets,” p. 241.

And all these systems antagonistic among themselves, are equally opposed to progress. Let humanity perish sooner than the principle, is the motto of the Utopians, as of the fanatics of all ages.<sup>31\*</sup>

One cannot, he declares, lay down constitutions, but must only point out tendencies.

Systems abound, schemes fall like rain. One would organize workshops, another the government in which he has more confidence. We know the social hypothesis of the Saint-Simonians, of Fourier, of Cabet, of Louis Blanc, etc. . . . But no one I know of has said that the question for both politics and economics was of tendencies rather than constitutions: that before all else it behooved us to find out whither we are going and not to dogmatize.<sup>82</sup>

Kropotkin agrees with him in this.

The Anarchist thinker does not resort to metaphysical conceptions (like "natural rights," "the duties of the state" and so on) to establish what are in his opinion the best conditions for realizing the greatest happiness of humanity. He follows on the contrary, the course followed by the modern philosophy of evolution . . . he studies society and tries to discover its tendencies past and present, its growing needs intellectual and economic, and in his ideal, he merely points out in which direction evolution goes.<sup>33\*</sup>

As Proudhon asserts, since society is "a superior being endowed with an independent life" it is "remote from any idea on our part to reconstruct it arbitrarily." <sup>84</sup> The function of the Anarchist theorist

<sup>31</sup> Proudhon, "General Idea of the Revolution," pp. 79-80.

<sup>TM</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>88</sup> "Anarchist Communism," "Revolutionary Pamphlets," p. 47. "Our first duty is to find out by an analysis of society, its characteristic tendencies at a given moment of evolution and state them clearly. Then to act according to those tendencies in our relations with all those who think as we do. And finally, from today and especially during a revolutionary period, work for the destruction of the institutions as well as of the prejudices that impede the development of such tendencies." "Anarchism, Its Philosophy and Ideal," "Revolutionary Pamphlets," p. 141.

<sup>88</sup> "General Idea of the Revolution," p. 76.

is merely "to widen the horizon and clear the way." <sup>35\*</sup> There are no absolutes for "Progress takes the place of the Absolute." <sup>311</sup> The Anarchist ideal is itself relative.

Anarchism is no patent solution for all human problems, no utopia of a perfect social order . . . since on principle it rejects all absolute schemes and concepts. It does not believe in any absolute truth or definite final goals for human development but in an unlimited perfectibility of social arrangements and human living conditions which are always straining after higher forms of expression and to which for this reason one can assign no definite terminus nor set any fixed goal. . . . Anarchism recognizes only the relative significance of ideas, institutions and social forms. . . . Even freedom is only a relative and not an absolute concept.<sup>37</sup>

In the Anarchist view, theory has no absolute or normative value. The form of society is determined, not from above, by reason, but from below, i. e., from the interplay of evolutionary forces operative in society as a whole. Thus we see, that Anarchism, like Marxism is irrationalistic in character. But in addition to the irrationalism in this evolutionary doctrine, we find in Anarchism, evidence of a more profound irrationalism in its belief in "a creative power latent in the masses of the people." This shall be treated in the next chapter. ✓

<sup>85</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>88</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 294.

<sup>87</sup> R. Rucker, "Anarcho-Syndicalism," Seeker and Warburg, London, 1938, pp. 30, 31.

## CHAPTER III

IRRATIONALITY AS MANIFESTED IN THE CONCEPT OF  
A LATENT CREATIVE POWER

In its typical form, belief in "a creative power latent in the masses of the people" is to be found in Kropotkin, in Bakunin and significantly, in Lenin also. It is a typical Russian belief, long recognized and known as the Narodnik attitude. It appeared in many of the prominent Russian thinkers of the nineteenth century. It bears a strong affinity to Nihilism, and like Nihilism, springs, at least in part from a guilty consciousness of the gap between the intelligentsia and the masses. Berdyaev gives us a concise description of it.

Narodnichestvo is above all, a belief in the Russian people, and by the people must be understood the simple laboring class and the peasantry. . . . Russian Narodniks of all shades believed that among the people was preserved the secret of true life, a secret concealed from the governing cultured classes. Consciousness of the gulf between the intelligentsia and the people was fundamental to the Narodnichestvo.<sup>1</sup>

Because it is in the people that the secret of life is preserved it is from the people themselves that the salvation of society is to come.

When Lenin declared that the direction of the movement could only be determined by the masses, he was professing the Narodnik faith. Indeed Lenin went so far as to declare that the only fault of the Narodnik movement was its failure to link up its ideas with the concept of the class struggle.<sup>2</sup> This brings out in stronger relief the basic irrationality of Lenin's attitude.

<sup>1</sup> Berdyaev, "The Origin of Russian Communism," Geoffrey Bles, The Centenary Press, London, 1937, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> "Their mistake (the Narodovists) was that they relied on a theory which in substance was not a revolutionary theory at all, and they either did not know how, or circumstances did not permit them, to link up their movement inseparably with the class struggle that went on within developing class society." Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?," Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 149. It must be borne in mind that "theory" here means a theory of practical tactics\_ as it does throughout this whole work. Cf. also p. 193,

Kropotkin constantly asserts his belief in "the creative, constructive power of the people."

Anarchism is obviously the representative of the creative constructive power of the people themselves.

All the institutions of communal life were developed . . . by the constructive, creative activity of the people.<sup>3</sup>

The function of the Anarchist theorist is to give new scope to the creative activity of the people in order that it may work out the necessary institutions with fresh vigor.<sup>4</sup>

It must be the work of all, a natural growth, a product of the constructive genius of the great mass.<sup>5</sup>

All through his "History of the French Revolution" runs the thesis that the mass of the people would have been able to produce a perfect social order if they had not been circumvented by the bourgeoisie who constructed a strong centralized government.

What is highly significant is that this creative power is unleashed only by the act of revolt itself.

The practical solution will not be found, will not be made clear until the change will have already begun. It will be the product of the revolution itself, of the people in action—or else it will be nothing, the brain of a few individuals being absolutely incapable of finding solutions which can only spring from the life of the people.<sup>6</sup>

This furnishes a double evidence of irrationality. Direction is not only from below, but the action must precede the idea.

<sup>3</sup> "Modern Science and Anarchism," "Revolutionary Pamphlets," pp. 147, 149. Also, p. 188.

<sup>4</sup> "They (the Anarchists) proclaimed the supreme rights of the individual and the people and endeavored to free popular institutions from forces which were foreign and harmful to them, in order that the unhampered creative genius of the people might remold these institutions in accordance with the new requirements." "Modern Science and Anarchism," Pamphlets, p. 148.

<sup>5</sup> "Anarchism, Its Philosophy and Ideal," "Revolutionary Pamphlets," p. 140.

<sup>6</sup> "Revolutionary Government," "Revolutionary Pamphlets," p. 241.

This faith in the masses appears in its most extreme form in Bakunin. It is this faith which is at the root of his passion for destruction. The purpose of destruction was to liberate the creative power latent in the masses.

We do not fear, we invoke anarchy, convinced that from this anarchy, that is from the complete expression of the untrammelled popular life, must come forth liberty, equality, justice.<sup>7</sup>

By placing his faith in the masses, Bakunin was preaching the "revolt of life against science." He does not of course, utterly reject science—the word "science" is too valuable a shibboleth. His purpose is not "to destroy science" but only "to remand it to its place."<sup>8</sup>

All that we have a right to demand of it (science) is that it shall point us with faithful and sure hand to the *general causes of individual suffering* . . . among these it shall not forget the immolation and subordination (still too frequent alas) of living individuals to abstract generalities . . . at the same time showing us the *general conditions necessary to the real emancipation of individuals living in society*. That is its mission; those are its limits, beyond which the action of social science can only be impotent and fatal.<sup>9</sup>

But lest this explanation might be misleading he goes on to declare:

The sole mission of science is to light the road. Only Life, delivered from all its governmental and doctrinaire barriers and given full liberty of action, can create.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> M. Bakunin, "L'Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste et L'Association Internationale des Travailleurs," p. 129 (Secret Statutes). "Nous ne craignons pas, nous invoquons l'Anarchie, convaincus que de cette anarchie, c'est-à-dire de la manifestation complète, de la vie populaire déchaînée, doit sortir la liberté, l'égalité, la justice."

<sup>8</sup> "What I preach then is, to a certain extent, *the revolt of life against science*, or rather against *the government of science* . . . not to destroy science . . . that would be high treason to humanity . . . but to remand it to its place so that it may never leave it again." M. Bakunin, "God and the State," first American edition, preface C. Cafiero and E. Reclus, no date Mother Earth Publishing Association, N. Y., p. 59.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

But this is still an antinomy, and Bakunin admits it.

On the one hand science is indispensable to the rational organization of society; on the other, being incapable of interesting itself in that which is real and living, it must not interfere with the real or practical organization of society?<sup>11</sup>

The solution of this contradiction is to be found in the elimination of the divorce between science and life. That can only occur when science becomes the property of the masses.

This contradiction can be solved in one way; by the liquidation of science as a moral being existing outside the life of all and represented by a body of breveted savants; it must spread among the masses. Science, being called upon to henceforth represent society's collective consciousness, must really become the property of everybody?<sup>12</sup>

The masses must "take into their own hands the direction of their destinies."<sup>13</sup>

Bakunin hopes that "Science" and "Life" can be reconciled. Obviously however, his explanation is hardly more than an aspiration. It is neither clear nor realistic. It seems fair to say that he is merely paying lip service to science. The rapprochement he suggests is certainly all in favor of "Life." Moreover recognizing the existing divorce of "Science" from "Life" and faced with the alternative of here and now making a choice between them, he does not hesitate to cast out science.

But until the masses shall have reached this degree of instruction, will it be necessary to leave them to the government of scientific men? Certainly not. It would be better for them to dispense with science than allow themselves to be governed by the savants?<sup>14</sup>

Bakunin was in fact, profoundly anti-intellectual. He preached, not

<sup>11</sup> *Loc. cit.* f

<sup>12</sup> *Loc. cit.*

is *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>14</sup> *Loc. cit.*

thought and theorizing but destruction terrible and inexorable. He declared that all speculations about the future are criminal, because they hinder pure destruction and trammel the march of the revolution?<sup>8</sup>

I do not believe in constitutions or in laws. The best constitutions would have me dissatisfied. We need something different. Storm and vitality and a new lawlessness and consequently free world?<sup>6</sup>

The concept of a creative power latent in the masses reappears in a modified form in the Nazi doctrine of race. The Aryan race is a distinct and superior biological strain, the creator of all culture and achievement. Understanding "masses" not in the sense of the common people in general, but rather in the sense of the great body of those possessed of Aryan blood, Hitler speaks of the high capabilities latent "in the great masses."<sup>16</sup> The purpose of the folkish state is to preserve and promote this racial stock so that the way may be opened for the free development of the forces slumbering in the race?<sup>8</sup>

<sup>15</sup> "L'Alliance" (Revolutionary Catechism), p. 94.

<sup>16</sup> Letter to Herwegh, August, 1848, in Carr, *op. cit.*, p. 173. Bakunin also professed the evolutionary concept of society. He appeals to the teaching of August Comte; Michel Bakounine, "Oeuvres, Fédéralisme, Socialisme et Antithéologisme," Librairie Tresse et Stock, Paris, 1895, p. 71 ff. However he holds the destruction of all authority is necessary in order that social development should appear in its true character as the immediate continuation of the development manifested in organic and physical nature. "... du moment que l'histoire est libre de tout arbitraire divin et humain, c'est alors et seulement alors, qu'elle se présente a nos yeux dans toute la grandeur imposante et en même temps rationnelle d'un développement nécessaire, comme la nature organique, et physique, dont elle est la continuation immédiate." *Op. cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>17</sup> Speech, April 24, 1923, "My New Order," p. 58.

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

The Nazi theory is essentially a romanticist vitalism, bearing a marked affinity to the theories of the nineteenth century Romantics.<sup>18</sup> Richard Wagner in particular, is regarded as the prophet of Nazism. A direct connection can be traced from Wagner, through his son-in-law, Houston Stewart Chamberlain to Rosenberg and Hitler.<sup>20</sup> Hitler regards Wagner's music as the highest expression of German musical genius.<sup>21</sup> Rosenberg quotes him constantly. Heiden testifies that "the turgidly written political compositions of Richard Wagner constitute Hitler's favorite reading."<sup>22</sup>

Wagner heralds "the folk" as "the only true inventor."<sup>23</sup> He is almost psychotic in his glorification of "Life."

Life is a law unto itself.<sup>24</sup>

Creative activity comes from the unconscious and the involuntary. Consciousness and intelligence are sterile and impotent; they can only follow in the wake of the creative unconscious force operative in the folk.

Consciousness cannot be made to go before, to regulate, as it were, unconsciousness. The unconscious is precisely the involuntary, the necessary and creative.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>18</sup> "National Socialism is the child of Prussianism married to Romanticism," Hans Kohn, "Revolutions and Dictatorships," Harvard University Press, 1941, pp. 200, 206. This is the leitmotif of Peter Viereck's "Metapolitics," N. Y., A. A. Knopf, 1941.

<sup>20</sup> Konrad Heiden, "Hitler," Constable & Co., London, 1936, p. 99; P. Viereck, N. Y., Alfred A. Knopf, 1941, p. 118, 137-138. The editors of the Reynal-Hitchcock edition of "Mein Kampf" declare, "In the apotheosis of Germanism which Wagner represents, Chamberlain found a living justification of his theories. And through Chamberlain, . . . Hitler has learned how to expound Wagner," M. K., p. 359.

<sup>21</sup> Viereck, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-133.

<sup>22</sup> Konrad Heiden, "Hitler," Constable & Co., London, 1936, p. 334.

<sup>23</sup> "Richard Wagner's Prose Works," transi. William Ashton Ellis, London, 1899, Vol. VIII, p. 347.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 346.

Consciousness is the end, the dissolution of unconsciousness, but unconscious agency is the agency of nature, of the inner necessity; only when the result of the agency has come to physical appearance, does consciousness set in—and that of just the physical phenomenon. So ye err when ye seek the revolutionary force in consciousness and therefore would fain operate through the intelligence; your intelligence is false, i. e., capricious so long as it is not the apperception of what has already ripened to a physical appearance. Not ye but the folk which deals unconsciously, and for that very reason, from a nature instinct, will bring the new to pass; but the might of the folk is lamed for j'ust so long as it lets itself be led by the chain of an obsolete intelligence, a hindering consciousness; only when this is completely annihilated by and in itself . . . only when we all know and perceive that we must yield ourselves not to our intelligence, but to the necessity of nature; when we become brave enough to deny our intellect, shall we obtain from natural consciousness, from want, the force to produce the new.<sup>26</sup>

All through Wagner's writings runs an almost Messianic expectation of the coming of the hero-leader, who as the personification of the "Folk" will be the "live embodiment of the patriotic Wahn."<sup>27</sup> The truly amazing thing is that in 1923, long before Hitler had any power or following, Chamberlain, Wagner's son-in-law, hailed him

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345. Also, "Only that science which wholly and completely denies itself and concedes all authenticity to nature, consequently avows nothing but the natural necessity, thereby totally disowning and annulling itself as regulator or ordainer . . . only that science is true; so the truth of science begins exactly where its essence ceases and nothing remains but the consciousness of natural necessity," p. 349. Wagner apotheosizes "Revolution." "*I am Revolution*, I am the ever fashioning Life, I am the only God . . . the millions, the embodied Revolution, the God become man," p. 238; "the lofty goddess *Revolution*," p. 232; "ever rejuvenating mother of mankind," *loc. cit.*; "redemptrix from the world of sorrow, creatrix of a new world blessing all," pp. 234-235. "From its root up I will destroy the order of things in which you live," p. 235.

It is obvious that there is a strong similarity between Wagner and Bakunin. Wagner himself confessed to Bakunin's "fascination" over him. E. Newman, "The Life of Richard Wagner," Alfred A. Knopf, N. Y., 3 vols., 1933, 1937, 1941, vol. II, pp. 49-51. Bakunin does not, of course, speak of the people as a "natural community"; yet this very difference shows how the same basic attitude can find different forms of expression.

<sup>27</sup> Viereck, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-114.

With one stroke you have transformed the condition of my soul. That Germany in her hour of greatest need, should bring forth a Hitler, proves her vitality. . . . I may justly fall asleep and need not again awaken.-§

In Naiti pronouncements this anti-intellectualism and this Mes-  
sianic faith in the Führer are constantly recurring themes. It is the  
"Volksgeist," the racial spirit, and not "ratio liberata" which is to be  
the principle of development. "Blood and soil" are to be "the gov-  
erning laws^ of life." Blunck, writing in an officially sponsored  
publication, designed for foreign consumption, does not hesitate to  
speak of the government as "rooted in opposition to rationalism." 28  
A vitalistic anti-intellectualism appears even in the bluff and pro-  
fessedly unphilosophical Goering.

The German revolution, in contrast to the French, is not being  
made in conformity with this science of liberal enlightenment but  
against it. Arising out of this fact have come points difficult of  
comprehension to the liberal minded German and foreigner. They  
could not understand why it was that the masses who lived in  
misery grasped our ideas before they were comprehended by the  
professors—they could not understand why the younger genera-  
tion, in spite of their imperfect intellect and education understood  
the revolution earlier than the brains of the intellectual. The  
association of creative persons with earth and blood, with the  
long line of generations connected with the soil and ideas of  
nationalism, with the fate of the countryside which is their home,  
is not vouchsafed the enlightened scientist with his definitions, in  
so high a measure.31

28 From a letter of Chamberlain to Hitler, Oct. 7, 1923: "Sie haben den  
Zustand meiner Seele mit einem Schlage ungewandelt. Dass Deutschland in  
der Stunde Seiner höchsten Not sich einen Hitler gebiert, das gezeugt sein  
Lebendigsein; . . . Ich dürfte billig einschlafen und hätte auch nicht nbtig  
gehabt wieder zu erwachen," Houston Stewart Chamberlain, "Auswahl aus  
seinen Werken," Ferdinand Hirt, Breslau, 1934, p. 69.

28 Hitler, speech, Nov. 6, 1938, "My New Order," p. 494.

30 "Germany Speaks," by twenty-one leading members of the Party and  
the State. Preface by Joachim von Ribbentrop, Thorton Butterworth, Lon-  
don, 1938, p. 239.

31 "The Political Testament of Hermann Goering, a selection of important



Hitler, himself, stressed "primitive instinct."

What the intellect of the intellectual could not see was grasped immediately by the soul, the heart, the instinct of the simple, primitive but healthy man. It is another one of the tasks of the future to reestablish the unity between feeling and intellect, that is, to educate an unspoiled generation which will perceive with clear understanding, the eternal law of development, and at the same time will consciously return to the primitive instinct.<sup>32</sup>

The Führer is not an "enlightened social scientist." The leader is the one who has the deepest insight into the demands of the developing "Volkgeist." He is the one who "summons from its present slumber" the energy latent in the great masses.<sup>33</sup> His knowledge springs from blood and soil and it cannot be criticised or measured by ordinary rational standards. Confidence in the leader springs not from intellectual conviction but from an inner voice. Hitler himself declares this.

You have all felt this in the past. To every single one of you, at some time has occurred the reflection that it is no subtlety of the intellect, but rather an inner voice that has at some time given its commands to every one of you. Reason must have dissuaded you from coming to me: faith alone gave you the command.<sup>34</sup>

The concept of the leader as "the Messiah" has steadily grown and with it has grown the idea that only one attitude can be taken toward the decisions of the leader—blind, complete and abiding faith and trust. This notion is put forward not only by fanatical pseudo-mystics,<sup>35</sup> but even by Goering.

speeches and articles by Field Marshal Hermann Goering, arranged and translated by H. W. Blood-Ryan, John Long, London, no date, p. SI (Speech of May 18, 1933).

<sup>32</sup> Hitler, Speech of Sept. 1, 1933, "My New Order," p. 192.

<sup>33</sup> "Where then can any strength still be found within the German people? It is to be found as always in the great masses; there energy is slumbering and it only awaits the man who will summon it from its present slumber and will hurl it into the great battle for the destiny of the German race." Hitler Speech, April 24, 1923, "My New Order," p. 58.

<sup>34</sup> Speech of Sept. 13, 1935, "My New Order," pp. 337-8.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. references given in the next chapter, pp. 95-99.

We know that the Leader in all those years in which he has been a leader to us, has always and in everything, done the right thing. We know also that nothing makes us so strong as the blind trust in him whose powerful faith can do more than move mountains. His powerful faith in Germany has led our people out of the deepest night and need, out of misery and despair, up to the shining light and has lifted Germany up to a great power.

In all these years, the Almighty has blessed him and the people again and again. In the Leader He has sent to us the Saviour. Unerringly the Leader went on his way and unerringly we followed him.<sup>80</sup>

Just as the Roman Catholic considers the Pope infallible in all matters concerning religion and morals, so do we National-socialists believe with the same inner conviction, that the Leader is, in all political and other matters concerning the national and social interests of the people simply infallible!<sup>17</sup>

J. W. Jones describes the general attitude:

... in their descriptions of the attributes and functions of the Leader even the legal theorists surrender themselves to a sort of mystical ecstasy. He is pictured as representing no concrete person or persons, nor again the collection of individuals forming the nation at any one specified time. He embodies some sort of transcendent unity, which soars above the desires or interests of a transient majority. In and through his words and acts the Nation for the first time comes to real life.<sup>33</sup>

se "Political Testament," p. 256. Speech of Sept. 10, 1938.

<sup>37</sup> H. Goering, "Germany Reborn," Matthews and Marrot, London, 1934, p. 79. It will be interesting to note the following adulation of Stalin:

Above the valley the mountain peak,  
Above the peak the sky.  
But Stalin, skies have no height to equal you,  
Only your thoughts rise higher.  
The stars, the moon,  
Pale before the sun,  
That pales in turn  
Before your shining mind.

N. Y. *Daily Worker*, Dec. 21, 1937.

On this adulation of Stalin cf. B. Souvarine, "Stalin," New York: Alliance-Longmans, Green, 1939, pp. 660-663.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> J. W. Jones, "The Nazi Conception of Law," Farrar & Rinehart, New

Nazi vitalism, which thus comes to its highest expression in and through the "charismatic leader" embodies a profound irrationalism.

The Weltanschauung can not be understood by rational thinking; it is the product of the deepest instincts, of the blood—not of the individual, but of the racial group . . . the biological forces decide irresistibly the thought, the creative faculties and the fate of men. . . . This Weltanschauung, the product of the creative forces of the racial group is totalitarian, it includes everything and pervades everything. The objectivity of ethics and of human thought, every universal standard of beauty and conduct, are destroyed. . . . It is a religion, based upon the certitude of "biological science"; it sanctifies life and its demands as forces against which no sanctity of law and no absolute truth can prevail.<sup>31</sup>

York, 1940, pp. 7-8. Cf. Rauschnig on "The Divine Inspiration of the Leader," in "The Revolution of Nihilism," pp. 34-36.

<sup>39</sup> Hans Kohn, "Revolutions and Dictatorships," 1941, pp. 207-208.

## CHAPTER IV

### IRRATIONALITY AS MANIFESTED IN THE CONCEPT OF THE CREATIVE VALUE OF ACTION

We come now to the third type of theory in which revolutionary irrationality is manifest: the concept of the creative value of action itself. The core of this theory is that action is to be cherished not merely for the sake of the objective ends that it may effect, but also for the sake of the subjective, psychological effect that such action exercises upon the actors themselves. It is because of the supposedly inescapable psychological effect that it exercises, that the action itself is said to be creative. It is in this theory that we find irrationality in its most naked form, because the specific social or political goal toward which the action is directed becomes in a sense, less important than the action itself. Consequently the ideal is measured not by the degree of its literal feasibility, but by its stimulus-value. The important thing is that men be moved to action; the literal truth, intrinsic possibility or correctness of the ideal which stimulates them, becomes a secondary matter.

Though (as we shall show later) the elements of this theory are present in practically all of the modern revolutionary doctrines, it was in Syndicalism that it first appeared in a clear and unashamed form. Indeed its classical expression is to be found in Sorel's theory of the myth. Syndicalism, it will be recalled, represents a development, or better perhaps, a corruption of Marxism. The Syndicalists professed the Marxian doctrine of the class struggle, but as they conceived it, the process lost much of its specifically Marxian character.

“According to Marx, capitalism by reason of the innate laws of its own nature is hurrying along a path which will lead the world of today with the inevitability of the evolution of organic life, to the doors of the world of tomorrow. This movement comprises a long period of capitalistic construction, and ends by its rapid destruction which is the work of the proletariat. Capitalism creates the heritage which Socialism will receive, the men who

will suppress the present regime, and the means of bringing about this destruction, at the same time that it preserves the results obtained in production. Capitalism begets new ways of working; it throws the working class into revolutionary organizations by the pressure it exerts on wages; it restricts its own political basis by competition, which is constantly eliminating industrial leaders. Thus after having solved the great problem of the organization of labor, to effect which Utopians have brought forth so many naive or stupid hypotheses, Capitalism provokes the birth of the cause which will overthrow it, and thus renders useless everything which Utopians have written to induce enlightened people to make reforms; and it gradually ruins the traditional order, against which critics of the idealist school had proved themselves to be so deplorably incompetent. It might therefore be said that capitalism plays a part analagous to that attributed by Hartmann to the unconscious in nature, since it prepares the coming of social reforms it did not intend to produce. Without any coordinated plan, without any directive ideas, without any ideal of a future world, it is the cause of an inevitable evolution; it draws from the present all that the present can give towards historical development; it performs in an almost mechanical manner, all that is necessary in order that a new era may appear.<sup>1</sup>

If this is to work out, it is essential that the class struggle should continue.

This doctrine will evidently be inapplicable if the middle class and the proletariat do not oppose each other implacably with all the forces at their disposal.<sup>2</sup>

Marx would have agreed with this, though it would hardly have occurred to him to make such an observation. He took for granted that the class struggle would continue. Sorel, however, does not hesitate to envision the opposite contingency.

If, on the contrary, the middle class, led astray by the chatter of the preachers of ethics and sociology, return to an ideal of constructive mediocrity, seek to correct the abuses of economics and wish to break with the barbarism of their predecessors, then one part of the forces which were to further the development of

<sup>1</sup> G. Sorel, "Reflections on Violence," pp. 84-85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

capitalism, is employed in hindering it, an arbitrary and irrational element is introduced, and the future of the world becomes completely indeterminate.

This indetermination grows still greater if the proletariat are converted to the ideals of social peace, at the same time, as their masters.<sup>3</sup>

If society is to progress, this must not be allowed to happen. Measures must be taken to keep the spirit of the class struggle alive. How is this to be done? Obviously, by "explaining to the proletariat the greatness of the revolutionary part they are called upon to play." <sup>4</sup> But the really essential part is to stir up the spirit of violence, particularly in connection with strikes. Acts of violence have an inescapable psychological effect on the men who perform them: moreover they arouse the spirit of retaliation in the bourgeoisie. Violence, therefore has an historic and indispensable role. Sorel does not hesitate to declare:

Proletarian violence has become an essential factor of Marxism.<sup>5</sup>

Sorel's doctrine bears a peculiar relationship to the general body of Syndicalist theory. His doctrine became a part of Syndicalist theory but it does not, as some have erroneously thought, represent the starting point of Syndicalism. It is rather a theoretical elaboration of the more primitive Syndicalist theory of "direct action."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91. "It is here that the role of violence appears . . . for it can in an indirect manner so operate on the middle class as to awaken them to a sense of their own class sentiment," p. 88.

It will be obvious that both Sorel and Lenin faced the same problem: Sorel sought to solve it by violence, Lenin by organization and the initiative of a revolutionary élite. Both theories involve a profound modification, if not indeed, a rejection of the Marxian dialectic.

<sup>6</sup> "The view which prevailed outside of France is that M. Sorel and his disciples 'created' the theory of revolutionary socialism in opposition to the parliamentary socialists, and that they have been able to impress their ideas upon a larger or smaller portion of the organized French workingmen. This view was first presented by Professor W. Sombart in his well-known work on Socialism and the Social Movement, and has made its way into other writings on revolutionary syndicalism. . . . This view, however, is a 'myth' and should

Syndicalism was a working class movement. It started, not as an elaborate world-theory, but simply from the workman's desire to "do something" about existing conditions. Like other working class movements, it felt the influence of Marxism, though as Von Mises points out it remained the naive "ideal of plundering hordes."<sup>7</sup> It did adopt the notion of the class struggle though it did not conceive this in the typically Marxian fashion.<sup>8</sup>

The characteristic feature of revolutionary syndicalism was the doctrine of "direct action."

"Direct action" is what the syndicalists most insist upon, as the only means of educating the workmen and of preparing them for the final act of emancipation. "Direct action" is action by the workmen themselves without the help of intermediaries; it is not necessarily violent action, though it may assume violent forms: it is the manifestation of the consciousness and of the will of the workmen themselves, without the intervention of an external agent: it consists in pressure exerted directly by those interested for the sake of obtaining the ends in view.

