State Terrorism and Rational Terror, Albert Camus

Marx, in nineteenth-century England, in the midst of the terrible sufferings caused by the transition from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy, had plenty of material for constructing a striking analysis of primitive capitalism. As for Socialism, apart from the lessons, which for the most part contradicted his doctrines, that he could draw from the French Revolution, he was obliged to speak in the future tense and in the abstract.

Thus it is not astonishing that he could blend in his doctrine the most valid critical method with a Utopian Messianism of highly dubious value. The unfortunate thing is that his critical method, which, by definition, should have been adjusted to reality, has found itself farther and farther separated from facts to the exact extent that it wanted to remain faithful to the prophecy. It was thought, and this is already an indication of the future, that what was conceded to truth could be taken from Messianism.

This contradiction is perceptible in Marx's lifetime. The doctrine of the Communist Manifesto is no longer strictly correct twenty years later, when Das Kapital appears. Das Kapital, nevertheless, remained incomplete, because Marx was influenced at the end of his life by a new and prodigious mass of social and economic facts to which the system had to be adapted anew. These facts concerned, in particular, Russia, which he had spurned until then. We now know that the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow ceased, in 1935, the publication of the complete works of Marx while more than thirty volumes still remained unpublished; doubtless the content of these volumes was not "Marxist" enough.

Since Marx's death, in any case, only a minority of disciples have remained faithful to his method. The Marxists who have made history have, on the contrary, appropriated the prophecy and the apocalyptic aspects of his doctrine in order to realize a Marxist revolution, in the exact circumstances under which Marx had foreseen that a revolution could not take place. It can be said of Marx that the greater part of his predictions came into conflict with facts as soon as his prophecies began to become an. object of increasing faith.

The reason is simple: the predictions were short-term and could be controlled. Prophecy functions on a very long-term basis and has as one of its properties a characteristic that is the very source of strength of all religions: the impossibility of proof. When the predictions failed to come true, the prophecies remained the only hope; with the result that they alone rule over our history. Marxism and its successors will be examined here from the angle of prophecy.

The Bourgeois Prophecy

Marx is simultaneously a bourgeois and a revolutionary prophet. The latter is better known than the former. But the former explains many things in the career of the latter. A Messianism of Christian and bourgeois origin, which was both historical and scientific, influenced his revolutionary Messianism, which sprang from German ideology and the French rebellions.

In contrast to the ancient world, the unity of the Christian and Marxist world is astonishing. The two doctrines have in common a vision of the world which completely separates them from the Greek attitude. Jaspers defines this very well: "It is a Christian way of thinking to consider that the history of man is strictly unique."

The Christians were the first to consider human life and the course of events as a history that is unfolding from a fixed beginning toward a definite end, in the course of which man achieves his salvation or earns his punishment. The philosophy of history springs from a Christian representation, which is surprising to a Greek mind. The Greek idea of evolution has nothing in common with our idea of historical evolution. The difference between the two is the difference between a circle and a straight line.

The Greeks imagined the history of the world as cyclical. Aristotle, to give a definite example, did not believe that the time in which he was living was subsequent to the Trojan War. Christianity was obliged, in order to penetrate the Mediterranean world, to Hellenize itself, and its doctrine then became more flexible. But its originality lay in introducing into the ancient world two ideas that had never before been associated: the idea of history and the idea of punishment. In its concept of mediation, Christianity is Greek. In its idea of history, Christianity is Judaic and will be found again in German ideology.

It is easier to understand this dissimilarity by underlining the hostility of historical methods of thought toward nature, which they considered as an object not for contemplation but for transformation. For the Christian, as for the Marxist, nature must be subdued. The Greeks are of the opinion that it is better to obey it. The love of the ancients for the cosmos was completely unknown to the first Christians, who, moreover, awaited with impatience an imminent end of the world. Hellenism, in association with Christianity, then produces the admirable efflorescence of the Albigensian heresy on the one hand, and on the other Saint Francis. But with the Inquisition and the destruction of the Albigensian heresy, the Church again parts company with the world and with beauty, and gives back to history its pre-eminence over nature.

Jaspers is again right in saying: "It is the Christian attitude that gradually empties the world of its substance . . . since the substance resided in a conglomeration of symbols." These symbols are those of the drama of the divinity, which unfolds throughout time. Nature is only the setting for this drama.

The delicate equilibrium between humanity and nature, man's consent to the world, which gives ancient thought its distinction and its refulgence, was first shattered for the benefit of history by Christianity. The entry into this history of the Nordic peoples, who have no tradition of friendship with the world, precipitated this trend. From the moment that the divinity of Christ is denied, or that, thanks to the efforts of German ideology, He only symbolizes the man-god, the concept of mediation disappears and a Judaic world reappears.

The implacable god of war rules again; all beauty is insulated as the source of idle pleasures, nature itself is enslaved. Marx, from this point of view, is the Jeremiah of the god of history and the Saint Augustine of the revolution. That this explains the really reactionary aspects of his doctrine can be demonstrated by a simple comparison with his one contemporary who was an intelligent theorist of reaction.

Joseph de Maistre refutes Jacobinism and Calvinism, two doctrines which summed up for him "everything bad that has been thought for three centuries," in the name of a Christian philosophy of history. To counter schisms and heresies, he wanted to re-create "the robe without a seam" of a really catholic Church. His aim and this can be seen at the period of his Masonic adventuresâ ”is the universal Christian city. Maistre dreams of the protoplastic Adam, or the Universal Man, of Fabre d'Olivet, who will be the rallying-point of individual souls, and of the Adam Kadmon of the cabalists, who preceded the Fall and who must now be brought to life again.

When the Church has reclaimed the world, she will endow this first and last Adam with a body. In the Soirees in St. Petersburg there is a mass of formulas on this subject which bear a striking resemblance to the Messianic formulas of Hegel and Marx. In both the terrestrial and the celestial Jerusalem that Maistre imagines, "all the inhabitants pervaded by the same spirit will pervade one another and will reflect one another's happiness." Maistre does not go so far as to deny personal survival after death; he only dreams of a mysterious unity reconquered in which, "evil having been annihilated, there will be no more passion nor self-interest," and where "man will be reunited with himself when his double standard will be obliterated and his two centers unified."

In the city of absolute knowledge, where the eyes of the mind and the eyes of

the body became as one, Hegel also reconciled contradictions. But Maistre's vision again coincides with that of Marx, who proclaims "the end of the quarrel between essence and existence, between freedom and necessity." Evil, for Maistre, is nothing but the destruction of unity. But humanity must rediscover its unity on earth and in heaven. By what means? Maistre, who is an ancien regime reactionary, is less explicit on this point than Marx. Meanwhile he was waiting for a great religious revolution of which 1789 was only the "appalling preface."

He quotes Saint John, who asks that we make truth, which is exactly the program of the modern revolutionary mind, and Saint Paul, who announces that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Humanity marches, by way of crimes, violence, and death, toward this final consummation, which will justify everything. The earth for Maistre is nothing but "an immense altar on which all the living must be sacrificed, without end, without limit, without respite, until the end of time, until the extinction of evil, until the death of death." His fatalism, however, is active as well as passive. "Man must act as if he were capable of all things and resign himself as if he were capable of nothing."

We find in Marx the same sort of creative fatalism. Maistre undoubtedly justifies the established order. But Marx justifies the order that is established in his time. The most eloquent eulogy of capitalism was made by its greatest enemy. Marx is only anti-capitalist in so far as capitalism is out of date. Another order must be established which will demand, in the name of history, a new conformity.

As for the means, they are the same for Marx as for Maistre: political realism, discipline, force. When Maistre adopts Bossuet's bold idea that "the heretic is he who has personal ideas" in other words, ideas that have no reference to either a social or a religious traditionâ ”he provides the formula for the most ancient and the most modern of conformities. The attorney general, pessimistic choirmaster of the executioner, announcess our diplomatic prosecutors.

It goes without saying that these resemblances do not make Maistre a Marxist, nor Marx a traditional Christian. Marxist atheism is absolute. But nevertheless it does reinstate the supreme being on the level of humanity. "Criticism of religion leads to this doctrine that man is for man the supreme being. From this angle, socialism is therefore an enterprise for the deification of man and has assumed some of the characteristics of traditional religions.1 This reconciliation, in any case, is instructive as

1 Saint-Simon, who influences Marx, is, moreover, influenced himself by Maistre and Bonald.

concerns the Christian origins of all types of historic Messianism, even revolutionary Messianism. The only difference lies in a change of symbols. With Maistre, as with Marx, the end of time realizes Vigny's ambitious dream, the reconciliation of the wolf and the lamb, the procession of criminal and victim to the same altar, the reopening or opening of a terrestrial paradise. For Marx, the laws of history reflect material reality; for Maistre, they reflect divine reality. But for the former, matter is the substance; for the latter, the substance of his god is incarnate here below. Eternity separates them at the beginning, but the doctrines of history end by reuniting them in a realistic conclusion.

Maistre hated Greece (it also irked Marx, who found any form of beauty under the sun completely alien), of which he said that it had corrupted Europe by bequeathing it its spirit of division. It would have been more appropriate to say that Greek thought was the spirit of unity, precisely because it could not do without intermediaries, and because it was, on the contrary, quite unaware of the historical spirit of totality, which was invented by Christianity and which, cut off from its religious origins, threatens the life of Europe today. "Is there a fable, a form of madness, a vice which has not a Greek name, a Greek emblem, or a Greek mask?" We can ignore the outraged puritanism. This passionate

denunciation expresses the spirit of modernity at variance with the ancient world and in direct continuity with authoritarian socialism, which is about to deconsecrate Christianity and incorporate it in a Church bent on conquest.

Marx's scientific Messianism is itself of bourgeois origin. Progress, the future of science, the cult of technology and of production, are bourgeois myths, which in the nineteenth century became dogma. We note that the Communist Manifesto appeared in the same year as Renan's Future of Science. This profession of faith, which would cause considerable consternation to a contemporary reader, nevertheless gives the most accurate idea of the almost mystic hopes aroused in the nineteenth century by the expansion of industry and the surprising progress made by science. This hope is the hope of bourgeois society itself the final beneficiary of technical progress.

The idea of progress is contemporary with the age of enlightenment and with the bourgeois revolution. Of course, certain sources of its inspiration can be found in the seventeenth century; the quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns already introduced into European ideology the perfectly absurd conception of an artistic form of progress. In a more serious fashion, the idea of a science that steadily increases its conquests can also be derived from Cartesian philosophy.

But Turgot, in 1750, is the first person to give a clear definition of the new faith. His treatise on the progress of the human mind basically recapitulates Bossuet's universal history. The idea of progress alone is substituted for the divine will. "The total mass of the human race, by alternating stages of calm and agitation, of good and evil, always marches, though with dragging footsteps, toward greater and greater perfection." This optimistic statement will furnish the basic ingredient of the rhetorical observations of Condorcet, the official theorist of progress, which he linked with the progress of the State and of which he was also the official victim in that the enlightened State forced him to poison himself.

Sorel2 was perfectly correct in saying that the philosophy of progress was exactly the philosophy to suit a society eager to enjoy the material prosperity derived from technical progress. When we are assured that tomorrow, in the natural order of events, will be better than today, we can enjoy ourselves in peace. Progress, paradoxically, can be used to justify conservatism. A draft drawn on confidence in the future, it allows the master to have a clear conscience. The slave and those whose present life is miserable and who can find no consolation in the heavens are assured that at least the future belongs to them. The future is the only kind of property that the masters willingly concede to the slaves.

2 Les Illusions du progres.

These reflections are not, as we can see, out of date. But they are not out of date because the revolutionary spirit has resumed this ambiguous and convenient theme of progress. Of course, it is not the same kind of progress; Marx cannot pour enough scorn on bourgeois rational optimism. His concept of reason, as we shall see, is different. But arduous progress toward a future of reconciliation nevertheless defines Marx's thought. Hegel and Marxism destroyed the formal values that lighted for the Jacobins the straight road of this optimistic version of history.

In this way they preserved the idea of the forward march of history, which was simply confounded by them with social progress and declared necessary. Thus they continued on the path of nineteenth-century bourgeois thought. Toc-queville, enthusiastically succeeded by Pecqueur (who influenced Marx), had solemnly proclaimed that: "The gradual and progressive development of equality is both the past and the future of the history of man." To obtain Marxism, substitute the term level of production for equality and imagine that in the final stage of production a transformation takes place and a reconciled society is achieved.

