

SOCIOLOGY & PSYCHOLOGY OF COMMUNISM
Jules Monmeret

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Sociology and Psychology of Communism

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society and shaped by a different history. And this Campaign is an answer to the particular problems posed by that history. A new type of social differentiation has appeared, whose hierarchical aspect has become clearly recognisable in the course of thirty years to the lay (I mean the non-communist) observer, and with it has appeared a new type of régime, harsh towards the 'free' proletariat and inhuman towards its slave labour.¹ The proletariat can only be called free by comparison with the labour force of the concentration camps. The *revival of slavery* is one of the characteristic features of 20th-century totalitarianism: the defeated in political and factional warfare, side by side with delinquents of every kind, many of whom would not in countries farther west be liable to any penalty at all, are all alike reduced to slavery, and not by a foreign power but by their own State.

At the end of the 19th century slavery existed only on the outskirts of Western civilisation. The European colonists found it established in the countries they exploited, especially in Africa. Although they formally abolished slave-ownership, their methods of developing the land were not at first such as to improve the conditions of the former slaves. On the whole, however, a new class of proletarians or tenant smallholders increasingly took the place of the old slave class. The Marxists of the 19th century accused the liberals of being liberal only at home, but in fact there was a movement, though a very slow one, towards the extension of political liberalism to the colonies. In the 20th century, in Russia and Germany, slavery reappears in new forms. It is *State slavery*. The slaves are not members of remote tribes on the periphery of the 'civilised' world—they are members of the losing side in the political struggles within Russia and Hitlerite Germany. It is their own countrymen who reduce them to slavery, and with no better pretext than to penalise a difference of *Weltanschauung* or consecrate a factional victory.

The fully-developed totalitarian world is an industrial world; pre-eminently, a world where resources are exploited and utilised. In it, repression is a part of the methods of production. Hence one of its characteristic phenomena: a *legal system* which concerns itself with problems of manpower, and production plans based on estimates of the supply of penal labour. Twentieth-century State slavery enables the exploitation of men, as Marxists used to call it, to be carried much

¹ See Dallin and Nicolaevsky, *Forced Labour in Soviet Russia* (New Haven, 1947). See also David J. Dallin, *The Real Soviet Russia* (New Haven, 1944). The first decree calling for the greater use of forced labour appeared 26 March 1928. In July of the same year the Commissariat of Justice ordered forced labour for all physically fit prisoners. This measure was a prelude to the first five-year plan. The execution of the plan, combined with the collectivisation of agriculture, brought about, between 1929 and 1935, the first of those great forced migrations which are a major characteristic of the totalitarian world.

their living conditions and ways of life (though this 'Marxist' factor is combined with other factors). Peter the Great sent Russia to school in Europe, and one of the consequences, at the end of the 19th century, was the assimilation of Marx's ideas by Lenin. But this end-product of Russia's relative Westernisation gave rise to a movement in the contrary direction: Russia became industrialised, like Europe, but her way of doing it estranged her from Europe. Risk, personal initiative, enterprise, private property, and the profit motive were the mainsprings of European industrialisation, not the motive of service to a more or less *sacred* State or of war against the rest of the world. XX

The increasing standardisation of mankind's material conditions is accompanied by a religious theory of the division of mankind into two camps. This duality is a duel, and according to communists there can be no future for humanity unless their side wins—though it is difficult for the unbeliever to conceive what meaning this statement can have for them. In any case, the separation of humanity into two camps is not the work of capitalists but of Marxists.

Whereas the 19th-century European socialist wanted to create a just society in Europe, the 20th-century European communist works for the absorption of Europe by a totally alien system which includes non-European factors and was designed to meet uniquely Russian problems. It is as though the Christian church had worked within the Roman Empire for the success of the Parthian monarchy, or as if every Christian in the Mediterranean world had been an agent of the Persian bureaucracy. Persia bordered on the Roman world as Russia borders on Europe, and Rome never succeeded either in absorbing Persia or in eliminating her. ZT

There is, moreover, a resemblance between the use made of Marxism by the present masters of the totalitarian world and the conversion of nomadic barbarians, such as the Goths of Alaric and the Turkish mercenaries of Mahmud of Ghazna, Togrul Beg, and Alp Arslan, to the universal religion of the civilisations they threatened, namely Christianity in the first case and Islam in the second. Like Stalin's Marxism, their conversion gave them the pretext for disrupting civilisation *from within*; as converts they were able to attack in the name of the true Faith the very societies which had brought the Faith to them. In the same way the Marxist chiefs of totalitarian Russia attack Western society from within, attempting to destroy the social structure of European countries for the sake of the socialism to which these countries themselves gave birth. There is no need to question the sincerity of the Bolshevik leaders' conscious motives. We may observe, however, that in the remote depths of Russia and central Asia the conception of Marxism and communism is probably comparable to the conception of Christian-

ity entertained by the Germanic tribes (Frisians, Saxons, Chamaves, Thuringians), who were subjected to 'mass conversion' after Charlemagne's victories.

The first object in the West is to prevent the integration into society of the proletariat. The mere existence of the 'communist' Campaign, *as it is today*,¹ implies that Western society is unfit for the task of integrating its own proletariat. *But the continued existence of Western society depends upon the accomplishment of this allegedly impossible task.* It is a precarious and alarming situation, indeed, for any nation if its 'lower' classes and all the disintegrating and unattached elements that adhere to them can be mobilised at the command and for the profit of a neighbouring empire.

The communist design can be seen to comprise in fact a two-fold campaign: to destroy one society and to construct another. In many countries the society marked for destruction is on a higher material and cultural level than Russia. The society 'for construction' begins in the Super-State known as Soviet Russia, and spreads outward from it. *This dual significance of the Campaign is revealed in its very structure and anatomy, in the fact that the privileged ruling oligarchy of the Russian Super-State is theoretically the leader of the disinherited outside the frontiers of Russia.* This is the age of general staffs, and the general staff in question is composed of the 'leaders' of the world revolution, who scrutinise the schisms and divisions of the Western world and do all they can to perpetuate, extend, and exploit them. But other members of this same general staff are concerned with constructive work inside Russia, which proceeds concurrently with the destruction abroad. There is social construction: the stabilising and reinforcing of the social stratification which set in after the revolution. And there is material construction: the industrialisation of Russia—building, machinery, factories and factory products, agriculture. This type of society is founded upon service, labour, hierarchy, and a *secular religion*,² unlike the 19th-century liberal capitalist society of the West, which was founded upon profit, property, risk, and personal initiative and independence. The twofold destination and function of the communist Campaign is served by two distinct groups of organs, whose separate roles were discernible from the beginning in the distinction between the Russian State and the Comintern, or Communist International. The campaign aspires to synchronise the destruction of the 'capitalist' and the construction of the 'socialist' world. Without counting the cost (in terms of

¹ Whenever this question arises it leads to confusion. Some people mean by the word communism what communism *ought* to be and others what it is; or else people use the word now in one sense and now in the other.

² The German sociologist Spranger was the first to use this now familiar term.

organises and reinforces every impulse that sets men against their native society, and works pertinaciously to aid, abet, and accelerate the self-division and secession of part of their own vital force which plunge societies into dissolution and ruin.

Although the phenomenon is unprecedented since Europe emerged from the mediterranean world and from the migratory tribes that poured into it from the East and created itself out of these elements, there was once an analogous phenomenon in the eastern part of the continent. Soviet Russia (to use the name it gives itself, although it is a misdescription of the régime) is not the first empire in which the temporal and public power goes hand in hand with a shadowy power which works outside the imperial frontiers to undermine the social structure of neighbouring States. The Islamic East affords several examples of a like duality and duplicity. The Egyptian Fatimids, and later the Persian Safavids, were the animators and propagators, from the heart of their own States, of an active and organising legend, an historical myth, calculated to make fanatics and obtain their total devotion, designed to create in neighbouring States an underworld of ruthless gangsters. The eponymous ancestor of the Safavids was a saint from whom they magically derived the religious authority in whose name they operated. They were Shi'is of Arabian origin, and the militant order they founded was dedicated to propaganda and 'nucleation' throughout the whole of Persia and Asia Minor. It recruited 'militants' and 'adherents' and 'sympathisers'. These were the Sufis. As rulers, their sympathies were recognised by other sovereigns in the same way that Stalin, head of the State, is recognised by other heads of States, and rightly, as the leader of world communism.¹ This merging of religion and politics was a major characteristic of the Islamic world in its victorious period. It allowed the head of a State to operate beyond his own frontiers in the capacity of *commander of the faithful* (Amir-al-muminin); and in this way a *Caliph* was able to count upon docile instruments, or captive souls, wherever there were men who recognised his authority. The territorial frontiers which seemed to remove some of his subjects from his jurisdiction were nothing more than material obstacles; armed force might compel him to feign respect for the frontier, but propaganda and subterranean warfare could continue no less actively beyond it.