"Direct action" may assume various forms, but the principal ones in the struggle against employers are: the strike, the boycott, the label and sabotage.<sup>9</sup>

The syndicate is the instrument through which the "direct action" is carried on. The "direct action" of the syndicate is the focal point and highest expression of the class struggle. The task of the syndicalists is to "organize the more or less vague class feeling of the workmen and to raise it to the clear consciousness of class interests and of class ideals."<sup>10</sup> In the present order the syndicate is primarily

be discarded. French writers who have studied the social movement of their country and who are competent judges have tried to dispel the error that has gotten abroad. . . . And in an article reviewing the book of Professor Sombart, M. Berth has insisted that Professor Sombart was in error. 'If we have had any part,' wrote he, 'it is the simple part of interpreters, of translators, of glossers; we have served as spokesmen, that's all.'" L. Levine, "Syndicalism in France," pp. 155-156.

<sup>7</sup> Von Mises, "Socialism," p. 275.

<sup>8</sup> Levine, *op. cit.*, p. 123 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Levine, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

a group of combat.”<sup>11</sup> The struggle carried on by the syndicate represented “the most immediate means of action.”<sup>12</sup>

The philosophy manifested in this, is as Levine points out “a moral activism which stressed the value of the strenuous life.”

It is conceived as the dynamic power which transforms the vague class feeling of the workers into a clear class consciousness—giving vitality to the class struggle—presumably the only creative force for improving the position of the workers in the present and for developing the will power and the moral character of the workers, necessary for their final emancipation.<sup>13</sup>

It is precisely this emphasis on a “romantic heroism” which distinguishes revolutionary syndicalism from other variations of Syndicalism, from revisionist Marxism, and for that matter from any form of Marxism. Socialism, said Lagardelle, was fatalistic, a sort of “Calvinism without God” whereas true syndicalism is activist. This is the boast and the glory of revolutionary syndicalism. The action directed by the syndicate stimulates the forces latent in man, reforms his passions and creates enthusiasm and zeal.<sup>14</sup> “The very struggle

<sup>11</sup> “Les Objectifs de nos Luittes de Classes” par Victor Griffuelhes et Louis Niel, ex-secrétaires de la Confédération Général du Travail, La Publication Sociale, Paris, no date, p. 38.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>13</sup> L. Lorwin (Louis Levine) article “Direct Action.” Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. Vol. 5, p. 156.

<sup>14</sup> “Et la pratique syndicaliste, l'action directe,—qui enseigne aux ouvriers qu'il n'y a rien de fatal, puisque ce sont les hommes qui font leur histoire,—qu'est-elle autre chose, sinon un appel constant à l'effort personnel du prolétariat, à ses ardeurs combatives, à ses appétits d'héroïsme? Quel contraste! Tandis que l'action, indirecte, parlementaire, et légale engourdit les activités, endort les volontés et berce les plus bas instincts de la nature humaine, l'action directe du syndicalisme stimule les forces latentes de l'individu, refoule ses mauvais désirs de passivité, et fait surgir au premier plan ses facultés d'enthousiasme, ce besoin de combat, cette soif de conquête, qui l'illuminent et le portent, jusqu'au sublime. D'un pareil mouvement, en vérité, n'ai-je pas le droit de dire qu'il est créateur d'hommes, et qu'il n'y a que des prolétaires formés, à son école qui, si le socialisme doit se réaliser plus ou moins, puissent être capables, à un moment, je ne sais quand, de renouveler le monde?”

Lagardelle in “Le Parti Socialiste et la Confédération du Travail” by Jules Guesde, Hubert Lagardelle et Eduard Vaillant, Rivière, Paris, 1908, p. 31.



which the syndicates carry on train the workingman in solidarity, in voluntary discipline, in power and determination to resist group oppression and in other moral qualities which group life requires."<sup>15</sup> This is the secret of syndicalism and it is this which gives it, its creative power.

It leads the workers to battle, calls them to action, and shows itself as the power capable of regenerating the world.<sup>16</sup>

Out of the spirit generated by such action, a new order would be created. It was not necessary to plan the new order in advance. The only immediate concern need be action—for this action itself is creative.

Are we able to indicate in detail the task of today and the work of transformation? No. No more than the thinkers, the writers and the philosophers of the eighteenth century were able to lay down the exact form of the revolution which they heralded and whose coming they prepared. It is not possible for us to perform the task of the prophet. As they knew the feudal regime, so we know the present regime; they strove to establish a different world; we strive to do the same. They prepared a revolution; we do the same. They are unable to trace in advance the organization of bourgeois society. We are equally incapable of laying down the forms of a free society. That which we know is that our force of creation corresponds to the force acquired through everyday action.<sup>17</sup>

"Le syndicalisme provoque et développe les meilleurs des sentiments moraux. En forçant l'ouvrier, l'éternel exploité, à se redresser contre le patron, l'éternel exploiteur, il fait naître le sentiment de dignité. En élevant la conscience du salarié jusqu'à la conception d'une société sans patronat, il provoque la haine de l'esclavage et l'amour de la liberté. En groupant les travailleurs pour lutter contre de mal commune, il leur prouve les dangers de l'isolement, l'impuissance, de l'égoïsme inconscient, l'impossibilité de l'individualisme à la mode bourgeoise, et développe en eux l'indispensable sentiment de solidarité." *Les Objectifs*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>15</sup> Levine, "Syndicalism in France," p. 137.

<sup>16</sup> "Contre toutes les forces de l'état, contre les corruptions politiciennes, contre l'exploitation capitaliste, il convie les travailleurs à la lutte, les appelle à l'action et se montre, comme la puissance capable de régénérer le monde." "Les Objectifs," p. 38.

<sup>17</sup> "Pouvons-nous indiquer en détail la tâche d'aujourd'hui et l'oeuvre de transformation! Non. Pas plus que les penseurs les écrivains et les philosophes

It is this element of intransigent activism upon which Sorel seized and which he emphasized in his famous doctrine of the "myth." It is its very irrationalism which he glorified. He elaborated this doctrine in answer to the question: how are the masses to be incited to direct action and violence? He is, in fact, simply analyzing the basic attitude of Syndicalism, when he says that this cannot be done by presenting "utopias," *i. e.*, intellectualized conceptions of a perfect social order. A utopia does not move men to act, but leads rather to doubt and hesitation.

The effect of utopias has always been to direct man's minds towards reforms which can be brought about by patching up the existing system.<sup>18</sup>

Instead he proposes the "myth," which is not a description of things, but the expression of a determination to act. The peculiar value of the myth is that it cannot be criticized or refuted.

A myth cannot be refuted, since it is at bottom identical with the convictions of a group, being the expression of these convictions and in the language of movement.<sup>19</sup>

And since the myth is the expression of a determination to act, "It must be judged as a means of acting in the present: any attempt to discuss how far it can be taken literally is devoid of sense."<sup>20</sup> As such the myth is essentially irrational, and its appeal is to sentiment.

The notion underlying the doctrine of the myth is that the truth

du dix huitième siècle n'ont dégagé les formes exactes de la révolution qui s'annonçait et dont ils préparaient la venue; il ne nous est pas possible de faire oeuvre de prophète. Comme ils sapèrent le régime féodal, nous sapons le régime présent; ils travaillèrent à l'établissement d'un monde différent, nous travaillons de même. Ils préparèrent une révolution, nous faisons de même. Ils furent impuissants à tracer à l'avance le cadre de la société bourgeoise, nous le sommes également pour dégager les formes d'une société libre. Ce que nous savons, c'est que notre force de création correspondra à la force acquise par l'action de chaque jour." "Les Objectifs," p. 39.

is "Reflections on Violence," p. 32.

is *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>20</sup> *Loc. cit.*

or correctness of an idea is of no consequence. To be more exact, Sorel would modify the concept of truth. He was fascinated by William James and the theory of pragmatism: and he dismisses as absurd, "the clerical concept of truth." Sorel does not ask the Syndicalists to propose to themselves a conscious falsehood or a fiction, recognized as such. What he is trying to say, is that the criterion of truth is stimulus-value. It is not so much that one must ignore literal truth, as that there is no such thing as literal truth.

The particular "myth" with which Sorel is concerned is that of the "general strike"—a tactic conceived by the Syndicalist workers themselves.

The general strike is the myth in which Socialism is wholly comprised, *i. e.*, a body of images capable of evoking instinctively all the sentiments which correspond to the different manifestations of the war undertaken by Socialism against modern society. Strikes have engendered in the proletariat, the noblest, deepest and most moving sentiments that they possess; the general strike groups them all in a coordinated picture, and by bringing them together gives to each one of them its maximum intensity.<sup>23</sup>

The significance of Sorel's teaching does not lie in any supposed influence which this sophisticated analysis of the myth may have had on the mass of the Syndicalist workers. Its real significance lies in the fact that it is an analysis of the attitude already adopted by the workers. Its value is that it is a revelation of the psychology of the revolutionary spirit. Sorel's aim was to elaborate a theoretical justification for the irrationalistic activism basic to Syndicalism. He seeks to achieve this partially, by showing that it is futile to attempt to attain any such contradictory thing as "liberal truth," but mainly by reaffirming and developing a conviction already accepted by the workers—the conviction that action is justified by the sentiments it produces, and that whatever stimulates action needs no justification other than that very fact.

21 G. Sorel, *De l'Utilité de Pragmatisme*" *passim*.

It is to violence that Socialism owes those high ethical values by means of which it brings salvation to the modern world.<sup>24</sup>

There is only one force which can today produce that enthusiasm without whose co-operation no morality is possible, and that is the force resulting from the idea of the general strike, constantly rejuvenated by the feelings aroused by proletarian violence.<sup>25</sup><sup>26</sup>

Sorel's doctrine paves the way for an understanding of Fascism. Indeed, Sorel spoke approvingly of Mussolini in 1915 <sup>21</sup> and Mussolini acknowledged his debt to Sorel.<sup>27</sup>

In its inception, Fascism was a relatively doctrineless activism. This, Mussolini, himself, declared:

The years preceding the March on Rome cover a period during which the need of action forbade delay and careful elaborations.<sup>28</sup>

Ruthlessness and determination were the chief characteristics of the new regime. It maintained a policy marked by the unscrupulous use of force to destroy opposition, and the trial and error method to determine the necessary enactments.

But although Fascism did, after two years, formulate an elaborate ideology, it did not forsake the earlier irrationalistic activism. Throughout its history Fascism has maintained a consistent glorification of the spirit of violence. What Mussolini said in 1926 on the seventh anniversary of the founding of the Fascist party is typical:

I have called the organization "Fasci Italiani di combattimento." This hard metallic name comprised the whole programme of Fascism as I dreamed it, as I wished it, as I have made it.

Comrades, this is still our programme: fight ... <sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> "Reflections on Violence," p. 295.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294.

<sup>26</sup> G. Pirou, "Georges Sorel," 1927, p. 53.

<sup>27</sup> S. D. II, p. 285.

<sup>28</sup> "Fascism, Doctrine and Institutions," p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> S. D. V, p. 297. "Chiamai invece questa organizzazione 'Fasci italiani di

It coincides perfectly with what he had already said in 1920:

Struggle is at the origin of all things, for life is full of contrasts; there is love and hatred, white and black, day and night, good and evil; and until these contrasts achieve balance, struggle fatefully remains at the root of human nature. However, it is good for it to be so. Today we can indulge in wars, economic battles, conflicts of ideas, but if a day came to pass when struggle ceased to exist, that day would be tinged with melancholy; it would be a day of ruin, the day of ending.<sup>30</sup>

This same emphasis appears also in the Fascist glorification of war:

War alone keys up all human energies to their maximum tension and sets the seal of nobility on those peoples who have the courage to face it.<sup>31</sup>

Rocco, in a speech upon which Mussolini set his personal seal of approval, describes this new spirit.

It is true that Fascism is, above all, action and sentiment and that such it must continue to be. Were it otherwise, it could not keep up that immense driving force, that renovating power which it now possesses.<sup>32</sup>

Fascism believes that violence itself is creative because it believes that by leading men to accept life as a struggle and fight, and by inducing them "to live a period of high, ideal tension" it is thereby changing man, himself, and accomplishing the transformation of society.<sup>33</sup> This activism expresses itself in a perfect disdain of any kind of fixed program or truth.

combattimento.' In questa parola dura e metallica c'era tutto il programma del Fascismo, così come io lo sognavo, così come io l'ho volevo, così come io l'ho fatto.

Ancora questo è il programma, o camerati: combattere."

<sup>30</sup> Speech of Sept. 20, 1920, "Discorsi Politici," Milano, 1921, p. 107. An added significance must be attached to this passage from the fact that it is appended as a note in the official publication, "Fascism, Doctrine and Institutions," pp. 35-36.

<sup>31</sup> "Fascism," p. 19.

<sup>32</sup> A. Rocco, "The Political Doctrine of Fascism," printed in full in "International Conciliation," Oct., 1929, Carnegie Endowment, p. 10.

<sup>33</sup> "Fascism," p. 61. (Address to the National Corporative Council, Nov. 14, 1933.)

Revealed truths we have torn to shreds, dogmas we have spat upon, we have rejected all theories of paradise, we have baffled charlatans . . . red, white, black, who have placed miraculous drugs on the market to give happiness to mankind. We do not believe in programs, in plans, in saints or apostles, above all, we do not believe in happiness, in salvation, in the promised land.<sup>34</sup>

To rationalize and justify this, Fascism presented the concept of the organic nation.

The Italian nation is an organism, having ends, a life and means, superior in power and duration to the single individuals or groups of individuals composing it.<sup>35</sup>

Yet the nation exists not as a biological but as a psychological unity. It is neither blood nor race but a common spirit which welds the Italian people into an organic nation.

Not a race, not a geographically defined region, but a people historically perpetuating itself; a multitude unified by an idea, and imbued with the will to live, the will to power, self-consciousness and personality.<sup>36</sup>

This closely resembles the evolutionary theory of Sorel. In Sorel's view, society evolves according to the plan of the class struggle, if and when the proletariat keeps before its eyes the "myth of the general strike." So in like manner, the Italian people attain an organic unity because there is presented to them the idea of the nation,

34 S. D. II, S3. "Noi abbiamo stracciato tutte le verità rivelate, abbiamo sputato su tutti i dogmi, respinto tutti i paradisi, schernito tutti i ciarlatani—bianchi, rossi, neri—che mettono in commercio le droghe miracolose per dare la 'felicità' al genere umano. Non crediamo ai programmi agli schemi ai santi, agli apostoli: non crediamo, soprattutto alla felicità, alla salvezza, alla terra promessa."

35 "Fundamental Laws of Fascism," *The Labour Charter*. Art. I. "Fascism," p. 133.

36 "Fascism," p. 12. "Rather it is the State which creates the nation, conferring evolution and real life on a people made aware of their moral unity." *Lee. cit.* In speaking to Ludwig, Mussolini said about "race" that "it is a feeling and not a reality. 95% feeling." Emil Ludwig, "Talks with Mussolini," Allen and Unwin, London, 1932, p. 75.

the will to power, self-consciousness and personality. Mussolini speaks in the spirit of Sorel:

We have created our myth. That myth is a faith, a passion. It is not necessary that it should be a reality. It is a reality from the fact that it is a stimulus, that it is a hope, that it is a faith, that it is courage. Our myth is the Nation, our myth is the greatness of that Nation. It is that myth, it is that greatness, that we wish to make a reality, to which we subordinate all else.<sup>37</sup>

Fascism, like syndicalism is overtly activist and pragmatic. Irrationalism is paraded forth naked and unashamed, it is no longer masked, even by an evolutionary dialectic or by a vitalism.

At the very heart of its theory and its practice lies the apotheosis of direct action, the belief in the decisive deed, and in the significance attributed to the initiative of a leading elite . . . History is made neither by the masses, nor by ideas, nor by "silently working" forces, but by the elites who from time to time assert themselves. This is a complete irrationalism but characteristically enough not the kind of irrationalism known to the conservatives, not the irrational which is at the same time the super rational, not the folk spirit (*Volkgeist*) not silently working forces, not the mystical belief in the creativeness of long stretches of time, but the irrationalism of the deed which negates even interpretation of history.<sup>38</sup>

What is perhaps the most appalling feature is that violence ceases to be a skeleton in the closet, a thing to blush for. It stalks abroad in full daylight, invested with a new dignity.

Under the species of Syndicalism and Fascism there appears for the first time in Europe a type of man who does not want to give reasons or to be right, but simply shows himself resolved to im-

<sup>37</sup> "Noi abbiamo creato il nostro mito. Il mito è una fede, è una passione. Non è necessario che sia una realtà. E una realtà nel fatto che è un pungolo, che è una speranza, che è fede, che è coraggio. Il nostro mito è la Nazione, il nostro mito è la grandezza della Nazione. E a questo mito, a questa grandezza, che noi vogliamo tradurre in una realtà completa, noi subordiniamo tutto il resto." (Oct. 24, 1922.) *S. D.* II, 345.

<sup>38</sup> Mannheim, "Ideology and Utopia," pp. 119-120.

pose his opinions. . . . Man has always had recourse to violence; sometimes this recourse was a mere crime and does not interest us here. But at other times violence was the means resorted to by him who had previously exhausted all others in defense of the rights of justice which he thought he possessed. It may be regrettable that human nature tends on occasion to this form of violence but it is undeniable that it implies the greatest tribute to reason and justice. For this form of violence is none other than reason exasperated. Force was in fact, the *ultima ratio*. Rather stupidly it has been the custom to take ironically this expression which clearly indicates the previous submission of force to methods of reason. Civilization is nothing else than the attempt to reduce force to being the *ultima ratio*. We are now beginning to realize this with startling clearness because "direct action" consists in inverting the order and proclaiming violence as the *prima ratio* or strictly as the *unica ratio*.<sup>TM</sup>

While this judgment of Ortega y Gasset does represent the attitude which these movements present in practice, it is not strictly speaking correct to say that they "do not want to give reasons or to be right." They can and do attempt to justify this activism on a pragmatic basis. As we have seen, they declare that "direct action" is justified by the results it achieves, by the enthusiasm which it stimulates, by the moral qualities (e. g. the sense of duty, of solidarity, etc.) which it promotes. There is a germ of truth in the idea that it does help in this regard; that is why, today especially, such a doctrine has a certain specious plausibility, because such moral qualities are indeed lacking in bourgeois culture.

A more direct justification of this is to be found however, in the writings of Gentile, sometime official philosopher of Fascism. What indeed is our criterion of "right" and "truth"? Gentile answers:

The concept of truth coincides with the concept of fact.<sup>40</sup>

His more precise meaning is however that "the true is what is in the making."

<sup>89</sup> José Ortega y Gasset, "The Revolt of the Masses," W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 1932, pp. 80-82.

<sup>40</sup> Giovanni Gentile, "The Theory of Mind as Pure Act," transi. H. W. Carr, Macmillan, New York, 1922, p. 15. Gentile was the first Fascist Minister of Education.

### *The Philosophy of Modern Revolution*

The truth is that the fact which is convertible with the truth (verum et factum convertuntur) in being the same spiritual reality which realizes itself, or which is known in its realizing, is not strictly speaking, a fact or a deed, but a doing. We ought then rather to say, 'verum et fieri convertuntur.'" 41

Such a doctrine obviously admits of no such thing as a transcendent right or truth. If then, the Fascist is accused of "not being interested in being right" and of "being simply resolved to impose his opinions," he can on the basis of this theory reply that he is right simply because he is able to impose his opinions.

Against such a background, the word "myth" is no longer a term of reproach or contempt. A "myth" is a perfectly respectable thing; in fact, it becomes a word freighted with an almost sacred significance. It conveys (as Viereck says of Rosenberg's use of it) the notion of necessary faith, or inspiration, or unifying mass yearning, or folktale truer than truth.42

Though the theory of the myth appears in this highly sophisticated and unashamed form only in Syndicalism and Fascism, we do find in the other movements also, an activism, a glorification of violence and an emphasis upon the psychological transformation effected by it. In Syndicalism and Fascism it is more apparent because there it holds the central position; but it is, for example, readily discernible in Nazism also. Hitler does not hesitate to speak of the necessity of violence.

What prevented national Germany from all practical shaping of the German development was the lack of a close cooperation of brutal power and ingenious political intention.43

In no sense however is violence merely an unfortunately necessary means. Hitler frequently refers to "the privilege of force and

41 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

42 Viereck, "Metapolitics," p. 229.

43 *Mein Kampf*, p. 783.



strength," a privilege which is the basic principle of distinction in nature and which is the necessary accompaniment of racial superiority.

The Jewish doctrine of Marxism rejects the aristocratic principle in nature, and instead of the eternal privilege of force and strength, it places the mass of numbers.<sup>44</sup>

Idealism alone leads men to the voluntary acknowledgment of the privilege of force and strength.<sup>45</sup>

Thus there results the subjection of a number of people under the will often of only a few persons, a subjection based simply on the right of the stronger, a right which as we see it in nature, can be regarded as the sole conceivable right because founded on reason.<sup>46</sup>

In fact, Hitler is so conscious of the value of the fighting spirit that he declares that a movement will be great only as long as it preserves the fighting spirit.

One can say that its strength and with it, its justification of existence, increases only as long as it acknowledges the principle of fight as the presumption of its development, and that it has passed the climax of its strength in the moment when the complete victory is on its side.

Thus it is only useful for a moment to aspire to this victory in a form which does not lead to a momentary victory, but which gives it a long period of growth due to the long duration of the struggle caused by absolute intolerance.<sup>47</sup>

In this he is actually close to supposing that the psychological effects of the fighting spirit constitute the essence of the desired transformation.

Hitler was moreover clearly conscious of the necessity of stirring up the spirit of violence.

The lack of a great new creative idea means at all times a limitation of the fighting power. The conviction of the justification of using even the most brutal weapons is always dependent on the

<sup>44</sup> *Mein Kampf*, p. 83.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 411.

<sup>46</sup> Hitler, Speech of Sept. 3, 1933, "My New Order," p. 200.

<sup>47</sup> *Mein Kampf*, p. 486.

presence of a fanatical belief in the necessity of the victory of a revolutionary new order on this globe. A movement which does not fight for such aims will therefore never rake the ultimate weapon.<sup>18</sup>

Fanatical intolerance is the source of strength and greatness. And fanatical intolerance can only spring from an idea which can inspire what amounts to religious convictions.

The greatness of every powerful organization as the incorporation of an idea in the world, is rooted in the religious fanaticism with which it intolerably enforces itself against everything else, fanatically convinced of its own right.<sup>19</sup>

It would however, be a mistake to suppose that this attitude is peculiar to these three movements or that it made its first appearance in Syndicalism. Actually, its roots are to be found in that basic irrationality common to all of the modern revolutionary movements.<sup>50</sup> Bakunin certainly expressed the glorification of violence far more vehemently than did Sorel. As we have already seen, the creation of the new order, was for Bakunin, contingent upon the total and inexorable destruction of the old. He called for storm, vitality and lawlessness and for "the unleashing of what are called the bad passions of men."<sup>61</sup> He does not hesitate to express a startling conclusion.

The desire for destruction is at the same time a creative desire.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 784. Cf. his speech of Sept. 18, 1922. "For liberation something more is necessary than an economic policy, something more than industry. If a people is to become free, it needs pride and will power, defiance, hate, hate and once again hate." "My New Order," p. 49.

<sup>49</sup> *Mein Kampf*, p. 486.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. especially, Robert Hunter, "Violence and the Labor Movement," Macmillan, New York, 1914.

<sup>51</sup> "L'Alliance," p. 129.

<sup>52</sup> "Lasst uns also dem ewigen Geiste vertrauen, der nur deshalb zerstört und vernichtet, weil er der unergründliche und ewig schaffende Quell alles Lebens ist—Die Lust der Zerstörung ist zugleich eine- Schaffende Lust." Bakunin, "Die Reaktion in Deutschland," "Zwei Schriften aus den 40" Jahren des XIX Jahrhunderts," von Michael Bakunin, Internationale Bibliothek für Philosophie, Bd. II, No. 11/12, Prag. 1936, p. 21. The section quoted is from

Though this almost pathological frenzy is lacking in Kropotkin it is significant that he regards the moment of revolutionary upheaval as a time of heightened creative ability. The plan which the reason was impotent to formulate, comes into being under the influence of the spirit generated by revolutionary action.

The practical solution will not be formed, will not be made clear until the change will have already begun. It will be the product of the revolution itself, of the people in action—or else it will be nothing, the brain of a few individuals being absolutely incapable of finding solutions which can only spring from the life of the people.<sup>53</sup>

Lenin lays that same significance on the moment of upheaval.

At no other time are the masses of the people in a position to come forward so actively as the creators of a new social order, as during the time of revolution.<sup>54</sup>

History generally, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more many sided, more lively and "subtle" than the best parties and the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced class imagine. This is understandable because the best vanguards express the class-consciousness, the will, the passion, the phantasy of tens of thousands, while the revolution is made, at the moment of its climax and the exertion of all human capabilities, by the class consciousness, the will, the passion and the phantasy of tens of millions who are urged on the very acutest class struggle.<sup>55</sup>

For Kropotkin too, revolution is a time of "heightened life."

the concluding paragraph of the article; it is not merely a passing remark but represents Bakunin's own summary of the matter.

<sup>53</sup> "Revolutionary Government," "Revolutionary Pamphlets," p. 241.

<sup>54</sup> This passage from Lenin's "Two Tactics of the Social Democrats in the Democratic Revolution," is quoted in V. Adoratsky, "Dialectical Materialism." Martin Lawrence, London, (no date), p. 75. Adoratsky was the Director of the Marx-Engels-Lenin institute of Moscow.

<sup>55</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Left-wing Communism," Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the U. S. S. R. Moscow, Leningrad, 1935, pp. 94-95.

To struggle is to live, and the fiercer the struggle, the intenser the life.<sup>50</sup>

Marx apparently laid the burden of effecting this psychological transformation upon the economic change, *i. e.*, he felt that the abolition of private property would transform man himself. Yet he too shared this revolutionary insight into the creative value of violence. In an unmistakable but strangely seldom quoted passage, he asserts that the revolutionary upheaval is necessary not merely as a means of overcoming the resistance of the vested interests but also to effect the psychological alteration of man himself.

Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness and for the success of the cause itself, an alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a *revolution*; this revolution is necessary therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew.<sup>51</sup>

The emphasis upon violence is a further evidence of the irrationality of modern revolution, of its stress upon the primacy of action. Yet it is the very formlessness and dynamism of modern revolution which demands this emphasis and makes it possible.<sup>52</sup> The modern

<sup>50</sup> "Anarchist Morality," "Revolutionary Pamphlets," p. 113.

<sup>51</sup> Marx-Engels, "The German Ideology," edit. R. Pascal, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1938, p. 69.

<sup>52</sup> "It is only in an order of things, in which there will be no longer classes or class antagonisms, that social evolutions will cease to be political revolutions. Until then, on the eve of each general reconstruction of society, the last word of social science will be:

"La combat ou la mort: la lutte sanguinaire ou le néant  
C'est ainsi que la question est invinciblement posée."

K. Marx, "The Poverty of Philosophy," transi. H. Quelch, Chicago, Charles Kerr & Co. (1934), p. 191.

<sup>53</sup> "The great strength of the revolutionary principles was that they gave a free course to the instincts of primitive barbarity which had been restrained by the secular and inhibitory action of environment, tradition and law." Gustave

revolutionary is reluctant to confine his objective to a clear-cut, sharply defined program. Such platforms may be formulated but he insists upon the purely limited, transient significance of such schemata. As we have already pointed out, he insists that these are, at best, merely certain aspects of a larger vision—a larger vision which is in the last analysis, that of a mass change in human nature. Unlimited possibility is its characteristic feature. It bears, as Sorel would say, “a character of infinity.”<sup>59</sup> It is immeasurable. Now the modern revolution stresses action—as every revolutionary must do. He cannot fail to recognize the fact that action, and particularly violent action has an inescapable psychological effect on the men who take part in it. Moreover, the spirit of violence is, in a sense, an immeasurable quantity. It is difficult to estimate the limits of its transforming power. Nothing then, could be simpler and seemingly more obvious than to find in action an imponderable factor which makes the astounding revolutionary ideal seem feasible. It is very neat and at first sight quite plausible, being just vague enough to render refutation difficult.

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#### *Conclusions About Revolutionary Irrationality*

The central fact which stands out from the analysis conducted in these last three chapters, is that for the modern revolutionary, reason is not the arbiter of man's social destiny. Consciously or

1« Bon, “The Psychology of Revolution,” transi. B. Miall, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1913, p. 65.

