

The Oswald Spengler Collection: Biographical Essay; Extracts From The Decline Of The West; The Hour Of Decision

Biographical Essay by Donald Stockton

[Biographical Essay](#)

Extracts From The Decline Of The West

[Extracts From The Decline Of The West: Introduction](#)

Sections from Spengler, *The Decline of the West*:

[The Problem Of Civilization](#)

[Introduction: The Conclusion - Imperialism](#)

[Architecture and Divinities](#)

[Imitation and Ornament](#)
[The History Of Style As An Organism](#)
[Music And Plastic: The Arts Of Form](#)
[Popular And Esoteric Character](#)
[Will To Power](#)
[Impressionism](#)
[The Morale Of Dawning Civilization](#)
[The Great Style: The History Of Style As An Organism](#)
[Pergamum And Bayreuth: The End Of Art](#)
[Classical Behaviour Drama And Faustian Character Drama](#)
[Every Culture Possesses Its Own Ethic](#)
[Every Science Is Dependent Upon Religion](#)
[Atheism](#)
[Origin And Landscape: The Group Of The Higher Cultures](#)
[Cities And Peoples](#)
[Reformation](#)
[Science, Puritanism](#)
[The Second Religiousness](#)
[The State](#)
[Philosophy Of Politics](#)
[Conclusion](#)

Readers notes for The Hour Of Decision: Part One: Germany And World Historical Evolution, London, 1934:

This document, prepared for Internet publication, replaces chapter headings with Roman numerals, has alterations whereby internal page references are necessarily rendered into references to other sections, a spelling correction and the replacement of a body reference to a footnote.

The Hour Of Decision was composed just after the Nazi revolution, and was banned by Third Reich authority. It assessed the decline of European power and its crisis of culture and civilization, the placement of the then-Russia within the province of a global challenge to Western Civilization, and the roles of capitalism and Marxism in the crisis. The book (guardedly but prophetically) placed deep reservations against the Nazis to make appropriate choices. Dated by the immediate circumstances it describes, the work nonetheless has a general quality which makes it part of the literature of the struggle for a 'European' Cultural Renaissance.

[The Hour Of Decision: Introduction](#)

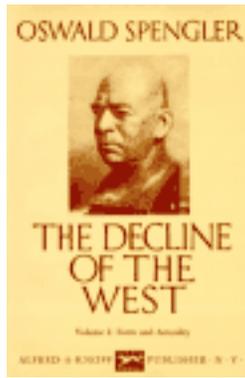
[The Hour Of Decision: Part One](#)

[The Hour Of Decision: Part Two](#)

[The Hour Of Decision: Part Three](#)

[The Hour Of Decision: Part Four](#)

[Homepage](#)



Oswald Spengler's Uneven Legacy

by Donald L. Stockton

SHORTLY BEFORE the end of the First World War, in the summer of 1918, a sizable volume appeared in bookstores throughout Germany. Bearing the title **Der Untergang des Abendlandes** (*The Decline of the West*), and written by an unknown former schoolmaster, the work in a short period of time found a wide audience. The initial printing was completely sold out in a period of six months, and a second and third printing followed. Though primarily read in the nation of Germany, the ominous title and original scholarship that the book presented caused it to spread gradually throughout the Western world. Within the course of two years, the name of Oswald Spengler was on the lips of many, both intellectual and unlearned.

Although both the *Decline* and its author are little-known today, for nearly two decades after its publishing the historical thought contained within the pages of Spengler's first work was included in most discussions of historical thinking, as well as discussions of possible future events. What, then, was the unique nature of *The Decline of the West*, and why has interest in the work so faded in the intervening time? Further, who was this unknown Oswald Spengler, and how did he originate the highly inventive ideas that made this work so greatly debated? These are the questions that I will attempt to illumine in this essay, in conjunction with some brief discussions of Spengler's more minor works. I will also attempt to define Spengler's influence on later historical thinkers, something I think is important for a true understanding of the author's legacy.

Biographical Sketch of Spengler's Early Life

ITHINK IT NECESSARY to inform the reader that it is a difficult if not hopeless task to uncover much information about Oswald Spengler's personal life. In searching a library of almost six million items, as well as various other resources, I was only able to find one book in English with any significant biographical information on Spengler -- *Oswald Spengler: A Critical Estimate* by H. Stuart Hughes. Even that one book was very limited in its information, and yet it was that same work that served as reference not only for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, but also for other references that included discussions of Spengler. These facts serve to prompt again the question asked earlier: Why has knowledge of Spengler faded so far from contemporary thinking? I will address that question later in this paper.