Religions of this kind acknowledge no frontiers. Soviet Russia is merely the geographical centre from which communist influence radiates; it is an 'Islam' on the march, and it regards its frontiers at any given moment as purely provisional and temporary. Communism, like

¹ Speaking before the second congress of Soviets, 26 January 1924, Stalin said: 'Lenin was the leader not only of the Russian proletariat and not only of the workers of Europe . . . but also of the whole working-class world.'

victorious Islam, makes no distinction between politics and religion, but this time the claim to be both universal State and universal truth applies not only within a civilisation or world which co-exists with other different civilisations, other worlds, but to the entire terrestrial globe. To an educated European or American, unless he is himself a communist, it appears that communists are religious fanatics in the service of an expansionist empire which is striving for world dominion. But communists see it differently: for them communism is *what ought to be*, and the whole of history, the whole past of humanity, takes its meaning from this future event.

Communism is on its way. A religion is seen as such only by those outside it. For its adherents it is simply the highest form of truth. For the true believer Russia no longer exists as such; but he does not believe he is a believer; he believes he possesses the truth. In fact, he is *possessed* by something which he believes to be the truth; and for this truth he feels an active attachment of a kind which truth (at least scientific truth) does not usually inspire or demand. Communism is a faith, and it has in Russia a sort of fatherland; but such a fatherland cannot be *a country like any other*. Russia is to communism what the Abbasid empire was to Islam. This is only an analogy, but a necessary one. Communism is not the party of 'foreign patriotism'¹; it is a religious sect of world conquerors for whom Russia is simply the strongpoint from which the attack is launched.

* * * *

In the 19th century politics and religion and economics were each a distinct and separate province. They were 'specialisms', separate in fact as well as in theory; and neither as subjects of study nor as activities was there much interchange or communication between them. This kind of intellectual autonomy is a characteristic feature of the liberal world; and minds formed in this tradition, even the ablest of them, will be at first perplexed by a phenomenon so complex and yet so unified as communism, which can, in a way, be described as a total social phenomenon. It is true that soldiers, historians, diplomats, and politicians, for whom imperial rivalries are a familiar subject, will have no difficulty in perceiving that this is yet another example of it: Persia and Assyria, Carthage and Rome, Habsburg and Bourbon, and now Kremlin and White House (or Kremlin and Wall Street, as communists put it). For such observers it seems a simple struggle for power; they will read the drama as a problem, and will easily grasp both its economic and its strategic aspects. But they will fail to take sufficient account of the

¹ As M. Léon Blum called it (*A l'Echelle humaine*; Paris, Gallimard, 1945).

strategists of the contemporary world will ignore this fact at their risk and peril. The Campaign is what it is solely because it has proved capable of mobilising and energising a deep and powerful fund of affective impulses. The fate of the Campaign, and consequently the issue of the struggle of empires, will depend less upon strategic routes and pipe-lines for uranium and oil than upon the invisible pipe-lines by which this modern 'Islam' canalises the resentments and discontents of the world it is vowed to destroy; even the unprecedentedly powerful modern weapons of war can be immobilised by the slow and secret canalisation of resentments and discontents and the draining away of the warlike spirit.

* * * *

In this situation we shall get no help from the isolated study of political economy, history of ideas, history of religions, or plain history considered as the battlefield of men and conflicting wills. All these dimensions must be explored simultaneously, using for each of them its appropriate method. When the spirit is assailed on all fronts at once it must achieve a kind of ubiquity for its counter-attack.

Western historians and sociologists have hitherto applied their familiar categories to the phenomenon of communism. But these categories were evolved from Western history. It was only with difficulty that they could be made to embrace such 19th-century phenomena as nationalism and socialism, and amid the new realities which are closing in on us they are totally inadequate to evaluate the newness and originality of communism. An empire, or aggregate of nations and peoples grouped around one preponderant nation, which is also a kind of religious community and at the same time engaged in sectarian proselytising, underground warfare, and the care of souls—here is a phenomenon which may well baffle members of a culture based upon the two great historic ideas of the distinction between spiritual and temporal and the secularisation of politics. The Christian distinction between *spiritualia* and *temporalia* means the separation, at least in principle (for it is an ideal rather than a fact) between two powers, each of which recognises the rights of the other even though in practice they both tend to encroach. Of the second idea, the secularisation of politics, the work of Machiavelli remains the classic expression. After *The Prince* and the *Discourse on Livy*, the art of politics in the West became as free as the art of cookery, and freer than that of medicine, from any religious or magical context. Not that the leader of men really ceased to have something in common with the person in primitive societies possessed of mana, but he came under the jurisdiction of the critical intelligence. Today, as in the past, there is an irrational element in the

lawyer, however much he needed them.¹ All these discontents were brought to a head by the two wars (1905 and 1914), which came too close together. But from the beginning of the 20th century the 'revolutionary situation' was inherent in the inadequacy of the oligarchy before its historic tasks. There is a revolutionary state of affairs (in the most general and universally accepted sense of the word) whenever men in any definite social category begin to reject the social definition of that category; in other words, when they revolt against conditions of life which are experienced as intolerable. But unless the society in which these revolutionary phenomena appear is itself profoundly sick there will be nothing more than short-lived riots and disturbances. Whenever men rebel against the conditions of their life they become exalted with ideas of liberation; there is a resurgence and elaboration of myths, and the intoxication of collective activity inspires men with a readiness to fight and die. But a revolution is successful only when it acquires a stronger organisation than that of the ruling oligarchy; and from this point of view the successful revolutions of the 20th century have been made by *general staffs*. But these general staffs have known how to ensure at least the benevolent neutrality of the majority of the population.

In the Roman world it was in the structure of the army that a solution was found for the problem set by the Senate's failure. And in the 20th century we find that the communist Campaign, and also its fascist and national-socialist imitators, *have modelled themselves upon the structure of the army*. They have borrowed some of its characteristic and typical features: discipline, subordination, hierarchy, concerted exercises and methods, unity of command. But it was not sufficient to pour the proletariat into the existing mould of the army, as in the Roman world, and this was not what was done. The problem was to replace the army (and the police, who can be taken as a specialised branch of it) by *another army*. And this new army was to wage a new type of war. It was to operate in time of peace and to wage, in time of war, its own separate war, not against the enemy but against its own government; it was not intended for open campaigns or for attacking fortified positions, but for undermining a social order. Such an organisation, which ignores the definitions by which an army is traditionally described, namely the distinctions between war and peace, between military and civilian, cannot properly be described as an army. The traditional army exists to defend a collectivity both offensively and defensively; it is for use only in time of war (martial law, which treats certain kinds of internal trouble as equivalent to foreign war, is an exceptional case)²; and lastly, and above

¹ Martov: quoted by G. Alexinsky, *La Russie Révolutionnaire* (Paris, 1947).