59 “The general strike has a character of infinity, because it puts on one side all discussion of definite reforms and confronts men with a catastrophe.” G. Sorel, “Reflections on Violence,” p. 27, footnote. Pareto declares: “Derivations usually overstep the limits of reality. Sometimes, as also in the case of myths, people do not mind that. But then again, as happens with pseudo-experimental derivations, there is an effort, now by one device, now by another to effect a certain accord with reality. One of the most widely used and most effective of such devices is to take advantage of the vagueness of the language in which the derivation is stated.” “The Mind and Society,” New York, 1935. Vol. HI, p- 1246, § 1797.

unconsciously the modern revolutionaries have, with an almost clairvoyant assurance, formulated their ideologies in such a way as to dispense the revolution from the necessity of rational guidance. Their appeal is always to the infra-rational. This is true not only of the professedly activist and irrational theories, but of the supposedly intellectualistic ones as well. It is significant that whenever reason is apparently glorified, there is also present the concept of a necessary evolutionary process. In the one case reason surrenders its primacy to the infra-rational elements in man's psychological make-up; in the other it bows down before the inevitable historical forces outside the individual. The important thing is that reason is never in a position to lay down prescriptions or norms for the practical movement. This is true with regard to prescriptions about purely sociological matters and it is even more apparent with regard to ethical questions. On the basis of the revolutionary doctrines, no objective standards remain, nor any possibility of a rational, objective appraisal or criticism. Each revolutionary ideology professedly eliminates the rational vantage ground from which such a judgment might be passed. This aspect of the teaching of the modern revolution has been variously designated as the "dethronement of truth," as the "glorification of a doctrineless dynamism" or as the "primacy of sociology over ethics"—but call it what you will, it is, in the last analysis a form of irrationality.

To obviate misunderstanding on this point, it must be clearly kept in mind that irrationality does not necessarily imply the absence of thought or theorizing. Obviously no man can completely abandon reason. When a man plots a campaign he is using his reason. Even when he professes to have nothing to do with thought or theorizing, his very assertion in itself constitutes a theory. The irrational man is simply the man who refuses to follow the guidance of reason, the man who refuses to admit that his life must be ordered in accord with rationally discernible principles. Such is the man who lets his life be guided by animal instincts and emotional impulses. Practically speaking, the irrationality of the modern revolutionary consists in the fact that he refuses to submit his actions to the judgment of reason, and that refusing to acknowledge any norm transcendent to

his own impulses and wishes, he admits no rule of action other than the pragmatic exigencies of that action itself.

That this is the attitude of the modern revolutionary is an inference that could probably be justified merely by a consideration of the inner logic of the revolutionary position itself. Even from an *a priori* point of view, it would seem that in order to achieve the action he desires, the revolutionary must find some way of escaping the inhibiting influences of rational consideration. But the fact that the modern revolutionaries *do actually do so*, is manifest in the ideologies which they have constructed. The various ideologies are in the final analysis, various ways of making irrationality appear respectable. It is in their ability to construct such "intellectualized defenses" of revolutionary irrationality, that the genius of all great revolutionaries consists. Often perhaps they do it unconsciously, without any clear realization, but at any rate those doctrines which have actually served as efficacious revolutionary ideologies, do enshrine and glorify such irrational elements.

Sorel shocks our sensibilities because of his blatant irrationalism and because of the fact that he champions violence, yet the simple fact is that Sorel, better than any other, has laid bare for us the inner structure of a revolutionary ideology. If there seems to be a divergence between Sorel's doctrine and that of the other modern revolutionaries, it must be borne in mind that Sorel is analyzing and dissecting the revolutionary ideology, while they on the other hand are simply constructing ideologies. Between Sorel's views, as expressed in his doctrine of the myth and the myths proposed by the other revolutionaries, there is merely the difference between the living body and that same body with its inner working exposed for view on the operating table. All of the modern revolutionary ideologies are actually "expressed in the form of derivations that overstep experience and reality,"<sup>100</sup> and all of them achieve this by embodying a basic irrationality.

<sup>100</sup> "The capacity for influencing human conduct that is possessed, by sentiments expressed in the form of derivations that overstep experience and reality, throws light upon a phenomenon that has been well observed and analyzed by Georges Sorel, the fact, namely, that if a social doctrine . . . is to have any influence, it must take the form of a myth." Pareto, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 1300, § 1868.

## CHAPTER V

## IMMANENTISM

Any "other-worldly" goal constitutes a challenge to the modern revolutionary movement. The revolution will have its best chance of success if men can be brought to stake their all for its achievement—if they can be made to feel that without its accomplishment all is lost. Recognizing, therefore, that a fanatical conviction of the necessity of a new order is the cornerstone of revolutionary effort, the modern revolutionary has, with a sure instinct, attempted so to construct his philosophy that men should find in the revolutionary ideal the sum and quintessence of all human values.

That all of the revolutionaries should have scented in religion the arch foe of the revolutionary spirit is, therefore, quite understandable. Religion, they felt, distracts men from the revolutionary resolve for it teaches that all is not lost if the new order is not achieved. Religion is by its very nature, "other-worldly"; and even when it is actively concerned in the promotion of social well-being, its crusade is tempered by the consideration that the final end and the meaning of human existence is to be found in another life. It is its "other-worldly" character to which the revolutionary objects. He denies God and opposes religion precisely because he does not want to acknowledge any supra-mundane reality or any supra-temporal destiny.

What is significant is not so much the bare fact of this opposition but rather the doctrine of uncompromising immanence upon which it is predicated. (We define immanence in Demant's sense—"as a dogma that the significance of the actual world process is immanent in it and requires no transcendent eternal reality to give it meaning.")<sup>1</sup> It is not so much atheism as rather the belief that the purpose and significance of human life is to be found in the world of

<sup>1</sup> V. A. Demant, "The Religious Prospect," London, Frederick Muller, 1939, p. 128.

here and now, which is the basic feature of modern revolution. This is, for all practical purposes, atheism, but the distinction is important because the revolutionary doctrine is not always expressed as an atheism. The earlier revolutionaries were indeed militant atheists; they saw no alternative but that of the complete destruction of religion. But later revolutionaries have not hesitated to invoke God and to appeal to religious sentiments. In doing so, some have carefully reinterpreted the words "God" and "religion"; their atheism becomes apparent enough. In other cases, however, this reinterpretation is lacking and one finds difficulty in convicting them of direct expressions of atheism. But what is common to all is the immanentist doctrine that the whole significance of human life is to be found in the world of here and now. All may not expressly reject God, but none leave a place for Him.

## Militant Atheism

In Bakunin, Kropotkin, Marx, Lenin and to a certain extent, Proudhon, this immanentism appeared as a militant atheism. Belief in God must be wiped out of the hearts of men. Religion was "the chief bulwark of government, authority, slavery and oppression,"<sup>2</sup> "the opium of the people."<sup>3</sup> In their eyes no more damning criticism could be made. They hated the "State" with an all-pervading hatred; and with no diminution they transferred that hatred to religion as well. To the Anarchist "the government, the lawgiver and the priest"<sup>4</sup> were inseparable allies. "Priests, military chiefs, judges,"

<sup>2</sup> Kropotkin, "Modern Science and Anarchism," "Revolutionary Pamphlets," p. 149. "In any society that is divided into classes, where on the one side of the line you have the oppressed and the exploited, and on the other side the oppressors and the exploiters, religion and its ministers were and still are, one of the bulwarks of the oppression of the masses." E. Yaroslavsky, "Religion in the U. S. S. R.," New York, International Publishers, 1934, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> "Religion is the moan of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the opium of the people." Karl Marx, "A Criticism of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right," in "Selected Essays" by Karl Marx, transi. H. J. Stenning, New York, International Publishers, 1926, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Kropotkin, "Anarchist Morality," "Revolutionary Pamphlets," p. 80.

have a common aim, that of "striving, at the expense of the people," to establish their domination." <sup>5</sup>

At all times there appeared sorcerers, prophets, priests and heads of military organizations who endeavored to establish and to strengthen their authority over the people. They supported one another, concluded alliances that they might reign over the people, hold them in subjection and compel them to work for their masters.<sup>6</sup>

Religion is the first line of defense for vested interests. To a wretched and oppressed people it holds out a way of escape—a way of escape, which from the point of view of these "vested interests" is safe and innocuous. By diverting otherwise dangerous and subversive tendencies into harmless channels, it becomes the "safety-valve of society." <sup>7</sup>

Reduced intellectually and morally as well as materially, to the minimum of human existence, confined in their life, like a prisoner in his prison, without horizon, without outlet, without even a future, if we believe the economists, the people would have the singularly narrow souls and blunted instincts of the bourgeois if they did not feel the desire to escape; but of escape there are but three methods—two chimerical and a third real. The first two are the dram-shop and the Church, debauchery of the body or debauchery of the mind; the third is the social revolution.<sup>8</sup>

In the celebrated phrase of Marx "religion is the opium of the people." <sup>9</sup> It is the sedative which enables men to endure their present lot by leading them to sublimate their hope.

<sup>5</sup> Kropotkin, "Anarchism, Its Philosophy and Its Ideal," "Revolutionary Pamphlets," p. 123.

<sup>6</sup> Kropotkin, "Modern Science and Anarchism," "Revolutionary Pamphlets," p. 147.

<sup>7</sup> Bakunin, "God and the State," p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> The reference is given above in footnote 3. Marx adds: "The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people, is the demand for their real happiness. The demand to abandon the illusions about their conditions is a demand to abandon a condition which requires illusions. The criticism of religion therefore contains potentially the criticism of the Vale of Tears whose aureole is religion." *Op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.



Religion teaches those who toil in poverty all their lives to be resigned and patient in this world, and consoles them with the hope of reward in heaven. As for those who live upon the labour of others, religion teaches them to be "charitable"—thus providing a justification for exploitation and, as it were, also cheap ticket to heaven likewise. "Religion is the opium of the people." Religion is a kind of spiritual intoxicant, in which the slaves of capital drown their humanity and blunt their desire for a decent human existence.<sup>10</sup>

In the idea of God these men saw the symbol of all they hated.

The idea of God implies the abdication of human reason and justice; it is the most decisive negation of human liberty, and necessarily ends in the enslavement of mankind both in theory and in practice.<sup>11</sup>

Carried away by his own eloquence, Bakunin goes on to declare that "if God existed, only in one way could he serve human liberty—by ceasing to exist."<sup>12</sup>

A jealous lover of human liberty, and deeming it the absolute condition of all that we admire and respect in humanity, I reverse the phrase of Voltaire, and say, that if God really existed, it would be necessary to abolish him.<sup>13</sup>

For the Marxist the idea of God is a product of fear.

All religion . . . is nothing but the fantastic reflection in men's minds of those external forces which dominate their everyday existence, a reflection in which earthly forces assume the form of super-natural forces.<sup>14</sup>

At first it was "the mysterious forces of nature" that led to "these personifications, these fantastic forms" (*i. e.*, ideas of gods.) But

<sup>10</sup> Lenin, "Socialism and Religion," in "Lenin on Religion," Martin Lawrence, London, no date, pp. 11-12.

<sup>11</sup> Bakunin, "God and the State," p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> F. Engels, "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science," Chicago, Charles Kerr & Co., 1935, pp. 331-332.

at a later stage this was done by "social forces" and the extraneous forces of the capitalist mode of production.<sup>15</sup>

The roots of religion are deeply imbedded in the social oppression of the working masses, and in their apparently complete helplessness before the blind forces of capitalism, which every day and every hour cause a thousand times more horrible suffering and torture for ordinary working folk than are caused by exceptional events such as war, earthquakes, etc. "Fear created the gods." Fear of the blind forces of capital—blind because its action cannot be foreseen by the masses—a force which at every step in life threatens the worker and the small business man with "sudden," "unexpected," "accidental" destruction and ruin, bringing in their train beggary, pauperism, prostitution and deaths from starvation—this is the tap-root of modern religion.<sup>16</sup> 7

Lenin sums up the Marxist doctrine.

God is (historically and socially) first of all, a complex of ideas engendered by the ignorance of mankind and its subjection, firstly, beneath the forces of nature, secondly, by class oppression.<sup>17</sup>

To these men "God" meant the Supreme and Perfect Being of traditional Christianity. To use the word "God" in any other sense, seems to them to confuse and obscure the issue. We witness this particularly in Lenin's criticism of an article written by Gorky. Gorky had declared:

God is a complex of those ideas worked out by tribes, by nations, by humanity at large, which arouse and organize the social

<sup>15</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>16</sup> Lenin, "Religion," p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 53. The atheistic character of Marxism is too well known to require extensive documentation. Further texts and references can be found in McFadden, "Philosophy of Communism," Ch. VI, pp. 118-131. Cf. especially E. Yaroslavsky, "Religion in the U. S. S. R.," International Publishers, N. Y., 1934 (Anti-religious propaganda by the head of the Militant Atheists League). For an accurate and well documented report on current conditions of N. S. Timasheff, "Religion in Soviet Russia, 1917-1942," Sheed & Ward, N. Y., 1942,

emotions, and which serve to unite the individual with society and to curb zoological individualism.<sup>18</sup>19

This, declares Lenin, is "obviously wrong and obviously reactionary." It is "a trick which is on all fours with the 'hocus-pocus' of the priests." "Of course," said Lenin, "you mean something 'Good and Beautiful,' 'Truth,' 'Justice,' and all that sort of thing." But he castigates Gorky none the less for playing into the hands of the reactionaries.<sup>18</sup>

Bakunin rebukes his "illustrious contemporary idealists" for the same misuse of the word.

The God whom they adore, or whom they think they adore is distinguished from the real gods of history precisely in this—that he is not at all a positive god, defined in any way whatever, theologically or even metaphysically. . . . They take good care not to give him any positive definition whatever, feeling very strongly that any positive definition would subject him to the dissolving power of criticism. They will not say whether he is a personal god or an impersonal god; whether he created or did not create the world; they will not even speak of his divine providence, all that might compromise him. They content themselves with saying "God" and nothing more. But then what is their God? Not even an idea; it is an aspiration. It is the generic name of all that seems grand, good, beautiful, noble, human to them. But why then, do they not say "Man"? <sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Lenin, "Religion," pp. 52-53.

<sup>19</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> Bakunin, "God and the State," p. 26. A more polished and less impassioned treatment of the problem of God is to be found in Michel Bakounine, "Oeuvres, Fédéralisme, Socialisme et Anti-théologisme," Librairie Tresse et Stock, Paris, 1895. Cf. chapter III, "L'Anti-théologisme," especially p. 79 ff; also "Lettres aux internationaux du Jura," *op. cit.*, p. 248 ff. "Sans vouloir approfondir les spéculations philosophiques sur la nature de l'être, nous croyons pouvoir établir comme un axiome la proposition suivante: Tout ce qui est, les êtres qui constituent l'ensemble indéfini de l'univers, toutes les choses existantes dans le monde, quelle que soit d'ailleurs leur nature, sous le rapport de la qualité, comme de la quantité, grandes moyennes ou infiniment, petites, rapprochées ou immensément éloignées, exercent, sans le vouloir et sans pouvoir même y penser, les unes sur les autres et chacune sur toutes, soit immédiatement soit par transition, une action et réaction perpétuelles qui, se combinant

To these Anarchists and Marxists we must in a certain sense be grateful. At least they are clear and outspoken in their attitude. They made no underhand attempt to parade under the banner of theism. Religion, they declared, must be destroyed and the idea of God wiped out of the hearts of men. The conflict between religion and revolution was a struggle to the death. No rapprochement or compromise was possible.

### *Reinterpretation of Religion*

Obviously, however, this attitude has certain disadvantages. Many are shocked and repelled by blatant atheism. There are, moreover, certain incurably religious instincts in the human heart—instincts which must be afforded some outlet. To certain of the revolutionaries a more subtle technique seemed, therefore, to be demanded.

Modern confusion about the definition of God made such a technique possible.<sup>21</sup> By taking advantage of those very hazy idealistic notions of God<sup>22</sup> that Bakunin and Lenin so emphatically ruled out, one could appeal to God, without suffering any of the inconveniences that might result from the acceptance of the traditional Christian

en un seul mouvement, *constituent ce que nous appelons, la solidarité, la vie et la causalité, universelles. Appelez cette solidarité Dieu, l'absolu, si cela vous amuse, peu nous importe, pourvu que vous ne donniez à ce Dieu d'autre sens que celui que nous venons de préciser: celui de la combinaison universelle, naturelle, nécessaire, mais nullement prédéterminée ni prévue d'une infinité d'actions et de réactions particulières.* *Op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>21</sup> The best delineation of this confusion is to be found in "God and Intelligence in Modern Philosophy," by Fulton J. Sheen, Longmans, Green & Co., London, New York, 1925; especially chapters IV and V, pp. 31-61. Cf. "American Philosophies of Religion," by H. E. Wieman and B. E. Meland, Willet Clarke & Co., Chicago, 1936.

<sup>22</sup> "The term God has a popular anthropomorphic meaning which it gets from mass religion. When a philosopher uses this word, he never means by it what, for example, any naïve person would mean by it. This fact must be especially stressed because the critics of idealism often leave the impression that idealism holds to the idea of God of the man in the street. . . . But no idea of God of any idealist is to be identified with the vague and crude conception of the unreflective." D. S. Robinson, "An Introduction to Living Philosophy," Thomas Y. Crowell Co., N. Y., 1932, pp. 95-96.

notion. Moreover, since men had begun to speak of vague humanitarianism and even aesthetic nature worship as religious sentiments, the word "religion" could be distorted to fit almost any context. It appeared, therefore, that to wean men from those "religious beliefs" that served as the bulwark of the existing order, a militant atheism was not necessary.

The elements of such a new approach appear in Proudhon. In his earlier years Proudhon had indeed scorned any such subterfuge. Declaring that religion was necessarily dogmatic, he scoffed at the idea of parading a vague philosophic pietism under the banner of religion. Religion meant belief in a "first principle, a cause of causes"; any rejection of this notion was in reality atheism and ought to be labeled as such.

Religion cannot exist as a mere vague and indefinite sentiment of piety; it is positive, dogmatic, definite or it is nothing. That is whjr Jean Jacques Rousseau, Bernadin de St. Pierre, Jacobi, no matter what they say, are as much atheists as Hegel, Kant and Spinoza. . . . Is not this philosophic spirit atheism, and the most refined atheism, which considers facts by themselves in their evolution, their series, their relations without giving a thought to a first principle or to the cause of causes? If one may join two such words, is it not an atheistic theology, this rational criticism which classes ideas of cause, substance, spirit, god, future life, etc. etc., as forms of our understanding, or symbols of our consciousness, and which consequently explains in a way which compels our assent, all religious manifestations, theologies and théogonies, as the unfolding of concepts? 24

The issue was clean cut and definite: on the one side, dogmatic religion, on the other, atheism.

23 Cf. Fulton J. Sheen, "Religion Without God," Longmans, Green & Co., New York, London, 1928, passim. On pages 47-48, twenty-three, **modern** definitions are listed. Among them are the following: "Religion is an emotion resting on a conviction of a harmony between ourselves and the universe a large"; "Religion is a projection in the roaring loom of time of a concentrated or unified complex of psychological values"; "Religion is an ever-moving process in the direction of complete personal adjustment and control in man's total environment"; "Any reasoned appreciation of life is—a religion even though there are no conventional religious elements in it."

24 Proudhon, "General Idea of the Revolution," p. 250.

Needless to say, Proudhon was here appealing not for theism, but for clarity of designation. He is simply attempting to show that the "philosophic spirit" must be ranged on the side of atheism. Like the other Anarchists, he rejected religion along with the State and God along with the King.<sup>25</sup> Revolution, he declared, must take the place of revelation, and the notion of Progress must be substituted for the notion of the Absolute.<sup>29</sup> He was particularly interested in founding a new system of humanitarian ethics—an ethic which should have nothing to do with religion.

*The Revolution is determined to emancipate morality from any admixture of mysticism: it is radically distinct from it, not only from Christianity, but from all religion, past, present and future.*<sup>27</sup>

This new morality, which is for him summed up in the word "Justice,"<sup>28</sup> is totally incompatible with the Christian idea of morality and the Christian conception of God as a transcendent being and supreme lawgiver.

*The Transcendent Being conceived and adored as the author and end of Justice, is the very negation of Justice; religion and morality which the people have agreed to make sisters, are heterogeneous and incompatible. One must choose between the fear of God and the fear of evil, between the danger of damnation and the danger of improbity: this is my thesis.*<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> "He who denies his king, denies his God and vice versa." *Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>26</sup> Proudhon, "De La Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Eglise," Vol. III, p. 605. Also "General Idea of the Revolution," p. 294.

<sup>27</sup> "La Révolution a positivement entendu affranchir la morale de tout mélange mystique: par là elle s'est radicalement séparée, non seulement du Christianisme mais de toute religion, passée, présente et à venir." Proudhon, "De La Justice," Vol. I, p. 170.

<sup>28</sup> Lu ("Political Theories of P. V. Proudhon") sums up Proudhon's notion of justice on p. 63. We have already quoted this passage in Chapter I, p. 6. <sup>29</sup> "L'Etre transcendant, conçu et adoré comme auteur et solution de la Justice, est la négation même de la Justice; la religion et la morale, que le consentement des peuples a faites soeurs, sont hétérogènes et incompatibles. Il faut choisir entre la crainte de Dieu et la crainte du mal, entre le risque de la damnation et le risque de l'improbité: viola ma these." Proudhon, "De la Justice," Vol. I, p. 39; cf. p. 170. Cf. J. Chabrier, "L'Idee de la Révolution d'après Proudhon," Paris, 1935, pp. 21-31.

Yet strangely enough, at the end of this very same work, he admits that there are in the human heart certain tendencies and inclinations that can only find satisfaction in the forms of religious worship. He sees an indestructible element of mysticism and a deep rooted feeling that certain events in life ought to be solemnized by ceremony and ritual. He proposes, therefore, a concordat between the Catholic Church and the Revolution. The primary condition of that rapprochement is that the Church scrap her dogmas, or rather that she should empty her teaching of dogmatic content by interpreting them in what amounts to an allegorical sense.<sup>30</sup> Proudhon himself furnishes an outline for such a reinterpretation in terms of a glorified humanitarianism. He would retain, be it noted, the word "God": but he would define God as "human nature elevated to the infinite and idealized."<sup>31</sup>

Proudhon's solution found further elaboration in syndicalism. The Syndicalists, like good revolutionaries and supposed followers of Marx, took for granted the denial of God and the rejection of religion.

Syndicalism is opposed to the idea of God and to the liberating value of Power: it denies the very *raison d'être* of the former because the Supreme Being can be only a pivot and a moving force of human actions; man should then be only a machine incapable of thinking and creating.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Proudhon, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 606-607.

<sup>31</sup> "Qu'est ce que cette adoration, religion, d'un être souverain, sinon une représentation de la Justice, c'est-à-dire du respect de l'humanité? Dieu est tout à la fois, d'un côté, la nature humaine élevée à l'infini et idéalisée; d'autre, le concept, nullement absurde bien qu'indémonstrable, d'un moi cosmique, comme qui dirait d'une Humanité universelle.

"Que sont ces trinités divines que l'on voit se dégager de toutes les mythologies, sinon la première catégorisation de l'âme humaine, individuelle et collective, dans ses puissances fondamentales? La Révolution n'a pas manqué de la reproduire dans sa devise fameuse; aucune philosophie du dix-neuvième siècle n'a pu s'en détacher.

"Vos anges ne sont-ils pas ces forces collectives que l'économie nous révèle, et dont l'équilibre fait l'objet du droit public et du droit des gens." Proudhon, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 602-603. In the succeeding pages Proudhon continues with this parallel, even reinterpreting the sacraments.

<sup>32</sup> «Le Syndicalisme s'oppose à l'idée de Dieu et à la valeur libératrice du Pouvoir: au premier il nie toute raison d'être car l'être suprême ne pourrait

Yet the theoreticians of Syndicalism, Sorel and his followers, were struck by the concept of religion without dogma. A Church stripped of her dogmas would be a Church bereft of menace, while on the other hand, alliance with such a Church could prove of inestimable benefit to the revolution.

What encouraged them in this regard was the emergence of the Modernist movement within the Catholic Church itself. Modernism, which was finally exposed and condemned by Pius X in the Encyclical, "Pascendi Dominici Gregis" of September 8, 1907,<sup>33</sup> was, in essence a pragmatic theory. Its central tenet was that dogma had only a subjective and not an objective value, and that it was to be judged, not by the canons of historical, scientific or metaphysical criticism, but only by its power to stimulate and express the religious sentiment.<sup>34</sup>

With Sorel (who had declared, that his "myth of the general strike" was not to be considered "literally as future history" but only "as a means of acting in the present").<sup>35</sup> Modernism found a ready welcome. He appealed to the Catholic Church to discard her "clerical concept of truth,"<sup>36</sup> z. e., to cease proposing her doctrines as absolute truth.<sup>37</sup> Berth is only echoing his master's teaching when he de-

etre que le pivot et le moteur des actions humaines, l'homme n'était plus qu'une machine incapable de penser et de créer." "Les Objectifs," p. 18.

<sup>33</sup> This Encyclical, with the exception of its disciplinary sections is to be found in "Enchiridion Symbolorum," Benziger-Bannwart-Umberg, Editio 18-20, Friburgi, Herder & Co., 1932, pp. 570-586, nos. 2071-2109. As Maisie Ward says of it, "The Modernists had no textbook. The Encyclical gave them one and then proceeded to condemn it." "Insurrection versus Resurrection," by Maisie Ward, N. Y., Sheed & Ward, 1937, p. 260.

<sup>34</sup> "Thus we come to the key idea of Modernism . . . that dogmas are not the statement of truths revealed by God, but expressions of the religious mind at the stage to which religious experience has brought it; and the value of dogmas is measured, not by the objective truth of what they tell us about God, but by the adequacy with which (provisionally and for the time being) they express our own religious convictions." Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

<sup>35</sup> Vide, *supra*, p. 61.

Sorel, "D'Utilité de Pragmatisme," p. 179.

<sup>37</sup> G. Sorel, "La Crise de la Pensée Catholique," Libraire G. Jaques, Paris (no date), *passim*.

dares that under such conditions a rapprochement between the Church and the Revolution is possible.

If the Church should decide to abandon Scholasticism, that is *to say*, the ancient metaphysic, and to renounce the clerical concept of truth, which leads inevitably to the Inquisition and theocracy ... it is possible to conceive of a collusion between Christianity and Socialism.<sup>38</sup>

Following the lead of Bergson, Berth distinguished between static religion and dynamic religion; the true and abiding element in religion is its mysticism, whereas dogma is an aspect of that static religion which is the bulwark of social oppression.

One must distinguish here what Bergson calls *static religion* and *dynamic religion*; the former is nothing else, in effect, than the counterpart of static social morality, destined above all to maintain, as the Socialists have always said, the lower classes in their submission and resignation to the established order, but the second is that *mysticism*, which we have carefully distinguished from idealism, and whose invincible and eternal character Proudhon himself has recognized.<sup>39</sup>

It is significant to note that Christianity, stripped of dogma and transformed by Socialism, would become in Berth's opinion, the "religion of the Holy Spirit."

<sup>38</sup> "Si l'Eglise peut se décider à lâcher la Scholastique, c'est-à-dire, l'ancienne métaphysique et à renoncer à la conception clericale de la vérité, qui conduit inévitablement à la Inquisition et à la théocratie ... il sera possible d'imaginer une collusion entre le christianisme et le socialisme." E. Berth in the introduction to "D'Aristote à Marx" (L'Ancienne et la Nouvelle Métaphysique), by Georges Sorel, Paris, Riviere, 1935, pp. 86-88.»

<sup>39</sup> "Il faudrait distinguer ici ce que Bergson appelé *religion statique* et *religion dynamique*, la première n'étant guère, en effet, que le contrefort de la morale sociale statique, destinée surtout à maintenir, comme les socialistes Vont toujours dit, les classes pauvres dans la soumission et la résignation à



Religion would no longer be the religion of the Father, nor that of the Son; but that of the Spirit, of the Third Person; the time of the Paraclete announced by Christ Himself would have arrived; and Pentecost would replace, as the greatest feast of Christianity, transformed by Socialism, the Jewish and Christian Easter.<sup>40</sup>

That Berth should have borrowed the idea of tenth century milleniarism is noteworthy; it is a further indication of the immanentist and chiliastic character of his doctrine.

In proposing this rapprochement with religion these men were striking out of religion all of its transcendent "other-worldly" elements. What they wanted of religion was only its symbolism and its sentiment. The God they were willing to invoke was not the transcendent Being of Christian belief but an idealistic abstraction. If this union was to be effected the Church would have to abandon her dream of supra-temporal human destiny and take instead, as the final goal of all striving, the immediate amelioration of man's worldly lot and condition.

#### *New Pseudo-Religions*

In the third approach embodied in Fascism and Nazism this opposition to "other-worldly" values manifests itself in the divinization of the political community. Instead of attempting to destroy religion as the first group did, or to reinterpret it as the second did, these movements have created new pseudo-religions of their own.<sup>41</sup> There is no militant atheism nor any officially expressed opposition to religion. Seldom do they openly deny the existence of supra-temporal ends; they simply assert the primacy of temporal ones in such a way as to leave no room for any others. They prefer to go

<sup>40</sup> "... et la religion ne sera plus la religion du Père, ni celle du fils, mais celle de l'Esprit, de la Troisième Personne: la temps du Paraclet, annoncés par le Christ lui même, seront venus, et la Pentecôte remplacera, comme fête suprême de la chrétienté transformée par le socialisme, la Pâque juive et chrétienne." Berth, *op. cit.*, p. 63. Sorel declares that it is because of its mysticism that Christianity will survive. Cf. G. Sorel, "De l'Eglise et de l'Etat," *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, Cah. 3, ser. 3, 1902, p. 32.