As for the necessity of evolution, Auguste Comte, with the law of three stages

of man, which he formulates in 1822, gives the most systematic definition of it. Comte's conclusions are curiously like those finally accepted by scientific socialism.3

3 The last volume of Cours de philosophic positive appeared in the same year as Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity.

Positivism demonstrates with considerable clarity the repercussions of the ideological revolution of the nineteenth century, of which Marx is one of the representatives, and which consisted in relegating to the end of history the Garden of Eden and the Revelation, which tradition had always placed at the beginning. The positivist era, which was bound to follow the metaphysical era and the theological era, was to mark the advent of a religion of humanity.

Henri Gouhier gives an exact definition of Comte's enterprise when he says that his concern was to discover a man without any traces of God. Comte's primary aim, which was to substitute everywhere the relative for the absolute, was quickly transformed, by force of circumstances, into the deification of the relative and into preaching a religion that is both universal and without transcendence. Comte saw in the Jacobin cult of Reason an anticipation of positivism and considered himself, with perfect justification, as the real successor of the revolutionaries of 1789. He continued and enlarged the scope of this revolution by suppressing the transcendence of principles and by systematically founding the religion of the species.

His formula: "Set aside God in the name of religion," meant nothing else but this. Inaugurating a mania that has since enjoyed a great vogue, he wanted to be the Saint Paul of this new religion and replace the Catholicism of Rome by the Catholicism of Paris. We know that he wanted to see in all the cathedrals "the statue of deified humanity on the former altar of God." He calculated with considerable accuracy that positivism would be preached in Notre-Dame before1860. This calculation was not so ridiculous as it seems.

Notre-Dame, in a state of siege, still resists: but the religion of humanity was effectively preached toward the end of the nineteenth century, and Marx, despite the fact that he had not read Comte, was one of its prophets. Marx only understood that a religion which did not embrace transcendence should properly be called politics. Comte knew it too, after all, or at least he understood that his religion was primarily a form of social idolatry and that it implied political realism,4 the negation of individual rights, and the establishment of despotism.

A society whose experts would be priests, two thousand bankers and technicians ruling over a Europe of one hundred and twenty million inhabitants where private life would be absolutely identified with public life, where absolute obedience "of action, of thought, and of feeling" would be given to the high priest who would reign over everything, such was Comte's Utopia, which announces what might be called the horizontal religions of our times. It is true that it is Utopian because, convinced of the enlightening powers of science, Comte forgot to provide a police force. Others will be more practical; the religion of humanity will be effectively founded on the blood and suffering of humanity.

Finally, if we add to these observations the remark that Marx owes to the bourgeois economists the idea, which he claims exclusively as his own, of the part played by industrial production in the development of humanity, and that he took the essentials of his theory of work-value from Ricardo,. an economist of the bourgeois industrial

4 "Everything that develops spontaneously is necessarily legitimate, for a certain time."

revolution, our right to say that his prophecy is bourgeois in content will doubtless be recognized. These comparisons only aim to show that Marx, instead of being, as the fanatical Marxists of our day would have it, the beginning and

the end of the prophecy,5 participates on the contrary in human nature: he is an heir before he is a pioneer. His doctrine, which he wanted to be a realist doctrine, actually was realistic during the period of the religion of science, of Darwinian evolutionism, of the steam engine and the textile industry.

A hundred years later, science encounters relativity, uncertainty, and chance; the economy must take into account electricity, metallurgy, and atomic production. The inability of pure Marxism to assimilate these successive discoveries was shared by the bourgeois optimism of Marx's time. It renders ridiculous the Marxist pretension of maintaining that truths one hundred years old are unalterable without ceasing to be scientific. Nineteenth-century Messianism, whether it is revolutionary or bourgeois, has not resisted the successive developments of this science and this history, which to different degrees they have deified.

The Revolutionary Prophecy

Marx's prophecy is also revolutionary in principle. In that all human reality has its origins in the fruits of production, historical evolution is revolutionary because the economy is revolutionary. At each level of production the economy arouses the antagonisms that destroy, to the profit of a superior level of production, the corresponding society. Capitalism is the last of these stages of production because it produces the conditions in which every antagonism will be resolved and where there will be no more economy. On that day our history will become prehistory. This representation is the same as Hegel's, but in another perspective. The dialectic is considered from the

5 According to Zhdanov, Marxism is "a philosophy that is qualitatively different from any previous system." This means, for example, either that Marxism is not Cartesianism, which no one would dream of denying, or that Marxism owes essentially nothing to Cartesianism, which is absurd.

angle of production and work instead of from the angle of the spirit. Marx, of course, never spoke himself about dialectical materialism. He left to his heirs the task of extolling this logical monstrosity. But he says, at the same time, that reality is dialectic and that it is economic. Reality is a perpetual process of evolution, propelled by the fertile impact of antagonisms which are resolved each time into a superior synthesis which, itself, creates its opposite and again causes history to advance.

What Hegel affirmed concerning reality advancing toward the spirit, Marx affirms concerning economy on the march toward the classless society; everything is both itself and its opposite, and this contradiction compels it to become something else. Capitalism, because it is bourgeois, reveals itself as revolutionary and prepares the way for communism.

Marx's originality lies in affirming that history is simultaneously dialectic and economic. Hegel, more extreme, affirmed that it was both matter and spirit. Moreover, it could only be matter to the extent that it was spirit and vice versa. Marx denies the spirit as the definitive substance and affirms historical materialism. We can immediately remark, with Berdyaev, on the impossibility of reconciling the dialectic with materialism. There can be a dialectic only of the mind. But even materialism itself is an ambiguous idea. Only to form this word, it must be admitted that there is something more in the world than matter alone.

For even stronger reasons, this criticism applies to historical materialism. History is distinguished from nature precisely by the fact that it transforms science and passion by means of will. Marx, then, is not a pure materialist, for the obvious reason that there is neither a pure nor an absolute materialism. So far is it from being pure or absolute that it recognizes that if weapons can secure the triumph of theory, theory can equally well give birth to weapons. Marx's position would be more properly called historical determinism. He does not deny thought; he imagines it absolutely determined by exterior reality.

"For me, the process of thought is only the reflection of the process of reality transported and transposed to the mind of man." This particularly clumsy definition has no meaning. How and by what means can an exterior process be "transported to the mind," and this difficulty is as nothing compared to that of then defining "the transposition" of this process. But Marx used the abbreviated philosophy of his time. What he wishes to say can be defined on other planes.

For him, man is only history, and in particular the history of the means of production. Marx, in fact, remarks that man differs from animals in that he produces his own means of subsistence. If he does not first eat, if he does not clothe himself or take shelter, he does not exist. This primum vivere is his first determination. The little that he thinks at this moment is in direct relation to these inevitable necessities. Marx then demonstrates that his dependence is both invariable and inevitable. "The history of industry is the open book of man's essential faculties."

His personal generalization consists in inferring from this affirmation, which is on the whole acceptable, that economic dependence is unique and suffices to explain everything, a concept that still remains to be demonstrated. We can admit that economic determination plays a highly important role in the genesis of human thoughts and actions without drawing the conclusion, as Marx does, that the German rebellion against Napoleon is explained only by the lack of sugar and coffee. Moreover, pure determinism is absurd in itself. If it were not, then one single affirmation would suffice to lead, from consequence to consequence, to the entire truth.

If this is not so, then either we have never made a single true affirmationâ ”not even the one stated by determinismâ ”or we simply happen occasionally to say the truth, but without any consequences, and determinism is then false. Marx had his reasons, however, which are foreign to pure logic, for resorting to so arbitrary a simplification.

To put economic determination at the root of all human action is to sum man up in terms of his social relations. There is no such thing as a solitary man; that is the indisputable discovery of the nineteenth century. An arbitrary deduction then leads to the statement that man only feels solitary in society for social reasons. If, in fact, the solitary mind must be explained by something outside man, then man is on the road to some form of transcendence. On the other hand, society has only man as its source of origin; if, in addition, it can be affirmed that society is the creator of man, it would seem as though one had achieved the total explanation that would allow the final banishment of transcendence. Man would then be, as Marx wanted, "author and actor of his own history."

Marx's prophecy is revolutionary because he completes the movement of negation begun by the philosophy of illumination. The Jacobins destroyed the transcendence of a personal god, but replaced it by the transcendence of principles. Marx institutes contemporary atheism by also destroying the transcendence of principles. Faith is replaced in 1789 by reason. But this reason itself, in its fixity, is transcendent. Marx destroys, even more radically than Hegel, the transcendence of reason and hurls it into the stream of history. Even before their time, history was a regulating principle; now it is triumphant. Marx goes farther than Hegel and pretends to consider him as an idealist (which he is not, at least no more than Marx is a materialist) to the precise extent that the reign of the mind restores in a certain way a supra-historical value.

Das Kapital returns to the dialectic of mastery and servitude, but replaces a consciousness of self by economic autonomy and the final reign of the absolute Spirit through the advent of communism. "Atheism is humanism mediated by the suppression of religion, communism is humanism mediated by the suppression of private property." Religious alienation has the same origin as economic alienation. Religion can be disposed of only by achieving the absolute liberty

of man in regard to his material determinations. The revolution is identified with atheism and with the reign of man.

That is why Marx is brought to the point of putting the emphasis on economic and social determination. His most profitable undertaking has been to reveal the reality that is hidden behind the formal values of which the bourgeois of his time made a great show. His theory of mystification is still valid, because it is in fact universally true, and is equally applicable to revolutionary mystifications. The freedom of which Monsieur Thiers dreamed was the freedom of privilege consolidated by the police; the family, extolled by the conservative newspapers, was supported by social conditions in which men and women were sent down into the mines, half-naked, attached to a communal rope; morality prospered on the prostitution of the working classes.

That the demands of honesty and intelligence were put to egoistic ends by the hypocrisy of a mediocre and grasping society was a misfortune that Marx, the incomparable eye-opener, denounced with a vehemence quite unknown before him. This indignant denunciation brought other excesses in its train which require quite another denunciation. But, above all, we must recognize and state that the denunciation was born in the blood of the abortive Lyon rebellion of 1834 and in the despicable cruelty of the Versailles moralists in 1871. "The man who has nothing is nothing." If this affirmation is actually false, it was very nearly true in the optimist society of the nineteenth century. The extreme decadence brought about by the economy of prosperity was to compel Marx to give first place to social and economic relationships and to magnify still more his prophecy of the reign of man.

It is now easier to understand the purely economic explanation of history offered by Marx. If principles are deceptive, only the reality of poverty and work is true. If it is then possible to demonstrate that this suffices to explain the past and the future of mankind, then principles will be destroyed forever and with them the society that profits by them. This in fact is Marx's ambition.

Man is born into a world of production and social relations. The unequal opportunities of different lands, the more or less rapid improvements in the means of production, and the struggle for life have rapidly created social inequalities that have been crystallized into antagonisms between production and distribution; and consequently into class struggles. These struggles and antagonisms are the motive power of history. Slavery in ancient times and feudal bondage were stages on a long road that led to the artisanship of the classical centuries when the producer was master of the means of production. At this moment the opening of world trade routes and the discovery of new outlets demanded a less provincial form of production.

The contradiction between the method of production and the new demands of distribution already announces the end of the regime of small-scale agricultural and industrial production. The industrial revolution, the invention of steam appliances, and competition for outlets inevitably led to the expropriation of the small proprietor and to the introduction of large-scale production. The means of production are then concentrated in the hands of those who are able to buy them; the real producers, the workers, now only dispose of the strength of their arms, which can be sold to the "man with the money." Thus bourgeois capitalism is defined by the separation of the producer from the means of production. From this conflict a series of inevitable consequences are going to spring which allow Marx to predicate the end of social antagonisms.

At first sight there is no reason why the firmly established principle of a dialectical class struggle should suddenly cease to be true. It is always true or it has never been true. Marx says plainly that there will be no more classes after the revolution than there were Estates after 1789. But Estates disappeared without classes disappearing, and there is nothing to prove that classes will not give way to some other form of social antagonism. The essentia] point of the Marxist prophecy lies, nevertheless, in this affirmation.

We know the Marxist scheme. Marx, following in the footsteps of Adam Smith and Ricardo, defines the value of all commodities in terms of the amount of work necessary to produce them. The amount of work is itself a commodity, sold by the proletarian to the capitalist, of which the value is defined by the quantity of work that produces it; in other words, by the value of the consumer's goods necessary for his subsistence.