² The special cases of despotism and tyranny are considered later.

struggle implied first priority for the problem of organisation. Secret groups were a necessity. But how was the dichotomy to be overcome between what was later to be called *mass action* (which was already occurring sporadically in the form of strikes) and *conspiracy* (which was the only course open to those whom autocracy branded as illegal)? For Lenin there was one, and only one, solution: to copy the structure of the army or, more exactly, to borrow from it some of its most characteristic and typical features, those which made an army of a body of men. Only a structure on military lines can bring a very large number of men into an operation as participants, while at the same time guaranteeing unity of plan and outlook and secrecy of action. An army of a new kind is therefore the solution of the problem: or, more precisely, a new thing which, without being an army, possesses those characteristics of one which will enable it to perform its appointed task. The characteristics in question are in fact the essential military characteristics: a small 'nucleus' is in command of an obedient majority. This command and this obedience can only be ensured by a strong organisation; and this organisation must be centralised, on the army model. There must be a 'dozen tried and talented leaders (and talented men are not born by hundreds), professionally trained, schooled by long experience and working in perfect harmony.'¹ Secret work must be concentrated in the hands of the smallest possible number. Who will be the staff officers? Who will compose that small directing nucleus which shall ensure the continuity of the movement through changing events? The answer is: 'Men who devote their entire lives, and not simply their free evenings, to the revolution',² men whose profession is revolutionary action. It must be a true *professional army*, but an army, as they would say today, of 'cadres', for each one of the staff officers, senior as well as junior, is liable to find himself, willy-nilly, in the role of a soldier of the line. Lenin, who is the complete Marxist, always preserves the 'class perspective'; but as an empirical and practical sociologist his answer to the old problem of the Cæsars is, in fact, a cæsarian one. But it is, of course, expressed in Marxist terms, for the men of our day, unlike the Romans, must always have a theory.

The type of army Lenin requires is adapted for the typical 20th-century non-military warfare: 'We must have "our own men" . . . everywhere, among all social strata, and in all positions from which we can learn the inner springs of our State mechanism. Such men are required for propaganda and agitation, but in a still larger measure for organisation'.³ An organisation of this kind can only maintain itself if it knows how to select its members. The selection must be rigorous. What cate-

¹ *What is to be Done?* p. 114 (London; Martin Lawrence, n.d.).

² *Iskra*, No. 1.

³ *What is to be Done?*, p. 83.

gories of men provide suitable recruits for this professional army? 'A working man who is at all talented and "promising" must not be left to work eleven hours a day in a factory.' We see here the first principle of selection of the new political élites. 'We must arrange that he be maintained by the party.'¹ The proletariat therefore provides raw material for the new élite, *but not the proletariat alone. The intelligentsia will retain its priority.* Lenin remembers, in a revealing phrase, 'the men who dream of doing practical work even while still at school'.² But the next step is to convert these heterogeneous recruits into a homogeneous unity (precisely the same problem that an army has to deal with). Among these men 'whose profession is that of revolutionists . . . all distinctions as between workers and intellectuals . . . must be dropped'.³ Which means that by the time the Party has formed them they will be neither workers nor intellectuals but a new social, and even a new human, type. Bound by military obedience to a general staff which decides every change of tactics, trained by a long apprenticeship to all the weapons of revolutionary action, these men are under the obligation to combine legal with illegal forms of struggle; they must be members, if necessary, of an ultra-reactionary parliament and of other reactionary institutions. The party is both a machine and a machination. The picked men pick others in their turn; and wherever they penetrate, from trade unions to the most harmless-looking associations, there will be the 'small compact nucleus' which we have since come to know under the name of 'communist fraction'. This 'compact nucleus' behaves towards the rest of the association *as an organism in relation to its medium*, and thus possesses over its host the superiority of the organic over the inorganic. It uses the host for its own ends, sometimes intentionally leading an institution to disaster by perverting its direction and meaning. Lenin revives, as if by instinct, the rules of the militant sects and orders; the organisation that is at the same time both secret and public, both legal and illegal. It cannot be altogether secret, because it proposes to gain 'the unlimited confidence of the masses'. Thus it retains what was effective in Blanquism while rejecting its frankly aristocratic basis. Blanqui's active minority is combined with Nechaev's secret society. It is sensitive to the least change of mood in the masses, it lives their life, as the 'populists' and 'economists' wanted to do, but it has the centralised and hierarchical organisation of Kautsky's party. From French jacobinism Lenin took its network of popular groups, while rejecting its individualism. *His organisation combined the resources of a secret society, a democratic political party, and an army.* But whereas in an army the soldier is not always on duty, the 'organisation' claims every breath of its 'responsible' members' lives. They are mobilised not

¹ *What is to be Done?*, p. 104.

² *ibid.*, p. 101.

³ *ibid.*, p. 105.

Lenin. At the end of the 19th century the future could be read in these two facts: *the organised discipline of German social-democracy, and the social unrest and conspiratorial politics in Russia*. The 'bourgeoisification' of the Western socialist parties—and particularly the German party, which was by force of circumstances the chief inheritor of Marxism—took place simultaneously in two ways: first, the party and the trade unions developed within the world 'to be destroyed' and prospered there; they were administered by salaried officials, they became affiliated in a thousand ways with the 'class enemy' and built up their movement upon the foundations of a soil which, according to Marxism, was not their own; secondly, the leading spirits were moulded into 'leaders' after the pattern of the bourgeois parliaments whose manners they adopted, and all the more easily because many of them, particularly in France, were lawyers, doctors, and university graduates of one kind or another, whose roots were in the petty bourgeoisie. Thanks to Russia's peculiar historical circumstances, which did not include a bourgeois period, Lenin was not faced with this problem of 'the bourgeois degeneration of socialists', but with other peculiarly Russian 'deviations' such as populism and the attachment to certain autochthonous institutions (*mir* and *artel*) from which a direct development of socialism was expected.¹ All that Lenin consciously did was to insist on a return to pure Marxism. Although Marx seldom left London, he tried to achieve by the written word what St. Paul achieved in his missionary travels. He kept looking for favourable opportunities for bringing his doctrine to bear, and he took them wherever they presented themselves; for he felt no organic attachment to any one country. No doubt Lenin also believed himself unattached. But he had not the time, nor perhaps the inclination, for the kind of world-interpretation that occupied Marx. Except, indeed, in respect of one subject, and that one of capital importance, namely organisation. For organisation acts upon the historical present, and must therefore take into account all the characteristics of the contemporary historical situation. Marx kept abreast of the whole movement of ideas in his time, but Lenin seems only to pursue knowledge in so far as it can be applied. Unlike Marx, he uses sociology only as an engineer uses mathematics.

For Marx, the primordial fact is production, and all other facts, without exception, must be referred to it before they can be understood. In the beginning was man's production of his means of existence, and production still remains the key to history. Marx proved, in his own work, that this conception makes it possible, starting from a given point in time, to interpret history in both directions, past and future. It

¹ In the preface to the Russian translation of the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx outlines a method of reconciling the two points of view. But in the end they proved mutually exclusive.

or revealed in action: the gift of handling men, for example, and not merely the demagogic art¹ of adding fuel to excitement, but the ability to take advantage of the *right moment* and to keep *in touch* with the masses. It is necessary to know just how far one can go *this time*, and not go too far or be carried away; and this implies a special sensitiveness in estimating what risks can be taken and at what moment, and how long that moment will last. It is also necessary to know how to let go and withdraw in good time, and to recognise the periods of 'ebb' and 'flow' which may bring disaster if they are not foreseen and controlled. For all this, although it is certainly better to have read and understood Marx, it is not sufficient to possess a merely theoretical understanding. The virtue of *praxis* is that in the world of physical fact we verify the science that we apply by our industry in applying it. In the world of human relations and of power, which is *sui generis*, *praxis* fills in the gaps left by theory; for theory is always general and not particular, and it is only by being continually reinterpreted that it can be applied to the changing and particular situations of historical becoming. In this world we are no longer in the precise and static realm of knowledge, and new qualities are needed. The special qualities appropriate to the military leader in a new type of war, and to the specialist of power, are not conferred by knowledge and theory alone, however 'correct'; they depend upon character, and character, as Stendhal said, 'is the one virtue that is not acquired in solitude', because it cannot be manifested except in our relations with others. In this sphere, where Marx left them everything to do, the 'great bolsheviks' had to discover for themselves that art of inventing catchwords satisfactory both to the political intelligence of professional revolutionaries and to the affectivity of the masses. The catchwords which then began to circulate among the masses played a part similar to that of advertisement in capitalist industry. Like advertisement, they depended upon suggestion, and the method of suggestion was similar. The word slogan is used today to describe both methods. But in 1917 this was not foreseen.