<sup>41</sup> For a general characterization of this attitude consult, Emile Bocquillon, "La Religion Civique et la Mission de la France," Paris, Librairie Vuibert, 1937.

their own way, calmly and as a matter of course, putting the nation or the race in the place of the Deity and demanding for the State that measure of loyalty and devotion due to Him alone.

This is particularly true of Fascism. That Fascism is not professedly atheistic is hardly to be wondered at. In traditionally Catholic Italy it would scarcely be a policy countenanced by the demands of political expedience. Expedience has indeed complicated the whole situation. The pact that Mussolini signed with the Vatican was obviously a purely political move—recognized as such by both parties.<sup>42</sup> In spite of the surface accord a very real struggle continued—chiefly with regard to the education of youth.<sup>43</sup>

The consistent policy of Fascism has been to surround the State with a pseudo-religious aura, in the name of which it claims undivided allegiance. The State is not merely a government; it is the "ethical State," "standing for the conscience and universal will of men."<sup>44</sup> It has a morality of its own, a morality which is independent of any transcendent religious principles.<sup>45</sup> The State itself is the source and the focal point of all human and spiritual values.

<sup>42</sup> For a thorough and scholarly exposition of this point see, D. A. Binchy, "Church and State in Fascist Italy," N. Y., Oxford University Press, 1943. Cf. also, H. Finer, "Mussolini's Italy," London, Gollancz, 1935, pp. 455-468. Most of what has been written on this point is so completely partisan and so honeycombed with errors of inference as well as with evidence of ignorance of fact, as to deserve no serious consideration. This can be clearly seen in Westmeyer's discussion of the point and his summation of the various current opinions. R. E. Westmeyer, "Modern Economic and Social Systems," N. Y., 1940, pp. 426-429.

«Cf. Finer, *op. cit.*, 426-451. In a speech of May 25, 1929, Mussolini distinguished between education and instruction. Finer describes his attitude: "To him instruction was a technical, merely instrumental matter. It was concerned with facts and words and formulae. Of this the State claimed no monopoly. . . . But education. The moulding of character? This is the State's business. Religion was only instruction and therefore subject to the final control, integration and moulding of the State." *Op. cit.*, p. 461.

<sup>44</sup> "Fascism," p. 10. The texts referring to the Fascist conception of the ethical state have already been quoted on pp. 18-20.

<sup>45</sup> "Let no one think of denying the moral character of Fascism, for I should feel ashamed to speak from this tribune, if I did not feel that I represent the moral and spiritual powers of the State. What would the State be if it

The Fascist conception of the State is all-embracing; outside of it no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have meaning.<sup>46</sup>

This is, in a more polished form, the basic principle of totalitarianism that there is to be nothing outside the State, nothing above the State or against the State, but rather everything in the State and for the State.<sup>47</sup> By "human and spiritual values" Fascism means all those cultural values made possible by social life. It is primarily because man is a social being that he differs from the animals; all specifically human achievements are the fruit of man's social life. Religion is to be included among these.

Man is not solely matter; and the ends of the human species, far from being the materialistic ones we have in common with other animals are, rather and predominantly, the spiritual finalities which are peculiar to man and which every form of society strives to attain as well as its stage of social development allows. Thus the organization of every social group is more or less pervaded by the spiritual influxes of unity of language, of culture, of religion, of tradition, of customs and in general of feeling and volition.<sup>48</sup>

Social life makes these values possible, and since for Fascism, the "ethical State" is the highest form of social life, it is this State which

did not possess a spirit of its own, and a morality of its own, which lend power to the laws in virtue of which the State is obeyed by its citizens?

"The Fascist State claims its ethical character: it is Catholic but above all it is Fascist, in fact it is exclusively and essentially Fascist. Catholicism completes Fascism, and this we openly declare, but let no one think they can turn the tables on us under cover of metaphysics or philosophy," S. D. VII, pp. 104-105. An added significance must be attached to this passage because of the fact that it is appended as a note in "Fascism," p. 39. Mussolini is asserting here, not merely that Fascism is not based on the tenets of any particular religious body, but that its "morality" is antecedent to and independent of any religious doctrine.

<sup>40</sup> "Fascism," p. 11.

<sup>47</sup> "Tutto nello Stato, niente al di fuori dello Stato, niente contro lo Stato," Speech 14, 1929. S. D. VII, p. 132.

<sup>48</sup> A. Rocco, "The Political Doctrine of Fascism," *International Conciliation*, No. 223, Oct., 1926, p. 401.

makes them possible. Thus it is by making the State synonymous with social life that Fascism is enabled to make the State the source and ground of all these values.

The State, therefore, is not merely a legislator but the "promoter of the spiritual life."

Fascism, in short, is not only a lawgiver and a founder of institutions, but an educator and a promoter of spiritual life.<sup>49</sup>

As the State creates the nation "conferring volition and therefore real life upon a people made aware of their moral unity,"<sup>50</sup> so too it invests the individual with true significance and value through his membership in the organic nation.

In the Fascist conception of history, man is man only by virtue of the spiritual processes to which he contributes as a member of the family, the social group, the nation.<sup>51</sup>

This does not mean that this membership in the organic nation is merely a necessary preliminary for the spiritual life. On the contrary the membership constitutes the spiritual life.

The Fascist conception of life is a religious one in which man is viewed in his immanent relation to a higher law, endowed with an objective will, transcending the individual and raising him to conscious membership of a spiritual society.<sup>62</sup>

Needless to say, that "objective will" is the "conscience and universal will of man" embodied in the ethical State; that "Spiritual society" is the "organic nation."

This is a clever and consistent distortion of true religious doctrine. A religious conception of life is indeed one in which man is viewed in his relation to the "higher law" of God, but by "higher law" Fascism means the "objective will of the ethical State." Man's true value and significance is found in his relationship to his Final

<sup>49</sup> "Fascism," p. 14.

so *Ibid.*, p. 13.

si *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>52</sup> *Loc. cit.*

End—but Fascism makes of the State the final end which gives true value to the individual. The State is even in a sense the creator, since from it alone, man receives "effective existence."

Thus Fascism does not deny religion; it simply proposes a new religion based solely upon the nature of man's immediate earthly existence. The real challenge of Fascism is that in so applying the words "religious" and "spiritual" to the State it is attempting to divest religion of any reference to transcendent or supra-mundane values. Its immanentism appears not so much in the fact that it ignores such values but rather that in presenting itself as a religion it takes no account of a supra-temporal human destiny.

In the Nazi attitude toward God and religion one is confronted with a confusing farrago of racial mysticism, political expediency, and revived Nordic paganism. Like Fascism, Nazism was, in the beginning, careful to avoid an open break with religious bodies. There is no militant atheism in "Mein Kampf," nor any ex professo rejection of Catholic or Protestant teaching.<sup>53</sup> But like Fascism, Nazism seeks to divinize the political community by creating a new immanentist pseudo-religion. This it does by making its racial crusade a religious issue—or rather, not a religious issue but *the* religious issue par excellence. "Mein Kampf" abounds with appeals to God. "God wills it," is always the ultimate argument for racial preservation and development.

The neglect of the race problem, Hitler declared, was the terrible mistake made by both Catholicism and Protestantism. Instead of devoting themselves to this problem, they spend their time bickering over denominational differences. Of course, it is the Jews who fo-

<sup>53</sup> Cf. W. Gurian, "Hitler's Undeclared War on the Catholic Church," in "Foreign Affairs," Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 260-271. Gurian shows how Hitler avoids open statements. The editors of the Reynal-Hitchcock edition of "Mein Kampf" declare: "After Hitler's release from prison, he saw that without the tacit consent of the Bavarian People's Party, any resumption of his activities in Bavaria was out of the question. Therefore he publicly disavowed any interest in religious warfare, though other Nazis might keep up a fairly steady fire on the Church from behind their desks in the Volkischer Beobachter offices." *M.K.*, edit, note, p. 825. Cf. H. Lichtenberger, "The Third Reich," p. 192.

### *Immanentism*

ment this strife in the hope of diverting attention from themselves.  
But both religions play into the Jews' hands.

Just as the Jew was once able to occupy public opinion with the struggle between federalism and centralization, and thus undermine it, while he sold out the national freedom and betrayed our fatherland to international high finance, so he was again able to loose a storm between the two German denominations, while the foundations of both were eaten away and undermined by international world Jewry. . . . Systematically these black parasites of the nations ravish our innocent young blonde girls and thus destroy something that can never again be replaced in this world. Both, yes both, Christian denominations regard with indifference this desecration and annihilation of a noble and unique race to whom the earth was given by the grace of God.<sup>54</sup>

It must not be supposed that Hitler is simply pleading for the Church to take an interest in social questions. The racial problem is not merely a social question—it is a religious one. It ought to be the primary concern of religious bodies.

What is important for the earth's future is not whether Protestants vanquish Catholics or Catholics vanquish Protestants but whether Aryan humanity maintains itself or dies out. . . . Precisely he who is folkishly oriented has the most sacred duty, each within his own denomination, to see to it that God's will is also fulfilled and God's labor not ravished.<sup>55\*</sup>

To pollute the race is to "sin against the will of the Creator." <sup>86</sup>  
This is the "permanently continuous original sin." <sup>57</sup>

This insistence on the sacredness of the crusade for racial perfection is at least in germ, the root idea of a new religion. Hitler's

<sup>54</sup> *M.K.*, pp. 826-827.

<sup>55</sup> *Loc. cit.*

*Ibid.*, p. 392.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 610. Also p. 581. "The undermining of the existence of human culture by destroying its supporters appears in a folkish way of life as the most execrable crime. He who dares to lay hand upon the highest image of the Lord sins against the benevolent Creator of this miracle and helps in the expulsion from Paradise."

intention becomes clearer when we realize his insistence upon the value of "religious fanaticism."

The greatness of every powerful organization as the incorporation of an idea in this world is rooted in the religious fanaticism with which it intolerably enforces itself against everything else?

It is this realization which prompts him to say that National Socialism must appear as a faith.

But at a time when the one side, armed with all the weapons of even a thousand-fold criminal view of life sets out to storm an existing order, the other side can give resistance only if this resistance itself is clad in the forms of a new, in our case a political faith.<sup>59</sup>

Such a faith is necessary for the people at large, even apart from its necessity for a fighting movement.

This is the mightiest thing which our Movement must create: for these widespread, seeking and straying masses a new Faith which will not fail them in this hour of confusion, to which they can pledge themselves, on which they can build so that they may at least find once again a place which may bring calm to their hearts.<sup>60</sup>

This brings the "religious" character of the Nazi idea into sharper relief. Hitler did not wish to be too bold for fear of antagonizing possible adherents, but in a later speech he did not hesitate to speak of it as "almost a religious faith."

It is from our Movement that redemption will come . . . that today is the feeling of millions. That has become almost a new religious faith.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> *M.K.*, pp. 486-487.

<sup>59</sup> *M.K.*, p. 570.

<sup>60</sup> Speech of April 12, 1922, "My New Order," p. 27.

<sup>61</sup> Speech of Aug. 1, 1923, "My New Order," p. 66.

After the Nazi accession to power the metamorphosis became complete. Nazi leaders put away their scruples. Youth especially, they hoped to indoctrinate with the religious character of Nazism. Typical is the statement of Ley (head of the Labour Front) to a large gathering of Hitler Youth in 1937.

We believe on this earth solely in Adolf Hitler. We believe that National Socialism is the sole faith and salvation of our people. We believe that God sent us Adolf Hitler.<sup>62</sup>

Even Goering grows lyrical.

We know that the Leader in all those years in which he was the leader to us, has always and in everything done the right thing. We know also that nothing makes us so strong as the blind trust in him whose powerful faith can do more than move mountains. His powerful faith in Germany has led our people out of the deepest night and need, out of misery and despair, up to the shining light and has lifted Germany up to a great power. In all the years the Almighty has blessed him and the people again and again. In the Leader He has sent us the Saviour.<sup>63</sup>

This Messianic glorification of Hitler is particularly significant in Goering since he usually affects a hearty, un-mystical, matter-of-fact attitude. Yet it runs through many of his speeches. He often ends them with what amounts to a doxology to Hitler.<sup>64</sup>

This divinization of Hitler has constantly tended to assume more and more fantastic forms. Not only is the figure of Hitler surrounded with a mystic aureole,<sup>65</sup> not only is Germany the chosen people

<sup>62</sup> Reported in the "New York Times," Feb. 11, 1937.

<sup>63</sup> Speech of Sept. 10, 1938, "Political Testament of Hermann Goering," p. 256.

<sup>64</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 138-139; p. 163; p. 169.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. article, "Adolph Hitler," by Bernard Lansing, in "Life" for Sept. 25, 1939. Says Rauschning: "Hitler is deliberately and unceasingly held up to the masses as a deity. One of the principle devices for securing National Socialist dominance is this deification of the man, his raising to the altitude of the sole savior of the nation. 'We all believe on this earth in Adolph Hitler, our leader'; 'We acknowledge that National Socialism is the faith that alone can bring blessedness to our people.' These are official pronouncements by the

and Hitler the Messiah, but it was even asserted by Kerri, Minister for Church Affairs, that "Adolf Hitler is the true Holy Ghost."<sup>66</sup> Highly significant is the fact that in 1936, the Lutherans declared, in an official protest, addressed to Hitler himself, their uneasiness over the fact that he "is often revered in a form that is due to God alone."

In this connection we must make known to the Führer and Chancellor our uneasiness over the fact that he is often revered in a form that is due to God alone. . . . His judgment is taken to be the standard unrestrainedly today not only in political decisions, but also in regard to morality and justice in our people, and he himself is vested with the dignity of the national priest, and even of the mediator between God and the people.<sup>67</sup>

The protest quotes from a speech that Goebbels gave on April 19, 1935:

When the Führer addressed his last appeal to the people on March 28, it was as if a profound agitation went through the whole nation; one felt that Germany was transformed into one single House of God, in which its intercessor stood before the throne of the Almighty to bear witness.<sup>68</sup>

What is most significant about this appeal, is that the very nature of the appeal, precludes any suspicion of exaggeration.

party élite. The Messiah figure of the Leader is the indispensable center of their propaganda, as carefully devised as the whole of the apparatus of power. Sometime before the seizure of power, a prominent National Socialist expressed to me his opinion that the figure of the leader must be withdrawn more and more into seclusion and surrounded with mystery . . . he must withdraw from view—just like the Creator behind creation—in order to heighten his effectiveness by his mysteriousness." H. Rauschning, "The Revolution of Nihilism," N. Y., Alliance Book Co., Longmans, Green, 1939, pp. 35-36.

<sup>66</sup> As quoted by Eugene Lyons, "Dictators into Gods," in the "American Mercury," March, 1939, p. 267. This article adduces much testimony on this point from current Nazi propaganda. Cf. also Lichtenberger, *op. cit.*, p. 341 ff.

<sup>67</sup> Evangelical Church Letter submitted to Chancellor Hitler in June, 1936. The text is that printed in "International Conciliation," no. 324, Nov., 1936. This is reprinted in full in Lichtenberger, "The Third Reich." The passage quoted is from p. 338.

<sup>68</sup> *Loc. cit.*

Article Twenty-four of the Twenty Five Points contained a demand for "positive Christianity." Positive Christianity, as Rosenberg understands it must find its expression in a German "Volkskirche," a church whose central tenet will be the "Volkmythus."

Among the greatest tasks of our century is to give the longing of the Nordic race soul, its form as a German Church, under the sign of the Folk-myth.<sup>69</sup>

It will substitute the "myth of blood" for the Roman "myth of the Pope as the Vicar of God."<sup>70</sup> It will subordinate the ideal of brotherly love to the doctrine of the nation; it will regard as good only that which is primarily ordained toward the preservation of the "Volk."<sup>71</sup> It will be a religion stripped of all Jewish influences.

Then, in place of the Old Testament stories of concubines and traders we shall put the Nordic sagas and legends, in the beginning literally related, later grasped as symbols.<sup>72</sup>

Rosenberg does not hesitate to elaborate a parallel between the Nazi movement and religion—a parallel similar to Proudhon's mystical interpretation of religion.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> "Die Sehnsucht, der Nordische Rassenseele ein Zeichen des Volksmyths ihre Form als Deutsche Kirche zugeben, das ist mit die grösste Aufgabe unseres Jahrhunderts." Rosenberg, "Mythus," pp. 575-576.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 566.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 570.

<sup>72</sup> Denn an Stelle der alte testamentlichen zühalter-und Vielhandler geschichten werden die nordische Sagen und Märchen treten, aufangs schlicht erzählt, später als Symbole begriffen. . . . Von Odin an fiber die alten Marchen bis Eckhart und Walter von der Vogelweide." *Ibid.*, p. 575.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 659 ff. In his "Voice of Destruction" (which he claims is an accurate eyewitness account of Hitler's private conversation) Rauschning quotes Hitler as saying: "We shall take the road back: Easter is no longer resurrection but the eternal renewal of our people. Christmas is the birth of our savior: the spirit of heroism and the freedom of our people. Do you think that these liberal priests, who have no longer a belief, only an office, will refuse to preach *our* God in their churches? I can guarantee that just as they have made Haeckel and Darwin, Goethe and Stefan George the prophets of their Christianity, so they will replace the cross with our swas-

What is particularly significant is that Rosenberg, like Proudhon, explicitly rejects the idea of a transcendent God. He goes to some length in criticizing and rejecting the doctrines of creation and the analogy of being. Giving an exclusive stress to the immanence of God, he ends with a vague pantheism.

The Nordic spiritual heritage resides basically in the consciousness not only of the human spirit's likeness to God, but of its divinity.<sup>74</sup>

The Nordic minds rejects, he declares, the despotism that is involved in the absurd notion of a "creatio ex nihilo"; God and the soul are simply spiritual polarities; the soul's "repose in God" is a "repose in itself."<sup>75</sup>

The extreme expression of this is *to be* found in the neo-paganism of such men as Bergmann, Hauer, and Reventlow.<sup>70</sup> In his well known work "Die 25 Thesen der Deutschreligion," Bergmann attempted to set up a new religion for Germany. Particularly significant for our present purpose is the fact that he does not want a transcendent God, but a pantheistic God identified with nature.

tika. Instead of worshipping the blood of their quondam savior, they will worship the pure blood of our people. They will receive the fruits of the German soil as a divine gift and will eat it as a symbol of the eternal communion of the people, as they have hitherto eaten of the body of their God. And when we have reached that point the churches will be crowded again." "The Voice of Destruction," N. Y., Putnam's Sons, 1940, pp. 50-51.

<sup>74</sup> "Die nordisch seelische Erbgut bestand tatsachlch im Bewusstsein nicht nur der Gottähnlichkeit, sondern der Gottlichkeit der Menschlichen Seele." *Ibid.*, p. 232. Rosenberg goes on to say that this is the only view which leaves a place for human freedom.

<sup>75</sup> "Rom-Jahve bedeutet: zauberischer Despotismus, magisches Schopfer-tum aus dem Nichts (ein für uns wahnwitzigen Gedanke). Nordisches Abend-land besage: Ich und Gott sind seelische Polarität, Schöpfungsakt ist jede vollzogene Vereinigung, das auseinander gehen ruft emeute dynamische Kräfte hervor. Die echte nordische Seele ist auf ihrem Hohenfluge stets 'zu Gott zu' und stets 'von Gott her.' Ihre 'Ruhe in Gott' ist zugleich 'Ruhe in sich.'" *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>70</sup> E. Bergmann, "Die 25 Thesen der Deutschreligion," Breslau, 1934; W. Hauer, "Deutsche Gottschau," Stuttgart, 1934; Ernst zu Reventlow, "Wo ist Gott?", Berlin, 1934. Cf. N. Micklem, "National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church," London, 1939, p. 47 ff.

God is a moral idea to which we are bound by the eternal creative force of nature, which works in the world and man. Belief in an other-worldly God is not of Indo-Germanic but of Semitic origin. This kind of God belief is not a condition of true religion and piety.<sup>77</sup>

It requires no great discernment to recognize in Nazism a new immanentist religion. It is evident in the whole expression of Nazi policy, from Hitler's insistence on the religious significance of the racial issue to extreme manifestations of Nordic paganism. Rosenberg's overt expressions are particularly noteworthy for he is the official "Director of Weltanschauung." It represents a clever and progressive attempt to invest the political community with an absolute and supreme religious value, so that genuinely religious instincts may be diverted from the service of transcendent, supra-mundane ends to that of the political community.

*Conclusions—The Relations Between Irrationality, Immanentism and the Revolutionary Ideal*

It will be apparent that in all of these movements there is an essential similarity of outlook—a similarity which is only partially masked by the contrast between the militant atheism of the earlier revolutionaries and the excessive "religiosity" of the later ones. All are manifestations of an uncompromising immanentism. The form of expression differs (it is naturally conditioned by the concrete circumstances and historical position of the different movements) but the basic dogma is the same. It is the refusal to admit a supra-mundane, supra-temporal human destiny.

This immanentism is in itself simply the appendage of the milleniaristic ideal that appears in each of these movements. There is a certain inner coherence in the ideology of the modern revolution. Irrationalism and immanentism are, as it were, the necessary accompaniments and presuppositions of the milleniaristic ideal. Over and

<sup>77</sup> Bergmann, "The Twenty-five Theses of the German Religion," a catechism taken from his "Die 25 Thesen der Deutsch-religion." This is quoted from the English version given in No. 39 of the Friends of Europe Publications, London, 1936.



above the fact that these three features have been so consistently joined in each of these ideologies, is the fact that, in proposing a psychologico-moral transformation as the goal of a politico-social movement, the modern revolutionary on the one hand, invades the field of religion, and on the other, he deals with the legitimate subject of social science. Both challenge or are at least capable of challenging his competence. If the revolutionary ideal and revolutionary ardor are to be maintained intact, the modern revolutionary must either deny God altogether, or create a new substitute god; and he must introduce into the ideology, some factor which will enable him to consider the revolutionary ideal as beyond the reach of rational criticism.

The absolutely essential requirements for an efficacious revolutionary ideology? are two: first, that it present a vision, capable of generating intense force for action, and second that the vision be placed beyond the destructive influence of alien considerations. The modern revolutionary ideology admirably fulfills these requirements, for the constant tendency has been to make of the revolutionary ideal, a faith fanatically to be believed in and worked for. What Edwards says of the "social myth" in general, is particularly true of the ideal held out by the modern revolutionary movement.

Out of the innumerable criticisms of "things as they are" and the equally innumerable hopes of "things as they might be" there gradually emerges a new ideal. This ideal is all embracing. It includes in a new totality, the strongest as well as the weakest inclinations of the discontented, repressed classes. It so frames an indeterminate future as to give an aspect of complete reality to the hopes of the present. Psychologically it is "a new heaven and a new earth." . . . It is the most powerful dynamic force which operates in human society, with the two exceptions of hunger and sexual love. . . . It is the power commonly spoken of as "religious conversion" or the "power of salvation." The social myth is the power of salvation generalized to include many phenomena not commonly spoken of as religious.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Edwards, "Natural History of Revolution," 1927, p. 91. And as Roger Lloyd says, "It is primarily by ideas that men and women are stirred into violent and self-forgetting action. Faith and not fact, is the authentic social dynamite." "Revolutionary Religion," by Roger Lloyd, N. Y., Harper 1938 p. 9.

As for the second requirement, immanentism sweeps away what would be the most serious challenge to revolutionary faith, viz. belief in a transcendent God and a supra-temporal human destiny. Revolutionary irrationalism completes the exclusion of what might be alien influences. In the appeal to rational norms and standards, in the principle that the movement must always proceed in accord with absolute, rationally verifiable norms and standards, the revolutionary very truly scents a dangerous intrusion.<sup>79</sup> Not only does it appear that carefully formulated rational conceptions fail to grip and move men, but in addition to this, sober analysis and critical reflection often counsel hesitation rather than headlong action. Moreover the admission of such norms would lay the revolutionary open to the possibility of embarrassing criticism.

As Mannheim points out, it is significant that the modern revolutionary often points to the sixteenth century Anabaptists as his spiritual progenitors. Like the Anabaptist, the modern revolutionary has a mystic faith in a millennial kingdom.<sup>80</sup> It is in fact, in this very chiliastic element, was present, as LeBon has shown, even in the

re "There is something very impressive in that intellectual consistency of anti-intellectualism which, in the spring tide of Socialism, inspired young Bolsheviks to make the battle for economic technological thought a war against the idea in any shape or form. For so long as even the ghost of an idea lingers on, the conception is admitted that prior to the acknowledged reality of material things, something else was already in existence, something transcendental, and the recognition necessarily implies an authority from above. To a philosophy purporting to derive its standards from the immanence of economic technological facts, this seems to be an interference from an outside source, a hitch in the smooth working of the automatic machine." Carl Schmitt, "The Necessity of Politics," London, Sheed & Ward, 1931, p. 70. This judgment can, of course, be applied just as readily to systems deriving their standards from the "immanence" of vitalist factors, etc.

<sup>80</sup> K. Mannheim, "Ideology and Utopia," N. Y., 1936, p. 190, footnote. In Mannheim's description of the chiliastic element in modern movements (*op. cit.*, pp. 190-222) there is an interesting confirmation of Sorel's theory of the myth, i. e., that we must frame a "future in some indeterminate time" in such "a way as to give an aspect of complete reality to the hopes of immediate action" ("Reflections on Violence," p. 134). Cf. also, Fr. Gerlich, "Der Kommunismus als Lehre vom tausendjährigen Reich," Munich, 1920; von Mises, "Socialism," London, 1936, pp. 281-288.

seemingly ultra-rationalistic *French* Revolution of 1879A! A rationalism of this type is by no means incompatible with the chiliastic outlook.

Nothing is more removed from actual events than the closed rational system. Under certain circumstances, nothing contains more irrational drive than a fully self-contained, intellectualistic world view. . . . In a certain sense the rational axiomatic point of departure, the closed system of deductive procedure and the internally balanced equilibrium of motives comprised in the body of axioms are quite as capable of insuring that inner coherence and isolation from the world as Utopian dreams?-

But as Mannheim goes on to indicate, "there is the danger that the chiliastic-ecstatic element will ebb away behind the intellectual façade . . . The abstract nature of the rational utopia contradicts the intense emotional drive of a sensually alert chiliastic faith in the complete and immediate present." 81 The great superiority of the modern ideology is that it has eliminated the danger. It represents a less ambiguous portrayal of the true revolutionary spirit.

In the earlier movements—in Marxism and in the Anarchism of Proudhon and Kropotkin—there is indeed a certain ambiguity. They retained something of this "intellectual façade." But it is an ambiguity of terminology only and not of ideas. Although a certain lip service is paid to reason, social development is regarded as subject to a more or less inexorable law which rules out the possibility of any effective interference from reason. It is significant that when men ceased to believe in the automatic character of social development, the "intellectual façade" was discarded and a greater emphasis placed on action and violence. We can then, say with Demant:

The struggle going on in Europe today is between two opposed forms of an immanentist interpretation of human existence—immanentist in the sense of a dogma that the significance of the

81 He concludes: "Believing that they acted in the name of pure reason, they were really subject to mystic, affective and collective influences," "Psychology of Revolution," p. 327.

82 Mannheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 196, 197.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 197.

actual world process is immanent in it and requires no transcendent eternal reality to give it meaning. Rationalistic immanentism takes its abstractions from the real and believes that what it postulates about these abstractions—Man, Society, the State, etc.—will be realized by the historic process itself . . . it finds it necessary to introduce, without knowing it to be an irrational faith, a belief in a pre-established, universal movement towards harmony and liberty. The irrational thrown out of the window, creeps in by the back door and asks for hospitality, under the name of "Progress."

Vitalistic immanentism is not content with this inadvertent permission to irrationalism to occupy quarters, and it storms the whole house. It takes hold of the concrete moving process of existence and considers immersion in it as the way to complete apprehension of the meaning of life.<sup>81</sup>

The history of the modern revolutionary ideology has by no means been a tale of slavish borrowing. It is rather the story adaptation and development. Just as the earlier movements seemed to appeal to reason while denying God, so the later ones, seem to appeal to God while denying reason. But in spite of this varying terminology, all of the movements have in reality denied both God and reason. Milleniarism has in every case been accompanied by irrationalism and immanentism. In those dogmas we find the basic philosophy of modern revolution.

<sup>84</sup> V. Demant, "The Religious Prospect," pp. 128-129.