The capitalist, in buying this commodity, thereby undertakes to pay for it adequately so that he who sells it, the worker, may feed and perpetuate himself. But at the same time he acquires the right to make the latter work as long as he can. He can work for a long time, very much longer than is necessary to pay for his subsistence. In a twelve-hour day, if half the time suffices to produce a value equivalent to the value of the products of subsistence, the other six hours are hours not paid for, a plus-value, which constitutes the capitalist's own profit.

Thus the capitalist's interest lies in prolonging to the maximum the hours of work or, when he can do so no longer, of increasing the worker's output to the maximum. The first type of coercion is a matter of oppression and cruelty. The second is a question of the organization of labor. It leads first to the division of labor, and then to the utilization of the machine, which dehumanizes the worker.

Moreover, competition for foreign markets and the necessity for larger and larger investments in raw materials, produce phenomena of concentration and accumulation. First, small capitalists are absorbed by big capitalists who can maintain, for example, unprofitable prices for a longer period. A larger and larger part of the profits is finally invested in new machines and accumulated in the fixed assets of capital. This double movement first of all hastens the ruin of the middle classes, who are absorbed into the proletariat, and then proceeds to concentrate, in an increasingly small number of hands, the riches produced uniquely by the proletariat.

Thus the proletariat increases in size in proportion to its increasing ruin. Capital is now concentrated in the hands of only a very few masters, whose growing power is based on robbery. Moreover, these masters are shaken to their foundations by successive crises, overwhelmed by the contradictions of the system, and can no longer assure even mere subsistence to their slaves, who then come to depend on private or public charity. A day comes, inevitably, when a huge army of oppressed slaves find themselves face to face with a handful of despicable masters. That day is the day of revolution. "The ruin of the bourgeoisie and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable."

This henceforth famous description does not yet give an account of the end of all antagonisms. After the victory of the proletariat, the struggle for life might well give birth to new antagonisms. Two ideas then intervene, one of which is economic, the identity of the development of production and the development of society, and the other, purely systematic, the mission of the proletariat. These two ideas reunite in what might be called Marx's activist fatalism.

The same economic evolution which in effect concentrates capital in a very few hands, makes the antagonism both more violent and, to a certain extent, unreal. It seems that, at the highest point of development of the productive forces, the slightest stimulus would lead to the proletariat finding itself alone in possession of the means of production, already snatched from the grasp of private ownership and concentrated in one enormous mass which, henceforth, would be held in common. When private property is concentrated in the hands of one single owner, it is only separated from collective ownership by the existence of one single man.

The inevitable result of private capitalism is a kind of State capitalism which will then only have to be put to the service of the community to give birth to a society where capital and labor, henceforth indistinguishable, will produce, in

one identical advance toward progress, both justice and abundance.

It is in consideration of this happy outcome that Marx always extolled the revolutionary role played, unconsciously it is true, by the bourgeoisie. He spoke of the "historic rights" of capitalism, which he called a source both of progress and of misery. The historical mission and the justification of capitalism are, in his eyes, to prepare the conditions for a superior mode of production.

This mode of production is not in itself revolutionary; it will only be the consummation of the revolution. Only the fundamental principles of bourgeois production are revolutionary. When Marx affirms that humanity only sets itself problems it can solve, he is simultaneously demonstrating that the germ of the solution of the revolutionary problem is to be found in the capitalist system itself. Therefore he recommends tolerating the bourgeois State, and even helping to build it, rather than returning to a less industrialized form of production. The proletariat "can and must accept the bourgeois revolution as a condition of the working-class revolution."

Thus Marx is the prophet of production and we are justified in thinking that on this precise point, and on no other, he ignored reality in favor of the system. He never ceased defending Ricardo, the economist of production in the manner of Manchester, against those who accused him of wanting production for production's sake ("He was absolutely right!" Marx exclaims) and of wanting it without any consideration for mankind. "That is precisely his merit," Marx replies, with the same airy indifference as Hegel.

What in fact does the sacrifice of individual men matter as long as it contributes to the salvation of all mankind! Progress resembles "that horrible pagan god who wished to drink nectar only from the skulls of his fallen enemies." But at least it is progress, and it will cease to inflict torture after the industrial apocalypse when the day of reconciliation comes.

But if the proletariat cannot avoid this revolution nor avoid being put in possession of the means of production, will it at least know how to use them for the benefit of all? Where is the guarantee that, in the very bosom of the revolution, Estates, classes, and antagonisms will not arise? The guarantee lies in Hegel. The proletariat is forced to use its wealth for the universal good. It is not the proletariat, it is the universal in opposition to the particular in other words, to capitalism. The antagonism between capital and the proletariat is the last phase of the struggle between the particular and the universal, the same struggle that animated the historical tragedy of master and slave.

At the end of the visionary design constructed by Marx, the proletariat will unite all classes and discard only a handful of masters, perpetrators of "notorious crime," who will be justly destroyed by the revolution. What is more, capitalism, by driving the proletariat to the final point of degradation, gradually delivers it from every decision that might separate it from other men. It has nothing, neither property nor morality nor country. Therefore it clings to nothing but the species of which it is henceforth the naked and implacable representative. In affirming itself it affirms everything and everyone. Not because members of the proletariat are gods, but precisely because they have been reduced to the most abjectly inhuman condition. "Only the proletariat, totally excluded from this affirmation of their personality, are capable of realizing the complete affirmation of self."

That is the mission of the proletariat: to bring forth supreme dignity from supreme humiliation. Through its suffering and its struggles, it is Christ in human form redeeming the collective sin of alienation. It is, first of all, the multiform bearer of total negation and then the herald of definitive affirmation. "Philosophy cannot realize itself without the disappearance of the proletariat, the proletariat cannot liberate itself without the realization of philosophy," and again: "The proletariat can exist only on the basis of world history. . . . Communist action can exist only as historical reality on the

planetary scale."

But this Christ is, at the same time, an avenger. According to Marx, he carries out the sentence that private property passes on itself. "All the houses, in our times, are marked with a mysterious red cross. The judge is history, the executioner is the proletariat." Thus the fulfillment is inevitable. Crisis will succeed crisis,6 the degradation of the proletariat will become more and more profound, it will increase in numbers until the time of the universal crisis when the world of change will vanish and when history, by a supreme act of violence, will cease to be violent any longer. The kingdom of ends will have come.

6 Every ten or eleven years, Marx predicted. But the period between the recurrence of the cycles "will gradually shorten."

We can see that this fatalism could be driven (as happened to Hegelian thought) to a sort of political quietism by Marxists, like Kautsky, for whom it was as little within the power of the proletariat to create the revolution as within the power of the bourgeois to prevent it. Even Lenin, who was to choose the activist aspect of the doctrine, wrote in 1905, in the style of an act of excommunication: "It is a reactionary way of thinking to try to find salvation in the working class in any other way than in the top-heavy development of capitalism." It is not in the nature of economics, according to Marx, to make leaps in the dark and it must not be encouraged to gallop ahead.

It is completely false to say that the socialist reformers remained faithful to Marx on this point. On the contrary, fatalism excludes all reforms, in that there would be a risk of mitigating the catastrophic aspect of the outcome and, consequently, delaying the inevitable result. The logic of such an attitude leads to the approval of everything that tends to increase working-class poverty. The worker must be given nothing so that one day he can have everything.

And yet Marx saw the danger of this particular form of quietism. Power cannot be looked forward to or else it is looked forward to indefinitely. A day comes when it must be seized, and it is the exact definition of this day that remains of doubtful clarity to all readers of Marx. On this point he never stops contradicting himself. He remarked that society was "historically compelled to pass through a period of dictatorship by the working classes."

As for the nature of this dictatorship, his definitions are contradictory.7 We are sure that he condemned the State in no uncertain terms, saying that its existence and the existence of servitude are inseparable. But he protested against Bakunin's nevertheless judicious observation of finding the idea of provisional dictatorship contrary to what is known as human nature. Marx thought, it is true, that the dialectical truths were superior to psychological truths. What does the dialectic say?

That "the abolition of the State has no meaning except among communists, where it is an inevitable result of the suppression of classes, the disappearance of which necessarily leads to the disappearance of the need for a power organized by one class for the oppression of another." According to the sacred formula, the government of people was then to be replaced by the administration of affairs. The dialectic was therefore explicit and justified the existence of the proletarian State only for the period necessary for the destruction or integration of the bourgeois class. But, unfortunately, the prophecy and its attitude of fatalism allowed other interpretations. If it is certain that the kingdom will come, what does time matter?

Suffering is never provisional for the man who does not believe in the future. But one hundred years of suffering are fleeting in the eyes of the man who prophesies, for the hundred and first year, the definitive city. In the perspective of the Marxist prophecy, nothing matters.

In any event, when the bourgeois class has disappeared, the proletariat will establish the rule of the universal man at the summit of production, by the very logic of productive development. What does it matter that this should be accomplished by dictatorship and violence? In this New Jerusalem, echoing with the roar of miraculous machinery, who will still remember the cry of the victim?

7 Michel Collinet in The Tragedy of Marxism points out in Marx three forms of the seizure of power by the proletariat: Jacobin republic in the Communist Manifesto, authoritarian dictatorship in the 18 Brumaire, and federal and libertarian government in the Civil War in France.

The golden age, postponed until the end of history and coincident, to add to its attractions, with an apocalypse, therefore justifies everything. The prodigious ambitions of Marxism must be considered and its inordinate doctrines evaluated, in order to understand that hope on such a scale leads to the inevitable neglect of problems that therefore appear to be secondary. "Communism in so far as it is the real appropriation of the human essence by man and for man, in so far as it is the return of man to himself as a social beingâ ”in other words, as a human beingâ ”a complete conscious return which preserves all the values of the inner movement, this communism, being absolute naturalism, coincides with humanism: it is the real end of the quarrel between man and nature, between man and man, between essence and existence, between externalization and the affirmation of self, between liberty and necessity, between the individual and the species. It solves the mystery of history and is aware of having solved it." It is only the language here that attempts to be scientific.

Basically, where is the difference from Fourier, who announces "fertile deserts, sea water made drinkable and tasting of violets, eternal spring . . ."? The eternal springtime of mankind is foretold to us in the language of an encyclical. What can man without God want and hope for, if not the kingdom of man?

This explains the exaltation of Marxist disciples. "In a society without anguish, it is easy to ignore death," says one of them. However, and this is the real condemnation of our society, the anguish of death is a luxury that is felt far more by the idler than by the worker, who is stifled by his own occupation. But every kind of socialism is Utopian, most of all scientific socialism. Utopia replaces God by the future.

Then it proceeds to identify the future with ethics; the only values are those which serve this particular future. For that reason Utopias have almost always been coercive and authoritarian.8 Marx, in so far as he is a Utopian, does not differ from his frightening predecessors, and one part of his teaching more than justifies his successors.

8 Morelly, Babeuf, and Godwin in reality describe societies based on an inquisition.

It has undoubtedly been correct to emphasize the ethical demands that form the basis of the Marxist dream. It must, in all fairness, be said, before examining the check to Marxism, that in them lies the real greatness of Marx.

The very core of his theory was that work is profoundly dignified and unjustly despised. He rebelled against the degradation of work to the level of a commodity and of the worker to the level of an object. He reminded the privileged that their privileges were not divine and that property was not an eternal right.

He gave a bad conscience to those who had no right to a clear conscience, and denounced with unparelleled profundity a class whose crime is not so much having had power as having used it to advance the ends of a mediocre society deprived of any real nobility. To him we owe the idea which is the despair of our times â ”but here despair is worth more than any hopeâ ”that when work is a

degradation, it is not life, even though it occupies every moment of a life.

Who, despite the pretensions of this society, can sleep in it in peace when they know that it derives its mediocre pleasures from the work of millions of dead souls? By demanding for the worker real riches, which are not the riches of money but of leisure and creation, he has reclaimed, despite all appearance to the contrary, the dignity of man. In doing so, and this can be said with conviction, he never wanted the additional degradation that has been imposed on man in his name. One of his phrases, which for once is clear and trenchant, forever withholds from his triumphant disciples the greatness and the humanity which once were his: "An end that requires unjust means is not a just end."