* * * *

Kerensky had the hardest task. It was not so easy to govern at that time as to make exaggerated promises, incite workers and soldiers to agitation, and sustain and inflame their excitement. But Lenin's instrument was not perfected until after his rise to power and during the civil war. Let us compare the Russia of the bolsheviks with the France of the Convention—neglecting the considerable differences in order to fix certain similarities: the Convention had to deal with a foreign war and

¹ Demagogic in the etymological sense. The art that we find in the earliest democracies known to us, those of the Greek *polis*.

'oppressed masses' of the belligerent countries, his words awoke in those masses a profound response. As a Marxist he addressed himself to the proletariat, and as a bolshevik he flouted diplomatic usage. Revolutionary France never really won the soul of the nations, because they detected too soon the imperialism behind the mask. But for bolsheviks the Europe of the Wilsonian era was a field ploughed ready for the propagandist's seed. The bolsheviks had no claims against Germany or against the Allies, and they held a trump card in the fact that Russia was herself a defeated nation. So they were able to *fix* the general aspiration for a new socialism, cleansed of treachery and redeemed from failure.¹ The masses were in the required state of receptivity, and the technicians of popular agitation were already in existence, so that the Campaign was launched outside Russia almost as soon as within. It only needed organising. And for the first time socialism was to have the resources of an immense country at its back. While the Second International was trying to recover from the shock of the war, its battered prestige could do little against the young communist parties which were arising everywhere. But these new parties had at first very little in common with the sort of organisation desired by Lenin.

Soon after the death of Jaurès (which Trotsky regarded as the end of a socialist epoch) Lenin was writing: 'The Second International did useful work in organising the proletarian masses during the long "peaceful period" in the third part of the 19th century. The task of the Third International [which was not yet in existence] will be to prepare the proletariat for revolutionary struggle against capitalist governments and for civil war against the bourgeoisie in all countries, for the conquest of political power and the victory of socialism.' The period from the October Revolution and the birth of the Third International to the speed-up of industrialisation and the five-year plans in Soviet² Russia may be regarded as a new period. The series of shocks which followed the first world war were only the tail end of the cyclone; and Lenin, Trotsky, and their co-religionists, who could now be found in all parts of the world—for the Faith precedes the Campaign as the myth precedes the rite or the religious movement the Church—were soon hoping that Germany and Hungary would provide the stage for the next outbreak of 'the Revolution' (technicians though they were, the dramatic eschatological sense was still deeply alive in them). For Marx, to assist revolutionary agitation wherever it occurred, meant to study the facts and to issue addresses, tracts, and pamphlets; but these were 19th-

¹ cf. Georges Sorel: *Plaidoyer pour Lénine*, appendix to the 1930 (French) edition of *Réflexions sur la violence*.

² The word is still used, though without any precise meaning. It merely serves to distinguish post-revolutionary from Tsarist Russia. Communist Russia would be more accurate, for the party is more important than the soviet (or soviets).

more than a candidate, for the supreme authority. At first the bolsheviks owed their privileged position solely to their prestige, for had they not already begun to put into practice the things which European socialism had only been able to plan on paper? The socialists whose authority and knowledge had dominated the whole socialist movement before the bolsheviks were either dead, like Bebel, or else, like Kautsky, Hilferding, and the Austro-Marxists, were compromised in the eyes of the younger revolutionaries. For a time some of them held together in what the bolsheviks contemptuously called the '2½ International'. In France Sorel's writings quite failed¹ to drag the unions out of the 'trade-unionist rut' or the socialist parties out of the 'parliamentary rut' and the 'revolutionary decadence', which was turning 'Jaurès-ism' into a mere variety, though a particularly eloquent one, of radical-socialism. Guesde and Vandervelde were swallowed up in the 'sacred union'. All the outstanding theorists and orators of the socialist movement had either disappeared or suffered a severe loss of prestige and credit; and European socialism found itself thrown, as it were, by this eddy of history, under the domination of Russia. Now, the members of the bolshevik group who had some connection with the other European leaders, through their training and their 'theoretical level', as they themselves called it, were far from numerous all told: Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Joffe, Bukharin, Rakovsky, Radek, etc. The men who were to follow them in the supreme positions had not much in common with the Europeans. This situation was to be resolved historically by a radical change in the whole movement which, before the Russian revolution, had been European socialism and was in future to be called (in part) communism. The method of recruiting members and the type of member were to change. Had socialism been 'betrayed' by the lawyers and professors, the 'petty bourgeois' of the Second International? Then communists must in future be recruited, in principle, primarily from among proletarians. Had European social-democracy been seduced by the liberal, bourgeois, and parliamentary democracy of Europe, whose manners, individualism, indiscipline, and hedonism it adopted? Then discipline must be supreme, a military discipline modelled on that of the Russian party which had been forged in the fire of revolution and civil war, and was the realisation, as we shall see, of the doctrine set forth in 1901 in *What is to be Done?*

But when European socialism was reborn as communism² it broke with its own traditions; the elements it borrowed from Russia were to

¹ For an obvious reason: only intellectuals could read them.

² We leave aside the reorganisation of the democratic socialist parties, which does not here concern us. It was of importance only during the period between the last wave of revolution (Germany, 1923) and the effective industrialisation of Russia.

prevail increasingly over its original elements. It was now Europe who became the borrower. The Russian revolution did not really set a directorate of men of every race and nation at the head of the workers of the world whom it was calling to battle. What it did in fact was not what it had done in theory. It founded the Communist International. But in the first place it was the Russian section of the International that possessed the *sinews of war*, and war was the business in hand; and in the second place the very structure of the parties and the unwritten but gradually established rules of promotion assured the Kremlin of a supply of *new men* who, though certainly more and more enfranchised from their 'own' bourgeoisies, were also more and more helpless against the specifically Russian organisation, which in effect co-opted them and identified them with its own interests. In the end it became impossible for them to look after the interests—in the geographical sense—of which they were the ostensible guardians; or to envisage them at all except from the point of view evolved by the high Russian bureaucracy which developed in the 'twenties and gradually substituted its élite of officials for the old élite of professional revolutionaries, who were too few in number and had been decimated by the revolution itself and by the civil war. The new men, the leaders and delegates of the communist parties of other countries, were indeed not subservient to 'their own' bourgeoisies as the former socialist lawyers and professors had been; but being born of the 'Party' and being nothing apart from it, they merely experienced a *new kind* of dependence. Instead of being bound to the ruling élites of their own countries they were bound to that of Russia—and the new dependence distorted the nature of the European working-class and socialist movement quite as much as the old.

The Catholic Church has maintained itself in spite of the fact that the Popes have too often been Italian. But it was a definite advantage for Catholicism in the days of the Spanish or French or Habsburg hegemony that the Pope should not be a Frenchman or a Spaniard or an Austrian. It meant that the interests of Catholicism were saved from being absorbed in those of the Habsburg or Bourbon monarchies to the grave detriment of the Catholic clients of the other great powers. The situation of communism in our day is not unlike what the situation of Catholicism would have been from the 16th to the 19th century if the Pope had been always a Frenchman or always a Spaniard.

During the 1920s the inevitable development of a new 'governing stratum'¹ took place in Russia. Inevitably, because when the State took

¹ In Pareto's terms, a new 'élite'; in Gaetano Mosca's, a 'political class'. But the word 'political' in this context must bear its most general, or Aristotelian, sense. It refers to the political class of a régime in which the 'autonomy of the spheres'—economic, political, ideological—is tending to be merged into one comprehensive power.