**Part II**

**Evaluation**



## CHAPTER VI

### THE SPIRIT OF REVOLUTION

It requires no great imagination to realize that the Thomist will be sharply opposed to this revolutionary philosophy. But what may not be so well understood is that Thomism is by no means synonymous with intransigent conservatism. In the nineteenth century such a supposition would have been readily accepted; it was generally assumed that a religious philosophy must undertake the defense of the established order. This attitude was fostered on the one hand by the anti-religious polemic of the revolutionaries, and on the other by the particular anti-revolutionary polemic of such men as Stahl and De Maistre. For them the existing order constituted the ordinance of God and to attempt to change it by revolution was to fly in the face of His Will.<sup>1</sup> And while it should be obvious that we must not interpret Thomism in terms of nineteenth century misconceptions, it may nevertheless be of some value to insist that Aquinas was by no means a dyed in the wool conservative. He was certainly not opposed to all change as such.<sup>2</sup> Conscious of the mutable char-

<sup>1</sup> This was the particular belief of Stahl. In an earlier chapter we have already shown that Stahl identified the revolutionary spirit with "rationalism," which he defined as man's emancipation from God (Cf. p. ??). "Aus dem Rationalismus kommt jene Vermeidenheit und Zuversicht des philosophischen Systems, welches aus menschlicher Kraft die letzten Gründe des Weltzusammenhanges aufdecken will; . . . und er vollendet sich in seiner notwendigen Entfaltung als pantheistische oder selbst materialistische Weltanschauung," Stahl, "Was ist die Revolution?", pp. 11-12. Elsewhere he declares that the State and society are bound by divine command and historical tradition. They are as they ought to be. "Philosophie des Rechts (1854), Vol. II, p. 193.

De Maistre looked upon revolution as satanic, though he felt that in spite of this it had a providential purpose. This is the theme of his great work, "Considerations sur la France," Bruxelles, Société Nationale pour la Propagation des Bons Livres, 1838.

Cf. Marcuse, "Reason and Revolution," pp. 361-374; Berdyaev, "The End of Our Time," pp. 144-147; C. Schmitt, "Politische Romantik," 2. Auflage München und Leipzig, Verlag von Duncker & Humboldt, 1925, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> "In rebus mutabilibus non potest esse aliquid omnino immutabiliter permanens," I-II, q. 97, a. 1, ad 2.

acter of society and of the limitations of human insight, he was ready to accept the necessity/ of periodic changes in human laws and institutions. Society is a growing and developing thing and he agrees that it would be absurd to suppose that any particular set of man made laws could be universally valid and applicable for all times and all conditions.<sup>3</sup> His whole doctrine of social change is however typified by a certain caution. We witness this even when there is question merely of introducing modifications in existing laws. He holds that such changes, however permissible and desirable, ought not lightly to be introduced, but should be made only for the sake of some very marked advantage or real necessity'.<sup>4</sup> The reason for this is that laws derive much of their efficacy and force from custom. They are more readily revered and obeyed, if through long tenure they have come to form part of the very background of the particular milieu. In no case should such an asset be readily sacrificed. There

<sup>3</sup> "Ex parte vero hominum, quorum actus lege regulantur, lex recte mutari potest propter mutationem conditionum hominum, quibus secundum diversas eorum conditiones diversa expediunt," I-II, q. 97, a. 1, c., et ad 1; cf. De Trinitate, II, 4. "It is evident that St. Thomas is far from believing that any human government is beyond alteration, or that there is anything in the nature of State law to preclude all growth. We have seen enough of his thought to know that the immutable natural law, far from preventing human law from adapting itself to changing social conditions, actually commands this adaptation. The 'law of nature' requires its creature the State, to fashion legislation that will enable a certain concrete group of human beings to attain in the fullest measure possible the goods that social life produces; and for St. Thomas any concrete reality is a changing reality—indeed the function of natural law in its essential definition is to act as the rule and measure of human change. The only immutability of the natural law is the immutability of incompletely determinate principles, principles that can be realized in actuality only when the abstraction is filled out by concrete facts, and concrete facts are events in the world of 'ens mobile.'" Karl Kreilkamp, "The Metaphysical Foundations of Thomistic Jurisprudence," The Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., 1939, p. 147.

<sup>4</sup> "... leges sunt mutandae, non tamen pro quacumque melioratione, sed pro magna utilitate, vel necessitate," I-II, q. 97, a. 2, ad 2. "Numquam debet mutari lex humana, nisi ex alia parte tantum recompensetur communi saluti, quantum ex ista parte derogatur. Quod quidem contigit vel ex hoc quod aliqua maxima, et evidentissima utilitas ex novo statuto provenit: vel ex eo quod est maxima necessitas, vel ex eo quod lex consueta aut manifestam iniquitatem continet, aut ejus observatio est plurimum nociva." *Ibid.*, corpus.

is always a certain risk in innovation; that risk should not be undergone for the sake of a minor advantage.<sup>5</sup>

It must be kept in mind however, that such a conservatism implies neither a love of the old simply because it is old, nor a condonation of the evils of the existing order. The modern follower of Thomas will indeed understand and sympathize with many of the complaints voiced by the revolutionary. His eyes are quite open to the grave defects of modern society. There could be no doubt about this ever since the Encyclical "Rerum Novarum" of Leo XIII.<sup>c</sup> In the pronouncements of the modern Pontiffs one finds trenchant and unambiguous criticism of many of the features of contemporary society. In a manner and measure different from that of the revolutionaries, but with no less emphasis, they have excoriated current economic injustice.

It may be said with all truth that nowadays the conditions of social and economic life are such that vast multitudes of men can only with great difficulty pay attention to the one thing necessary, namely their eternal salvation. . . . The mind shudders if we consider the frightful perils to which the morals of workers (of boys and young men particularly), and the virtue of girls and women are exposed in modern factories; if we recall how the present economic regime and above all the disgraceful housing conditions prove obstacles to the family tie and family life; if we remember the insuperable difficulties placed in the way of a proper observance of the holy days. . . . Bodily labor, which was decreed by Providence for the good of man's body and soul, even

<sup>5</sup> "Habet ipsa legis mutatio, quantum in se est, detrimentum quoddam salutis communis; quia ad observantiam legum plurimum valet consuetudo; intantum quod ea, quae contra communem consuetudinem fiunt, etiam si sint leviora de se, graviora videntur; unde quando mutatur lex, diminuitur vis constrictiva legis, inquantum tollitur consuetudo," I-II, q. 97, a. 2, c. "Lex nullum habet robur ad hoc quod persuadetur subditis, quod sit bona nisi per consuetudinem; quae quidem non fit nisi per multum tempus. Unde qui facile mutat leges quantum est de se, debilitat legis virtutem." In Polit. II,

<sup>8</sup> This appeared in 1891. It will be recalled that Leo XIII was the Pontiff who inaugurated the revival of Thomistic philosophy and made it the official philosophy of Catholic schools. Cf. his encyclical, "Aeterni Patris" of August 4, 1879.



after original sin, has everywhere been changed into an instrument of strange perversion; for dead matter leaves the factory ennobled and transformed, where men are corrupted and degraded.<sup>7</sup>

Marx himself hardly put it more strongly. And with no less fire but with more light they have castigated that "moral disintegration" with which Sorel was so preoccupied. They would agree with him that the spirit of co-operation and the sense of solidarity have been lacking; that men have grown cynically self-centered; that justice and charity have hardly flourished. When the revolutionary declares that abiding social amelioration demands the birth of a new spirit, his plea is strangely like the Christian appeal. Both Lenin and Pius XI would agree with the following statement of Mannheim.

No economic order can be brought into existence as long as the corresponding human type does not emerge.<sup>8</sup>

The real danger in any revolution lies in the impatience out of which it is born—an impatience which is, by its very nature intolerant of restriction and restraint. In practice this impatience manifests itself in a callousness to human suffering and a ready acceptance of any tactic, however ruthless. Bakunin may have been pathological in his eulogy of destruction, but he did at least have a premonition of the elements which come to the fore at a time of revolution. It is characterized by "storm, vitality and lawlessness" and "the unleashing of what are called the bad passions of men."<sup>9</sup> In all revolutions there are undoubtedly sincere prophets of a better order: men, who for the sake of a great hope steel themselves to violence. These are

<sup>7</sup> Pius XI, "Quadragesimo Anno," National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington, D. C., 1931, pp. 40, 42-43.

<sup>8</sup> K. Mannheim, "Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction," N. Y., 1940, p. 201. Pius XI says, "All that we have taught about reconstructing and perfecting the social order will be of no avail without a reform of manners," "Quadragesimo Anno," p. 31, also p. 40. Cf. "Five Great Encyclicals," N. Y., Paulist Press, 1939. (Leo XIII on "The Condition of Labor"; Pius XI, "Christian Education of Youth," "Christian Marriage," "Reconstructing the Social Order," "Atheistic Communism"; Pius XII, "Summi Pontificatus"), N. Y., Paulist Press, 1939.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *intra*, p. 70.

not without their guilt; but more serious is the fact that in every revolution, there appear what Stepun calls:

... the sportsmen and alarmists of the revolution, who in the depths of their souls are absolutely indifferent to the suffering of the people, who in greedy self-seeking and fanatic obsession with ideas shriek for blood and adventure, because they themselves are bloodless and their experiences lack life?<sup>10</sup>

Revolution is a time of opportunity for the misfits, the psychopaths, the irresponsibles. As Rauschnig says of the Nazi élite:

To have come to grief in ordinary life is no disqualification for revolutionary leadership—on the contrary. With the full momentum of their demagogic resources, and with the readiness to gamble of the true desperado, who has nothing to lose and everything to gain, this gutter élite were able to carry the day with ease against the rather too cautious and anemic members of the aristocratic clubs.<sup>11</sup>

As Stepun adds, all the thwarted seize this time as their opportunity to revenge themselves upon a world which has ignored them.

Through all the excesses of second and third class revolutionists so typical of the first years of Bolshevism, the same desire found voice—to throw all that they had missed into confusion and chaos, as quickly and as thoroughly as possible. Thus they overpowered and murdered elegant women of the hated bourgeois world with bitter vehemence because they could not capture them in any other way; they burned libraries with genuine tears of rage because they could not master high culture otherwise than by the revengeful act of destroying it. From the same motive men entered upon fantastic, erratic revolutionary careers, to which they brought nothing but the spirit of the dilettante, the madness of the enthusiast, the energy of the aggrieved and thwarted.<sup>12</sup>

The spirit of violence is a genie more readily evoked than quieted, There is a terrible risk in stirring up the madness of upheaval. Only

<sup>10</sup> Stepun, "The Russian Soul and Revolution," London, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936, p. 133.

<sup>11</sup> Rauschnig, "The Revolution of Nihilism," p. 31.

<sup>12</sup> Stepun, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-138.

a starry eyed visionary could fail to realize that beneath the veneer of civilization lurks the animal. There is no particular mystery in this, but only the simple fact that since man possesses a body, he has passions and emotions, which must be carefully restrained unless they are to carry man away. Since the revolutionary ideology removes such restraints, it is not surprising that the revolution should destroy what it touches. If you sow the wind, you must be prepared to reap the whirlwind.

It is because he knows human nature so well that Thomas is reluctant to sanction political revolution. But though cautious, he is not lethargic. It would not be correct to suppose that he condemns all revolution as such. Thomas was, of course, confronted with no social phenomenon precisely similar to the modern revolution. The only revolution he treats of is the simple uprising, comparable to what would be called in modern times, the purely political revolution. It must however, be admitted that he is reluctant to sanction even this. This reluctance is not due precisely to the fact that the uprising may involve violence and bloodshed; a point which should be amply proven by the fact that he does not balk at these things in legitimate cases of self-defense and in a just war.<sup>13</sup> But he does counsel patience because he knows human nature well enough to realize that more often than not, revolution of any sort will bring worse evils in its train than those it aims to remedy.

"It would be for the multitude and its rulers dangerous, if on their own authority, some should attempt the assassination of rulers, even of tyrants: in most cases they would, on account of the dangers of such a procedure, rather expose themselves to evil than to good. . . . Instead of achieving a remedy from the removal of a tyrant, the multitude would, from such a presumption, rather be threatened with danger from the loss of a king."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Cf. II-II, q. 64, a. 7; II-II, q. 40, a. 1.

<sup>14</sup> "Esset autem hoc multitudini periculosum et eius rectoribus si privata praesumptione aliqui attentarent praesidentium necem etiam tyrannorum. Plerumque enim huiusmodi periculis magis exponunt se mali quam boni. . . . Magis igitur ex huius praesumptione immineret periculum multitudini de amissione regis, quam remedium de subtractione tyranni," *De Regimine Principum*, L. I, c. 6.

Yet this must not be taken as an absolute disapproval of all revolution as such. Thomas's basic principle is that if the constituted authority is so corrupt as to destroy rather than procure the common good, it is lawful to resist and even to overthrow it.

A tyrannical government is not a just one, because it is not ordered to the common good, but to the private good of the ruler. . . . Therefore a disturbance directed against such a regime is not really sedition, unless perhaps the tyrant's regime be disturbed so inordinately that the multitude of his subjects should suffer more from the disturbance than from the rule of the tyrant. Indeed it is rather the tyrant who is guilty of sedition.<sup>15</sup>

It is significant that Pius XI, in his Apostolic Letter of March 28, 1937, to the Mexican Bishops, draws a clear distinction between just and unjust insurrections. He admits that insofar as the constituted authorities "arise against justice and truth even to destroying the very foundations of authority, it is not to be seen how those citizens are to be condemned who united to defend themselves and the nation, by licit and appropriate means, against those who make use of the public power to bring it to ruin." He then goes on to repeat certain general principles, the tenor of which is that such an insurrection may be justified provided that it uses only lawful means, proportionate to the end, used only to the extent required to achieve that end, and "in such a manner that they do not cause to the community greater damages than those they seek to repair." <sup>16</sup>

iB "Regimen tyrannicum non est justum; quia non ordinatur ad bonum commune, sed ad bonum privatum regentis . . . et ideo perturbatio hujus regiminis non habet rationem seditionis: nisi forte quando sic inordinate perturbatur tyranni regimen, quod multitudo subjecta majus detrimentum patitur ex perturbatione consequenti, quam ex tyranni regimine: magis autem tyrannus seditiosus est," II-II, q. 42, a. 2, ad 3.

<sup>18</sup> Apostolic Letter of Pius XI, "On the Religious Situation in Mexico," issued March 28, 1937, Washington, D. C., National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1937, pp. 17-18.

In commenting on this encyclical, Sturzo says: "By adding the word 'unjust' he excludes from condemnation those insurrections and those acts of violence that may have the character of justice. Indeed he goes on to say that should 'these constituted authorities rise up against justice and truth

We may say then, that though the Thomist admits the possibility of a just revolution, he admits it only as the last desperate resort of self-defense. Its exercise will be hedged in and limited on every side by restrictions and restraints. No free hand will be given to violence and there will be no glorification of upheaval. It will be strictly limited both in its scope and the means it employs. It will be a task undertaken reluctantly and with a clear realization of the dangers involved. Is such an undertaking possible? That Thomas seemingly doubts it is the conclusion we must draw from the stand he takes in the "De Regimine Principum." Yet it is at least theoretically possible, and in the "Summa Theologica" Thomas does admit this. The simple truth would seem to be that, knowing human nature as he does, Thomas is afraid of the forces and elements that might arise in the concrete movement. And if there is reason to fear and hesitate even if the revolution is exercised against a background of Christian belief and morality, how much more is there to fear when it is inspired by the modern revolutionary ideology?

Modern revolution is in truth, characterized by an incredibly naïve over-simplification. The revolutionary is possessed of an im-

to the point of destroying the very foundations of authority' it would be hard to condemn the citizens who unite 'to defend the nation and to defend themselves.' The Pope, however, limits the defense to one carried on by *lawful and appropriate means*, and further on he emphasizes the point, saying that the character of defense justifies only 'lawful actions and not actions intrinsically bad.' Finally he demands that the means should be proportionate to the end and used in the measure in which they will serve the end, so as to save the community from greater evils than those it sought to remedy.

"This precision springs from an anxiety to define and limit *legitimate resistance*, which according to the best theological formulation should be called *active defensive resistance*. It is not indeed a case of simple *defensive resistance* which may be either passive or active, but of *active defensive resistance*, that is, of an armed uprising against the constituted authorities, for a defensive purpose, using only lawful means, proportionate to the end and used only to the extent required to achieve it, in part or in whole, without producing greater evils than those they would avert." Luigi Sturzo, "Politics and Morality," transi. B. B. Carter, London, Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd., 1938, p. 208. Vide the whole of Chapter XI, "The Right to Rebel." Cf. J. Maritain, "The Things That Are Not Caesar's" (a translation of "Primaauté du Spirituel," by J. F. Scanlan), N. Y., Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931, pp. 149-150.

patient zeal for action; he is intolerant of restriction and restraint. It is not then surprising, that he should seek a philosophy which will give him a system self-contained and self-sufficient (or at any rate that he should present to the masses, an ideology cast in such a form.) Revolutionary impatience blinds one to the complexity of life. A revolutionary reduces life to a single pattern; revolutionary action, demands an integrated outlook. This single-mindedness is, as Berdyaev insists, the very core of the revolutionary mentality.

The essence of revolution is totality, entirety in relation to every act of life. The revolutionary is one who in every act he performs relates it to the community as a whole and subordinates it to the central and complete idea. For the revolutionary there are no *separate* spheres; he tolerates no division of life into parts, nor will he admit any autonomy of thought in relation to action, or autonomy of action in relation to thought. The revolutionary has an integrated world view in which theory and practice organically coalesce. Entirety in everything—that is the basic principle of the revolutionary attitude to life.<sup>17</sup>

There is something astounding in the assurance with which the modern revolutionary asserts his own competence to deal with the whole man. In that particular manipulation of socio-political factors which he proposes, lies, he believes, not only the solution of the problems of social organization but also the means of achieving an inner reformation of the spirit and character of man himself. It may be that man, naturally good, is corrupted by the regime of property which the revolution will destroy (Anarchism); it may be that man's spirit and character are the reflection of the economic conditions which the revolution will transform (Marxism); it may be that the new spirit will be simply the expression of those latent powers, those slumbering forces which the revolution will liberate and make operative (Anarchism, Nazism); it may be that action and violence by themselves evoke certain psychological dispositions (Syndicalism, Fascism); it may be (as it really is in all of these movements) a combination of several of these factors—but in every case the essential and moving factor is the revolution itself.

<sup>17</sup> N. Berdyaev, "The Origin of Russian Communism," p. 124.

No one who views the revolutionary doctrine dispassionately can fail to be struck by the incredibly naïve optimism upon which genuine revolutionary hope is predicated. In promising a better world, a veritable "Golden Age," the revolutionary seems to take little account of the strength and persistence of human selfishness and greed. Yet it is not so much ignorance of human passion that characterizes the revolutionary as rather the belief that in the revolution itself there is a subtle alchemy that will rid man of it. It is interesting to note that Max Eastman (having finally become disillusioned in Marxism) points out that Marx never bothered to study human nature or to ask whether Socialism was compatible with human instincts.<sup>18</sup> What is doubly interesting is that during his long Marxist career, this apparently never occurred to Eastman either. This is somewhat amazing because the objection did occur to Lenin. Lenin does attempt to answer it and his answer throws further light upon the naïveté of the revolutionary outlook. The gist of his reply is that with the advent of Socialism, human nature itself will be changed and human passions will disappear.<sup>19</sup> Another example of revolutionary naïveté is the failure of the rank and file to realize what Max Nomad describes as "the inexorable logic of every revolutionary struggle, which necessarily results in the establishment of a new aristocracy" and a new form of exploitation.<sup>20</sup> As he points out, revolutionary thought seems to veer between the two poles of belief in the "Good Leader" and belief in the "Wise Mass."<sup>21</sup> What Nomad himself says about Bakunin's attitude is in fact the attitude of all sincere revolutionaries—the conviction that once a man adopts the particular revolutionary doctrine "he becomes magically divested of the normal passions and temptations of those who gain power."<sup>22</sup>

Such evidences of naïve optimism are however simply manifestations of the broader revolutionary principle that the essential cure for

<sup>18</sup> Max Eastman, "Socialism Doesn't Jibe with Human Nature," *Reader's Digest*, Vol. 38, no. 230, June, 1941, pp. 41-49.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 12, 13.

<sup>20</sup> Max Nomad, "Apostles of Revolution," Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1939, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162, footnote.

all the ills of society lies in the manipulation of one or the other set of socio-political factors. But this principle itself is in turn an evidence of the modern desire to achieve social amelioration by what Maritain calls "the use of technique" rather than the "way of asceticism."

The heirs of rationalism seek to impose on us today . . . an anti-ascetic system that is exclusively technological. An appropriate technique ought to permit us to rationalize human life, that is, to satisfy our desires with the least possible measure of inconvenience, and without any inner reformation of our own selves.<sup>23</sup>

It must not be supposed however, that this "use of technique" applies only to a professedly "rationalistic" system such as Marxism. As we use the phrase here, it refers simply to that manipulation of social-political factors upon which the revolutionary bases his hope. In this sense, the technique may consist in the establishment of a "functionally rationalized society" or it may consist in the re-establishment of "infra-rational vitalities." These are in fact simply variants of the same theme; the actual techniques may differ but the principle that dictates the use of technique is the same—the suppo- \*  
sition that evil is to be sought in something outside of man. Neither demands that man enter into himself and examine his own conscience. Evil is to be eradicated and perfection to be attained by some externalization, by some work *ad extra*. The one thing necessary is that the revolution be achieved, that the structure of society be changed. Even when the "creation of a new spirit" is sought, that

28 J. Maritain, "Freedom in the Modern World," transi. Richard O'Sullivan, N. Y., Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936, p. 96.

This attitude is simply another manifestation of what Niebuhr calls "the easy conscience of modern man." The essential tenet of this belief (which as Niebuhr shows, appears in the most diverse movements) is that man himself is never more than the unfortunate victim of circumstances which an appropriate technique will enable him to correct. Either he is the victim of corrupting institutions which he is about to destroy or reconstruct, or of false ideas which an adequate education is about to overcome. Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Nature and Destiny of Man," I. Human Nature (Gifford Lectures), N. Y., Scribner's, 1941, pp. 93-95. Cf. also Lois Whitney, "Primitivism and the Idea of Progress," Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1934.

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spirit is the spirit of violence—a spirit whose very essence is the feeling of hate and resentment against something outside. By this very token such a demand simply constitutes a more extreme form of externalization.

It is precisely because he is so ready to place the blame elsewhere that the modern revolutionary tends so readily to accept, to stir up and to eulogize violence. The spirit of revolution thus represents nothing so much as a glorified version of the petulance of childhood,

Man is always prone to blame someone else; from the earliest childhood when he kicked and banged the door because he bumped his nose, to that other childhood when in a game of golf he cursed the demons of hell and the God of heaven because he missed the cup.<sup>24</sup>

A realistic view of human nature and even the barest acquaintance with the facts of social history shows us that on the contrary that such violence solves no real problems. That there are today evils, objective evils whose removal requires political and social action may be quite true. But if we are to be realistic we must begin with an examination of conscience; our reform must begin with a reformation of man himself.

It (our reform) agrees that there should be a revolution, but maintains that the revolution should not be against something outside man, but something inside man, namely his pride, his egotism, his selfishness, his envy and his avarice.<sup>25</sup>

Realizing this we will not be so ready to vent our spleen on the first scapegoat that comes our way. We may be forced to take strong, and in extreme circumstances, even violent measures, but we will not rage and destroy. The best antidote for the spirit of revolution is the revolution of the spirit.

<sup>24</sup> Fulton J. Sheen, "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity," N. Y., Macmillan, 1938, p. 159. Cf. Rosalind Murray, "The Good Pagan's Failure," London, New York, Longmans, Green, 1939, pp. 142-143, 152-154.

<sup>25</sup> Sheen, *loc. cit.*



## CHAPTER VII

## DOCTRINELESS DYNAMISM

The uneasiness which this spirit of revolution inspires in us is by no means allayed by a critical scrutiny of the philosophy of modern revolutionary movements. It is in fact, intensified by the realization that in each case the immediate effect of the revolutionary philosophy is to eliminate those transcendent norms and standards by which concrete eventualities might be judged. The revolutionaries do of course, criticize the old order which they hope to overthrow, but the inevitable conclusion of revolutionary irrationality is that the concrete enactments of the revolutionary movement are themselves open to no criticism. The present policy of the revolutionary movement can never be evaluated and found wanting. Whatever is done (by the revolutionary movement) is right, because at no stage of revolutionary development is it possible to invoke an ideal by which the actual might be measured.

This rejection of transcendent norms and standards is of course, most apparent in Fascism and Nazism. Contemporary writers grow almost incoherent in describing the "barbarism," "the Neanderthal mentality," "the primitivism" and "the revolt against civilization" of these two movements. Rauschnig's "Revolution of Nihilism" is justly the most celebrated of such descriptions. His thesis is that "fascism" (taking the word in the broad sense, as including all totalitarian movements) is in essence a "doctrineless dynamism." He pointed out that these movements were activistic, pragmatic and ruthless, knowing no fixed doctrines or principles over and above the value of the revolutionary movement itself and endeavoring at all costs to keep up the illusion of movement.<sup>1</sup>

In Italian Fascism, this activism is indeed the core of theory, since as we have seen, the organic nation is a psychological rather than a biological unity—a unity constituted by the possession of a new

spirit, the spirit generated by action. Mussolini could therefore say that the whole program of Fascism was "fight that struggle was the essence of reality; and that it would be a great disaster if the struggle were to cease."<sup>2</sup>

In Nazism there is of course greater insistence upon the biological element, i. e., on the possession of Aryan blood, yet here also great emphasis is laid upon action and the spirit of violence. It will always be necessary, declared Hitler, to maintain the fighting spirit.<sup>3</sup> Both feel that the struggle must continue indefinitely. (This is the root of that dynamism that must finally find outlet in war.)

The significant thing is the lack of a fixed objective. This is the characteristic which so appalls Rauschning and other contemporary analysts. Fascism and Nazism profess, naturally, to be striving for a better world, but their ideal is left amorphous and undefined. The only absolute they recognize is the process itself. All that they profess to be certain of, is that the secret of social amelioration is to be found in the "organic nation" or in the "Volkgeist." Indeed they emphasize the fact that the revolutionary transformation consists essentially in the creation of a new spirit. Changes in the structure of society, however desirable they may be in themselves, are simply instrumental to the formation of this new spirit. That is how opportunistic flexibility in political and economic doctrine is justified. One can choose any political or economic doctrine which fosters the development of this new spirit.

In the hands of a determined revolutionary élite this conception is an exceedingly dangerous tool. Perfectly suited to serve as the stimulant of mass ardor, it is no less perfectly suited to serve as a screen for the self-aggrandizement of a ruling minority. It invests the concrete enactments of the revolutionary movement, with an absolute value. To call for a reckoning is impossible, for there are no transcendent norms by which it might be judged. In the name of an amorphous but all embracing hope, the leaders can gloss over the most ruthless oppression and the most glaring miseries. All that is necessary is to maintain the illusion of being on the march to a newer and better world.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 63 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *M.K.*, p. 486.

What has for long hindered a true understanding of modern revolution, has been the failure to realize that such a doctrineless dynamism is the logical sequel to the irrationalism found in all of these movements. In recent years this failure found a practical expression in the sharp distinction that was so frequently drawn between Nazism-Fascism on the one hand and Communism on the other. The Nazi-Soviet pact did much to destroy the illusions about the present Soviet regime; but unfortunately it did little to bring about a clearer understanding of the basic issues. This obtuseness is typically exemplified in Rauschnig. He has the perspicacity to see that at the present time Bolshevism can be classified with Fascism and Nazism as a "doctrineless revolution." <sup>1</sup> But he blames the whole matter on Stalin, declaring that "this assertion is justified insofar as Stalinism is nothing more than the jettisoning of the Communist doctrine of the Russian Revolution and its development into something else." <sup>2</sup> He contrasts "Leninism the backbone of which was after all, an unshakable faith in human reason, to Stalinism, the expression of total nihilism." <sup>3</sup>

Now on the surface, Marxism does indeed seem far removed from a "doctrineless dynamism." In Marxism there is a fixed objective, or as Demant puts it, "a 'finalist,' 'classical,' 'rational' element which defines the essence of man and society and in the light of which the actual condition of the world is seen as estranged." <sup>4</sup> This element stands out in sharp contrast to the apparent opportunism of Fascism and Nazism. And Marxism has of course, a certain "scientific" flavor which is totally lacking in the relentless activism of Fascism and in Nazism's appeal to infra-rational biological forces.

At this point we may remark parenthetically, how unfortunate it is that the memory of modern man is short-lived. Nihilism and Anarchism have passed into the historical discard; and few who are so struck by the contrast between Nazism-Fascism and Communism, seem to have heard of Bakunin. It is unfortunate, because a better acquaintance with Bakunin shows that a "doctrinal element" is by

<sup>1</sup> H. Rauschnig, "The Revolution of Nihilism," N. V., 1939, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> *cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> V. A. Demant, "The Religious Prospect," London, 1939, p. 89.

no means psychologically incompatible with a ruthless activism. For Bakunin, the apostle, be it remembered, of pan-destruction, did have a more or less definite social ideal. This fact by itself should make one chary of facile contrasts.