But Nietzsche's tragedy is found here once again. The aims, the prophecies are generous and universal, but the doctrine is restrictive, and the reduction of every value to historical terms leads to the direst consequences. Marx thought that the ends of history, at least, would prove to be moral and rational. That was his Utopia. But Utopia, at least in the form he knew it, is destined to serve cynicism, of which he wanted no part. Marx destroys all transcendence, then carries out, by himself, the transition from fact to duty. But his concept of duty has no other origin but fact.

The demand for justice ends in injustice if it is not primarily based on an ethical justification ot justice; without this, crime itself one day becomes a duty. When good and evil are reintegrated in time and confused with events, nothing is any longer good or bad, but only either premature or out of date. Who will decide on the opportunity, if not the opportunist? Later, say the disciples, you shall judge. But the victims will not be there to judge.

For the victim, the present is the only value, rebellion the only action. Messianism, in order to exist, must construct a defense against the victims. It is possible that Marx did not want this, but in this lies his responsibility which must be examined, that he incurred by justifying, in the name of the revolution, the henceforth bloody struggle against all forms of rebellion.

The Failing of the Prophecy

Hegel haughtily brings history to an end in 1807; the disciples of Saint-Simon believe that the revolutionary convulsions of 1830 and 1848 are the last; Comte dies in 1857 preparing to climb into the pulpit and preach positivism to a humanity returned at last from the path of error. With the same blind romanticism, Marx, in his turn, prophesies the classless society and the solution of the historical mystery. Slightly more circumspect, however, he does not fix the date. Unfortunately, his prophecy also described the march of history up to the hour of fulfillment; it predicted the trend of events.

The events and the facts, of course, have forgotten to arrange themselves according to the synthesis; and this already explains why it has been necessary to rally them by force. But above all, the prophecies, from the moment that they begin to betray the living hopes of millions of men, cannot with impunity remain indeterminate. A time comes when deception transforms patient hope into furious disillusionment and when the ends, affirmed with the mania of obstinacy, demanded with ever-increasing cruelty, make obligatory the search for other means.

The revolutionary movement at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth lived, like the early Christians, in the expectation of the end of the world and the advent of the proletarian Christ. We know how persistent this sentiment was among primitive Christian communities. Even at the end of the fourth century a bishop in proconsular Africa calculated that the world would only exist for another one hundred and one years.

At the end of this period would come the kingdom of heaven, which must be merited without further delay. This sentiment is prevalent in the first century9

and explains the indifference of the early Christians toward purely theological questions. If the advent is near, everything must be consecrated to a burning faith rather than to works and to dogma. Until Clement and Tertullian during more than a century, Christian literature ignored theological problems and did not elaborate on the subject of works.

But from the moment the advent no longer seems imminent, man must live with his faithâ ¨in other words, compromise. Then piety and the catechism appear on the scene. The evangelical advent fades into the distance; Saint Paul has come to establish dogma. The Church has incorporated the faith that has only an ardent desire for the kingdom to come. Everything had to be organized in the period, even martyrdom, of which the temporal witnesses are the monastic orders, and even the preaching, which was to be found again in the guise of the Inquisition.

A similar movement was born of the check to the revolutionary advent. The passages from Marx already cited give a fair idea of the burning hope that inspired the revolutionary spirit of the time. Despite partial setbacks, this faith never ceased to increase up to the moment when it found itself, in 1917, face to face with the partial realization of its dreams. "We are fighting for the gates of heaven," cried Liebknecht.

In 1917 the revolutionary world really believed that it had arrived before those gates. Rosa Luxemburg's prophecy was being realized. "The revolution will rise resoundingly tomorrow to its full height and, to your consternation, will announce with the sound of all its trumpets: I was, I am, I shall be." The Spartakus movement believed that it had achieved the definitive revolution because, according to Marx himself, the latter would come to pass after the Russian Revolution had been consummated by a Western revolution. After the revolution of 1917, a Soviet Germany would, in fact, have opened the gates of heaven. But the Spartakus movement is crushed, the French general strike of 1920 fails,

9 On the imminence of this event, see Mark ix, 1; xiii, 30; Matthew x, 23; xvi, 27-8; xxiv, 34; Luke ix, 26-7; xxi, 22, etc.

the Italian revolutionary movement is strangled. Liebknecht then recognizes that the time is not ripe for revolution. "The period had not yet drawn to a close." But also, and now we grasp how defeat can excite vanquished faith to the point of religious ecstasy: "At the crash of economic collapse whose rumblings can already be heard, the sleeping soldiers of the proletariat will awake as at the fanfare of the Last Judgment, and the corpses of the victims of the struggle will arise and demand an accounting from those who are bowed down with curses." While awaiting these events, Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg are assassinated, and Germany rushes toward servitude.

The Russian Revolution remains isolated, living in defiance of its own system, still far from the celestial gates, with an apocalypse to organize. The advent is again postponed. Faith is intact, but it totters beneath an enormous load of problems and discoveries which Marxism had not foreseen. The new religion is once more confronted with Galilee: to preserve its faith, it must deny the sun and humiliate free man.

What does Galilee say, in fact, at this moment? What are the errors, demonstrated by history itself, of the prophecy? We know that the economic evolution of the contemporary world refutes a certain number of the postulates of Marx. If the revolution is to occur at the end of two parallel movements, the unlimited shrinking of capital and the unlimited expansion of the proletariat, it will not occur or ought not to have occurred. Capital and proletariat have both been equally unfaithful to Marx. The tendency observed in industrial England of the nineteenth century has, in certain cases, changed its course, and in others become more complex.

Economic crises, which should have occurred with increasing frequency, have, on the contrary, become more sporadic: capitalism has learned the secrets of

planned production and has contributed on its own part to the growth of the Moloch State. Moreover, with the introduction of companies in which stock could be held, capital, instead of becoming increasingly concentrated, has given rise to a new category of smallholders whose very last desire would certainly be to encourage strikes.

Small enterprises have been, in many cases, destroyed by competition as Marx foresaw. But the complexity of modern production has generated a multitude of small factories around great enterprises. In 1938 Ford was able to announce that five thousand two hundred independent workshops supplied him with their products. Of course large industries inevitably assimilated these enterprises to a certain extent.

But the essential thing is that these small industrialists form an intermediary social layer which complicates the scheme that Marx imagined. Finally, the law of concentration has proved absolutely false in agricultural economy, which was treated with considerable frivolity by Marx. The hiatus is important here. In one of its aspects, the history of socialism in our times can be considered as the struggle between the proletarian movement and the peasant class.

This struggle continues, on the historical plane, the nineteenth-century ideological struggle between authoritarian socialism and libertarian socialism, of which the peasant and artisan origins are quite evident. Thus Marx had, in the ideological material of his time, the elements for a study of the peasant problem. But his desire to systematize made him oversimplify everything. This particular simplification was to prove expensive for the kulaks who constituted more than five million historic exceptions to be brought, by death and deportation, within the Marxist pattern.

The same desire for simplification diverted Marx from the phenomenon of the nation in the very century of nationalism. He believed that through commerce and exchange, through the very victory of the proletariat, the barriers would fall. But it was national barriers that brought about the fall of the proletarian ideal. As a means of explaining history, the struggle between nations has been proved at least as important as the class struggle. But nations cannot be entirely explained by economics; therefore the system ignored them.

The proletariat, on its part, did not toe the line. First of all, Marx's fear is confirmed: reforms and trade unions brought about a rise in the standard of living and an amelioration in working conditions. These improvements are very far from constituting an equitable settlement of the social problem; but the miserable condition of the English textile workers in Marx's time, far from becoming general and even deteriorating, as he would have liked, has on the contrary been alleviated. Marx would not complain about this today, the equilibrium having been reestablished by another error in his predictions.

It has, in fact, been possible to prove that the most efficacious revolutionary or trade-union asset has always been the existence of a working-class elite who have not been sterilized by hunger. Poverty and degeneration have never ceased to be what they were before Marx's time, and what he did not want to admit they were despite all his observations: factors contributing to servitude not to revolution. One third of working-class Germany was unemployed in 1933.

Bourgeois society was then obliged to provide a means of livelihood for these unemployed, thus bringing about the situation that Marx said was essential for revolution. But it is not a good thing that future revolutionaries should be put in the situation of expecting to be fed by the State. This unnatural habjt leads to others, which are even less good, and which Hitler made into doctrine.

Finally, the proletariat did not increase in numbers indefinitely. The very conditions of industrial production, which every Marxist is called upon to encourage, improved, to a considerable extent, the conditions of the middle class1 and even created a new social stratum, the technicians. The ideal, so dear to Lenin, of a society in which the engineer would at the same time be a

manual laborer is in conflict with the facts. The principal fact is that technology, like science, has reached such a degree of complication that it is not possible for a single man to understand the totality of its principles and applications.

It is almost impossible, for instance, for a physicist today to have a complete understanding of the biological science of his times. Even within the realms of physics he cannot claim to be equally familiar with every branch of the subject. It is the same in technology. From the moment that productivity, which is considered by both bourgeois and Marxist as a benefit in itself, is developed to enormous proportions, the division of labor, which Marx thought could have been avoided, became inevitable. Every worker

1 From 1920 to 1930, in a period of intense productivity, the number of metallurgical workers decreased in the United States, while the number of salesmen working for the same industry almost doubled.

has been brought to the point of performing a particular function without knowing the over-all plan into which his work will fit. Those who co-ordinate individual work have formed, by their very function, a class whose social importance is decisive.

It is only fair to point out that this era of technocracy announced by Burnham was described, about twenty years ago, by Simone Weil in a form that can be considered complete, without drawing Burnham's unacceptable conclusions. To the two traditional forms of oppression known to humanityâ ¨oppression by armed force and by wealthâ ¨ Simone Weil adds a thirdâ ¨oppression by occupation. "One can abolish the opposition between the buyer and the seller of work," she wrote, "without abolishing the opposition between those who dispose of the machine and those of whom the machine disposes."

The Marxist plan to abolish the degrading opposition of intellectual work to manual work has come into conflict with the demands of production, which elsewhere Marx exalted. Marx undoubtedly foresaw, in Das Kapital, the importance of the "manager" on the level of maximum concentration of capital. But he did not believe that this concentration of capital could survive the abolition of private property. Division of labor and private property, he said, are identical expressions. History has demonstrated the contrary. The ideal regime based on collective property could be defined, according to Lenin, as justice plus electricity. In the final analysis it is only electricity, without justice.

The idea of a mission of the proletariat has not, so far, been able to formulate itself in history: this sums up the failing of the Marxist prophecy. The failure of the Second International has proved that the proletariat was influenced by other things as well as its economic condition and that, contrary to the famous formula, it had a fatherland. The majority of the proletariat accepted or submitted to the war and collaborated, willy-nilly, in the nationalist excesses of the times. Marx intended that the working classes before they triumphed should have acquired legal and political acumen. His error lay only in believing that extreme poverty, and particularly industrial poverty, could lead to political maturity.

Moreover, it is quite certain that the revolutionary capacity of the masses was curtailed by the decapitation of the libertarian revolution, during and after the Commune. After all, Marxism easily dominated the working-class movement from 1872 on, undoubtedly because of its own strength, but also because the only socialist tradition that could have opposed it had been drowned in blood; there were practically no Marxists among the insurgents of 1871.

This automatic purification of revolution has been continued, thanks to the activities of police states, until our times. More and more, revolution has found itself delivered into the hands of its bureaucrats and doctrinaires on the one hand, and to enfeebled and bewildered masses on the other. When the revolutionary elite are guillotined and when Talleyrand is left alive, who will

oppose Bonaparte? But to these historical reasons are added economic necessities.

The passages by Simone Weil on the condition of the factory worker2 must be read in order to realize to what degree of moral exhaustion and silent despair the rationalization of labor can lead. Simone Weil is right in saying that the worker's condition is doubly inhumane in that he is first deprived of money and then of dignity. Work in which one can have an interest, creative work, even though it is badly paid, does not degrade life.

2 La Condition ouvriere (Paris: Gallimard).

Industrial socialism has done nothing essential to alleviate the condition of the workers because it has not touched on the very principle of production and the organization of labor, which, on the contrary, it has extolled. It even went so far as to offer the worker a historic justification of his lot of much the same value as a promise of celestial joys to one who works himself to death; never did it attempt to give him the joy of creation. The political form of society is no longer in question at this level, but the beliefs of a technical civilization on which capitalism and socialism are equally dependent. Any ideas that do not advance the solution of this problem hardly touch on the misfortunes of the worker.