Born in the summer of 1880 in the small town of Blankenburg, Germany, Spengler was raised by parents of reasonable means. His father was a former mining technician who had become a postal worker, and from him the author of the *Decline* seems to have received the scientific and mathematical gifts he would later develop. After graduating from a classical high school in Halle, Germany, he followed the typical German practice of attending several universities in turn -- Munich, Berlin, and finally Halle. He returned to Halle in 1901 to complete his doctoral degree. He studied in mathematics and natural sciences, and chose as his thesis topic the fragments of Heraclitus, a somewhat obscure pre-Socratic philosopher, and completed the degree in 1904.

Spengler was interested in education, and passed the state teaching examination shortly after completing his doctoral degree. He initially took a position at Saarbrücken, and he taught subsequently in Düsseldorf and Hamburg. After moving up to the Hamburg Realgymnasium (practical high school), Spengler was asked to teach a variety of subjects, from German to history and geography. He was remembered as a fine instructor, with a insightful teaching style, and was well-liked by his students as well as his fellow professors. This was to be his last teaching position, however, as the climate of Hamburg aggravated the severe headaches that he often suffered from.

At this point Spengler moved to Munich and there took up residence as a private scholar, living austere on a small income that he received from inheritance. His financial condition degenerated even further before the outbreak of World War I, as most of the funds in his inheritance were in foreign bonds, and these no longer brought in any interest. He was not called for military service, due to his headaches and an inner-ear ailment, and spent most of the war years living in a dingy slum apartment, eating poorly, and writing down by candlelight many of the concepts that would later appear in the *Decline*. Spengler was sustained during this time by the conviction that within him the seed of a powerful idea was developing, and that

it was only a matter of time before that idea would come to his fruition.

The Genesis of *The Decline of the West*

IT WAS DURING THIS TIME in Munich, where Spengler seemed to have reached such a desperate point in his own life's history, that he abruptly formed a new and striking vision of the world's history.



At that time the World-War appeared to me both as imminent and also as the inevitable outward manifestation of the historical crisis, and my endeavor was to comprehend it from an examination of the spirit of the preceding centuries -- not years... Thereafter I saw the present -- the approaching World-War -- in a quite other light... I [saw] world-history as a picture of endless formations and transformations, of the marvelous waxing and waning of

organic forms.

Spengler's natural affinity for science and the natural world led him to form a highly original philosophy of history -- namely, that the existence of a culture mirrors that of a biological organism. Birth, growth, apogee, decay, and death were features that were present in both phenomena, and the rhythms of nature could be found as the underpinnings in the development of individual human cultures. Spengler called this concept "the cyclical morphology of culture" and presented the metaphysical grounds for such a theory in the preface to his *Decline of the West*, which I will discuss later.

Spengler initially wrote what would become the first volume of the *Decline* in the form of long aphorisms that were essentially detailed reflections on one central concept. He felt that this rather unsystematic way of approaching the investigation would lead to more intuitive and vital understanding. As Spengler wrote in the introduction to the *Decline*,

[My writing] is intuitive and depictive through and through, written in a language which seeks to present objects and relations illustratively instead of offering an army of ranked concepts."

Although critics maintain that this technique makes the work fragmentary and uneven in nature, Spengler felt the aphoristic style, which he had adopted from the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, was the most powerful way to reach organic ideas that could not be systematically analyzed. Nietzsche was not the only thinker who

had affected Spengler's manner of interpretation, as I will show in the following section.

Spengler's Influences

BEFORE LAUNCHING INTO A DISCUSSION (or a reading) of the *Decline*, it is beneficial to have a general frame of the author's major sources for inspiration and insight. Although Spengler is an extremely intuitive historian, often leaving the reader somewhat baffled by broad jumps in thought that he makes in the *Decline*, he is not without method or precedent. His work is, in some ways, a manifestation of certain intellectual trends that had been present (primarily in German philosophy) for some time. G.W.F. Hegel, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Friedrich Nietzsche are often mentioned specifically by Spengler throughout his works as predecessors in thought, and there are a great number of others that are alluded to. Furthermore, there are a number of historical scholars that preceded Spengler in certain ways but were unknown to him. I will only be presenting the former here, as the latter can only be helpful in a critical estimation of Spengler in an overall historical context, not in understanding his individual works.