To obviate such a miscarriage of analysis, we must inquire more deeply into the role that such a fixed ideal plays in the Marxist revolutionary attitude. In this undertaking we are immediately confronted with the basic paradox of Marxism, for Marxism is essentially a theory of the dialectic development of society. Society, it is maintained, is in the throes of an evolutionary process and the fate of society is in the hands of that process. Man cannot determine his own social destiny, for the form of society can only be determined in and through the operation of the dialectic of history. The fixed objective is not a form which man conceives and imposes upon society. All that men can do is co-operate with and further dialectical development by promoting the class struggle.

Man's actions, in other words, are not directly ordained toward the achievement of the final goal but only toward the furtherance of the revolutionary process. How could it be otherwise? The goal can only be defined as that which is to come out of the process. No rationalized conception of it can be more than a tentative prediction. The one thing which can be apprehended with certainty is the value of the process itself. All that men can know, all that they need know, is that they must keep on acting in accord with the demands of the revolutionary process.

Thus we arrive at a belief in the "infallibility of the actual" similar to that which is characteristic of Nazism and Fascism. In no case can one question the value of the concrete enactment of the revolutionary movement. The only question that might be raised is the relationship of this particular revolutionary movement to the process. This is the question upon which Lenin expended his "rationalism." He was interested in showing the form which the revolutionary movement must assume in order to constitute the true expression of the dialectical process. It was in this regard that he insisted upon the necessity of theory—and that theory was a theory of the process. But once it is established that this concrete revolutionary movement constitutes a true expression of the dialectic of

history, the enactments of this movement can no longer be questioned.

Nazism and Fascism are enabled to profess a more or less permanent dynamism because their ideal is so amorphous that one can never speak of it as being fully realized. Hitler gives us the psychology behind this attitude.

It is only useful for a movement to aspire to this victory in a form which does not lead to a momentary victory but which gives it a long period of growth due to the long duration of the struggle.<sup>8</sup>

But Marxism also is enabled to fulfill this prescription by reason of the all embracing and all inclusive character of its ideal. Though the Communists have attained power in Russia, the struggle is not over. The state of true Communism has not yet arrived; all that is attained is the Socialist stage.<sup>9</sup> One has no right to measure the enactments of the present by that final ideal; nor can one be sure when it will be achieved. All one can know is that he must keep on striving for it, and that the enactments of the revolutionary regime are inevitably leading him to it.

Contrary to Rauschning's assertion, Stalin did not have to "jettison the Communist doctrine of the Russian Revolution." To achieve a dynamism all that he had to do was to stress the infallibility of the process and at the same time insist that his mandates constituted the expression of the process.

The absolute, the note of true being, by which the actual can be judged, gradually drops out. No longer what Socialism means, the true organic society, but what *this* state does, at this moment, is the only criterion. Not the condition of social being in which man "appropriates" his real essence, as Marx saw it, but just what Stalin decrees becomes the touchstone of authentic Communism.<sup>10</sup>

\**Mein Kampf*, p. 486.

<sup>8</sup> V. Lenin, "The State and Revolution," N. Y., International Publishers, 1932, p. 81; McFadden, "The Philosophy of Communism," N. Y., 1939, pp. 158-161.

<sup>10</sup> V. A. Demant, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

But it must be born in mind, that this could happen only because Marx himself had insisted on the process. By stressing the absolute value of the process, and by declaring that *the ideal* can only be determined by *the process*, Marx himself made it impossible to hold up the *ideal* as a norm by which the process could be measured. In proposing a fixed *objective*, Marx was, as Demant observes, making "an effort to achieve the results of a dogma of being upon a dogma of pure *becoming*." 11 But the combination was inherently unstable precisely because the supposed element of being could not be rationally defined. As Stalinism demonstrates, it can in practice be reduced to a philosophy of becoming in no wit different from the dogma of pure *change* proposed by Nazism and Fascism. It may be noted that Niebuhr arrives at a conclusion similar to ours on the basis of a slightly different analysis.

It is not altogether strange the Marxist politics should result in political realities in Russia, not too distinguishable from the fruits of Fascism. For in both cases the paradoxical relation of the creative and destructive forces in human life is not fully understood; nor is the relation of form to vitality in human creativity fully comprehended. The romantic fascist, conscious of the element of pretension in the culture of bourgeois rationalism, dispenses with all norms and rational principles of order, insisting upon the *self-justifying* character of the romantic-natural order of race and blood, if only it is expressed with sufficient vitality. The Marxist rebel, also conscious of the element of pretension in the social standards of the rationalist, but oblivious to the inevitability of a degree of pretension in all forms of human spirituality, including his own, blandly hopes for a new social order in which human creativity will express itself without destructiveness; and human vitality will be captured and contained in a perfect social harmony. The provisional cynicism of the Marxist is thus given a moral sanction and façade of a too simple principle of universal form and order; just as the deeper cynicism of the romanticist, unable to exist in terms of pure nihilism, is compounded with a too primitive and narrow principle of natural cohesion and order. In both cases the moral façade allows human impulses to express themselves without sufficient discipline. Hence the similarity in the political fruits of the two creeds.<sup>13</sup>

11 *Ibid.*, p. 86.

12 R. Niebuhr, "The Nature and Destiny of Man," I, N. Y., 1941 pp. si-

In this regard we cannot overlook the significance of Sorel's doctrine as a "via media." We have already stressed his relationship to Fascism. Obviously his doctrine also bears a strong relationship to certain elements of the Nazi theory. Yet Sorel himself professed Marxism. However modified may have been his notion of Marxism, nevertheless, he did, like Marx, hold to the notion of a fixed objective. He stressed action and the spirit of violence; yet he felt that this would ultimately result in an economic order which followed the Syndicalist pattern. Fascism took up the first element, but rejected the notion of a fixed goal. Sorel managed to retain both simply because he held that the spirit of violence was operative within the framework of a fixed evolutionary pattern. Thus we see that to have a belief in a fixed objective we need nothing more than a belief in an immanent pattern of social development. The presence of a finalist element in a revolutionary theory is no evidence of a belief in the primacy of reason. It does not necessarily imply any conviction of the possibility of criticizing, measuring and guiding the present action in the light of absolute norms.

In the light of this it appears that we must not reserve the epithet "doctrineless dynamism" for Nazism and Fascism alone. Any revolutionary theory is a doctrineless dynamism if it denies that at any

52. Much has been written on the "similarity in the political fruits of the two creeds." Cf., especially, E. Lyons, "Assignment in Utopia," N. Y., Harcourt, Brace, 1937; W. Gurian, "The Rise and Decline of Marxism" (transl. E. F. Peeler), London, Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1938; B. Souvarine, "Stalin, a critical survey of Bolshevism," Alliance Book Corporation, Longman's Green, N. Y., 1939; especially see the conclusions expressed, pp. 672-676; F. Borkenau, "The Totalitarian Enemy," London (1939); Borkenau's conclusion has already been quoted (p. ix *infra*). No impartial observer can dissent from the balanced verdict of William Henry Chamberlin: "The gigantic Soviet experiment has proved that a Socialist economy can be a going concern, that it can build big new factories, beat peasant plowshares into tractors, prepare efficiently for the supreme ordeal of war. But the price which it has exacted in human lives and human liberty, is a heavy one—much heavier than any people would voluntarily pay. Socialist economics is incompatible with the maintenance of civil and personal and political liberties. Iron-handed dictatorship is inextricably intertwined with the major constructive achievements of the Soviet regime." "Russia as a Partner in War and Peace," in "The Saturday Evening Post," Nov. 14, 1942, Vol. 215, no. 20, p. 214.

stage of development, reason can step in to evaluate, judge and criticize. *It is futile to distinguish between movements which hold to an absolute ideal and those which do not, if that ideal is merely a condition to be realized by the process, and not a norm by which the process is to be judged. And whenever the directive function of reason is denied, this is all that the ideal can be.* For all practical purposes it matters little whether or not such an ideal is present, for in any case it serves not as a norm to guide action but only as a myth to stimulate it.

*It is then, the very abandonment of reason which makes totalitarian excesses possible. They are possible simply because there are no available standards or norms by which the concrete enactments of the revolutionary movement could be judged. The seeds of totalitarianism are therefore present in the very basic irrationality common to all the revolutionary movements. Consequently revolutionary irrationality must stand condemned, at least by those who find totalitarianism abhorrent or a doctrineless dynamism repellent.*

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF HUMAN REASON

THAT the revolutionary doctrine should lead to the totalitarian abuse of man is not surprising. Misuse of man is the inevitable product of a misconception of his nature. The misconception of man which comes to flower in the totalitarian doctrine is fundamentally present in the basic philosophy of modern revolution. In revolutionary irrationalism and immanentism is enshrined a mutilated concept of the nature and destiny of man.

Nothing should be more evident than that man is a unique and extraordinary being—a being different from any other being in this material world. The evidence for this uniqueness is written in every page of human achievement, in the history of man's technological advances and in the record of his cultural, philosophic and religious aspirations.<sup>1</sup> The fact is that even when man is most insistent about his own lowly origin, even when he scoffs at the pretention of being more than a mere animal, he is still forced to admit that only a very unique sort of animal would have made such claims.

Today man indeed does his best to argue away his own uniqueness. He attempts to explain himself in terms of reflex mechanisms, of tropisms, of stimulus-response patterns. He adduces all sorts of data about the endocrine glands, about sub-conscious drives, about alimentary and economic forces. That such elements do enter into man's composition, and that he is influenced by such factors, is beyond question. But that they do not exhaust the picture of man nor explain his essential nature is equally beyond question. There is in man one thing which cannot be explained away in terms of such factors. That is man's thought.

The startling thing about man's knowledge is that he is able to grasp, not merely the singular, but the universal; his knowledge is not

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R. Allers, "The New Psychologies," London, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1933, pp. 33-34.

restricted to a recognition of exterior sensible qualities, but penetrates to the very essences of things.

"To understand means to 'read inwardly'; and this is clear to anyone who considers the difference between intellect and sense, because sensitive knowledge is concerned with exterior sensible qualities, whereas intellectual knowledge penetrates into the very essence of a thing: for the object of the intellect is what a thing is." <sup>2</sup>

Thought is not composed of mere congeries of sense pictures, nor are ideas merely a collation of quasi-photographic impressions. The idea cannot be reduced to the common or generic image. The common image, which by its confusion simulates the universality of the idea only contains sensible phenomena in juxtaposition, without rendering the whole phenomenon intelligible to us. The distinctive feature of the idea is that it reveals the essence of what it represents, by bringing out a dominant trait which is the *raison d'être* of all the others.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "Dicitur intelligere, quasi intus legere; et hoc manifeste patet considerantibus differentiam intellectus, et sensus; nam cognitio sensitiva occupatur circa qualitates sensibiles exteriores; cognitio autem intellectus penetrat usque ad essentiam rei; objectum enim intellectus est quod quid est," II-II, q. 8.

"Sensus non est cognoscitivus nisi singularium; cognoscit enim omnis sensitiva potentia per species individuales quum recipiat species rerum in organis corporalibus. Intellectus autem est cognoscitivus universalium, ut per experimentum patet. Differt igitur intellectus a sensu." *Contra Gentiles*, II, ch. 66.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, "God, His Existence and His Nature," St. Louis, 1941, Vol. II, p. 286.

The old theory of the composite image, as proposed by Galton and Huxley is more interesting than significant. Moore's experiments show that any form of imagery is extremely rare. (T. V. Moore, "Temporal Relations of Meaning and Imagery," reprint from the *Psychological Review*, Vol. 22, No. 3, May, 1915; "Process of Abstraction: An Experimental Study," *U. of California Publications in Psychology*, Vol. I, No. 2, 1910). Later experiments claim to offer evidence of some imagery but even they offer no substantiation for anything like the composite image theory. Cf. A. G. Bills, "General Experimental Psychology," Longmans, Green, N. Y., 1934, pp. 365-388. The strange thing about the once bitterly mooted "imageless thought"



In addition to this there is the fact that man knows such abstract things as wisdom and truth, and is capable of grasping relationships and formulating laws. He is moreover conscious of himself, and he can reflect on his own act of knowing; an operation which a sensible organ is incapable of performing.<sup>4</sup> All of these facts point to the conclusion that here is an essential distinction between mere sense knowledge and the intellectual knowledge of which man is capable. Consequently we are forced to admit that in reason man possesses a power totally different from that possessed by any other material being, a power whose possession places man in a class by himself.

Because reason is man's most significant characteristic, it is therefore, the indispensable clue to the understanding of his nature and destiny. But before going on to point out the implications of human rationality, it is necessary to refer to certain modern tendencies which have hindered a proper understanding of it. The fact is that modern man, enamored of the physical science which interprets man in terms of chemical and physiological factors, seldom stops to examine the problem of the nature of thought.<sup>5</sup> But in addition to this,

controversy is that the Thomist is placed in the position of attacking the theory of imageless thought. Thomas asks the question, "Utrum intellectus possit actu intelligere per species intelligibiles quas penes se habet, non convertendo se ad phantasmata" (1-84-7) and answers it in the negative. Cf. F. A. Walsh, "Phantasm and Phantasy," "The New Scholasticism," Vol. IX, No. 2, April, 1935, pp. 116-133. Actually the crux of the question is not whether or not imagery is present but whether the total result can be explained in terms of imagery. The simple fact is that the idea is of a totally different character from the image.

4 "Cognitio sensus non se extendit nisi ad corporalia . . . intellectus autem cognoscit incorporea, sicut sapientiam, veritatem et relationes rerum. . . , Nullus sensus seipsum cognoscit nec suam operationem; visus enim non videt seipsum nec videt se videre . . . intellectus autem cognoscit seipsum et cognoscit se intelligere." *Contra Gentiles*, II, ch. 66. Cf. also *Quaestio de Anima*, a. 2 and 14; *Compendium Theologiae* 79; I, q. 75, a. 2.

5 Modern thinkers either attempt to explain reason simply in terms of its accompanying phenomena (as e.g., the behaviorists) or they concern themselves chiefly with the function of reason in problem solving, in personal orientation and integration or in social organization. Idealist philosophers do acknowledge the conceptual character of thought; but the epistemological position peculiar to idealism renders an adequate psychology impossible.

there is today, a common tendency to confuse the effects of this power with its essence. (This is, in fact, the tendency which underlies revolutionary errors.) Hardly anyone ventures to equate man with the lower animals. But what does happen is that, lacking an adequate metaphysic, they define man's superiority in terms of his cultural and technical advances rather than in terms of that unique power which makes such advances possible.

The modern mind is quite ready to admit the distinction between "person" and "biological individual." Unfortunately however, "person" is confused with "personality." But since personality can be legitimately described in terms of the social relationships in which it is manifested, and the influences which mold it, person itself is defined in terms of such factors.<sup>6</sup> This admirably illustrated in Hooks' naïve criticism of Maritain.

For Marx, man is not born with a "soul" or "human personality." He achieves it. Marx's social philosophy is an attempt to discover and to help to bring into existence, the social, cultural and educational conditions under which all men and women may develop significant human personalities. M. Maritain's belief in a "personality" (sic) which can exist independently of physical biological and cultural conditions is a consequence of a bad psychology and still worse metaphysics.<sup>7</sup>

We are quite ready to grant to Hook that personality represents the influence of a mass of environmental conditions; yet it should be obvious that man is able to develop a personality solely because he is already a person. To cite another instance, we could readily admit

They think of reason not as an abstractive, cognitive faculty possessed by an individual man, but rather as something transcendent and absolute. As Maritain profoundly observes: "They thus reach a notion of thought which (leaving out of count, the numerous confusions, inevitable under such conditions) is only appropriate to the divine thought, although they do not recognize the true God: they 'theomorphize' thought in general." J. Maritain, "The Degrees of Knowledge," N. Y., Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938, p. 274, footnote.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. G. P. Conger, "A Course in Philosophy," N. Y., Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1924, pp. 321-323.

<sup>7</sup> Sidney Hook, "Reason, Social Myths and Democracy," N. Y., John Day Co., 1940, pp. 99-100.

to Dr. Alexander that "the new born infant shows no human but merely animal characteristics." But when he goes on to say that "the difference between man and animals comes about gradually during the infant's development from an ovum to an adult,"<sup>8</sup> he is ignoring the obvious fact that the infant is a potential adult. Though the infant may behave as an animal, it is not actually a mere animal because it can become a man, whereas the animal cannot. The very educability of an infant means that he possesses a power which the animal does not.<sup>9</sup> It is the possession of this power which constitutes the essential distinction between them.

Thomas is quite ready to grant to the modern that there is no adequate development of human personality except in social existence.<sup>10</sup> But this fact must not obscure the realization that as part of his original endowment, the individual man possesses a power which definitely sets him apart from the lower animals and which alone opens up the possibility of that development of which the latter are incapable.

At this point we must remark parenthetically, that an obvious danger in such theories is that the dignity and value of man can easily be considered to accrue to him only in virtue of his participation in the social process, which guarantees the conditions of his development. If what is properly human is defined in terms of the part man plays in a certain environmental pattern, or if man attains a true human status only in a particular social order, it is difficult to find

<sup>8</sup> From Dr. Franz Alexander's introduction to "What Man Has Made of Man," by Mortimer J. Adler, N. Y., Longmans, Green, 1937, p. xiv.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Adler, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

<sup>10</sup> That man is a social animal is a principle upon which Thomas repeatedly insists. "Sciendum est autem, quod quia homo naturaliter est animal sociale, utpote qui indiget ad suam vitam multis, quae sibi ipse solus praeparare non potest." In *Ethicam*, I, lect. 1, n. 4. This dependence as Thomas goes on to show is biological, economic, and moral. Elsewhere he speaks of a more properly psychological dependence when he declares that because man is a social animal, truthfulness and affability are parts of the virtue of justice, II-II, q. 114, a. 2, ad 1; II-II, q. 109, a. 3. (On this point, cf. P. Roussetot, "The Intellectualism of St. Thomas," transi. J. E. O'Mahony, London, Sheed & Ward, 1935, pp. 226-230); cf. also *Contra Gentiles*, III, c. 85; I-II, q. 72, a. 4; I-II, q. 94, a. 2; *De Regimine Principum*, Bk. I, ch. 1.

a conclusive argument for granting to him individual inviolability apart from, or in opposition to the supposed demands of that order.

In view of this, it would seem that the revolutionary denial of the significance of the individual reason has a good deal of bearing on the problem of the final status of the individual in these theories. In the development of the revolutionary movements into totalitarian regimes, the Thomist sees a rigid inner logic. As we shall see later the Thomist regards man's status as a rational being as the basis for the doctrine of individual human inviolability. The fact therefore, that in the revolutionary theories, the individual is supposedly unable to sit in judgment upon the process, and that understanding, knowledge and insight appear only in the process, prepares the way for a total subordination of the individual to that process. In stressing the utter impotence in this regard of the isolated individual, the revolutionary is, at least unconsciously, asserting that what is characteristically human does not belong to the individual as such. We shall show later that the denial of reason involves the denial of absolute norms and that this also paves the way for totalitarian excesses. Here we simply wish to point out that the seed of totalitarianism is already sown in all revolutionary irrationality by the very fact that the revolutionary has no adequate understanding of the basic feature which distinguishes man from the lower animals.

This conclusion seems to be born out by the striking parallel between this irrationality and the Averroism against which Thomas urged such a bitter polemic. Asserting the unity of the active intellect, the Averroists declared in effect, that rationality and responsibility were neither the prerogative nor the duty of the individual. When Thomas points out the evil consequences of this doctrine, you might think you were reading a description of the totalitarian state.

If therefore, there were one intellect for all, it necessarily follows that there would be only one who understands and consequently one who wills and uses all others according to his own arbitrary decision. . . . Such a doctrine destroys the whole science of morals and the whole basis of social intercourse.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> "Si igitur, sit unus intellectus omnium, ex necessitate sequitur quod sit unus intelligens et per consequens unus volens et utens pro suae voluntatis

Thomas's argument against the Averroists is, in essence, our argument against the revolutionaries—that reason is a power essentially distinct from sense cognition and a power possessed by the individual.<sup>12</sup> This doctrine must be the starting point of all ethics and social philosophy. We shall return later to the explanation of the positive ethical principles based on this doctrine, but at present we shall see how this doctrine affects the revolutionary theories about the nature of the forces that govern the development of society.

arbitrio omnibus aliis . . . (talis doctrina) destruit totam scientiam moralem et omnia quae pertinet ad conversationem civiilem," *De Unitate Intellectus*.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid*, passim; I, q. 79, a. 4 and S.

## CHAPTER IX

### HUMAN FREEDOM AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

We must now show the bearing that this doctrine of the rational nature of man has upon the revolutionary theories of social development. It will be recalled that though each revolutionary movement enshrines a particular theory of how the factors present in social life are to be utilized so as to achieve the desired condition of supposedly optimum social functioning, all are nonetheless premised on the common principle that the only standards by which this is to be governed are those revealed in and by the very interplay of such factors, that the only laws of social development are those dictated exclusively by the inner exigencies of social, political or economic development itself.

In maintaining such a position, the revolutionary is in effect setting up a concept of law in no wise different from that revealed in the biological sphere in the inner exigencies of natural development. In the organic realm, the only laws operative are indeed those immanent in the very nature of the organisms involved, and revealed in the actual inter-relationships of these organisms. Their operation is not mediated by reason.<sup>1</sup> Reason cannot interfere, for we cannot absolutely speaking criticize any phase of biological development and say, "This ought to be," or "This ought not to be." There is no morality involved. Looking merely at the order of nature itself (apart from some pragmatic purpose of our own) we find no norm which would enable us to say that it is wrong, *e. g.* for the grub of the parasitic wasp to feed upon and destroy the grub of the hard working bee. (The wasp possesses a special organ for inserting its

<sup>1</sup> "Omnia participant aliquantulum legem aeternam; in quantum scilicet impressione ejus habent inclinationes in proprios actus, et fines," I-II, q. 91, a. 2, c. "Etiam animalia irrationalia participant rationem aeternam suo modo . . . in creatura autem irrationali non participatur rationaliter; unde non potest dici lex nisi per similitudinem." *Ibid.*, ad 3.

egg into the cell constructed by the bee!)<sup>24</sup> It is by such depredations that the harmony of the natural world is maintained? In this sense, there is in the biological order an "infallibility of the process."

Yet it is surely obvious that this concept can obtain in the purely biological order, solely because no individual being in the order is of such unique value that it has a right to be regarded as inviolable? *If one* cherishes the conviction that in the case of man, the individual as such, is of unique value, he is by that very fact predicating the existence of a whole series of restraints and restrictions. It will be impossible to give free play to revolutionary violence. It will be impossible to permit the social polity to be distated solely by the exigencies of the revolutionary process. The ultimate argument of the Thomist against revolutionary irrationalism will be that man is a being of such unique value that the status which the individual obtains must always be considered a matter of major moment. Such a doctrine places reason in the possession of an absolute norm which enables it to criticize, evaluate and direct.

But before we proceed to demonstrate the existence of such a norm, it is necessary to show that it is possible for reason to intervene in social development. Could it be that human history represents the automatic or inevitable unfolding of a pre-determined evolutionary pattern? If the course of social development is pre-determined by inexorable laws, it would obviously be absurd to speak of the interventions of reason. The process might in that case be called a work of reason, but this would have to be an absolute reason, after the Hegelian pattern, and not human reason. Individual human reason would play a part in it, but it would be a passive part, the part, as it were, of a material cause. Reason would not specify the

2 Cf. V. Henri Fabre, "The Mason Bees," transi. A. T. de Mattos, N. Y., Dodd. Mead & Co., 1914, Ch. XI, p. 277 if.

"Corruptiones et defectus in rebus naturalibus dicuntur esse contra naturam particularem; sed tamen sunt de intentione naturae universalis, in quantum defectus unius cedit in bonum alterius, vel etiam totius universi," I, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2.

4 "Quia in rebus corruptibilibus nihil est perpetuum, et semper manens, nisi species, bonum speciei est de principali intentione naturae . . .," I, q. 98, a. 1, c.

line of development but would simply be one of the factors involved in that tension or conflict from which the development springs. Thus in the Marxian system development results because man constructs religious, philosophic or political ideologies, and these often conflict with his economic position. The ideology does not, however, determine the line of development. What we are asking here is whether reason can exercise a formal or specifying function, as distinguished from such a relatively passive or material function?

In asking this we are obviously positing the question of human freedom, since we are asking whether man is free to specify the line of development or whether he is simply the pawn of antecedent necessities. Now contemporary thought knows many definitions of human freedom;<sup>5</sup> and not a little of plausibility of modern revolution is due to the ready use of the word "freedom" which this confused terminology enables it to make. Without intending in any way to exclude that "freedom of fulfillment" of which we must speak later, we shall use the word here to refer to the power of choice possessed by the individual.<sup>6</sup> The existence of this freedom of choice is the focal point of the question we have just posited.

Significantly enough it is in reason that Thomas finds the evidence of freedom of choice. That we are free is of course, a datum of consciousness, but Thomas, not content to base his doctrine merely on this, goes on to show that freedom is the concomitant of reason. "Reason," he declares, "is the radical cause of all liberty."<sup>7</sup> The lower animal seeks the good which is suitable to its nature; it is irresistibly drawn to a particular good when it perceives that that good corresponds to "the concrete and individual actual dispositions of its appetite."<sup>8</sup> Consequently it is not free. But while the animal,

<sup>5</sup> Cf. "Freedom, Its Meaning," a symposium planned and edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen, N. Y., Harcourt, Brace, 1940.

<sup>6</sup> "Proprium liberi arbitrii est electio. Ex hoc enim liberi arbitrii esse dicimur quod possumus unum recipere, alio recusato, quod est eligere," I, q. 83, a. 3; I, q. 61, a. 8, ad 3; I-II, q. 10, a. 2; I-II, q. 13, a. 6.

<sup>7</sup> De Veritate, q. 24, a. 2. "Necesse est quod homo sit liberi arbitrii ex hoc ipso, quod rationalis est," I, q. 83, a. 1; also, I-II, q. 17, a. 1, ad 2.

<sup>8</sup> R. Garrigou-Lagrange, "God, His Existence and His Nature," 1941, Vol II, p. 291.

restricted to sense cognition knows only *things that are good*, man by his reason can know their very *goodness*. He apprehends the very essence of goodness and by that very token has some knowledge of the perfect, the universal good. Such a good will alone irresistibly attract him. No other, no particular good, can compel his desire because by comparison, he can discern in all others some measure of imperfection.

If the will be offered an object which is good universally and from every point of view, the will tends to it of necessity, if it wills anything at all: since it cannot will the opposite. If, on the other hand the will is offered an object, that is not good from every point of view, it will not tend to it of necessity.<sup>9</sup>

Rarely, if ever, do we explicitly analyze our state of mind immediately before we make a choice. We are so accustomed to making choices that we take the whole process for granted. Yet what really takes place is as though we were telling ourselves: "This concrete good which is here and now presented to me is a particular, limited good. It is truly a good, but because it is a particular good, it does not exhaust my idea of good. It is attractive, but only from certain points of view. From other points of view, it has no appeal whatsoever. Compared with the supreme good, it can even be regarded as a non-good. Consequently I am not bound to desire it; I can approve it or set it aside."<sup>10</sup>

It is therefore, in the nature of the intellect, that Thomas finds

<sup>9</sup> "Si proponatur aliquod objectum voluntati, quod sit universaliter bonum, et secundum omnem considerationem, ex necessitate voluntas in illud tendit, si aliquid velit: non enim poterit velle oppositum; si autem proponatur sibi aliquod objectum, quod non secundum quamlibet considerationem sit bonum, non ex necessitate voluntas fertur in illud," I-II, q. 10, a. 2. "Felicitem indeterminate et in universali, omnis rationalis mens naturaliter appetit et circa hoc deficere non potest; sed in particulari non est determinatus motus voluntatis creaturae ad quaerendum felicitatem in hoc vel illo." De Veritate, q. 24, a. 7, ad 6. Cf. I, q. 83, a. 1; De Malo, q. 6; Contra Gentiles, II, c. 48. Consult the masterly treatment of the whole question by Garrigou-Lagrange in "God, His Existence and His Nature," 1941, Vol. II, pp. 284-306.

Cf. R. E. Brennan, "Thomistic Psychology," N. Y., Macmillan, 1941, pp. 221-222.

h.



the roots of human freedom. Choice is possible because the judgment upon which *it* depends is not itself determined. This indifference springs from the fact that man can know the abstract and the universal. It is because he grasps the universal concept of goodness, the notion of good in general, that man can resist the concrete allure of this particular good. It is because he is a rational being that man is free.

That there are limits to this freedom is beyond dispute. Yet it is no argument against human freedom to say that man cannot always do exactly as he wills. It is true that man cannot mold reality to his will; nor has he always perfect command of his own body'. But though he may be subject to material limitations, to bodily weaknesses and physical coercion, his will still remains free. As Thomas puts it, freedom pertains essentially to the elicited rather than the commanded acts of the will. The elicited act is the volition which is the immediate act of the will itself; the commanded act is that which is exercised through the mediation of other powers, *e. g.*, the act of walking. The will itself can suffer no coercion, but the external members can, and that is why it is not always within man's power to accomplish what he wills.<sup>11</sup>

It is indeed true that man is often moved and affected by infra-rational impulses and desires. He does not always use his freedom nor act in a properly human fashion. Not every act of man is an "actus humanus."<sup>12</sup> Yet the central fact remains that man can transcend such influences and impulses. He is free precisely because no particular good can determine his will.