Only through the interplay of economic forces, so much admired by Marx, has the proletariat been able to reject the historical mission with which Marx had rightly charged it. His error can be excused because, confronted with the debasement of the ruling classes, a man who has the future of civilization at heart instinctively looks for an elite as a replacement. But this instinctive search is not, in itself alone, creative. The revolutionary bourgeoisie seized power in 1789 because they already had it. At this period legality, as Jules Monnerot says, was lagging behind the facts. The facts were that the bourgeoisie were already in possession of the posts of command and of the new power: money. The proletariat were not at all in the same position, having only their poverty and their hopes and being kept in their condition of misery by the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeois class debased itself by a mania for production and material power, while the very organization of this mania made the creation of an elite impossible.3 But criticism of this organization and the development of rebel conscience could, on the contrary, forge a reserve elite. Only revolutionary trade unionism, with Pelloutier and Sorel, embarked on this course and wanted to create, by professional and cultural education, new cadres for which a world without honor was calling and still calls. But that could not be accomplished in a day and the new masters were already on the scene, interested in making immediate use of human unhappiness for the sake of happiness in the distant future, rather than in relieving as much and as soon as possible the suffering of millions of men.

3 Lenin was the first to record this truth, but without any apparent bitterness. If his words are terrible for revolutionary hopes, they are no less so for Lenin himself. He dared to say, in fact, that the masses would more easily accept bureaucratic and dictatorial centralism because "discipline and organization are assimilated more easily by the proletariat, thanks to the hard school of the factory."

The authoritarian socialists deemed that history was going too slowly and that it was necessary, in order to hurry it on, to entrust the mission of the proletariat to a handful of doctrinaires. For that very reason they have been the first to deny this mission. Nevertheless it exists, not in the exclusive sense that Marx gives it, but in the sense that a mission exists for any human group which knows how to derive pride and fecundity from its labors and its sufferings. So that it can manifest itself, however, a risk must be taken and confidence put in working-class freedom and spontaneity. Authoritarian socialism, on the contrary, has confiscated this living freedom for the

benefit of an ideal freedom, which is yet to come. In so doing, whether it wished to or not, it reinforced the attempt at enslavement begun by industrial capitalism. By the combined action of these two factors and during a hundred and fifty years, except in the Paris of the Commune, which was the last refuge of rebel revolution, the proletariat has had no other historical mission but to be betrayed. The workers fought and died to give power to the military or to intellectuals who dreamed of becoming military and who would enslave them in their turn. This struggle, however, has been the source of their dignity, a fact that is recognized by all who have chosen to share their aspirations and their misfortunes. But this dignity has been acquired in opposition to the whole clan of old and new masters. At the very moment when they dare to make use of it, it denies them. In one sense, it announces their eclipse.

The economic predictions of Marx have, therefore, been at least called in question by reality. What remains true in his vision of the economic world is the establishment of a society more and more defined by the rhythm of production. But he shared this concept, in the enthusiasm of his period, with bourgeois ideology. The bourgeois illusions concerning science and technical progress, shared by the authoritarian socialists, gave birth to the civilization of the machine-tamers, which can, through the stresses of competition and the desire for domination, be separated into enemy blocs, but which on the economic plane is subject to identical laws: the accumulation of capital and rationalized and continually increasing production. The political difference, which concerns the degree of omnipotence of the State, is appreciable, but can be reduced by economic evolution. Only the difference in ethical concepts â ”formal virtue as opposed to historical cynicismâ ”seems substantial. But the imperative of production dominates both universes and makes them, on the economic plane, one world.4

4 It is worth specifying that productivity is only injurious when it is considered as an end, not as a means, in which case it could have a liberating effect.

In any event, if the economic imperative can no longer be denied,5 its consequences are not what Marx imagined. Economically speaking, capitalism becomes oppressive through the phenomenon of accumulation. It is oppressive through being what it is, it accumulates in order to increase what it is, to exploit it all the more, and accordingly to accumulate still more. At that moment accumulation would be necessary only to a very small extent in order to guarantee social benefits. But the revolution, in its turn, becomes industrialized and realizes that, when accumulation is an attribute of technology itself, and not of capitalism, the machine finally conjures up the machine.

5 Although it was deniable until the eighteenth centuryâ ” during all the period in which Marx thought he had discovered it. Historical examples in which the conflict between forms of civilization did not end in progress in methods of production: destruction of the Mycenaean civilization, invasion of Rome by the barbarians, expulsion of the Moors from Spain, extermination of the Albigenses.

Every form of collectivity, fighting for survival, is forced to accumulate instead of distributing its revenues. It accumulates in order to increase in size and so to increase in power. Whether bourgeois or socialist, it postpones justice for a later date, in the interests of power alone. But power opposes other forms of power. It arms and rearms because others are arming and rearming. It does not stop accumulating and will never cease to do so until the day when perhaps it will reign alone on earth. Moreover, for that to happen, it must pass through a war. Until that day the proletariat will receive only the bare minimum for its subsistence.

The revolution compels itself to construct, at a great expenditure in human lives, the industrial and capitalist intermediary that its own system demands. Revenue is replaced by human labor. Slavery then becomes the general condition, and the gates of heaven remain locked. Such is the economic law governing a

world that lives by the cult of production, and the reality is even more bloody than the law. Revolution, in the dilemma into which it has been led by its bourgeois opponents and its nihilist supporters, is nothing but slavery. Unless it changes its principles and its path, it can have no other final result than servile rebellions, obliterated in blood or the hideous prospect of atomic suicide.

The will to power, the nihilist struggle for domination and authority, have done considerably more than sweep away the Marxist Utopia. This has become in its turn a historic fact destined to be put to use like all the other historic facts. This idea, which was supposed to dominate history, has become lost in history; the concept of abolishing means has been reduced to a means in itself and cynically manipulated for the most banal and bloody ends. The uninterrupted development of production has not ruined the capitalist regime to the benefit of the revolution. It has equally been the ruin of both bourgeois and revolutionary society to the benefit of an idol that has the snout of power.

How could a so-called scientific socialism conflict to such a point with facts? The answer is easy: it was not scientific. On the contrary, its defeat resulted from a method ambiguous enough to wish to be simultaneously determinist and prophetic, dialectic and dogmatic. If the mind is only the reflection of events, it cannot anticipate their progress, except by hypothesis. If Marxist theory is determined by economics, it can describe the past history of production, not its future, which remains in the realms of probability.

The task of historical materialism can only be to establish a method of criticism of contemporary society; it is only capable of making suppositions, unless it abandons its scientific attitude, about the society of the future. Moreover, is it not for this reason that its most important work is called Capital and not Revolution? Marx and the Marxists allowed themselves to prophesy the future and the triumph of communism to the detriment of their postulates and of scientific method.

Then predictions could be scientific, on the contrary, only by ceasing to prophesy definitively. Marxism is not scientific; at the best, it has scientific prejudices. It brought out into the open the profound difference between scientific reasoning, that fruitful instrument of research, of thought, and even of rebellion, and historical reasoning, which German ideology invented by its negation of all principles. Historical reasoning is not a type of reasoning that, within the framework of its own functions, can pass judgment on the world. While pretending to judge it, it really tries to determine its course.

Essentially a part of events, it directs them and is simultaneously pedagogic and all-conquering. Moreover, its most abstruse descriptions conceal the most simple truths. If man is reduced to being nothing but a character in history, he has no other choice but to subside into the sound and fury of a completely irrational history or to endow history with the form of human reason. Therefore the history of contemporary nihilism is nothing but a prolonged endeavor to give order, by human forces alone and simply by force, to a history no longer endowed with order. The pseudo-reasoning ends by identifying itself with cunning and strategy, while waiting to culminate in the ideological Empire.

What part could science play in this concept? Nothing is less determined on conquest than reason. History is not made with scientific scruples; we are even condemned to not making history from the moment when we claim to act with scientific objectivity. Reason does not preach, or if it does, it is no longer reason. That is why historical reason is an irrational and romantic form of reason, which sometimes recalls the false logic of the insane and at other times the mystic affirmation of the word.

The only really scientific aspect of Marxism is to be found in its preliminary rejection of myths and in its exposure of the crudest kind of interests. But in this respect Marx is not more scientific in his attitude than La Rochefoucauld; and that is just the attitude that he abandons when he embarks on prophecy.

Therefore it is not surprising that, to make Marxism scientific and to preserve this fiction, which is very useful in this century of science, it has been a necessary first step to render science Marxist through terror.

The progress of science, since Marx, has roughly consisted in replacing determinism and the rather crude mechanism of its period by a doctrine of provisional probability. Marx wrote to Engels that the Darwinian theory constituted the very foundation of their method. For Marxism to remain infallible, it has therefore been necessary to deny all biological discoveries made since Darwin. As it happens that all discoveries since the unexpected mutations established by De Vries have consisted in introducing, contrary to the doctrines of determinism, the idea of chance into biology, it has been necessary to entrust

Lyssenko with the task of disciplining chromosomes and of demonstrating once again the truth of the most elementary determinism. That is ridiculous: but put a police force under Flaubert's Monsieur Homais and he would no longer be ridiculous, and there we have the twentieth century. As far as that is concerned, the twentieth century has also witnessed the denial of the principle of indeter-minism in science, of limited relativity, of the quantum theory,6 and, finally, of every general tendency of contemporary science.

Marxism is only scientific today in defiance of Heisenberg, Bohr, Einstein, and all the greatest minds of our time. After all, there is really nothing mysterious about the principle that consists in using scientific reasoning to the advantage of a prophecy. This has already been named the principle of authority, and it is this that guides the Churches when they wish to subject living reason to dead faith and freedom of the intellect to the maintenance of temporal power.

Finally, there remains of Marx's prophecyâ ¨henceforth in conflict with its two principles, economy and scienceâ ¨ only the passionate annunciation of an event that will take place in the very far future. The only recourse of the Marxists consists in saying that the delays are simply longer than was imagined and that one day, far away in the future, the end will justify all. In other words, we are in purgatory and we are promised that there will be no hell. And so the problem that is posed is of another order.

If the struggle waged by one or two generations throughout a period of economic evolution which is, perforce, beneficial suffices to bring about a classless society, then the necessary sacrifice becomes comprehensible to the man with a militant turn of mind; the future for him has a concrete aspect the aspect of his child, for instance. But if, when the sacrifice of several generations has proved insufficient, we must then embark on an infinite period of universal strife one thousand times more destructive than before, then the conviction of faith is needed in order to accept the necessity of killing and dying. This new faith is no more founded on pure reason than were the ancient faiths.

6 Roger Callois, in Critique du Marxisme (Paris: Galli-mard), remarks that Stalinism objects to the quantum theory, but makes use of atomic science, which is derived from it.

In what terms is it possible to imagine this end of history? Marx did not fall back on Hegel's terms. He said, rather obscurely, that communism was only a necessary aspect of the future of humanity, and did not comprise the entire future. But either communism does not terminate the history of contradictions and suffering, and then it is no longer possible to see how one can justify so much effort and sacrifice; or it does terminate it, and it is no longer possible to imagine the continuation of history except as an advance toward this perfected form of society. Thus a mystic idea is arbitrarily introduced into a description that claims to be scientific. The final disappearance of political economyâ ¨ the favorite theme of Marx and Engelsâ ¨signifies the end of all suffering. Economics, in fact, coincides with pain and suffering in history,

which disappear with the disappearance of history. We arrive at last in the Garden of Eden.

We come no nearer to solving the problem by declaring that it is not a question of the end of history, but of a leap into the midst of a different history. We can only imagine this other history in terms of our own history; for man they are both one and the same thing. Moreover, this other history poses the same dilemma. Either it is not the solution of all contradictions and we suffer, die, and kill for almost nothing, or it is the solution of contradictions and therefore, to all intents and purposes, terminates our history. Marxism, at this stage, is only justified by the definitive city.

Can it be said, therefore, that this city of ends has a meaning? It has, in terms of the sacred universe, once the religious postulate has been admitted. The world was created, it will have an end; Adam left Eden, humanity must return there. It has no meaning, in the historical universe, if the dialectical postulate is admitted. The dialectic correctly applied cannot and must not come to an end.7 The antagonistic terms of a historical situation can negate one another and then be surmounted in a new synthesis.