In 1919 another new organ was created, the secretariat of the Central Committee of the party. It was in theory an executive organ, but it acquired in fact a dictatorship over public appointments. Souvarine describes it as a 'commissariat for official promotions'. Stalin succeeded to this post in April 1922, and it became his function to co-ordinate the work of the Orgburo, the Central Control Commission, and the Cheka—in other words, the supreme authorities of the Party and the police. His colleagues in the Politburo, each absorbed in his own task, usually had no time to study the ready-made decisions which he laid before them. For the same reason, when the effects of these decisions appeared, they could not always understand how they had been arrived at, nor could they accurately judge how far they were in line with accepted doctrine, or with the directives they had agreed upon in common, or with justice. In theory, the Central Committee controlled everything, but it was in the nature of things that it could not, in fact, control the secretariat. How can one supervise the thing whose function is supervision? Moreover, the capital importance of this function did not immediately appear. The general secretary controlled neither the International nor diplomacy, nor industry, nor agriculture. In other words, neither policy nor production was in his hands. And the man who held the post was a tried and active bolshevik who had only rarely and for very brief periods been outside Russia, knew no foreign languages,¹ and had to his credit no theoretical work on revolutionary tactics comparable to those of Lenin or Trotsky. And as for administration, it was Sverdlov, now dead, who had seemed, in the heroic period, to be the great administrator.

Nevertheless, Stalin's position enabled him in effect to present the Politburo with accomplished fact in respect of a whole series of measures, each of which might be only a detail but which, taken all together, reveal a definite *tendency* (in the sense of both meaning and direction). When Lenin perceived the need to control Stalin's activities, and perhaps terminate them, it was too late.

When Stalin entered upon his secretarial functions there was already a pyramid with one man at its summit; and the political character of the leadership derived from the Party's military structure which was the historic expression of the doctrine of *What is to be Done?* The personality and the peculiar virtues of Lenin, however, helped to obscure the true nature of this leadership. Lenin's initiative and his tactical theories had been successful at times of crisis; he was known as the founder and unchallenged leader of the bolshevik 'fraction' which had triumphantly passed the test of history: a relentless fighter and formidable polemist, he had yet made no irreconcilable enemies among

¹ Like Hitler.

supreme power in Italy by King Victor Emmanuel, everyone realised that he was not going to be just another normal prime minister.

To the 'old bolsheviks' Stalin seemed to be one of themselves. He did not put them in the shade, as Trotsky did. But he differed from them in two characteristics whose importance was to be fully demonstrated by events.

In the first place, while he was in charge of the secretariat, or 'commission for official promotions', of the party at the time when the State was becoming the first of the 20th-century partisan-states (the partisan-state being the preliminary stage of the totalitarian state), Stalin was also a member of the Politburo; and in this way he had a more complete view than anyone else of the situation as a whole.

Secondly, although he was not a legendary figure like Trotsky, he was the man who could make or mar promotions, and was therefore known to all who had been, or wished to be, promoted. There is no question that the old bolsheviks failed to detect the true importance of the secretariat. For the fact is that at the very moment of Lenin's disappearance from the scene Stalin was establishing himself as the supreme agent for the recruiting, advancement, and replacement of officials, and this at a time when the whole of Russia was becoming officialised. The State that emerged from the civil war had assumed to itself all the important social functions, political, economic, administrative, and ideological, and it was bound to find for itself a personnel adequate to operate and make effective this *total* domination and control over society.

The Secretariat and the secretary would preside over this *political stabilisation* and *social differentiation*. To *re-compose* a collectivity in this way is, so to speak, to repeat—*mutatis mutandis*, on a vast scale and with much greater complexity—the hierarchical, vertical structure outlined in *What is to be Done?* The army which is the Party became the animator of the State, which was assuming every important social function. Stalin found himself placed—and he knew how to stay there—at the very point of concentration of power, in a key social position of the new ruling élite that was emerging and stabilising itself. There was soon to be developed an effective solidarity between a rising élite, an institution (the secretariat), and a man; and this élite, faced with an uncertain future, would come to regard the institution and the man as a point of security in a troubled world whose horizon was still veiled by clouds of the recent storm. Once elections, from top to bottom, became a mere formality, and junior secretaries were appointed by senior secretaries, the general secretary became, in the eyes of all who depended on him, the very personification of the Politburo and the Central Committee of the Party—in other words, of the one and only

political power in the whole immense empire, in which no other power was allowed to exist. In their eyes it was through Stalin that this power made its decisions, decisions which could raise a man to great responsibilities with a great future or cast him into outer darkness. The great majority of new members and candidates for the Party, and for all official positions, was composed either of converts, people who had come over from the old governing class, and intellectuals (who, being pliable by definition, were most often only too anxious to forget their past and the days of their ascendancy), or else of political illiterates. These last, when they opted for the 'victorious revolution', were in fact opting for a normal social life in society as they found it; they were 'in favour' of a chance to earn a living and put an end to their acutely physical anxieties. All that was necessary was that these men, who had been rescued from want and offered the hope of a career, should remain at the discretion of the secretariat. And the structure of the empire made it inevitable that this would happen. The secretary had only to give his mind to it—as history proves he did—and he could rally round himself a crowd of clients who were for the most part unable to grasp the true political situation (which would have required unusual insight) and in any case not at all anxious to do so (as one can well imagine). The historic test was the struggle with Trotsky and the opposition. It appeared to prove the 'class solidarity' between the secretaries, or new élite, and the general secretariat. By definitely establishing the ascendancy of the secretary (though there was still an attempt to save appearances), it placed in the forefront of the historical scene the solidarity between a rising élite and one man. Thenceforward, in the period of the *Nep*, when private enterprise was permitted in agriculture and internal trade, the political tide was favourable to a secretariat whose whole concern was with the public service. The selection of congress delegates was in reality a monopoly of the secretaries; the regional or local secretary was regarded as the spokesman of the centre and could rally round himself the floating mass which comprised, owing to the state in which Russia then was, only a very few men of any real education or political experience. It was therefore in the power of the Secretariat to make and unmake the men in charge of production, to give or withhold the means of livelihood, and to conscript and direct the whole population of Russia as though it were an army.

Russian society appeared, then, to have entered upon a process of recomposition, of which the driving force was the nucleus of professional revolutionaries grouped around Lenin. But after it came to power the functions of this group were both extended and transformed. There occurred a phenomenon which had already appeared before in Russian

book trade. Events had moved swiftly, and real-life history was playing one of its familiar tricks on its ideological phantom. As a result, Trotsky became involved in a confusion which lasted to the end of his life, for when he speaks of the Party and the U.S.S.R. he is sometimes speaking of them, ideologically, as they ought to be, and at other times he is speaking of them as in fact, in real-life history, they are. In appealing to the Party against the Party apparatus, and also, in some degree, to the Party apparatus against the Party secretariat and Stalin, he is already in fact appealing from the real to the ideal. He is appealing from the Party as it is, and as he himself, in point of fact, had largely contributed to make it, to the Party as it ought to be.

The sociological phenomenon of *concentration of power* has occurred at various times in various civilisations. It appeared in Europe in the first half of the 20th century, first in the reign¹ of Lenin, then of Stalin, and finally in Hitlerism; and Fascism appeared in Italy at the same time as the rise of Stalin. We have already seen how there was a tendency for power to be concentrated in Lenin; and in this particular case the personality of the man played a part in creating the function. Although the constitution of 1918 contained no hint of such a person, the death of Lenin meant the disappearance of a man in whom supreme power was concentrated. The sociological significance of this fact was obscured—wishly in the case of communists, who were in a position to know the truth, and of the whole European and American Left—by the particular personality and record of the man. The 1918 constitution was based on the doctrines, principles, and standards consciously accepted by the leaders of the new régime; but the concentration of power pursued its course in spite of ideology and doctrine. There was, however, a specific difference between Lenin's rise to power and the accession of Stalin to the supreme position left vacant by Lenin's death. Lenin was the leader of a successful revolution and also a personality in a class by himself, whereas Stalin emerged victorious from a 'struggle of Diadochi' that lasted thirteen years. (Although his success seemed assured once Trotsky had been eliminated, he was not safe beyond all question until the end of that period.) His position only became inexpugnable after the Moscow Trials and the violent and dishonouring² deaths of the last of those companions of the prophet in whom there inhered a fragment of the 'revolutionary legality', which was the only legality the régime could claim. If we examine the matter, as is customary in the West, from the point of view of public law, we

¹ This is an intentional exaggeration. The phenomenon was not so clearly marked at the beginning.