In general, human free will does not exclude but presupposes the vast and complex dynamism of instincts, tendencies, psycho-

<sup>11</sup> "Duplex est actus voluntatis. Unus quidem, qui est ejus immediate, velut ab ipsa elicited, scilicet velle. Alius, qui est actus voluntatis a voluntate imperatus, et mediante alia potentia exercitus; ut ambulare et loqui. . . . Quantum igitur ad actus a voluntate imperatos, voluntas violentiam pati potest; inquantum per violentiam exteriora membra impediri possunt, ne imperium voluntatis exequantur. Sed quantum ad ipsum proprium actum voluntatis, non potest ei violentia inferri," I-II, q. 6, a. 4.

<sup>12</sup> "Illae actiones proprie humanae dicuntur, quae ex voluntate deliberata procedunt," I-II, q. 1, a. 1.

physical dispositions, acquired habits and hereditary traits, and it is at the top point where this dynamism emerges is the world of the spirit that freedom of choice is exercised, to give or withhold decisive efficacy to the inclinations and urges of nature. It follows from this that freedom, as well as responsibility is capable of a multiplicity of degrees of which the Author of being alone is judge. It does not follow from this that freedom does not exist ... on the contrary! If it admits of degrees, then it exists.<sup>13</sup>

To deny this is to ignore sound metaphysical principles, to neglect the distinction between sense knowledge and intellectual knowledge and to dismiss as well the obvious testimony of man's consciousness of his own freedom.

It is possible to construct a rigid evolutionary doctrine, a doctrine according to which the form of society is inexorably predetermined, only on the basis of a deterministic view of human nature, or to put it less ambiguously, only by denying this power of free choice. Fundamentally, the doctrine of social evolution represents a naïve application to social development of the principles of biological evolution that were so fascinating to the nineteenth century mind. This was particularly true of the Anarchists, who seeing in their no-government ideal, the condition of optimum social functioning, without any further ado conceived this as the *nisus* of evolutionary progress. Without attempting any really exact delineation of the dynamic of society, they assumed that the social unrest of the early nineteenth century and the prevalent insistence upon a greater measure of individual freedom, were the expression of a basic and ineluctable law.

It remained for Marx to invest this with a more plausible and imposing framework. It is only in Marxism that the doctrine really takes on the character of a coordinated system. There we see how necessary a deterministic premise is for a mature evolutionary theory of society. The Marxist declares that the process is operative in and through human activity and that it results from the interaction of human wills. But the process will take on a definite evolutionary character only if there is some way of guaranteeing constancy in that opposition of attitude and outlook from which the development

<sup>13</sup> Maritain, in "Freedom, Its Meaning," p. 633.

springs. The Marxist finds this element in the doctrine of economic determinism.

We are aware that the Marxists protest a too rigid interpretation of this phrase. Engels does insist that this is not a mechanist determinism, i. e., that all man's attitudes are not merely the passive reflection of his economic position.<sup>14</sup> The ideological structure is compounded by man's own activity. All that this means however is that the economic element is not the sole factor involved in the process. The economic factor still plays the "primarily determining role"; it fixes the character of the superstructure, even though other elements must come into play in the actual construction of it.

I am well aware that there is ample scope for revision in the current interpretation of historical materialism, according to which everything — all ideologies, spiritual life, religious beliefs, philosophy, the arts, etc., are mere epiphenomena of economics. . . . Marx himself saw deeper into the matter . . . so one may say that despite certain formulas, he always believed in a reciprocal action between economic and other factors, economics taken alone were not for him the sole spring of history . . .

(Yet) if the economic factor taken by itself is not for Marx the sole spring of history, the fact remains that since the essential dynamism of revolution springs for him, from economic contradictions and social antagonism engendered by the system of production, it is the economic factor which plays the significant and primarily determining role.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "According to the materialist conception of history the determining element in history is ultimately the production and reproduction in real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. If, therefore, somebody twists this into the statement that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms it into a meaningless, abstract and absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure — political forms of the class struggle and its consequences, constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle — forms of law — and then even the reflexes of all these struggles in the brains of the combatants: political, legal, philosophical theories, religious ideas and their further development into systems of dogma — also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form." *Letter of Engels to Bloch, "Karl Marx and Friederick Engels,"* Correspondence, Martin Lawrence, London, 1934, p. 475.

<sup>15</sup> J. Maritain, "True Humanism," Charles Scribner's Sons, N. 1938. pp. 38-40.

The simple fact remains that if the economic factor be not a determining factor, there will be no predetermined process. A large element of contingency will be introduced.

To understand this problem we must keep in mind the frequently noted failure of Marxism to distinguish between "cause" and "condition."<sup>16</sup> When pressed, the Marxist admits that the economic factor is no more than a conditioning element; but his dialectic is none the less premised on the supposition that it is a determining cause.

The Scholastic philosopher must be relentless in urging this point against Marxism: Social institutions are created by men; they are brought into being through the intermediary of men's minds. Now men are either determined or merely conditioned in the choice of all social institutions. If they are determined they do not possess freedom of choice. If they are merely conditioned as any Scholastic philosopher would admit, the theory of economic determinism loses all its significance.<sup>17</sup>

With reference to such conditioning influences, we must insist that the Thomist is far from denying that one can discern in history

<sup>16</sup> We quote Coffey to explain the distinction between the two as the Scholastic understands it.

"A condition in the proper sense of necessary condition or *conditio sine qua non*, is something which must be realized or fulfilled before the event or effect in question can happen or be produced. On the side of the latter there is real dependence, but from the side of the former there is no real and positive influence on the happening of the event. The influence of the condition is negative, or if positive, it is only indirect, consisting in the removal of some obstacle to the positive influence of the cause. In this precisely a condition differs from a cause: windows, for instance, are a condition for the lighting of a room in the daylight, but the sun is the cause. The distinction is clear and intelligible, nor may it be ignored in a philosophical analysis of causality," P. Coffey, "Ontology," Longmans, Green, London, 1918, pp. 358-359.

<sup>17</sup> C. McFadden, "The Philosophy of Communism," N. Y., Benziger Brothers, 1939, p. 238. The fact that Marx confused these two notions and that it was this very confusion which enabled him to construct his whole philosophy of history has been widely recognized. Cf. M. Bober, "Karl Marx's Interpretation of History," Harvard University Press, 1927, p. 323; H. Wood, "Christianity and Communism," N. Y., Round Table Press, 1933, pp. 68-69; M. Eastman, "Marxism, Is It Science," N. Y., W. W. Norton & Co., 1940, pp. 25-26.

certain recurrent patterns of cultural development; he is quite ready to admit that there is such a thing as a "Zeitgeist." If we look simply at the observable facts of history and sociology, without attempting to analyze them in terms of some pre-conceived theory, it is difficult to see how any one could question a conclusion such as that of Hulme.

There are certain doctrines which for a particular period seem not doctrines, but inevitable categories of the human mind. Men do not look upon them merely as the correct opinion, for they have become so much a part of the mind and lie so far back that they are never really conscious of them at all. They do not see them but other things through them. It is these abstract ideas at the center, the things they take for granted, that characterize a period.<sup>18\*</sup>

The Renaissance ideals offer an example of this. A new insistence on man, conditioned the thought of that period. It was manifested even in such widely divergent things as neo-pagan classicism on the one hand and Molinism on the other.

So long as this influence is not conceived in such a fashion as to compromise individual intellectual autonomy, the Thomist will find nothing repugnant in such a doctrine. On the contrary, Thomas' very consciousness of the social character of man's life, would dispose him to expect such a mutual rapport. No man lives and develops in isolation; his intellectual and physical development is predicated upon social existence.<sup>10</sup> Though this may refer primarily to the family, it is no less true of the larger political and cultural groupings. In the conclusion of his study of Thomas intellectualism, Rousselot gives the following summation of the Thomist attitude.

If we consider the intelligence of the human race at any given moment, we shall also see that the multitude of individual intelligences may be said to come together and united, give birth to one unique idea which is the particular possession of no individ-

<sup>18</sup> T. E. Hulme, "Speculations," edit. H. Read, London, Kegan Paul, N. Y., Harcourt, Brace, 1936, pp. 50-51, also p. 37.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 131.

liai man but which is shared by all. In the chapter dealing with science we have seen something similar where the integral knowledge of any period may be said to exist in a coherent and articulated form outside and above the intelligences of individuals, who for themselves possess merely an isolated piece of the whole. Belief, which is so absolutely necessary for human kind in the domain of *facts*, suggests analogous reflections. The rational certitude possessed by one man is not the direct result of his intuition of the intelligible object in such matters, nor is it based upon a rational analysis of it into its fundamental principles. Rather it is something linked up with the knowledge of his neighbor and his neighbor's testimony, for only in that way can the world progress.<sup>20</sup>

; Marxism may have interpreted this dependence in a strange fashion and may have exaggerated the truth of this dependence, but the Thomist will not deny the truth in order to escape the exaggeration. We are not committing ourselves to the Marxist doctrine by admitting that there is an interaction among all the elements and factors present in a particular culture and that the whole complexus exerts a general conditioning influence upon the individuals living in that culture. All that the Thomist need do is insist that such influences are not insurmountable, that they extend only to the broadest features and most general attitudes of an era and that they can be manifested in widely divergent ways.

Thus there can be no doubt that the multitude of free acts in the past have their effect in the present. It is because of these that the present has its particular problems and its particular needs, its difficulties that cry out for solution. These constitute, as Maritain observes, necessities before which "the wills of the men of the present day are powerless."<sup>21</sup> We cannot change the situation; these are the problems we have inherited. But the question is, how are these to be solved? How is man to react to them? This does depend upon the wills of the men of our time. None of these conditioning factors, whether they be cultural or economic, can become the adequate and specifying cause of man's activity. In the words of McFadden:

20 P. Rousselot, "The Intellectualism of St. Thomas," 1935, pp. 227-228.

21 J. Maritain, "Freedom in the Modern World," N. Y., 1936, p. 140.

They merely set the stage so to speak, for the free activity of man. The fundamental determining causes of man's activity are spiritual powers inherent in his own nature."

When we turn to the modern scene, it does seem apparent that the stage is set for a more or less profound re-casting of the social order. Laissez-faire capitalism has born bitter fruit; the evils it has brought into being cry out for remedying. Need we repeat that this has been the constant assertion of modern Pontiffs? Men everywhere are abandoning "rugged individualism" and it seems inevitable that future events should only accelerate this tendency. Must we suppose therefore that society is being inexorably propelled toward a collectivist economy? Or must we suppose that a revolutionary upheaval is inescapable? These are suppositions which have gained much ground.<sup>22</sup> But make no mistake: if these things do happen it will only be because men have freely brought them about. As we shall see shortly, events themselves have forced later revolutionaries to abandon the deterministic doctrine; but even apart from this confirmation it would be apparent that since man is free, since he can transcend the influences which may be brought to bear upon him, a place must be left open for the interventions of human freedom in history. Tendencies may be present in the social matrix, but to explain them we need not conjure up the "deus ex machina" of a pre-determined process. The tendencies simply mean that there are problems that cry out for solution.

Social development is a process that is open to a multitude of contingent factors, subject to cross-currents and reversals. Since man is rational, he possesses freedom of choice, since he possesses freedom of choice he is at least to a certain extent the master of his own destiny. Maritain's criticism of Marx sums up the issue.

He (Marx) was deeply, almost tragically aware of the way in which history shapes men instead of being shaped by them. But

<sup>22</sup> McFadden, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

<sup>23</sup> This idea is expressed by Lawrence Dennis in "The Dynamics of War and Revolution," privately published by the "Weekly Foreign Letter," 1940; and in his earlier works, "Is Capitalism Doomed," N. Y., Harper, 1932, and "The Coming American Fascism," N. Y., Harper, 1936; and also by James Burnham, "The Managerial Revolution," N. Y., John Day Co., 1941.

if he had had a just metaphysical idea of human freedom, if he had understood that man is endowed with a liberty whereby in the degree to which he is a person, he can with more or less difficulty indeed, yet really triumph over necessity within himself, he would have understood that, without thereby being able arbitrarily to twist the course of history to his fancy or his tastes, man can yet raise new currents in the flood of circumstance, which make one with other forces and trends and pre-existent conditions to determine the movement of history, which is not fixed in advance by evolution.<sup>21</sup>

It is significant that both Sorel and Lenin agree with this recognition of contingency in social development. The actual course of events forced both of them to the conclusion that the coming of the revolution was neither automatic nor inevitable. The revolution would not come of its own accord; it must be brought about through the instrumentality of some élite. Both of them realized that the proletariat tended to forget the opposition so necessary for the dialectic. Both of them saw in this a serious challenge to the evolutionary conception and both of them found it necessary to modify their notion of the process. We have already discussed the manner in which they modified it, but the fact interests us here insofar as it constitutes a testimony from the revolutionaries themselves to the possible intervention of human freedom.

Few indeed, of the revolutionaries held to the notion of a process automatic and rigidly predetermined. The notion of an automatically operative evolutionary process never represented more than one facet of the rather amorphous doctrine of Anarchism. In the Narodnik view, some special initiative was regarded as needed to arouse the creative forces slumbering in the masses. In Syndicalism, Fascism and Nazism the emphasis upon such initiative and spontaneity becomes, of course, very marked and the evolutionary concept becomes progressively nebulous. In fact, few revolutionaries can escape the notion that revolutionary activity itself is an instance of human spontaneity. The deterministic concept which comes to the fore in "Capital" is a less obvious and more sophisticated doctrine. Indeed the Marx of the Communist Manifesto seems himself to be a believer in such spontaneity.

a\* J. Maritain, "True Humanism," 1938, p. 124.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SUPRA-TEMPORAL DESTINY OF MAN

From the foregoing it is dear that society) is not constrained to move along the path of a predetermined pattern. But now the question arises, how is this freedom to be utilized? Though the deterministic concept be refuted, revolutionary irrationalism is not, by that very token disposed of. Those of the revolutionaries who reject determinism, substitute "titanism"—the glorification of the will to revolution. They may call it "freedom" (the followers of Lenin are fond of the phrase) but by that freedom, they simply mean the absence of all restrictions? Reduced to ultimate philosophical terms, this is simply the "freedom of indifference"—a freedom divorced from rational guidance.

As we have already pointed out, our ultimate argument against revolutionary irrationalism is drawn from the fact that man, in virtue of his rational nature, is a being of unique value, a being with rights which must be safeguarded. Recognition of the fact that man is such a being, will put reason in the possession of certain norms in accord with which social development must at all times be guided. Consequently our present task will be to establish the foundations of this concept of human value.

We take as our starting point, the fact that man is a rational being. For the Thomist, the really significant thing about human reason, is that reason is a power which points to man's possession of a spiritual soul. This is a cardinal point in Thomist anthropology. It is because man is composed of spirit as well as matter that the human individual is a being of unique value. It is because of this that the individual man must not be submerged in the political collectivity, nor left to the mercy of any social evolutionary process. It is the presence of the spiritual soul in man which enables Thomas to say;

<sup>1</sup> Cf. N. Berdyaev, "The Origin of Russian Communism," *London*, 1937, pp. 181-184; J. Maritain, "Freedom in the Modern World," *N. Y.*, 1936, p. 4L.



"Man is not ordained to the political community according to his whole self and according to all that is his." <sup>2</sup>

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What evidence is there for the existence of this spiritual soul? For Thomas it is a conclusion logically arrived at from the analysis of man's rational nature. It is by no means a conviction based merely on an aspiration or an emotional projection. The demonstration starts from a principle already established: the fact that reason's operations are essentially distinct from the operations of sense cognition. Can such operations be wholly explained as the work of a material, sensible organ? That the operation of reason is dependent upon and conditioned by the prior action of the sense is beyond dispute. Thomas is very insistent upon the fact that the act of understanding is causally dependent upon acts of the bodily organs of sense and imagination. It is for this reason, he declares that an injury to the brain will interfere with intellectual operations.<sup>3</sup> Yet such facts certainly do not warrant the conclusion that the intellect is a power of the sensitive order. That abstraction and the formation of the universal concept, as well as the phenomena of judgment, reflexivity and self-consciousness should consist in neural impulses or the like is beyond credence. The fact is that if the intellect were corporeal in nature, it would, like the photographic plate, be limited to the reception of singular, individuated forms.<sup>4</sup> The very fact, therefore that the intellect knows the universal, is an indication that it cannot be "anything corporeal nor composed of corporeal things."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "Homo non ordinatur ad communitatem politicam secundum se totum vel secundum omnia sua," I-II, q. 24, a. 4, ad 3.

<sup>3</sup> I, q. 75, a. 3, ad 2; I, q. 84, a. 6; I, q. 84, a. 7; I, q. 75, a. 2, ad 3.

<sup>4</sup> "Quod autem recipitur in corpore, recipitur in eo secundum quantitatis divisionem. Ergo forma non recipitur in corpore nisi ut individua. Si igitur intellectus esset corpus, formae rerum intelligibiles non reciperentur in eo nisi ut individuae. Intelligit autem intellectus res per formas earum. . . . Non ergo intellectus intelligit universalis sed solum particularia; quod patet esse falsum," *Contra Gentiles*, I, II, c. 49.

<sup>5</sup> In explaining this, Thomas says: "Omne enim quod est in potentia ad aliquid et receptivum ejus, caret eo quod est in potentia et cujus est receptivum . . . ; sed intellectus noster sic intelligit intelligibilia, quod est in potentia ad ea et susceptivus eorum, sicut sensus sensibilium; ergo caret omnibus illis

Nor will it avail to appeal to the complexity of the cortex, for however complex it may be, it still remains a material organ.

Such operations, Thomas maintains, are rationally explicable only in terms of a spiritual principle; spiritual activities presuppose a spiritual substance? For Thomas the human soul is a spirit—which signifies an immaterial and invisible substance—an entity different from, but no less real or substantial than material entities. And though this soul is the form or life principle of the body/ and though its operations are normally exercised through the senses, by the very fact that it is a spirit, it is no way dependent upon the body for its continued existence, and on that very account survives the death of the body.<sup>9</sup> This is in itself, an indication that man as an individual possesses a unique value that ought to be respected.

The full significance of this appears however, only when we consider man in relation to his ultimate destiny. For Thomas this is

rebus, quas natus est intelligere. Cum igitur intellectus noster natus sit intelligere omnes res sensibiles et corporales, necesse est quod careat omni natura corporali.” In “De Anima,” III, lect. 7. He repeats the same argument in the *Summa Theologica*: “Quod autem potest cognoscere aliqua, oportet ut nihil eorum habeat in sua natura: quia illud, quod inest ei naturaliter, impediret cognitionem aliorum. . . . Si igitur principium intellectuale haberet in se naturam alicujus corporis, non posset omnia corpora cognoscere; omne autem corpus habet aliquam naturam determinatam,” I, q. 75, a. 2, c.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas's syllogism starts with a premise we have already established: “Ipsam igitur intellectualem principium, quod dicitur mens vel intellectus, habet operationem per se cui non communicat corpus.” He goes on: “Nihil autem potest per se operari, nisi quod per se subsistit: non enim est operari, nisi entis in actu; unde eo modo aliquid operatur, quod est. . . . Relinquitur igitur, animam humanam, quae dicitur, intellectus, vel mens, esse aliquid incorporeum et subsistens,” I-75-2, c.

<sup>7</sup> I, q. 36, a. 1, ad 1.

<sup>8</sup> I, q. 76, a. 1; *Contra Gentiles*, II, c. 65, 68-71.

<sup>9</sup> I, q. 75, a. 6; *Contra Gentiles*, II, c. 55, 79, 82. The human soul is incomplete “ratione speciei” inasmuch as it is the form of the body; but it is complete “ratione substantialitatis,” i. e., it is self-subsistent. Thomas's main argument for the incorruptibility of the human soul (I, q. 75, a. 6) is based upon an analysis of the nature of a spiritual substance. It is not corruptible “per se” because it is simple; it is not corruptible “per accidens” because it has existence “per se.”

the question of man's relationship to God, of God's purpose and design for man. That this is the ultimate and conclusive argument against revolutionary irrationality, no one has recognized better than the revolutionaries themselves. They have good reason to be bitterly opposed to belief in God, for such a belief constitutes the most serious and unmistakable challenge to revolutionary completeness. By stressing half-truths, the revolutionary may be able to evolve a somewhat plausible distortion of the notion of human freedom in the social order, but once we admit the notions of a transcendent God, outside of, and above the flux of temporal becoming, it is no longer possible to consider society simply from the viewpoint of the inner exigencies of its political, social or economic development. It is always necessary in that case, to consider man in relation to the purpose and design of the First Cause.

It is important to note that when the revolutionary attacks the notion of God, his chief argument seems to be that belief in God distracts man from the work of social reconstruction. It does not seem to occur to him that there is any principle at stake, other than the social utility of this concept. Nor does it seem to occur to him that there might be any reasoned evidence for the existence of God. In general, revolutionaries and radicals of all shades seem serenely oblivious of the fact that there could be an intellectual approach to the problem of God's existence.

Here it is manifest that the modern world is reaping the fruit of centuries of idealism. Modern philosophy has blindly accepted Kant's critique of the traditional theistic arguments; William James declares that the very fact these arguments have never been taken seriously since Kant's time, exempts one from the necessity of examining them.<sup>10</sup> Kant's own approach based on the practical reason, is regarded as an indication of the only possible line of approach.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> William James, "Varieties of Religious Experience," Longmans, Green, N. Y., 1902, pp. 437-438. For further references on this point cf. Fulton J. Sheen, "God and Intelligence in Modern Philosophy," Longmans, Green, London, New York, 1925, pp. 23-24.

<sup>11</sup> The starting point of modern agnosticism is to be found in the pan-phenomenalism of Hume. His doctrine was sensistic and nominalistic. On the basis of these principles he shows that the idea of cause is nothing else but a common image of phenomena that succeed one another. The principle

Thus it is maintained either that the notion of a transcendent God represents an elementary type of wish-projection or that the only approach to God is an emotional, indemonstrable and incommunicable one.<sup>11</sup>

The Thomist approach stands out in sharp contrast to this, for Thomas holds that the existence of God is rigidly demonstrable. In the celebrated "Quinque Viae" he shows how the existence of this contingent and limited world presupposes the existence of a supreme, all-perfect, unlimited Being, Who Himself uncaused and unmoved, is the First Cause and the Author of all being and motion.<sup>12</sup> A detailed exposé of these proofs would be beyond the scope of this study but the general line of argument will be sufficiently dear from Doctor Sheen's admirable summary.

Very simply these five arguments can be reduced to the fundamental one of Being, which can be stated in some such way as this. All beings in this world are composed of the determined and the undetermined, the conditioned and the unconditioned, act and potency, essence and existence. In virtue of this composition they change or evolve or die--evolution without composition is impossible. If I seek the reason of this participation, I am driven back necessarily to something distinct from the composed elements and which has grouped or united them together. Thus one mounts up to God in Whom there is no composition, but Whose very essence it is to exist, and in this He differs from creatures whose existence is not their essence.

of causality obviously then has no objective validity. Kant accepted this criticism; and though he retained the principle of causality as a category of the mind, he denied the possibility of utilizing it in any demonstration of the existence of God. For him it is the practical reason basing itself on the consciousness of moral obligation, which leads us to admit the existence of God. Cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 84-88, 100-103; J. T. Casey, "The Primacy of Metaphysics," The Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., 1936, pp. 14-15.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. F. J. Sheen, *op. cit.*, chapters 3 and 4, pp. 21-46.

<sup>13</sup> The "locus classicus" for these proofs is the *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 2, a. 3. Cf. also, *Contra Gentiles*, I, c. 13, 15, 16, 46; II, c. 15; III, c. 44. De Veritate, q. 5, a. 2; De Potentia, q. 3, a. 5; In Metaphy., L. XII, Leet. 5 ff.

<sup>11</sup> F. J. Sheen, "Religion Without God," Longmans, Green, New York, London, 1928, pp. 207-208. The best exposé of the Thomistic proofs that we know of, is to be found in Garrigou-Lagrange, *op. cit.*, Vol. I pp. 242-377.

Only if we admit the existence of such a Being can we explain the existence of the world of everyday experience. This Being Whose existence, logical necessity forces us to admit, will not be an evolving God, identified with the developing process (such a notion would be of no help in explaining the existence of the world) but a transcendent, all-perfect Being, the First Cause and the Final End of all created beings.

Once it is established that God exists and that man possesses a spiritual soul, there remains only the problem of showing the precise bearing these facts have upon the status of man in the temporal order. Exactly what is God's purpose and design with regard to man? In the case of any of His creatures, the clue is to be found in the natures with which He had endowed them. Thus while in the case of irrational creatures we can find no discernible purpose other than that of showing forth His glory by contributing to the common harmony and perfection of the material order,<sup>10</sup> we can accept no such solution in the case of man, a creature endowed with reason and will and possessing a spiritual soul. God's design in his regard will be fulfilled only in the exercise of this reason and will, and that exercise will not be limited merely to the span of his earthly existence. Ultimately this exercise must consist in nothing else but knowing and loving God Himself, thus rendering Him a formal and conscious tribute of glory. Conversely this exercise will constitute the true perfection and complete happiness of man himself.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>10</sup> I, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2; I, q. 98, a. 1, c. Cf. *infra*, pp. 134, 135.

<sup>18</sup> "Totum universum cum singulis suis partibus ordinatur in Deum sicut in finem; inquantum in eis per quamdam imitationem divina bonitas representatur ad gloriam Dei; quamvis creaturae rationales speciali quodam modo supra hoc habeant finem Deum, quem attingere possunt sua operatione, cognoscendo et amando," I, q. 65, a. 2, c.

"Ultima et perfecta beatitudo non potest esse nisi in visione divinae essentiae. Ad cujus evidentiam, duo consideranda sunt. *Primo* quidem, quod homo non est perfecte beatus, quamdiu restat sibi aliquid desiderandum, et quaerendum. *Secundum* est, quod uniuscujusque potentiae perfectio attenditur secundum rationem sui objecti. Objectum autem intellectus est quod quid est, id est, essentia rei . . . : unde intantum procedit perfectio intellectus, inquantum cognoscit essentiam alicujus rei. Si ergo intellectus aliquis cognoscat essentiam alicujus effectus, per quam possit cognosci essentia causae, ut scilicet

This, be it noted, will be an individual act, precisely because man possesses individual powers of reason and will. However dependent the development of these powers may be upon social existence, they are nevertheless exercised by the individual as such. Consequently in the case of man there will be an exact reversal of what obtains among irrational creatures. Whereas in the latter case, the design of the Creator is fulfilled in that very subordination of the individual which ensures the common harmony and perfection, in the former this design demands that the individual be safeguarded and cherished.<sup>17</sup> This must not be taken as a polemic for laissez faire individualism; for on the contrary, Thomas was acutely conscious of man's social nature and the necessity of working for the common good.<sup>18</sup>

sciatur de causa quid est, non dicitur intellectus attingere ad causam simpliciter, quamvis per effectum cognoscere possit de causa, an sit; et ideo remanet naturaliter homini desiderium, cum cognoscit effectum, et scit, eum habere causam, ut etiam sciat de causa, quid est; et illud desiderium est admirationis, et causae inquisitionem. . . . Si igitur intellectus humanus cognoscens essentiam alicujus effectus creati non cognoscit de Deo, nisi an est, nondum perfectio ejus attingit simpliciter ad causam primam, sed remanet ei adhuc naturale desiderium inquirendi causam; unde nondum est perfecte beatus: ad perfectam igitur beatitudinem requiritur, quod intellectus pertingat ad ipsam essentiam primae causae. Et sic perfectionem suam habebit per unionem ad Deum, sicut ad objectum, in quo solo beatitudo hominis consistit, I-II, q. 3, a. 8, c.

<sup>17</sup> "Quia igitur in rebus corruptibilibus nihil est perpetuum, et semper manens, nisi species, bonum speciei est de principali intentione naturae, ad cujus conservationem, naturalis generatio ordinatur; substantiae vero corruptibiles manent semper non solum secundum speciem, sed etiam secundum individua; et ideo etiam ipsa individua sunt de principali intentione naturae," I, q. 98, a. 1.

<sup>18</sup> We have already referred to Thomas's doctrine that man is a social animal (p. 131, footnote 10); but to say that he is a "social animal" implies also that he is a "political animal" because the perfection of social life and the complete fulfillment of man's needs is assured only in the political group (De Regimine Principum, Lib. I, c. 1; In Pol., Lib. I, lect. 1). The common good is the end of society itself. As such this is superior to the good of the individual: "Bonum commune semper invenitur esse divinius quam bonum unius tantum" (*Contra Gentiles*, III, c. 19; *ibid.*, I, c. 41). It is because man is ordained to society, as a part to the whole that "lex proprie, primo et principaliter respicit ordinem ad bonum commune," (I-II, q. 90, a. 2; *ibid.*,

But that common good "is not to be conceived in such a collective or general or organic way as to ignore the welfare of concrete human beings individually considered." 19 To say that the individual must be

a. 3; II-II, q. 58, a. 5; II-II, q. 64, a. 2). "Bonum commune est finis singularium personarum in communitate existentium; sicut bonum totius finis est cujuslibet partium." II-II, q. 58, a. 9, ad 3. It is precisely by seeking the common good that the individual seeks his own good, II-II, q. 47, a. 10, ad 2.