7 See the excellent discussion by Jules Mounerot in Sociolo-gie du communisme, Part III.

But there is no reason why this new synthesis should be better than the original. Or rather there is only a reason for this supposition, if one arbitrarily imposes an end to the dialectic, and if one then applies a judgment based on outside values. If the classless society is going to terminate history, then capitalist society is, in effect, superior to feudal society to the extent that it brings the advent of this classless society still nearer. But if the dialectic postulate is admitted at all, it must be admitted entirely. Just as aristocratic society has been succeeded by a society without an aristocracy but with classes, it must be concluded that the society of classes will be succeeded by a classless society, but animated by a new antagonism still to be defined.

A movement that is refused a beginning cannot have an end. "If socialism," says an anarchist essayist,8 "is an eternal evolution, its means are its end." More precisely, it has no ends; it has only means which are guaranteed by nothing unless by a value foreign to evolution. In this sense, it is correct to remark that the dialectic is not and cannot be revolutionary. From our point of view, it is only nihilismâ ” pure movement that aims at denying everything which is not itself.

8 Ernestan: Socialism and Freedom.

There is in this universe no reason, therefore, to imagine the end of history. That is the only justification, however, for the sacrifices demanded of humanity in the name of Marxism. But it has no other reasonable basis but a petitio principii, which introduces into historyâ ”a kingdom that was meant to be unique and self-sufficientâ ” a value foreign to history.

Since that value is, at the same time, foreign to ethics, it is not, properly speaking, a value on which one can base one's conduct; it is a dogma without foundation that can be adopted only as the desperate effort to escape of a mind which is being stifled by solitude or by nihilism, or a value which is going to be imposed by those whom dogma profits. The end of history is not an exemplary or a perfectionist value; it is an arbitrary and terroristic principle.

Marx recognized that all revolutions before his time had failed. But he claimed that the revolution announced by him must succeed definitively. Up to now, the workers' movement has lived on this affirmation which has been continually belied by facts and of which it is high time that the falsehood should be dispassionately denounced. In proportion as the prophecy was postponed, the affirmation of the coming of the final kingdom, which could only find the most feeble support in reason, became an article of faith.

The sole value of the Marxist world henceforth resides, despite Marx, in a dogma imposed on an entire ideological empire. The kingdom of ends is used, like the ethics of eternity and the kingdom of heaven, for purposes of social mystification. Elie Halevy declared himself unqualified to say if socialism was going to lead to the universalization of the Swiss Republic or to European Caesarism.

Nowadays we are better informed. The prophecies of Nietzsche, on this point at least, are justified. Marxism is henceforth to win fame, in defiance of its own teachings and, by an inevitable process of logic, by intellectual Caesarism, which we must now finally describe. The last representative of the struggle of justice against grace, it takes over, without having wanted to do so, the struggle of justice against truth. How to live without graceâ ¨that is the question that dominates the nineteenth century. "By justice," answered all those who did not want to accept absolute nihilism.

To the people who despaired of the kingdom of heaven, they promised the kingdom of men. The preaching of the City of Humanity increased in fervor up to the end of the nineteenth century, when it became really visionary in tone and placed scientific certainties in the service of Utopia. But the kingdom has retreated into the distance, gigantic wars have ravaged the oldest countries of Europe, the blood of rebels has bespattered walls, and total justice has approached not a step nearer. The question of the twentieth centuryâ ¨for which the terrorists of 1905 died and which tortures the contemporary worldâ ¨ has gradually been specified: how to live without grace and without justice?

Only nihilism, and not rebellion, has answered that question. Up to now, only nihilism has spoken, returning once more to the theme of the romantic rebels: "Frenzy." Frenzy in terms of history is called power. The will to power came to take the place of the will to justice, pretending at first to be identified with it and then relegating it to a place somewhere at the end of history, waiting until such time as nothing remains on earth to dominate.

Thus the ideological consequence has triumphed over the economic consequence: the history of Russian Communism gives the lie to every one of its principles. Once more we find, at the end of this long journey, metaphysical rebellion, which, this time, advances to the clash of arms and the whispering of passwords, but forgetful of its real principles, burying its solitude in the bosom of armed masses, covering the emptiness of its negations with obstinate scholasticism, still directed toward the future, which it has made its only god, but separated from it by a multitude of nations that must be overthrown and continents that must be dominated. With action as its unique principle, and with the kingdom of man as an alibi, it has already begun, in the east of Europe, to construct its own armed camp, face to face with other armed camps.

The Kingdom of Ends

Marx never dreamed of such a terrifying apotheosis. Nor, indeed, did Lenin though he took a decisive step toward establishing a military Empire. As good a strategist as he was a mediocre philosopher, he first of all posed himself the problem of the seizure of power. Let us note immediately that it is absolutely false to talk, as is often done, of Lenin's Jacobinism. Only his idea of units of agitators and revolutionaries is Jacobin.

The Jacobins believed in principles and in virtue; they died because they had to deny them. Lenin believes only in the revolution and in the virtue of expediency. "One must be prepared for every sacrifice, to use if necessary every stratagem, ruse, illegal method, to be determined to conceal the truth, for the sole purpose of penetrating the labor unions . . . and of accomplishing, despite everything, the Communist task." The struggle against formal morality, inaugurated by Hegel and Marx, is found again in Lenin with his criticism of inefficacious revolutionary attitudes. Complete dominion was the aim of this movement.

If we examine the two works written at the beginning9 and at the end1 of his career as an agitator, one is struck by the fact that he never ceased to fight mercilessly against the sentimental forms of revolutionary action. He wanted to abolish the morality of revolutionary action because he believed, correctly, that revolutionary power could not be established while still respecting the Ten Commandments. When he appears, after his first experiments on the stage of history, where he was to play such an important role, to see him take the world so freely and so naturally as it had been shaped by the ideology and the economy of the preceding century, one would imagine him to be the first man of a new era.

9 What to Do? (1902).

1 The State and the Revolution (1917).

Completely impervious to anxiety, to nostalgia, to ethics, he takes command, looks for the best method of making the machine run, and decides that certain virtues are suitable for the driver of history's chariot and that others are not. He gropes a little at first and hesitates as to whether Russia should first pass through the capitalist and industrial phase. But this comes to the same as doubting whether the revolution can take place in Russia. He himself is Russian and his task is to make the Russian Revolution. He jettisons economic fatalism and embarks on action. He roundly declares, from 1902 on, that the workers will never elaborate an independent ideology by themselves.

He denies the spontaneity of the masses. Socialist doctrine supposes a scientific basis that only the intellectuals can give it. When he says that all distinctions between workers and intellectuals must be effaced, what he really means is that it is possible not to be proletarian and know better than the proletariat what its interests are. He then congratulates Lassalle for having carried on a tenacious struggle against the spontaneity of the masses. "Theory," he says, "should subordinate spontaneity." 2 In plain language, that means that revolution needs leaders and theorists.

2 Marx said much the same: "What certain proletarians, or even the entire proletariat, imagine to be their goal is of no importance."

He attacks both reformism, which he considers guilty of dissipating revolutionary strength, and terrorism,3 which he thinks an exemplary and inefficacious attitude. The revolution, before being either economic or sentimental, is military. Until the day that the revolution breaks out, revolutionary action is identified with strategy. Autocracy is its enemy, whose main source of strength is the police force, which is nothing but a corps of professional political soldiers. The conclusion is simple: "The struggle against the political police demands special qualities, demands professional revolutionaries." The revolution will have its professional army as well as the masses, which can be conscripted when needed. This corps of agitators must be organized before the mass is organized. A network of agents is the expression that Lenin uses, thus announcing the reign of the secret society and of the realist monks of the revolution: "We are the Young Turks of the revolution," he said, "with something of the Jesuit added." From that moment the proletariat no longer has a mission. It is only one powerful means, among others, in the hands of the revolutionary ascetics.4

3 We know that his elder brother, who had chosen terrorism, was hanged.

4 Heine already called the socialists "the new puritans." Puritanism and revolution go, historically, together.

The problem of the seizure of power brings in its train the problem of the State. The State and the Revolution (1917), which deals with this subject, is the strangest and most contradictory of pamphlets. Lenin employs in it his favorite method, which is the method of authority. With the help of Marx and

Engels, he begins by taking a stand against any kind of reformism which would claim to utilize the bourgeois Stateâ ¨that organism of domination of one class over another. The bourgeois State owes its survival to the police and to the army because it is primarily an instrument of oppression.

It reflects both the irreconcilable antagonism of the classes and the forcible subjugation of this antagonism. This authority of fact is only worthy of contempt. "Even the head of the military power of a civilized State must envy the head of the clan whom patriarchal society surrounded with voluntary respect, not with respect imposed by the club." Moreover, Engels has firmly established that the concept of the State and the concept of a free society are irreconcilable. "Classes will disappear as ineluctably as they appeared. With the disappearance of classes, the State will inevitably disappear. The society that reorganizes production on the basis of the free and equal association of the producers will relegate the machine of State to the place it deserves: to the museum of antiquities, side by side with the spinning-wheel and the bronze ax."

Doubtless this explains why inattentive readers have ascribed the reason for writing The State and the Revolution to Lenin's anarchistic tendencies and have regretted the peculiar posterity of a doctrine so severe about the army, the police, the club, and bureaucracy. But Lenin's points of view, in order to be understood, must always be considered in terms of strategy. If he defends so very energetically Engels's thesis about the disappearance of the bourgeois State, it is because he wants, on the one hand, to put an obstacle in the way of the pure "economism" of Plekhanov and Kautsky and, on the other, to demonstrate that Kerensky's government is a bourgeois government, which must be destroyed. One month later, moreover, he destroys it.

It was also necessary to answer those who objected to the fact that the revolution itself had need of an administrative and repressive apparatus. There again Marx and Engels are largely used to prove, authoritatively, that the proletarian State is not a State organized on the lines of other states, but a State which, by definition, is in the process of withering away. "As soon as there is no longer a social class which must be kept oppressed ... a State ceases to be necessary.

The first act by which the [proletarian] State really establishes itself as the representative of an entire society the seizure of the society's means of productionâ ¨is, at the same time, the last real act of the State. For the government of people is substituted the administration of things. . . . The State is not abolished, it perishes." The bourgeois State is first suppressed by the proletariat. Then, but only then, the proletarian State fades away. The dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary â ¨first, to crush or suppress what remains of the bourgeois class; secondly, to bring about the socialization of the means of production. Once these two tasks are accomplished, it immediately begins to wither away.

Lenin, therefore, begins from the firm and definite principle that the State dies as soon as the socialization of the means of production is achieved and the exploiting class has consequently been suppressed. Yet, in the same pamphlet, he ends by justifying the preservation, even after the socialization of the means of production and, without any predictable end, of the dictatorship of a revolutionary faction over the rest of the people. The pamphlet, which makes continual reference to the experiences of the Commune, flatly contradicts the contemporary federalist and anti-authoritarian ideas that produced the Commune; and it is equally opposed to the optimistic forecasts of Marx and Engels. The reason for this is clear; Lenin had not forgotten that the Commune failed.

As for the means of such a surprising demonstration, they were even more simple: with each new difficulty encountered by the revolution, the State as described by Marx is endowed with a supplementary prerogative. Ten pages farther on, without any kind of transition, Lenin in effect affirms that power is necessary to crush the resistance of the exploiters "and also to direct the great mass of

the population, peasantry, lower middle classes, and semi-proletariat, in the management of the socialist economy." The shift here is undeniable; the provisional State of Marx and Engels is charged with a new mission, which risks prolonging its life indefinitely. Already we can perceive the contradiction of the Stalinist regime in conflict with its official philosophy.

Either this regime has realized the classless socialist society, and the maintenance of a formidable apparatus of repression is not justified in Marxist terms, or it has not realized the classless society and has therefore proved that Marxist doctrine is erroneous and, in particular, that the socialization of the means of production does not mean the disappearance of classes.

Confronted with its official doctrine, the regime is forced to choose: the doctrine is false, or the regime has betrayed it. In fact, together with Nechaiev and Tkachev, it is Lassalle, the inventor of State socialism, whom Lenin has caused to triumph in Russia, to the detriment of Marx. From this moment on, the history of the interior struggles of the party, from Lenin to Stalin, is summed up in the struggle between the workers' democracy and military and bureaucratic dictatorship; in other words, between justice and expediency.