² At least in intention.

find that Stalin transformed the soviet constitution of 1918 in the way that Cæsar, Augustus, and their successors transformed the republican constitution of Rome. The mere proliferation of magistratures and functions can change a republic into an empire and turn a constitution into a sort of academic text. What *was* the Roman imperium? An accumulation in the hands of one man of republican magistracies whose content had either been transformed by the mere pressure of history or been modified in unforeseeable ways and in a sense undreamt of by their founders, or else been totally voided of its original meaning. The first Cæsars successively combined in their own person:

(1) The tribunitian power, the essentially plebeian magistrature in virtue of which the tribunes were leaders of the plebs.¹ (It has been described by a German historian as the 'institutionalisation of tyranny'.)

(2) The pro-consular *imperium*,² which soon became the *imperium majus infinitum*. This was the origin of the use of the word 'empire'. It was an extension of the power of a commanding general to protect or conquer the province legally assigned to him. It is the source of military power, and is the power that enabled an imperial candidate to make good his claim. The imperial power was made an effective reality through the efforts of great military leaders.

(3) The office of *princeps senatus*, which bore the same relation to the oligarchy as the office of people's tribune to the plebs. The *princeps senatus* was the oligarchy's traditional leader. (But, in fact, unless he had a powerful personality the function remained purely titular.)

(4) The sovereign pontificate. The emperor was a member, *ex officio*, of all the religious colleges, and therefore had the chief position in the State religion.

To this nucleus there were added other exclusively imperial powers which owed nothing to the republican magistracies and were indeed a negation of them: the right of peace and war, of 'presentation to magistratures', of conferring Roman citizenship, founding colonies, coining money. And finally the emperor became *princeps civium*, thus acquiring for himself the *potestas populi romani*.

Just as the Roman imperium appears to a constitutional lawyer to be an accumulation of republican magistracies, so the unique position of Stalin in Russia seems to derive from an accumulation of functions. In 1922, when he began to build up the power of the secretariat, Stalin had been a member of the Central Committee since 1912, and a member

¹ The senatorial oligarchy succeeded in profoundly modifying this function, and was sometimes able to turn it to its own advantage; but not before suffering some rude blows from it.

² 'The alliance between democracy and military power, which gave rise to the Empire, was permanently incarnated in the emperor himself' (Léon Homo, *Les Institutions romaines*; Paris, 1933).

internal transformation of the revolutionary party. All other political parties having been abolished, the political life of the country inevitably took the single-party form. It may be said, indeed—oversimplifying for the moment and leaving details and complications until later—that since the Party had left no living social forms outside itself *the Russian counter-revolution was not directed against the Party but was an internal revolution within it.*

The comparative lack of social differentiation in the old Russia provides a partial explanation for this fact. Unlike the monarchies of old Europe, Tsarism was a landowners' government, or tyranny, based chiefly upon an oligarchy in which nobility and function went together (function conferred nobility, so the Tsar could and did create nobles); whereas in Europe the king himself was only one of the nobles, and they did not hold their titles from him (hence the long-standing prejudice, inherited by the bourgeoisie, against the recently ennobled). Over against this dominant oligarchy, which was outweighed by the Tsar, the Father of all the Russias, stood the mass of the peasants, whose legal status was still servile until 1861. Even in the industrial sphere initiative usually came from the tsars who, since Peter the Great, themselves created factories and State workshops and inspired 'private initiatives', which deserved the adjective very much less than their Western analogues. In the non-Russian parts of the Empire 'primitive societies' still existed, and in central Asia, for example, the Moslem social structure had changed little from what it was during the Islamic Middle Ages. Russia had nothing resembling the age-old and vigorous social differentiation of western Europe; its history had brought to maturity no bourgeoisie comparable to that of Europe, with its creative achievements in economics, law, and culture—and even politics. The first truly political manifestations in Russia were the revolutionary political groups of the early 20th century, the social-democratic party and the social revolutionaries; but not the constitutional democratic party, which was based only on the liberal nobility (that is, a small minority of the oligarchy), and on a small and heterogeneous and sparsely scattered bourgeoisie which had no historical experience behind it. The bolshevik dictatorship made short work of eradicating these parties, whose roots were shallow; and Russia's 'modern' social structure took shape entirely under bolshevik auspices. Although it is convenient for the purpose of descriptive analysis to distinguish between composition and social differentiation on the one hand and the rapid process of industrialisation on the other, they are in fact merely two aspects of a single historic phenomenon which is still in process of emergence. Historical developments in the West may bring into conflict two or more social forces each of which has its own

CHAPTER 9

The Prestige of Totality

WITH Hegel, philosophy was expanded so far as to leave nothing outside itself. Art, religion, history—it explained everything; and Hegel tended to make a future Hegel impossible. But the speculative character of the system turned against it; for although the system explained everything, it could do nothing. The completion of the system makes the system itself futile; and the totalitarian unification in the world of ideas only makes the fragmentation in the world of facts more irritating. This intellectual totalitarianism calls for *orthodoxy*, but does nothing to create it; so recourse must be had to history if philosophy is to be made effective. Writing at the same time as Kierkegaard, Marx was to expound the necessity for a *leap* outside the system and beyond speculation, and was to attempt the leap himself. With both these thinkers it is a question of a leap into existence; in the one case the existence of the individual, in the other that of the Species. If the word *dereliction* is not to be found in Kierkegaard, the thing itself is there; and the concept is not really clear except in relation to sin and grace. But Marx's perspective is that of Feuerbach; with him it is not a question of the salvation of the individual, but of the Species. The role played in the Christian universe of Kierkegaard by persons corresponds to the part played by groups in the atheist universe of the 'Left Hegelians'. According to Marx, the intercessor and mediator is a collectivity: the Proletariat. The system has burst apart and philosophy overflows into history; but on the historical plane of the real man, Marx and Marxism continue to pursue the same ambitions as the system. There is, however, the difference that what in Hegel was philosophy becomes, after Marx, religion. *A philosophy lived collectively cannot remain philosophy but is transformed into religion.* It is here that Marxism, which takes up again on its own account the Hegelian search for the unity and homogeneity of the world, can make an ally of the need for intellectual unity, coherence, and tranquillity, which has moved men at different periods of history to look for a key and to believe that they have found one. The aim is to enclose everything within a circle, leaving nothing outside; to enclose literally everything, beginning with life itself. It is then no longer a question of a purely speculative system, but of an orthodoxy

which shall be at one and the same time a vision of the world and a practical imperative, both science and conquest. Orthodoxy is a system which satisfies the need of activity as well as the feelings and the intelligence, and saves man from the atomisation of his faculties which corresponds with that autonomy of the separate spheres (political, economic, and cultural) which characterised the liberal epoch. In this sense the negation of the liberal atomisation of man proceeded steadily (making its way underground for more than half a century) from Hegel to communism. When the system is able to attract and nourish affectivity and to include *praxis*, it becomes apparent that philosophy in action is religion. The communist Campaign is a religious campaign.

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Those who sought to bring the clear, cold eye of the classifier to bear upon the so-called 'primitive' phenomena of 'religious life' were, for the most part, after the end of the 18th century readily sensitive to the 'belief in omnipresent impersonal forces'.¹ To this category of forces belong the famous *mana* of the Melanesians and the 'equivalent' forces identified in other 'primitive'² societies, the *orenda* of the Iroquois, and the *wakanda* of the Sioux; but it also includes quite different representations, such as the *rta* or 'order of the world' of the Vedic arya; the *asha* of Zoroastrianism; the *μύρα* of the Homeric poems, which bears witness to beliefs far more ancient than the poems themselves; or that omnipotent *Δίκη* which, according to Heraclitus, keeps the sun 'within the boundaries of its empire'.