19 "Catholic Principles of Politics," by J. A. Ryan and F. J. Boland, N. Y., Macmillan, 1940, p. 103. This is so because (as we have shown) rational creatures attain their end in a special way by knowing and loving God. Whenever we discuss the doctrine of the common good, we must keep in mind the principle Thomas expressed in the Summa Theologica, I-II, q. 21, a. 4, ad 3: "Homo non ordinatur ad communitatem politicam secundum se totum, et secundum omnia sua." Pius XI sums the whole teaching in the encyclical, "Divini Redemptoris."

"Man has a spiritual and immortal soul. He is a person marvelously endowed by his Creator with gifts of body and mind. He is a true 'microcosm,' as the ancients said, a world in miniature, with a value far surpassing that of the vast inanimate cosmos. God alone is his last end, in this life and in the next. By sanctifying grace he is raised to the dignity of a son of God, and incorporated into the kingdom of God in the Mystical Body of Christ. In consequence he has been endowed with many and varied prerogatives: the right to life, to bodily integrity, to the necessary means of existence; the right to tend toward his ultimate goal in the path marked out for him by God; the right of association and the right to possess and use property. . . . But God has likewise destined man for civil society according to the dictates of his very nature. In the plan of the Creator, society is a natural means which man can and must use to reach his destined end. Society is for man and not vice versa. This must not be understood in the sense of liberalistic individualism, which subordinates society to the selfish use of the individual; but only in the sense that by means of an organic union with society and by mutual collaboration the attainment of earthly happiness is placed within the reach of all. In a further sense it is society which affords the opportunities for the development of all the individual and social gifts bestowed on human nature. These natural gifts have a value surpassing the immediate interests of the moment, for in society they reflect the divine perfection, which would not be true were man to live alone. But on final analysis, even in this latter function society is made for man, that he may recognize this reflection of God's perfection, and refer it in praise and adoration to the Creator. Only man, the human person, and not society in any form is endowed with reason and a morally free will," Nos. 27, 29, "Five Great Encyclicals," N. Y., Paulist Press, 1939, pp. 186-187.

safeguarded and cherished means simply that he must be accorded such conditions and opportunities as will enable him to lead a properly human existence and thus advance toward the true development of his powers and the achievement of his eternal destiny'. For our present purpose it is unnecessary to lay down specific features of social organization; it is sufficient to have established the general norm which is well expressed by Maritain.

The social polity is essentially directed . . . towards such a development of social conditions as will lead the generality to a level of material, moral and intellectual life in accord with the good and peace of all, such as will positively assist each person in the progressive conquest of the fullness of personal life and spiritual liberty.<sup>20</sup>

Once this norm is admitted there can be no question of excluding reason from the conduct of the social polity. This is a standard that possesses absolute validity and universal applicability. Whatever opinion we may hold as to the actual forces that constitute the dynamic of social progress, we must always submit the concrete development to the judgment of reason.

This will moreover, be a norm applicable at every stage of social development, *f. e.* it will not suffice merely to promise individual autonomy at some future stage of development. Anarchism, Syndicalism and Marxism all make some such promises, envisioning as they do the ultimate emancipation of the individual. In spite of all their professed solicitude for individual autonomy, they do not however, regard this as an ethical standard by which the present action must be regulated and in accord with which the line of social organization must be formulated. They regard it rather as a condition to be realized by the process than as a norm by which the enactments of the process must be judged. Indeed they could not do otherwise without abandoning their own irrationalism. At best, their doctrine is reducible to the principle that the destiny of the present individual can be neglected for the sake of the individual of the future. Russian Communism offers a clear embodiment of this principle. All its

<sup>20</sup> J. Maritain, "True Humanism," 1938, p. 128.



vaunted promises do not mask the fact that it does not respect the individual as such. And in the last analysis, there is little consolation for the individual in the reflection that he constitutes a faggot for a fire, at which some future generation will warm itself.

At this point a word of caution is necessary. Thomist rationalism must not be confused with the exaggerated rationalism of Utopian Socialism. When we say that reason must be the ultimate arbiter of man's social destiny, we do not mean that the initiative in social development must come from reasoned considerations supplied by some ingenious thinker. This was the theory of the Utopians; the follower of Thomas makes common cause with the revolutionaries in rejecting it as artificial and sterile. In the theory that men have only to know the truth in order to accept it, the Thomist sees a naïve and unreal psychology and in fact, a form of intellectual determinism.<sup>21</sup> Moreover there is a strong element of traditionalism in Thomas's political philosophy; and paradoxically enough, this bears in some respects a marked parallel to revolutionary irrationalism. It will be recalled that Thomas insists strongly on the value of custom.<sup>22</sup> But though custom implies on the one hand, a conservative adherence to established ways, it implies also a progressive development which will move in advance of the fixed law and may indeed entirely supplant that law. Thus though Thomas would be opposed to the sudden change favored by the revolutionary, he would agree that the dynamic of society must be found not in abstract reasoning, but rather in the concrete forces and movements operative in the social matrix. Reason cannot guide it in the sense that it can be made to move along the lines of some preconceived plan. The development results above all from the interplay of many wills. But it is not, on that account, less rational, but rather more so, since resulting from the

21 "Ad hoc quod homo bene agat, requiritur, quod non solum ratio sit bene disposita per habitum virtutis intellectualis, sed etiam quod vis appetitiva sit bene disposita per habitum virtutis moralis," I-II, q. 58, a. 2, c. Ignorance is not the sole cause of evil; this is a fact attested both by experience and by an analysis of the factors involved in the act of free choice. (Cf. what has already been said about the indifference of the intellect with regard to the practico-practical judgment, *infra*, pp. 136-137.)

22 *Infra*, pp. 108-109.

concurrence of many men, it is, as Rousselot observes, ' the manifestation of a deeper and more deliberate judgment."

By actions also, especially if they be repeated, so as to make a custom, law can be changed and expounded; and also something can be established which obtains force of law, insofar as by repeated external actions, the inward movement of the will, and concepts of reason are most effectually declared; for when a thing is done again and again, it seems to proceed from a deliberate judgment of reason.<sup>24</sup>

But, to recall again the main theme of this critique, one must not simply bow down and accept custom, merely because it has resulted from the developing life of society. If it is accepted, this will be because it is judged to be in accord with what ought to be. Thus the last word of Thomistic traditionalism will be:

"Custom does not prevail over natural or divine law." <sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Rousselot, "The Intellectualism of St. Thomas," London, 1935, p. 231.

<sup>24</sup> "per actus maxime multiplicatos, qui consuetudinem efficiunt, mutari potest lex, et exponi, et etiam aliquid causari, quod legis virtutem obtineat; inquantum scilicet per exteriores actus multiplicatos, interior voluntatis motus et rationis conceptus efficacissime declaratur; cum enim aliquid multoties fit, videatur ex deliberato rationis iudicio provenire, I-II, q. 97, a. 3. Consult also what we have said about the "Zeitgeist" and conditioning factors in human history on pp. 141-143.

<sup>25</sup> Consuetudo non praejudicat legi naturali vel divino," II-II, q. 100, a. 2, c. "Nulla consuetudo vim legis obtinere potest contra legem divinam vel legem naturalem," I-II, q. 97, a. 3, ad 1.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE PHILOSOPHIC ROOTS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY DOCTRINES

Having finished his exposition of these arguments, arguments in themselves lucid, almost obvious, arguments based on facts of common experience and developed according to the dictates of common sense, the Thomist might well be tempted to feel that his work was over. Yet if he does so he is undoubtedly in for a rude awakening. It is a painful, yet undeniable fact that the average modern philosopher experiences great difficulty in attempting to grasp these arguments. But what makes this fact all the more poignant, is the further realization that in this day and age, when we stand in such dire need of an ethic which, based on a true rationalism, will safeguard the rights of the individual man, the modern thinker is himself unable to offer an adequate substitute for these arguments. As we scrutinize contemporary specimens of the non-Scholastic polemic against totalitarianism, we cannot fail to be impressed by the sad fact that the only recourse of such literature is to appeal to emotional and quasi-instinctive considerations, and that its chief rebuttal is to cry out about "barbarians" and "the destruction of civilization." Consequently, before concluding this study, it is incumbent upon us first of all to show how so obvious a principle as the inviolability of individual rights, could today have fallen into partial disrepute, and secondly to expose the methodological fallacies and psychological obstacles that hinder the modern thinker from grasping the basic principles of the Thomist ethic.

Paradoxically enough, part, at least, of the blame for contemporary disregard of individual rights must be laid at the door of Liberalism. Modern revolutionary theories, and the totalitarian doctrine into which they emerge, represent in large measure, a reaction against the error of the Liberalistic concept. Historical Liberalism had conceived the absence of compulsion as the very essence of freedom.

"The good society of Liberalism was characterized by the absence of restraint in every walk of life. In its ideal world a man would be constantly free to indulge his fancy; at any given moment he must be at liberty to exercise the inherent rights of his individuality. The only admissible check on this otherwise unrestricted freedom would be his obligation not to interfere with the freedom of other men/

The revolutionaries were not slow to point out the serious defects of this conception as embodied in a laissez faire state. They stressed the fact that in modern society' mere freedom from compulsion can be a very illusory freedom. To be really free a man must be able to realize the potentialities of his nature—he must be able to live in a truly human manner. To this end freedom from want, from fear, from economic exploitation are just as necessary as freedom from external coercion. By creating favorable social conditions, the revolutionaries proposed to achieve this "freedom of fulfillment—the liberty which consists in fulfilling one's nature." -

There is of course a good deal of truth in this. That the revolutionaries themselves distorted the notion of freedom does not minimize the fact that their emphasis on freedom of fulfillment effectively masked any disregard of the individual man. If one were to declare to the revolutionary that he was ignoring the unique value of man.

1 R. J. Harvey, "The Metaphysical Relation between Person and Liberty," The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D. C., 1942, p. 3.

2 V. A. Demant, "The Religious Prospect," London, 1930, p. 157; J. Maritain, "Freedom in the Modern World," N. Y., 1936, p. 30. What we have here described as the revolutionaries' concept of "freedom of fulfillment" is in reality a distorted version of what the Thomist calls "freedom of autonomy." "The ultimate fulfillment of man's ontological vocation is achieved through the gradual perfection of personality by the ordered use of his liberty of choice which ultimately leads him to his final perfection of his nature in freedom of autonomy. The constant striving for good increases and perfects his personality, as he rises from innumerable contingent beings to the absolute Being, from countless piecemeal truths, to the absolute Truth, from the multiplicity of partial and limited goods to the supreme Good Who is also the plenitude of Being," Harvey, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94. The revolutionary is seeking a fulfillment, of human nature, but he has a false concept of that nature. Cf. the classical passage in the Summa Contra Gentiles, Bk. IV, ch. 22, where Thomas shows that true freedom is had only when the will is ordained to the true good.

he could with some verisimilitude, reply that on the contrary, he alone had the true interests of man at heart. Thus we witness the strange paradox of the revolutionary attitude—that while on the one hand they can preach violence, ruthlessness and even the total suppression of the individual, on the other hand they can and do profess to be working for nothing but the greater glory, security and happiness of man.

There is however an even more direct connection between the Liberalistic doctrine and the revolutionary irrationalism which culminates in doctrineless dynamism. In the Liberalistic doctrine, liberty became an end in itself. To declare that freedom must be "bounded by an absolute and by ends," was, the Liberal felt, tantamount to nullifying the very essence of liberty itself. The Liberal freedom was not freedom *for* something, *for* the fulfillment of some goal, purpose or nature; but freedom itself was dignified with the primacy of an absolute.<sup>3</sup> Yet since this absolute liberty was invested in the individual, its end could only be a subjective good and evil. Truth and goodness were not constants but variants. In the last analysis, this implies the abandonment of all objective, transcendent standards, for since this unchartered liberty was the absolute value, there could be no other final arbiter of truth and goodness. Behind the façade of Liberalism there lurks therefore, a profound relativism, a relativism which differs from that of totalitarianism only in that values are relative to the individual and not to the state.

Now there can be no doubt that Liberalism possessed an unmistakable, even if incomplete insight into the true status and dignity of the human individual. Yet because of this very relativism, Liberalism is forced to maintain an economic and political doctrine which in the last analysis ignores the welfare of the individual. Between this genuine, though rudimentary insight, and the *laissez faire* social philosophy there is an inherent contradiction—a contradiction which was, for a time, thinly masked by the Liberalistic faith in progress. The "Golden Age" was on the way, the "Golden Age" in which all the shortcomings of the present would be eliminated. It was in fact, the very free play of egotistic and selfish impulses which would supposedly ensure the advent of the "Golden Age."

3 Harvey, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

Now during a period of increasing material prosperity such a theory may have a certain plausibility—at least for those who either enjoy or have some prospect of enjoying comfort and security. It is not, however, surprising that the *have-nots* should lack this enthusiastic optimism; nor is it surprising that under the circumstances, they should tend to question this belief in the autonomy of the individual, along with the false economic and political doctrine with which it was associated. Moreover, modern man had, thanks to Liberalism, grown accustomed to the absence of objective norms; it need, therefore, occasion us no surprise to find that in seeking to escape the defects of Liberalism, modern man does not abandon relativism, but only changes the pole of reference from the individual to the collectivity.

Even at that, mere tendencies or even inherent contradictions might not have been so bad, if, in spite of them, Liberalism had been able to give an adequate rational defense of individual dignity. The inability of Liberalism in this regard is however, not so much a defect specific to Liberalism as it is a general weakness of modern philosophy. Behind the Liberal concept of a freedom without ends is the whole of the modern rejection of final causes. For modern philosophy “the *how* of operation has supplanted the *why* of essence.” Descartes is, of course, the father of this tendency. It was his emphasis upon the mathematical-quantitative approach which paved the way for an exclusive interest in the *how* of operation and for a disproportionate emphasis upon the methods of physical science. The first product of this emphasis was a mechanistic view of the cosmos as a system of moving bodies governed by mathematical law. But later, under the stimulus of the theories of evolution and conservation, life, mind and society also came to be interpreted in naturalistic terms. Gradually truth came to be sought exclusively in the sensory data of the physical sciences. Science came to supplant philosophy, and philosophy itself was conceived merely as a synthesis of the findings of science.

At first the scientific method was cherished mainly as a means of correcting the unchecked speculations of philosophy. But with the emergence and development of nineteenth century positivism, the “scientific method” came to be looked upon as the only means of

obtaining valid knowledge. Philosophy lost the status of a body of knowledge having independent validity. The peculiar domain of philosophy became the penumbral region beyond the realm of exact knowledge. Its task became that of formulating tentative solutions for problems that science was as yet unable to solve. Thus the philosopher was supposedly a sort of advance scout for the scientist. Even when he did attempt to formulate "ultimate generalities" he must, as Whitehead repeatedly insisted, formulate these in the light of science, and re-formulate them *with each* advance of science. The final degradation of philosophy comes in the theory of Carnap, which reduces the philosopher to the role of the "grammarian, whose chief task is to keep scientific language in order and undefiled." 4

That naturalism and positivism should disown the notions of God and the human soul is not surprising. To the physical scientist as such "metaphysical" *concepts are* anathema—and indeed, rightly so, because they do not pertain to the discipline of his science. But the mistake of the modern world was to become so enamoured of the physical science which interprets man "materialistically, mechanistically . . . behaviouristically, physiologically, 'reflexiologically,' 'endocrinologically' and psycho-analytically" 5 as to regard these as the only modes of approach. All of these may help us to understand some aspect of man's being; but they only tell us some feature of his operation, and all of them taken together fail to tell us *what* man is.

Under such conditions, if one does hold to a conviction of the dignity of man as an individual, he does so only on the basis of emotional or semi-instinctive considerations. His science fails to demonstrate such values. The way is then laid open for revolutionary and totalitarian excesses, for emotion and "instincts" are frail defenses against revolutionary ardor.

4 M. Adler, *What Man Has Made of Man*, N. Y., 1937, p. 132. Cf. J. Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, N. Y., Scribner's, 1940, pp. 44-50; E. G. Salmon, "Philosophy and Science," in *The New Scholasticism*, April, 1942, Vol. XVI, No. 2; R. B. Perry, *Philosophy of the Recent Past*, N. Y., Scribner's, 1926, pp. 19-80; E. A. Burtt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science*, London, Kegan Paul, 1925.

5 P. A. Sorokin, "The Crisis of Our Age," N. Y., E. P. Dutton & Co., 1942, pp. 94-96.

The iconoclasts were too smart to be wise, too rational to be reasonable, too much enchanted with an immature science to hold fast to tested truths. They could not find the human soul when they dissected their cadavers; they could not measure the inalienable essence. So in the high realms of the intelligence there prevailed a radical disrespect for men, and the human ideals of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity were relegated to the limbo of old superstitions along with God, the soul and the moral law. What could a mere physico-chemical system or a bundle of conditioned reflexes have to do with such glamorous nonsense? <sup>6</sup>

It is undeniable that today we do hear much talk of "lite things of the spirit" and "spiritual values." It would, however, be an egregious error to suppose that the abandonment of the crudities of materialism signifies a return to the Thomistic concept of a spiritual soul. The fact is that in modern parlance "spiritual" is roughly equivalent to "cultural"; "spiritual" values and activities are those not immediately connected with bio-physical drives. What has happened is that the materialistic argument against the spiritual soul has been replaced by the more subtle denial of substance. "Spiritual activities" there may be, says the modern, but there is no spiritual substance. Of what then are these the activities? The question is naïve, says the modern.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Walter Lippmann, "The Good Society," Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1937, p. 379.

<sup>7</sup> The problem of substance has today become so involved with epistemological questions that it is almost unrecognizable as such. Occasionally, however, we do find modern philosophers answering the question we have just asked. The following answers are typical.

"As far as *reason* goes, it seems to me quite as satisfactory to suppose that qualities and complexes of qualities are simply the qualities they are, as it is to suppose that they are the attributes of something not themselves. And even if we accept the barest Cartesian form of the ontological argument ('Nothing can have no properties'), we would appear to apply the principle as faithfully in the inference: if there are attributes, there must be other attributes of which they are the attributes and in which they inhere, as in the inference; if there are attributes, there must be substances of which they are the attributes," W. R. Dennes, "Primary Substance" in "The Problem of Substance," University of California Publications in Philosophy, Vol. 9, Berkeley, 1927, p. 131.

"Since Hume's time the idea of a self or ego endowed with a soul which is the unknown bearer of functions and attributes has had a hard time. It is



This is actually the whole tenor of the modern approach. The general modern attitude toward the problem of substance is succinctly expressed in the following dilemma: either substance is a property-less, quality-less substratum, and so is nothing at all, or else it is a mere aggregate of properties and activities? The Aristotelean philosophy has left us, declares Muirhead, with the paradox that, while the real thing is supposedly to be found in the nucleus of its properties, this nucleus is just that element which nowhere appears in our knowledge of the thing.<sup>9</sup> Having, since the time of Kant, become identified with the thing-in-itself, this nucleus, which is supposedly the substance, has come to suffer the disrepute of the thing in itself. With regard to the second alternative, the typical modern answer is that if this is all that substance is, why bother with the concept of substance at all? <sup>10</sup>

not only that nothing in immediate experience can be found corresponding to it, but that, if it were found, it would inevitably appear as a possession of somebody, in other words, as an attribute or dependent of something else." J. H. Muirhead, "Self and Substance," in "The Problem of Substance," p. 186.

<sup>8</sup> Article "Substance" in *The Dictionary of Philosophy* (edit. Runes), N. Y., 1942, p. 305.

<sup>9</sup> Muirhead, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>10</sup> "Science is simply a classification of the relations of recurrent textures of qualities, plus the body of inferences which can be drawn from the propositions that formulate those relations. We are told that science reckons, and needs to reckon, with no individual existent that is more or other than a structure of qualities, relations, or measured dimensions or intervals. Why should metaphysics insist upon the reality of such an existent?" Dennes, in "The Problem of Substance," p. 131. It is interesting to note that though Dennes says that there is no answer to this question "as far as reason goes" (the passage is quoted above), he does accept the notion of substance on the basis of "experience" (pp. 132 ff) and then proceeds to elaborate the doctrine in a way that is, on the whole, quite acceptable to the Thomist. We cannot help feeling that his earlier diffidence about "reason" in relation to substance, is due simply to a faulty concept of the nature of philosophy.

Modern philosophers have taken great pains to show us that substance cannot be apprehended by the senses. Cf. E. Cassirer, "Substance and Function," Chicago, Open Court Publishing Co., 1923. Whitehead in particular, is the great modern opponent of the concept of substance. He regards it as "an instance of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness," A. N. Whitehead, "Science and the Modern World," N. Y., Macmillan, 1926, p. 77. Cf. also his "Process and Reality," N. Y., Macmillan, 1929, *passim*.

Why indeed? The Thomist can echo this question because the foregoing represents neither his approach to nor his concept of substance. The modern caricature of substance as a property-less, quality-less substratum or a passive, inert core is not the Thomist conception.<sup>11</sup> The Thomist does not expect to come upon substance by peeling away accidents, as one would peel away an onion. The scalpel and the test tube are in fact, just as impotent to isolate substances as are the unaided senses; it is the intellect which apprehends and distinguishes it.<sup>12</sup> Substance is simply a determination of being. When the intellect is confronted with a group of phenomena which presents itself as autonomous, it comes to recognize the "something which is" as "something which exists in itself" or subsists.<sup>13</sup> The intellect recognizes that properties and activities come to the observer, not merely in themselves as properties and accidents, but as the properties and accidents of a thing or subject. In formulating the concept of substance, all that we assert, therefore, is that if there is an activity, there must be something acting, if there is motion there must be something moving, if there is a wave there must be something waving.

In the last analysis, the real divergence between the Thomist and the typical modern philosopher is thus seen to lie in their respective concepts of the relations of science and philosophy, or more fundamentally in their respective notions of intellectual cognition. The modern philosopher is preoccupied with the empirical data of sense. The Thomist does not minimize such data, but what he does claim is that in the presentations of sense the intellect immediately and intuitively recognizes certain first principles. Such is the principle of identity and its derivative, the principle of causality<sup>14</sup> and also

11 "Oportet quod ratio substantiae intelligatur hoc modum quod substantia sit res cui conveniat esse non in subjecto (nomen autem rei a quidditate imponitur, sicut nomen entis ab esse) et sic in ratione substantiae intelligatur, quod habeat quidditatem cui conveniat esse non in alio," *Contra Gentiles*, I, c. 25.

12 "Substantia in quantum huiusmodi, non est visibilis oculo corporali; neque subiacet alicui sensui, sed nec etiam imaginationi, sed soli intellectui, cuius objectum est 'quod quid est,'" III, q. 76, a. 7.

13 R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 177-178.

14 Cf. J. Maritain, "A Preface to Metaphysics," N. Y. Sheed & Ward, 1939; Passim; Garrigou-Lagrange, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 111-199.

the category of substance. The senses do not grasp these principles as such; nor will any scientific refinement of sense knowledge manifest them. On the basis of a purely sensistic psychology both Hume's rejection of the principle of causality and Whitehead's rejection of the concept of substance would be assuredly justified. On such a sensistic basis there can be no possibility of demonstrating the existence of a transcendent (hid.) In such a case three alternatives remain: to deny God, to posit Him on the basis of the practical reason or on some other non-intellectual approach or to conceive of an immanent "God" identified with the developing process. This last is the view most popular with contemporary philosophers; <sup>10</sup> and in an unsophisticated form it is the view of many of the modern revolutionaries.

The revolutionary abandonment of all norms and standards transcendent to the supposed process does not come as a surprise to one can survey dispassionately the rise of what Sorokin calls "sense culture." An all absorbing interest in sensory values, an infatuation with the glitter of empirical findings, have, ever since the time of Descartes been leading to the substitution of an "ontologized science" for a true philosophy. By the force of its own inner logic such a philosophy must culminate in a philosophy of becoming. The notion of being cannot be apprehended by the senses, nor can they grasp the principle of identity which the intellect immediately perceives in being. As Aristotle pointed out long ago, the ultimate

<sup>15</sup> As Pius X said in the Encyclical "Pascendi Dominici Gregis" (Sept. 8, 1907), phenomenalism necessarily leads to agnosticism: "Vi huius humana ratio phaenomenis omnino includitur, rebus videlicet, quae apparent eaque specie, qua apparent; earundem praetergredi terminos nec ius nec potestatem habet. Quare nec ad Deum se erigere potis est, nec illius existentiam, utut per ea, quae videntur, agnoscere." "Enchiridion Symbolorum," Denziger-Bannwart-Umberg, Editio 18-20, Friburgi, Herder & Co., 1932, no. 2072, pp. 570-571.

<sup>10</sup> "The modern notion of God is on all sides that of an evolving God, Who is either tending toward Deity, budding off from the Divine Imaginai in one of the world systems, or else organic with a progressing world. He is not: He is *becoming*," F. J. Sheen, "God and Intelligence," p. 61. Vd. the whole of Chapter 5 of this work, pp. 47-61; also, "American Philosophies of Religion," by H. N. Wieman and B. E. Meland, Chicago, New York, Willet, Clarke & Co., 1936.

reason why Heraclitean philosophers denied the principle of identity was because they regarded "only objects of sense perception as constituting being."<sup>17</sup>

The doctrine of being constitutes the very corner of the Thomist philosophy. It is the acceptance of the principle of identity (a principle immediately evident in the notion of being) which is the distinguishing feature of the philosophy of being as opposed to the philosophy of becoming, it is this principle which is the basis of all other principles and standards.

"That which before all else falls under apprehension, the notion of which is included in all things whatsoever anyone understands, and therefore the first indemonstrable principle is that the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time, which is founded on the notion of being and non-being, and on this principle all others are based."<sup>18</sup>

Once this principle is denied every intellectual norm disappears or ceases to be more than an unfaithful symbol.

Consequently it is not too strange that in the last analysis absolute intellectualism of the Hegelian type should inspire a political doctrine very like that inspired by the anti-intellectualism which seems to be its very antithesis. What Garrigou-Lagrange says of all philosophies of becoming is born out with startling aptness in modern totalitarian theory.

"From this point of view, necessity and freedom are identical. Hegel reduced the real to the rational, fact to right; the anti-intellectualists reduce the rational to the real, right to 'accomplished fact.' Both must grant that success is at the same time truth and goodness. There is no need of saying that might exceeds right; it is right."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Metaphysics, Bk. IV, c. 5.

<sup>18</sup> "Illud quod primo cadit in apprehensione, est ens, cujus intellectus includitur in omnibus, quaecumque quis apprehendit; et ideo primum principium indemonstrabile est, quod non est simul affirmare et negare, quod fundatur supra rationem entis, et non entis: et super hoc principio omnia alia fundantur," I-II, q. 94, a. 2. "Omnia principia reducuntur ad hoc sicut ad primum: impossibile est simul affirmare et negare," II-II, q. 1, a. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 281.

They coincide because "both admit the formula of their common father, Heraclitus, that: 'everything is and is not, nothing is, all is becoming.' "

Thus it is no exaggeration to say that the denial of the significance and true function of reason is the root cause of the revolutionary disregard of the individual. Just as it is man's possession of reason which makes him a being of unique value, so it is reason's ability to transcend the data of sense and apprehend first principles which makes it possible to establish the norms by which the individual is safeguarded. That is why the modern world needs more than anything else, a metaphysic which will reaffirm the primacy of reason, So long as its vision is clouded by the scales of a meretricious phenomenalism, it will be able to achieve neither a true concept of the nature and destiny of man, nor an adequate understanding of those principles which alone can serve as a bulwark against revolutionary excesses.

## CONCLUSION

We have shown that the philosophy of modern revolution is false in principle, that taking advantage of all the idealistic and mystic elements in man's make-up, it leads him into disastrous blind alleys. We have shown that though it pretends to offer man an integrated pattern of life, it necessarily ends by destroying the best of human values, because it is based on a false and mutilated concept of man's nature and destiny.

What made the development of modern revolution possible, was / man's consciousness of his own helplessness and insecurity. In- / augurated as movements to remedy economic or political insecurity, ; the modern revolutions at once assumed the form of a remedy for ' all insecurity. Haunted by his own insufficiency and by his "terror of abandonment and isolation in the face of destiny," 1 modern man was only too ready to trust himself to some mystic process, to the moving forces of history, of evolution, to "infra-rational vitalities" or to the collectivity in some form or other.

But when modern man takes this way of escaping the defects of bourgeois liberalism, he only exposes himself to worse evils because

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the Christian ethic; but it produced the modern revolution not only because it failed to apply that ethic to social relations, but more fundamentally because it forsook the principles upon which that concept of man is based. If we would save the modern world from the modern revolution, we must re-examine man and re-promulgate those principles. When the modern world re-discovers God, it will re-discover the true root of man's dignity and freedom.





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