There is a moment's doubt about whether Lenin is not going to find a kind of means of conciliation when we hear him praising the measures adopted by the Commune:

elected, revocable functionaries, remunerated like workers, and replacement of industrial bureaucracy by direct workers' management. We even catch a glimpse of a federalist Lenin who praises the institution and representation of the communes. But it becomes rapidly clear that this federalism is only extolled to the extent that it signifies the abolition of parliamentarianism. Lenin, in defiance of every historical truth, calls it centralism and immediately puts the accent on the . idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, while reproaching the anarchists for their intransigence concerning the State.

At this point a new affirmation, based on Engels, is introduced which justifies the continuation of the dictatorship of the proletariat after socialization, after the disappearance of the bourgeois class, and even after control by the masses has finally been achieved. The preservation of authority will now have as limits those that are prescribed for it by the very conditions of production. For example, the final withering away of the State will coincide with the moment when accommodation can be provided for all, free of charge. It is the higher phase of Communism: "To each according to his needs." Until then, the State will continue.

How rapid will be the development toward this higher phase of Communism when each shall receive according to his needs? "That, we do not and cannot know. . . . We have no data that allow us to solve these questions." "For the sake of greater clarity," Lenin affirms with his customary arbitrariness, "it has never been vouchsafed to any socialist to guarantee the advent of the higher phase of Communism." It can be said that at this point freedom definitely dies. From the rule of the masses and the concept of the proletarian revolution we first pass on to the idea of a revolution made and directed by professional agents.

The relentless criticism of the State is then reconciled with the necessary, but provisional, dictatorship of the proletariat, embodied in its leaders. Finally, it is announced that the end of this provisional condition cannot be foreseen and that, what is more, no one has ever presumed to promise that there will be an end. After that it is logical that the autonomy of the Soviets should be contested, Makhno betrayed, and the sailors of Kronstadt crushed by the party.

Undoubtedly, many of the affirmations of Lenin, who was a passionate lover of justice, can still be opposed to the Stalinist regime; mainly, the notion of the withering away of the State. Even if it is admitted that the proletarian State cannot disappear before many years have passed, it is still necessary, according to Marxist doctrine, that it should tend to disappear and become less and less

restrictive in order that it should be able to call itself proletarian. It is certain that Lenin believed this trend to be inevitable and that, in this particular sense, he has been ignored. For more than thirty years the proletarian State has shown no signs of progressive anemia. On the contrary, it seems to be enjoying increasing prosperity.

Meanwhile, in a lecture at the Sverdlov University two years later, under the pressure of outside events and interior realities, Lenin spoke with a precision which left little doubt about the indefinite continuation of the proletarian super-State. "With this machine, or rather this weapon [the State], we shall crush every form of exploitation, and when there are no longer any possibilities of exploitation left on earth, no more people owning land or factories, no more people gorging themselves under the eyes of others who are starving, when such things become impossible, then and only then shall we cast this machine aside. Then there will be neither State nor exploitation." Therefore as long as there exists on earth, and no longer in a specific society, one single oppressed person and one proprietor, so long the State will continue to exist.

It also will be obliged to increase in strength during this period so as to vanquish one by one the injustices, the governments responsible for injustice, the obstinately bourgeois nations, and the people who are blind to their own interests. And when, on an earth that has finally been subdued and purged of enemies, the final iniquity shall have been drowned in the blood of the just and the unjust, then the State, which has reached the limit of all power, a monstrous idol covering the entire earth, will be discreetly absorbed into the silent city of Justice.

Under the easily predictable pressure of adverse imperialism, the imperialism of justice was born, in reality, with Lenin. But imperialism, even the imperialism of justice, has no other end but defeat or world empire. Until then it has no other means but injustice. From now on, the doctrine is definitively identified with the prophecy. For the sake of justice in the far-away future, it authorizes injustice throughout the entire course of history and becomes the type of mystification which Lenin detested more than anything else in the world.

It contrives the acceptance of injustice, crime, and falsehood by the promise of a miracle. Still greater production, still more power, uninterrupted labor, incessant suffering, permanent war, and then a moment will come when universal bondage in the totalitarian empire will be miraculously changed into its opposite: free leisure in a universal republic. Pseudo-revolutionary mystification has now acquired a formula: all freedom must be crushed in order to conquer the empire, and one day the empire will be the equivalent of freedom. And so the way to unity passes through totality.

Totality and Trials

Totality is, in effect, nothing other than the ancient dream of unity common to both believers and rebels, but projected horizontally onto an earth deprived of God. To renounce every value, therefore, amounts to renouncing rebellion in order to accept the Empire and slavery. Criticism of formal values cannot pass over the concept of freedom. Once the impossibility has been recognized of creating, by means of the forces of rebellion alone, the free individual of whom the romantics dreamed, freedom itself has also been incorporated in the movement of history.

It has become freedom fighting for existence, which, in order to exist, must create itself. Identified with the dynamism of history, it cannot play its proper role until history comes to a stop, in the realization of the Universal City. Until then, every one of its victories will lead to an antithesis that will render it pointless. The German nation frees itself from its oppressors, but at the price of the freedom of every German. The individuals under a totalitarian regime are not free, even though man in the collective sense is free. Finally, when the Empire delivers the entire human species, freedom will reign over herds of slaves, who at least will be free in relation to God and,

in general, in relation to every kind of transcendence. The dialectic miracle, the transformation of quantity into quality, is explained here: it is the decision to call total servitude freedom. Moreover, as in all the examples cited by Hegel and Marx, there is no objective transformation, but only a subjective change of denomination. In other words, there is no miracle.

If the only hope of nihilism lies in thinking that millions of slaves can one day constitute a humanity which will be freed forever, then history is nothing but a desperate dream. Historical thought was to deliver man from subjection to a divinity; but this liberation demanded of him the most absolute subjection to historical evolution. Then man takes refuge in the permanence of the party in the same way that he formerly prostrated himself before the altar. That is why the era which dares to claim that it is the most rebellious that has ever existed only offers a choice of various types of conformity. The real passion of the twentieth century is servitude.

But total freedom is no more easy to conquer than individual freedom. To ensure man's empire over the world, it is necessary to suppress in the world and in man everything that escapes the Empire, everything that does not come under the reign of quantity: and this is an endless undertaking. The Empire must embrace time, space, and people, which compose the three dimensions of history. It is simultaneously war, obscurantism, and tyranny, desperately affirming that one day it will be liberty, fraternity, and truth; the logic of its postulates obliges it to do so. There is undoubtedly in Russia today, even in its Communist doctrines, a truth that denies Stalinist ideology. But this ideology has its logic, which must be isolated and exposed if we wish the revolutionary spirit to escape final disgrace.

The cynical intervention of the armies of the Western powers against the Soviet Revolution demonstrated, among other things, to the Russian revolutionaries that war and nationalism were realities in the same category as the class struggle. Without an international solidarity of the working classes, a solidarity that would come into play automatically, no interior revolution could be considered likely to survive unless an international order were created.

From then on, it was necessary to admit that the Universal City could only be built on two conditions: either by almost simultaneous revolutions in every big country, or by the liquidation, through war, of the bourgeois nations; permanent revolution or permanent war. We know that the first point of view almost triumphed. The revolutionary movements in Germany, Italy, and France marked the high point in revolutionary hopes and aspirations.

But the crushing of these revolutions and the ensuing reinforcement of capitalist regimes have made war the reality of the revolution. Thus the philosophy of enlightenment finally led to the Europe of the black-out. By the logic of history and of doctrine, the Universal City, which was to have been realized by the spontaneous insurrection of the oppressed, has been little by little replaced by the Empire, imposed by means of power.

Engels, with the approval of Marx, dispassionately accepted this prospect when he wrote in answer to Bakunin's Appeal to the Slavs: "The next world war will cause the disappearance from the surface of the globe, not only of reactionary classes and dynasties, but of whole races of reactionaries. That also is part of progress." That particular form of progress, in Engels's mind, was destined to eliminate the Russia of the czars. Today the Russian nation has reversed the direction of progress. War, cold and lukewarm, is the slavery imposed by world Empire. But now that it has become imperialist, the revolution is in an impasse.

If it does not renounce its false principles in order to return to the origins of rebellion, it only means the continuation, for several generations and until capitalism spontaneously decomposes, of a total dictatorship over hundreds of millions of men; or, if it wants to precipitate the advent of the Universal

City, it only signifies the atomic war, which it does not want and after which any city whatsoever will only be able to contemplate complete destruction. World revolution, by the very laws of the history it so imprudently deified, is condemned to the police or to the bomb. At the same time, it finds itself confronted with yet another contradiction.

The sacrifice of ethics and virtue, the acceptance of all the means that it constantly justified by the end it pursued, can only be accepted, if absolutely necessary, in terms of an end that is reasonably likely to be realized. The cold war supposes, by the indefinite prolongation of dictatorship, the indefinite negation of this end. The danger of war, moreover, makes this end highly unlikely. The extension of the Empire over the face of the earth is an inevitable necessity for twentieth-century revolution. But this necessity confronts it with a final dilemma: to construct new principles for itself or to renounce justice and peace, whose definitive reign it always wanted.

While waiting to dominate space, the Empire sees itself also compelled to reign over time. In denying every stable truth, it is compelled to go to the point of denying the very lowest form of truth the truth of history. It has transported revolution, which is still impossible on a worldwide scale, back into a past that it is determined to deny. Even that, too, is logical. Any kind of coherence that is not purely economic between the past and the future of humanity supposes a constant which, in its turn, can lead to a belief in a human nature.

The profound coherence that Marx, who was a man of culture, had perceived as existing between all civilizations, threatened to swamp his thesis and to bring to light a natural continuity, far broader in scope than economic continuity. Little by little, Russian Communism has been forced to burn its bridges, to introduce a solution of continuity into the problem of historical evolution. The negation of every genius who proves to be a heretic (and almost all of them do), the denial of the benefits of civilization, of artâ ¨to the infinite degree in which it escapes from history and the renunciation of vital traditions, have gradually forced contemporary Marxism within narrower and narrower limits.

It has not sufficed for Marxism to deny or to silence the things in the history of the world which cannot be assimilated by its doctrine, or to reject the discoveries of modern science. It has also had to rewrite history, even the most recent and the best-known, even the history of the party and of the Revolution. Year by year, sometimes month by month, Pravda corrects itself, and rewritten editions of the official history books follow one another off the presses.

Lenin is censored, Marx is not published. At this point comparison with religious obscurantism is no longer even fair. The Church never went so far as to decide that the divine manifestation was embodied in two, then in four, or in three, and then again in two, persons. The acceleration of events that is part of our times also affects the fabrication of truth, which, accomplished at this speed, becomes pure fantasy.

As in the fairy story, in which all the looms of an entire town wove the empty air to provide clothes for the king, thousands of men, whose strange profession it is, rewrite a presumptuous version of history, which is destroyed the same evening while waiting for the calm voice of a child to proclaim suddenly that the king is naked. This small voice, the voice of rebellion, will then be saying, what all the world can already see, that a revolution which, in order to last, is condemned to deny its universal vocation, or to renounce itself in order to be universal, is living by false principles.

Meanwhile, these principles continue to dominate the lives of millions of men. The dream of Empire, held in check by the realities of time and space, gratifies its desires on humanity. People are not only hostile to the Empire as individuals: in that case the traditional methods of terror would suffice. They are hostile to it in so far as human nature, to date, has never been able to live by history alone and has always escaped from it by some means.

The Empire supposes a negation and a certainty: the certainty of the infinite malleability of man and the negation of human nature. Propaganda techniques serve to measure the degree of this malleability and try to make reflection and conditioned reflex coincide. Propaganda makes it possible to sign a pact with those who for years have been designated as the mortal enemy. Even more, it allows the psychological effect thus obtained to be reversed and the people, once again, to be aligned against this same enemy. The experiment has not yet been brought to an end, but its principle is logical. If there is no human nature, then the malleability of man is, in fact, infinite. Political realism, on this level, is nothing but unbridled romanticism, a romanticism of expediency.

In this way it is possible to explain why Russian Marxism rejects, in its entirety and even though it knows very well how to make use of it, the world of the irrational. The irrational can serve the Empire as well as refute it. The irrational escapes calculation, and calculation alone must reign in the Empire. Man is only an interplay of forces that can be rationally influenced.