If we remember that the physical concept of energy, as elaborated in the 19th century, includes implicitly the obscurer concept of dynamism, we shall better understand the resonance of words or expressions³ like History, Forces of Production, the Goal of Evolution, the End of History, the Realisation of Philosophy, the Dialectic (with a capital letter). Such impersonal entities as these—Auguste Comte called them 'metaphysical'—place the real history of men and their worlds within a domain completely intelligible ('in law', though not in fact) and completely penetrable to the mind of the Marxist (and to his alone), and they afford him the kind of certainty and security which can only be derived from dogma. These 'forces', often as slow and tortuous as Providence,

¹ 'God is not only a late arrival in religion; it is not indispensable that he should come' (Van der Leeuw, *Phénoménologie de la religion* (French trans.; Paris, 1948)). Durkheim reached the same conclusion by other ways. Cf. *Année sociologique*, 1897-8; *De la définition des phénomènes religieux*.

² I use this adjective with the utmost caution (cf. *La Poésie moderne et le sacré*, pp. 191-6) and only for the sake of immediate intelligibility.

³ It is essential to distinguish between the two, but resonance may be common to both.

weapon of history, explaining what had to be explained in order to fight and to conquer. In the 20th century the fight itself was to devour the doctrine, and the philosophy was to become a religion. Marx was totally identified with this doctrine, in which he may be said, using his own terms, to have *alienated* himself, as every creator alienates himself in his work. (If we modify the derogatory sense in which Marx uses the term, which counts for so much in his critical work, the sense of the criticism will be changed, and this part of his work will be brought in close relation with what is now known as *psycho-analysis*.) As a Hegelian, Marx held that force brings societies to birth; and as a critic of Hegel he wanted philosophy to play an active part; he wanted it to erupt into history. The logical conclusion was that the army of those who would make philosophy actual must be organised and then led into battle for the *Imperium mundi*.

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At the beginning of the 20th century Marx's doctrine was what enabled the professional revolutionaries to mobilise the workers for a holy war. But its impact upon the intellectuals counted for more than its impact upon the workers, because in fact the latter impact is transmitted through the former. Politics, economics, religion, and the 'world of culture' were able to appear in the liberal epoch as so many separate realities or 'spheres', linked together it is true and reacting upon each other, but capable of being kept apart and treated, up to a certain point, as distinct from one another; and at the same time, as has happened at certain periods in other civilisations, philosophy became a 'speciality'. But with the decline of the liberal era there began a change which became more and more definite; the long-delayed success of Schopenhauer, and more especially of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, bore witness to the return of philosophy from the lecture-room to life. Between Hegel and Marx, as between Hegel and Kierkegaard, philosophy leaves the university and comes back into everyday life. But Marx, Kierkegaard's contemporary, scores on two targets which seemed by definition to be mutually exclusive: he combined the prestige and attraction of the 'lived philosophy' with the prestige and attraction of the System; in other words, he added the prestige of the single totality to the separate prestiges of totality and of Unity. In the critical social phase which began before our time and which we¹ ourselves represent, the attractive power of Marxism is that of an *orthodoxy* manifested simultaneously on the intellectual plane as a *system*, on the religious plane as *Einführung* (or affective communion), and on

¹ In this context 'we' means our opponents as well as ourselves.

In this place we have been considering ideas only from the point of view of their emotional charge; their power of nourishing the sentiment or, more accurately, the subjectivity (so to speak) of an age and a civilisation. The truth of our observations does not reflect upon the letter of Marx's writings—which, in any case, represent the interaction of ideas developed at different periods of his life and may therefore appear contradictory. We are not writing the history of a philosophy but of the historical development of a living complex. Without Marx there would have been no Marxism, but the written philosophy—as we have already seen—cannot by itself adequately explain the developing complex that goes by the name of communism (whose connections with Marxism are sometimes erroneously conceived). What we are concerned with is a sociology of Marxism. One may legitimately attempt to determine the latent content of a doctrine or, more precisely, a religion whose passional dynamic is conspicuously perceptible. Such an undertaking entails risks and it must lack precision, but it can be fruitful—as will soon appear. For the moment, however, we are operating only at the most superficial level, and leaving to another place our exploration of the deeper strata.

It is not false to say that 'interest guides the world'; nor is it false to say that 'ideas guide the world'. The quest, both historical and logical, for the truth at the heart of these two formulas leads to the following proposition, which represents, as it were, a middle term: men are only moved, by ideas on the one hand or by interest on the other, through the medium of affectivity (there is a *point of fusion* at which by definition ideas and feelings no longer exist or are not distinct, or cannot at any rate be discerned). This third proposition is thus the middle term which demonstrates both the truth and the inadequacy of the two previous propositions; it includes them both implicitly, and also something else, something new. It is more true. One may put it like this: *ideas guide the world of today, provided always that they have been previously assimilated*. Hegelianism, once it had been assimilated by the affectivity of an epoch and a civilisation, and deflected, moreover, by the potent Marxist index of refraction, could only mould the sensibility and imagination of individuals and masses by taking the form of mythology, catechism, and pious images and legends; and the explosive power of Marxism derives from the same fermentation. Outside the textbooks it only survives at the cost of many an adaptation. What began as the doctrine of one man became the doctrine of a sect, and finally partook of the semi-hypnotic prestige of an advancing multitude whose magnetism draws in the spectators who watch it pass.

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 'the canalisation of resentments' and 'the diversion of aggressive impulses'. To understand them one must adopt a viewpoint from which the so-called 'normal' and the 'pathological', the physiological and the psychological (or better, the physical and the moral), the social and the individual, the substructure and the superstructure, do not appear as distinct domains but as analytical abstractions and types of meaning which the seeker of knowledge can make use of to light his path. Historical changes and social movements can only avail themselves of the energy that exists—and it is equally true to say that the energy that exists can only express itself through the social movements and historical changes. Secular religion of the Islamic type—the virulent conjunction of a religion and a people each of which is 'new' and at the disposal of the other and each of which transforms the other—affords a vital outlet. According to Dunbar, affectivity repressed as the result of a too-painful tension gives rise to energy in a different circuit. Instead of issuing in exteriorisation,¹ it is liable not only to 'intravert' and produce psychoses and neuroses but also to enter the 'reduced circuit' (the subcortical centres and sympathetic system) and to influence that part of the nervous system which controls sympathetic reactions. Then the organs begin to speak in their own 'language', which takes the form of illness (the disorders are at first functional, but the functional disorder eventually modifies the organ itself). Adherence to a secular religion would thus be an individual therapeutic solution; the psychic trouble is cured and the danger of somatic trouble removed. So religion effects a *transmutation of human suffering*, and the religion that triumphs is the one that best satisfies the emotional needs of the greatest number.² The energy that fixes upon images continually debases and alters them, investing them with new meanings and even paradoxically taking advantage of their contradiction by events. Thus the early Christians accommodated themselves to the postponements of the Second Coming and took advantage of these successive accommodations to create new and different representations. In communism, a secular religion, and also in the crude and brutal religion that was inherent in national socialism, the function of the *beyond* is performed by the *future* (the future millennial or multimillennial Reich and the destiny of the master race correspond functionally to the classless society). Each of these secular religions must be described as 'materialist'; in the one case it is historical materialism and in the other zoological. They seek the 'beyond' in the 'here', and

¹ Dunbar's physiological demonstration of this is outside the field to which we are restricting ourselves.

² According to Arnold J. Toynbee, the universal or 'higher' religions emerge from the depths of the 'internal proletariat' of a society and are the product of the accumulated miseries of a prolonged 'time of troubles'. Themselves the product of suffering, they tend 'absurdly' to deny suffering.

war had in reality very little in common except authority. To describe them all indiscriminately as 'fascist', as liberal and socialist journalists too often did, was an error of judgment which has since had to be paid for. Alone of the new States, Czechoslovakia tended towards a democracy which conformed, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Western pattern. On the other hand, in the Balkan States the reigning monarchies were not challenged, in spite of the changes in landownership (the episode of King Carol's abdication did not put an end to monarchy in Rumania), and the new authoritarian tendency was expressed, in practice, in the reinforcement of the royal power. In the Poland of Pilsudski and the Lithuania of Valdemaras, which had barely regained or acquired a precarious national independence, the remedy for weakness was sought for in a stronger and more stringent executive power. Along the whole chain of new States stretching from north to south, from the Baltic to Hungary, between defeated Germany and bolshevik Russia, the executive (which practically displaced the legislature) was kept in a perpetual state of alert both by the fear of a return of Russian domination, in the aggravated form of bolshevism, and by pressure from the West. From the very first the machinations of communism were a major and unambiguous national peril for these States. And we have no need to call upon imagination to picture this peril, for memory should suffice. At the very most, then, we should call these States dictatorships; but we ought not to describe them as fascist, and still less as totalitarian. In the same way, it is a piece of mental laziness to call Primo de Rivera's régime in Spain a fascist one. All through the 19th century the anarchic Spanish impulse towards liberalism was counteracted by periods of authoritarian reaction. Moreover, the army in Spain is not an historic necessity as it is in France (Spain has not faced an external threat for more than a century), but is, on the contrary, a serious social problem; not being required for war, and being a more stable organisation than the political parties, it has been on several occasions a determining factor in Spanish internal politics.