Spengler counted among his forerunners three of the most creative minds that Germany has ever produced. What is the content of their work, and how does it relate to Spengler's efforts in the *Decline*? Obviously, a full treatment of such a question is not possible or desired here, but I will attempt to lay down some general principles each originated which informed the author's work. It is important to see what Spengler derived from these men, for as he notes in his explanatory essay of 1921 "Pessimism?",

...Goethe's observations on nature, and Hegel's lectures on world history were all written in clear view of factual reality -- something that cannot be said [of systematic philosophers].... I construe the relationships between reality and speculative thought in a manner wholly different from the systematic philosophers. For them reality is lifeless matter from which laws can be derived. For me, reality presents examples that illuminate an experienced thought...

Spengler in many ways opposes the trend in the thought of his time (and of ours) to offer up as valid only thought that can be proved through the rigors of logic and reason. He justifies this strong anti-rationalist tendency in his thinking by referring primarily to these three great German philosophers. They too, in Spengler's mind, held great reverence for fact over idea, a principle that Spengler brings to the fore in *The Decline of the West*. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was a 19th-century German philosopher who held professorships at a number of German universities, most notably Heidelberg, Berlin, and Jena. Although he wrote on a host of

philosophical topics, it is Hegel's *Philosophy of History* that surely had the most powerful effect on Spengler, as in it Hegel makes a forcible attempt to unify seemingly disparate cultural and historical phenomena into a single process. Although Hegel's central thesis is radically different than Spengler's -- namely, that world history is a rational, gradual unfolding of the spirit of freedom within the minds and hearts of men over time -- Hegel attempts in a way not dissimilar to Spengler's to analogize stages in the development of each culture. Hegel presents concrete examples that he believes illustrate deep relationships between the political manifestation of each people and their understanding of what it means to be a human being. Spengler owes a debt to Hegel, since "Hegel was the last great thinker to take political realities as his point of departure without letting his thought be entirely smothered with abstractions." Hegel did not theorize without continual reference to concrete examples, and Spengler claims to have made the same attempt in *The Decline of the West*.

While there are occasional references to Hegel in Spengler's writings, it is an unlikely pair of thinkers, Johann von Goethe and Friedrich Nietzsche, that Spengler holds before him in his chief work. Spengler makes in plain from the outset of *The Decline of the West* that he intends to write with certain principles learned from these two philosophers constantly in mind. This pair is particularly unusual to be discussed in unison, as their world-views are strikingly different, but Spengler merges the elements that he considers most central to his endeavor into an unusual fusion. In the "Introduction" to the *Decline*, there is a crucial footnote in which is contained the following statement by Goethe:

The Godhead is effective in the living and not in the dead, in the becoming and the changing, not in the become and the set-fast; and therefore, the reason is concerned only to strive towards the divine through the becoming and the living, and the understanding only to make use of the become and the set-fast.

This rather unique and difficult quote summarizes, in Spengler's words, "my entire philosophy." Basically, Spengler seems to maintain that it is only while beings are changing and evolving toward something that they are truly alive and vital. One author notes, "...everything transitory is only a metaphor", the final chorus of Goethe's *Faust* rang out again and again in the *Decline*. "All things human ... were only passing reflections of great hidden truths." This position holds the germ of Spengler's "morphology of culture" within it, as it opens the door wide for many valid interpretations of the world made by many different human beings, while simultaneously presuming a deeper, more ultimate process in the world, unknown to those beings.

As already noted, Spengler had borrowed the aphoristic style that initiated the *Decline* from Nietzsche, and his debt does not end there. Spengler believed that the German philosopher was the first to uncover clearly the changing nature of morality and metaphysics over history that Goethe had postulated. Take for

example this quote from Nietzsche's *Daybreak*:

How the overall moral judgments have shifted! The great men of antique morality, Epictetus for instance, knew nothing of the now normal glorification of thinking of others, of living for others; in the light of our moral fashion they would have to be called downright immoral, for they strove with all their might for their ego and against feelings with others.

Spengler thought that even though Nietzsche did not have a sense for the underlying system that gave rise to these disparate notions of ethics, he took the first step that Goethe had hinted at. Nietzsche, the author of the *Untimely Meditations* was also "a man out of season" as Spengler claimed to be in the *Decline* -- a prophet of things coming into being, but not presently existing.