A few inconsiderate Marxists were rash enough to imagine that they could reconcile their doctrine with Freud's, for example. Their eyes were opened for them quickly enough. Freud is a heretic thinker and a "petit bourgeois" because he brought to light the unconscious and bestowed on it at least as much reality as on the super or social ego. This unconscious mind can therefore define the originality of a human nature opposed to the historic ego. Man, on the contrary, must be explained in terms of the social and rational ego and as an object of calculation.

Therefore it has been necessary to enslave not only each individual life, but also the most irrational and the most solitary event of all, the expectancy of which accompanies man throughout his entire life. The Empire, in its convulsive effort to found a definitive kingdom, strives to integrate death.

A living man can be enslaved and reduced to the historic condition of an object. But if he dies in refusing to be enslaved, he reaffirms the existence of another kind of human nature which refuses to be classified as an object. That is why the accused is never produced and killed before the eyes of the world unless he consents to say that his death is just and unless he conforms to the Empire of objects. One must die dishonored or no longer existâ ” neither in life nor in death. In the latter event, the victim does not die, he disappears. If he is punished, his punishment would be a silent protest and might cause a fissure in the totality.

But the culprit is not punished, he is simply replaced in the totality and thus helps to construct the machine of Empire. He is transformed into a cog in the machinery of production, so indispensable that in the long run he will not be used in production because he is guilty, but considered guilty because production has need of him. The concentration-camp system of the Russians has, in fact, accomplished the dialectical transition from the government of people to the administration of objects, but by identifying people with objects.

Even the enemy must collaborate in the common endeavor. Beyond the confines of the Empire there is no salvation. This is, or will be, the Empire of friendship.

But this friendship is the befriending of objects, for the friend cannot be preferred to the Empire. The friendship of people and there is no other definition of itâ ”is specific solidarity, to the point of death, against everything that is not part of the kingdom of friendship. The friendship of objects is friendship in general, friendship with everything, which supposesâ ”when it is a question of self-preservationâ ”mutual denunciation.

He who loves his friend loves him in the present, and the revolution wants to love only a man who has not yet appeared. To love is, in a certain way, to kill the perfect man who is going to be born of the revolution. In order that one day he may live, he should from now on be preferred to anyone else. In the kingdom

of humanity, men are bound by ties of affection; in the Empire of objects, men are united by mutual accusation. The city that planned to be the city of fraternity becomes an ant-heap of solitary men.

On another plane, only a brute in a state of irrational fury can imagine that men should be sadistically tortured in order to obtain their consent. Such an act only accomplishes the subjugation of one man by another, in an outrageous relationship between persons. The representative of rational totality is content, on the contrary, to allow the object to subdue the person in the soul of man. The highest mind is first of all reduced to the level of the lowest by the police technique of joint accusation. Then five, ten, twenty nights of insomnia will culminate an illusory conviction and will bring yet another dead soul into the world.

From this point of view, the only psychological revolution known to our times since Freud's has been brought about by the NKVD and the political police in general. Guided by a determinist hypothesis that calculates the weak points and the degree of elasticity of the soul, these new techniques have once again thrust aside one of man's limits and have attempted to demonstrate that no individual psychology is original and that the common measure of all human character is matter. They have literally created the physics of the soul.

From that point on, traditional human relations have been transformed. These progressive transformations characterize the world of rational terror in which, in different degrees, Europe lives. Dialogue and personal relations have been replaced by propaganda or polemic, which are two kinds of monologue. Abstraction, which belongs to the world of power and calculation, has replaced the real passions, which are in the domain of the flesh and of the irrational.

The ration coupon substituted for bread; love and friendship submitted to a doctrine, and destiny to a plan; punishment considered the norm, and production substituted for living creation, quite satisfactorily describe this disembodied Europe, peopled with positive or negative symbols of power. "How miserable," Marx exclaims, "is a society that knows no better means of defense than the executioner!" But in Marx's day the executioner had not yet become a philosopher and at least made no pretense of universal philanthropy.

The ultimate contradiction of the greatest revolution that history ever knew does not, after all, lie entirely in the fact that it lays claim to justice despite an uninterrupted procession of violence and injustice. This is an evil common to all times and a product of servitude or mystification. The tragedy of this revolution is the tragedy of nihilismâ ”it confounds itself with the drama of contemporary intelligence, which, while claiming to be universal, is only responsible for a series of mutilations to men's minds. Totality is not unity.

The state of siege, even when it is extended to the very boundaries of the earth, is not reconciliation. The claim to a universal city is supported in this revolution only by rejecting two thirds of the world and the magnificent heritage of the centuries, and by denying, to the advantage of history, both nature and beauty and by depriving man of the power of passion, doubt, happiness, and imaginative inventionâ ”in a word, of his greatness.

The principles that men give to themselves end by overwhelming their noblest intentions. By dint of argument, incessant struggle, polemics, excommunications, persecutions conducted and suffered, the universal city of free and fraternal man is slowly diverted and gives way to the only universe in which history and expediency can in fact be elevated to the position of supreme judges: the universe of the trial.

Every religion revolves around the concepts of innocence and guilt. Prometheus, the first rebel, however, denies the right to punish. Zeus himself, Zeus above all, is not innocent enough to exercise this right. Thus rebellion, in its very first manifestation, refuses to recognize punishment as legitimate. But in his last incarnation, at the end of his exhausting journey, the rebel once more

adopts the religious concept of punishment and places it at the center of his universe. The supreme judge is no longer in the heavens; history itself acts as an implacable divinity.

History, in one sense, is nothing but a protracted punishment, for the real reward will be reaped only at the end of time. We are far, it would seem, from Marxism and from Hegel, and even farther from the first rebels. Nevertheless, all purely historical thought leads to the brink of this abyss. To the extent to which Marx predicted the inevitable establishment of the classless city and to the extent to which he thus established the good will of history, every check to the advance toward freedom must be imputed to the ill will of mankind.

Marx reintroduced crime and punishment into the unchristian world, but only in relation to history. Marxism in one of its aspects is a doctrine of culpability on man's part and innocence on history's. His interpretation of history is that when it is deprived of power, it expresses itself in revolutionary violence; at the height of its power it risked becoming legal violenceâ ”in other words, terror and trial.

In the universe of religion, moreover, the final judgment is postponed; it is not necessary for crime to be punished without delay or for innocence to be rewarded. In the new universe, on the other hand, the judgment pronounced by history must be pronounced immediately, for culpability coincides with the check to progress and with punishment. History has judged Bukarin in that it condemned him to death. It proclaims the innocence of Stalin: he is the most powerful man on earth.

It is the same with Tito, about whom we do not know, so we are told, whether he is guilty or not. He is on trial, as was Trotsky, whose guilt only became clear to the philosophers of historical crime at the moment when the murderer's ax cracked his skull. Tito has been denounced, but not yet struck down. When he has been struck down, his guilt will be certain. Besides, Trotsky's and Tito's provisional innocence depended and depends to a large extent on geography; they were far removed from the arm of secular power.

That is why those who can be reached by that arm must be judged without delay. The definitive judgment of history depends on an infinite number of judgments which will have been pronounced between now and then and which will finally be confirmed or invalidated. Thus there is the promise of mysterious rehabilitations on the day when the tribunal of the world will be established by the world itself. Some, who will proclaim themselves contemptible traitors, will enter the Pantheon of mankind; others who maintain their innocence will be condemned to the hell of history. But who, then, will be the judge? Man himself, finally fulfilled in his divinity.

Meanwhile, those who conceived the prophecy, and who alone are capable of reading in history the meaning with which they previously endowed it, will pronounce sentenceâ ”definitive for the guilty, provisional sentences for the judges. But it sometimes happens that those who judge, like Rajk, are judged in their turn. Must we believe that he no longer interpreted history correctly? His defeat and death in fact prove it. Then who guarantees that those who judge him today will not be traitors tomorrow, hurled down from the height of their judgment seat to the concrete caves where history's damned are dying? The guarantee lies in their infallible clairvoyance. What proof is there of that? Their uninterrupted success. The world of trial is a spherical world in which success and innocence authenticate each other and where every mirror reflects the same mystification.

Thus there will be a historic grace,5 whose power alone can interpret events and which favors or excommunicates the subject of the Empire. To guard against its caprices, the latter has only faith at his disposalâ ”faith as defined in the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius: "We should always be prepared, so as never to err, to believe that what I see as white is black, if the hierarchic Church defines it thus." Only this active faith held by the representatives of

truth can save the subject from the mysterious ravages of history. He is not yet free of the universe of trial to which he is bound by the historic sentiment of fear. But without this faith he runs a perpetual risk of becoming, without having wished to do so and with the best intentions in the world, an objective criminal.

5 "The ruse of reason," in the historical universe, presents the problem of evil in a new form.

The universe of trial finally culminates in this concept, at which point we have come full circle. At the end of this long insurrection in the name of human innocence, there arises, by an inevitable perversion of fact, the affirmation of general culpability. Every man is a criminal who is unaware of being so. The objective criminal is, precisely, he who believed himself innocent. His actions he con-' sidered subjectively inoffensive, or even advantageous for the future of justice. But it is demonstrated to him that objectively his actions have been harmful to that future. Are we dealing with scientific objectivity? No, but with historical objectivity.

How is it possible to know, for example, if the future of justice is compromised by the unconsidered denunciation of present injustice? Real objectivity would consist in judging by those results which can be scientifically observed and by facts and their general tendencies. But the concept of objective culpability proves that this curious kind of objectivity is only based on results and facts which will only become accessible to science in the year 2000, at the very earliest. Meanwhile, it is embodied in an interminable subjectivity which is imposed on others as objectivity: and that is the philosophic definition of terror.

This type of objectivity has no definable meaning, but power will give it a content by decreeing that everything of which it does not approve is guilty. It will consent to say, or allow to be said, to philosophers who live outside the Empire, that in this way it is taking a risk in regard to history, just as the objective culprit took a risk, though without knowing it. When victim and executioner have disappeared, the matter will be judged. But this consolation is of any value only to the executioner, who has really no need of it. Meanwhile, the faithful are regularly bidden to attend strange feasts where, according to scrupulous rites, victims overwhelmed with contrition are offered as sacrifice to the god of history.

The express object of this idea is to prevent indifference in matters of faith. It is compulsory evangelization. The law, whose function it is to pursue suspects, fabricates them. By fabricating them, it converts them. In bourgeois society, for example, every citizen is supposed to approve the law. In objective society every citizen will be presumed to disapprove of it.

Or at least he should always be ready to prove that he does not disapprove of it. Culpability no longer has any factual basis; it simply consists of absence of faith, which explains the apparent contradiction of the objective system. Under a capitalist regime, the man who says he is neutral is considered objectively to be favorable to the regime. Under the regime of the Empire, the man who is neutral is considered hostile objectively to the regime. There is nothing astonishing about that.

If a subject of the Empire does not believe in the Empire, he is, of his own choice, nothing, historically speaking; therefore he takes sides against history and is, in other words, a blasphemer. Even lip service paid to faith will not suffice; it must be lived and acted upon in order to be served properly and the citizen must be always on the alert to consent in time to the changes in dogma. At the slightest error potential culpability becomes in its turn objective culpability.

Consummating its history in this manner, the revolution is not content with killing all rebellion. It insists on holding every man, even the most servile,

responsible for the fact that rebellion ever existed and still exists under the sun. In the universe of the trial, conquered and completed at last, a race of culprits will endlessly shuffle toward an impossible innocence, under the grim regard of the grand inquisitors. In the twentieth century power wears the mask of tragedy.

Here ends Prometheus' surprising itinerary. Proclaiming his hatred of the gods and his love of mankind, he turns away from Zeus with scorn and approaches mortal men in order to lead them in an assault against the heavens. But men are weak and cowardly; they must be organized. They love pleasure and immediate happiness; they must be taught to refuse, in order to grow up, immediate rewards. Thus Prometheus, in his turn, becomes a master who first teaches and then commands. Men doubt that they can safely attack the city of light and are even uncertain whether the city exists.

They must be saved from themselves. The hero then tells them that he, and he alone, knows the city. Those who doubt his word will be thrown into the desert, chained to a rock, offered to the vultures. The others will march henceforth in darkness, behind the pensive and solitary master. Prometheus alone has become god and reigns over the solitude of men. But from Zeus he has gained only solitude and cruelty; he is no longer Prometheus, he is Caesar. The real, the eternal Prometheus has now assumed the aspect of one of his victims. The same cry, springing from the depths of the past, rings forever through the Scythian desert.

The end