But in the Italy of Mussolini we can clearly discern some of the specifically new features of the 20th-century type of absolutism—though here, too, they are qualified and combined with purely Italian characteristics. The real distinctive features of 20th-century absolutism are those common to Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany. But one may say that Italy proved her receptivity and historic inventiveness: she provided, as it were, a brilliant and spectacular dress-rehearsal of the phenomenon; and although it remained superficial because certain essential conditions were lacking, it established the *décor* of 20th-century tyranny. The talents of the new condottieri both as actors and as producers cannot be overrated; they launched a mode, and they remain un-

In Plato's theory (*Republic*, Book VIII) tyranny follows democracy; but in Greek history tyranny more often preceded democracy. However, the contradiction is not so great as it appears. Tyranny is generally found between two differing forms of régime, and it may mark the violent transition from the one to the other. It abolishes or suspends the earlier legitimacy, and is a proof of the existence of a subversive social movement. It may be itself a product of this movement, or it may be a reaction against it; but in either case it represents the diversion of this movement to purposes which are not, or are not directly, relevant to its deepest motives. (This is an example of what Vico calls a 'trick of providence' and Hegel a 'trick of reason': namely, the dialectic by which men are involved in doing what they do not mean to do or do not know they are doing.) Tyranny exists in fact when a group, or party, or man—and the three cases are not so different in practice as in theory—has attained certain major objectives without which no tyranny can be efficient, and especially the monopoly of armed force, which means the power of effective coercion. There is tyranny whenever a relation of forces, which was established because a group or a man seized a favourable opportunity, is able to be maintained only by constraint and violence and terror when once the favourable situation has passed away. So it follows that tyranny is a phenomenon which reveals a certain relation of forces, of which it is itself a function, irrespective of the nature of the forces concerned and of the values they represent for their friends or foes. Therefore, *tyranny may be the symptom of very different kinds of historic change, just as fever is a symptom of very different diseases.*

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The study of the relation of forces and the relation of the tyrannical authority to their interplay has enabled us, by tracing the features common to the Greek and Italian tyrannies, to discover a *general pattern* of the phenomenon of tyranny. We must now ask whether this type is found only within the City-State which, in one form or other, was the milieu of both the Greek and the Italian tyrannies, or is it general and are our observations valid for other political spheres as well? We believe that they are, and we will now attempt to justify this belief.

Their remoteness in time has enabled us to draw a simple picture of the ancient tyrannies in the fewest possible lines. The societies of Greece and Italy were simpler than our own, and thus they offer less interference to a clear view of the picture. By contrast, the 20th-century societies, in which a *new absolutism* has appeared, are like complex figures composed of an indefinite number of simple figures—of which the general pattern of tyranny as we have found it in the Greek and

Italian cities is one. If we first isolate this pattern in our mind and then reinsert it within the more complicated pattern with which it is combined in the 20th-century absolutisms, we shall be able to distinguish how far the simple pattern can explain and throw light upon the more complex 20th-century pattern and how far it fails to do so. The difference, both in degree of complexity and in scale, between the ancient tyrannies and the modern absolutisms may be compared to the difference between classical and modern military campaigns, which are also differences in complexity and scale. But students of strategy have been able, in spite of these differences, to establish a certain number of typical data for all possible military engagements and to recognise these data, *mutatis mutandis*, at a distance of thousands of years. The value of x may vary, but the concept x is always possible and always functionally useful. But the two cases are not analogous and can only be roughly compared. The Greek and Italian cities must not be thought of as perfect microcosms, or test-tubes containing a chemically pure specimen reduced to essentials and hermetically sealed against external interference. Nevertheless, it remains true that the relative economic independence of each collectivity, its much more clearly defined contours, and the smaller number of elements involved, which makes it much easier to reduce the phenomenon to essentials, do give us a sort of microscopic view of these ancient societies. We see them isolated and enlarged.

The ancients defined tyranny by opposition to law. For them, tyranny was synonymous with illegitimacy because the law rested upon *sacred* foundations. The tyrant was without the law, and therefore did not and could not rely upon any law to protect him, but only upon force. The old oligarchic power rested on belief and cult and priesthood; and the democratic power, in its pure form, and despite the abuses of every kind that are interwoven with the actual history of democracy, rests upon the two foundations of the people and the law—*Demos* and *Nomos*—neither of which is anything apart from the other. If they are not brought to accord, or if they fall apart, then *Demos* without *Nomos* will produce anarchy, followed by tyranny—and this inevitably brings foreign intervention which endangers the independence and even the historical existence of the *Polis*; or alternatively *Nomos* without *Demos* will produce oligarchy. In this case, as in ancient Rome before the laws were published, the reading and interpretation of the law will be a privilege of the few, and *the others* will be mere objects upon whom the law acts from the outside. The Greek tyrants, as a matter of fact, usually paid little attention to the laws; they simply suspended them in so far as their application or execution was inconvenient to the tyranny. The law is an inadequate protection for the subject in times

they find themselves crushed by it as individuals. Psychological forces are not confined within the limits of the individual. The individual's organisation of these forces is his psychological individuality; but individuality can be compared only to the visible part of an iceberg. The farther we go below the surface, the weaker is the unifying and, as it were, centralising power of the individual principle. As we have seen, an ideology is a ruse by which the top of the iceberg deceives the lower part—and the converse is also true.

In fact, when objectively examined, the means employed reveal that the ends are of the same nature as themselves and quite unlike the proclaimed end—which is always, in one form or another, the 'realisation of the Good'. The end, which is of the same nature as the means (at the lower level the distinction between the two does not exist), is censored at the higher, or official, levels, both of the 'Islamic' community and of the individual's consciousness (between which there is no hard-and-fast line, for it is the same energy that is being circulated and transformed).

Twentieth-century absolutism, therefore, differs from the ancient forms of tyranny as realisation differs from intention, so greatly do the means at its disposal increase its power of territorial expansion and its psychological intensity. In a word, it is thanks to its *organisation* that modern tyranny makes the ancient tyrannies and despotisms appear, by comparison, imperfectly tyrannical and despotic. It is organisation that puts a world of difference between pre-capitalist and post-capitalist tyranny. The latter is called totalitarian because the capitalist era has revealed that it is possible to organise and rationalise *everything*. It is clear in retrospect that the weakness of organisation in the old tyrannies and despotisms was an effective safeguard of liberty; in other words, the way was kept open for new possibilities. But totalitarianism can organise on a world scale with the same thoroughness as capitalism can organise a factory. When the Arab and Islamic conquests reached their maximum extent, stretching from the Indus to the Garonne, it was quite impossible to achieve centralisation; but capitalism has made centralisation possible over an even vaster area.

This is the cause of another difference between ancient despotism and modern tyranny: the effective opposition now occurs at a different point in the system. In the Achemenid and Ottoman empires the governors of remote provinces could proclaim themselves independent and reject the despot's authority. But in contemporary absolutism, owing to the concentration of power, the strongest possibilities of opposition exist in the neighbourhood of the summit and not at the periphery, as in the old despotisms, nor at the base among the lower social strata (which is where the dissident communists would wish them to be). In comparison with liberal society, the possibility of opposition has shifted from below