The Decline of the West

OSWALD SPENGLER BELIEVED that he stood at the cusp of a new wave of historical thinking. Whereas in the past, historians had been content to gather facts, chart broad cultural movements, and take the flow of time as consisting of events that were causally related, Spengler had a vision that made these circumstances not merely existent, but necessary. The "morphology of culture" that Spengler conceived made history not merely a past, but a destiny, for each culture contained within it an essence that inevitably must reveal itself. As he states in his introduction,

Each Culture has its own possibilities of self-expression which arise, ripen, decay, and never return. There is not one sculpture, one painting, one mathematics, but many. Each is in its deepest essence different from the others, each limited in duration and self-contained....

Spengler felt that this insight must force historians to approach their work in an entirely different light. For he did not believe that a developing culture borrowed or integrated values or systems from past ones, at least not in their true nature. Each is working out its own unique being, and if, for example, the Greeks borrowed certain mathematical concepts from the Egyptians, it was with an entirely different understanding of what they meant and what they were for. To Spengler, each culture in the world's history had its own unique "soil" in which to develop and grow. The physical terrain, proximity of neighbors, natural resources, and other factors influence the manner in which the "seed" of the inhabiting people unfolds not only geographically but also socially and economically. This, coupled with the unique temporal period and particular population of each great culture,

serves to produce a social organism that is distinct from all others, just as one variety of plant is distinct from the rest.

However, Spengler maintained that the underlying pattern that each followed could be revealed through analysis, especially through studying the art, music, and architecture of each and discovering analogues.

I hope to show that without exception all great creations and forms in religion, art, politics, social life, economy and science appear, fulfill themselves, and die down contemporaneously in all the cultures; that the inner structure of one corresponds strictly with that of all others; that there is not a single phenomenon of deep physiognomic importance in the record of one for which we could not find a counterpart in the record of every other; and that this counterpart is to be found under a characteristic form and in a perfectly definite chronological position.

This is clearly a bold claim, and one that most of Spengler's past critics contend he failed to accomplish. However, there are a few contemporary scholars that are attempting to make good on Spengler's assertion in a nearly scientific way, as I will mention at the end of the paper.

It is important to note which cultures were to be investigated by Spengler in the *Decline*, and how he categorized them. He specifies eight that are distinct and conspicuous in the annals of world history: the Egyptian, the "Classical" (the sum of Greek and Roman civilization), the "Magian" (a combination of Iranian, Hebrew, and Arabian cultures), the Chinese, the Indian, the Babylonian, the Mexican, and the Western civilization in which we are now living. The bulk of the *Decline* is concerned with comparisons between the "Classical" civilization and our modern one, the Western or "Faustian." (Spengler uses the term "Faustian" interchangeably because he sees as the essence of Western Civilization the desire for infinity and boundlessness that is personified in Goethe's *Faust*.) However, the author makes frequent allusions to the remaining cultures, except for the Babylonian and the Mexican, which go virtually unmentioned. Spengler makes little attempt to justify singling out these eight as the best examples of what is defined by culture. He merely maintains them each to be "...separate worlds of dynamic being." Spengler believes that there is no logical basis for selecting these eight, but rather recommends them as displaying the essential feature of a Culture -- the production of a Civilization.

Every Culture has its own Civilization. In this work, for the first time, the two words are used in a periodic sense, to express a strict and necessary organic succession. The Civilization is the inevitable destiny of the Culture. Civilizations are the most external and artificial states which a species of developed humanity is capable. They are a conclusion, the thing-become succeeding the

thing-becoming. They are an end, irrevocable, yet by inward necessity reached again and again.

Spengler's understanding of world-history -- a number of elevated cultures with no linear relationship -- causes him to break radically with other historical thinkers on this point. As he sees each Culture exhibiting an essentially organic nature, it is at the time that a Culture ceases to evolve and grow that it forms a Civilization; the Culture has brought itself into fruition, and in its last phase will maintain the conventions and systems it has brought into being. It has ceased to relate to these ideas in a dynamic way, however, and eventually alienation and decay results.

I have striven thus far to present the general world-picture that Spengler operates out of in *The Decline of the West*, and now I think it wise to turn to the work itself for some concrete illustrations of the author's interpretation of world history. I here also wish to remark that my interpretation of the work is for all intents and purposes a solitary one. I was able to discover virtually no critical scholarship on the *Decline* in English anywhere, whether it be in nearby libraries, on the Internet, or elsewhere. Therefore any particular bias or error that results in this exposition is surely mine. I also wish to remark that what follows is not a full treatment of the *Decline* -- the book runs over a thousand pages over two volumes, and I think it would be impossible to analyze it all here.

Spengler opens the book with a rather interesting discussion of mathematics, a subject that he had great interest in and affinity for throughout his life. He presents a discussion of mathematics first, as he wishes to illustrate that even in this, the most abstract and analytical body of human knowledge, there has been no progress made toward any goal, save those necessitated by each culture. He describes how in each great Culture, mathematics is seen as addressing a unique problem and is not even understood as anything apart from overcoming an obstacle to practical concerns.

Every philosophy has hitherto grown up in conjunction with a mathematic belonging to it. Number is the symbol of causal necessity. Like the conception of God, it contains the ultimate meaning of the world-as-nature.

Spengler seems to be saying here that numbers are a deep and unexplainable symbol from which human beings work to give definition to their world. Because a number cannot be shown to rest on some larger, more fundamental concept, its origin (like God's) is a mystery which man attempts to fathom by creating mathematical systems. This first chapter is crucial to establishing Spengler's hypothesis, for, as I previously mentioned, mathematics is the most abstract (and therefore seemingly the most universal) human endeavor. If he can show that even in this field there is no continuity, he has gone a good way toward demonstrating the reality of his "morphological" principle.

The mathematic of the Classical soul sprouted almost out of

nothingness, the historically constituted Western soul, already possessing the Classical science (not inwardly, but outwardly as a thing learnt), had to win its own by apparently altering and perfecting, but in reality destroying the essentially alien Euclidean system.

Spengler attempts to demonstrate that the central theme of the Classical mathematic is the problem of measurement, while the "Faustian" man's is the problem of function related to his desire for infinity. The Western man uses mathematics to break down the spatial world, as in modern calculus. Spengler's arguments are somewhat technical, but for the most part quite convincing.

After his treatment of mathematics, Spengler turns to metaphysics, where he lays out most of the fundamental theory used in *The Decline of the West*. His initial distinction is one alluded to earlier -- the separation between natural events and historical events. Speaking of history he writes,

Every happening is unique and incapable of being repeated. Becoming lies beyond the domain of cause and effect, law and measurement. But history, as positively treated, is not pure becoming; it is an image radiated from the waking-consciousness of the historian, in which the becoming dominates the become.

Here Spengler does two things: first, he makes history indecipherable by the rational understanding of cause and effect, and second, he asserts that it is still intelligible to men (specifically historians like himself) because we ourselves are in a historical process of becoming as well and therefore are in tune with history instinctively. He goes on to define this historical view: "The Morphology of the organic, of history and life and all that bears the sign of direction and destiny, is called Physiognomic." As I will mention later, it is the related idea of "Physiognomic rhythm" that Spengler believes connects man with history in a powerful way.

Another interesting concept is presented by Spengler in this central section: the idea of Destiny.

The word "destiny" expresses an indescribable inward certainty: causality carries the notion of law. The physiognomic flair, by which it is possible to read a lifetime, a fate, from a face, operates without deliberate effort or any system. It is far removed from cause and effect. Still the inward feeling of certain destiny is the foundation of the recognition of cause and effect, as becoming is to the become.... The idea of destiny governs the world-picture of history, for destiny is the true existence-mode of the prime phenomenon.

In this section Spengler ridicules the notion that events are ruled by the law of causality, for all biological life is bound by necessity in some fashion. Just as it is

certain that a seed will grow into a plant, decay, and die and not transmogrify into a worm or continue growing indefinitely, Spengler sees it as certain that history will unfold in a manner that is guided by inexplicable forces. As he comments, "...that which actually ensues subserves a deeper necessity, and for the eye that sweeps over the distant past visibly conforms to a major order." This order lies deep within the essence of the universe, of being itself, and it is not unjustified to consider Spengler something of a mystic in this notion of destiny.

In the following section, Spengler elaborates on principles that guide his method throughout the *Decline*. He first discusses the relationship between space and death. As was mentioned during the outline of Goethe's influence on the author of the *Decline*, Spengler takes everything external to the individual (whether it be form, matter, space, etc.) as a symbol from which the human being derives meaning and makes sense of his own existence.

All that is, symbolizes. From this property of being significant nothing is exempt...

In discussing this relationship between spatiality and death Spengler writes,

A deep relation, and one which is early felt, exists between space and death. Man is the only being that knows death.... The child suddenly grasps the lifeless corpse for what it is, something that has become wholly matter, wholly space, and at the same moment it feels itself as an individual being in an alien extended world.

He feels that all higher thought derives from a consideration of death, either directly or indirectly. The individual is a thing becoming, as it changes and develops over time, but it is also something become, as there is a continuity of identity that remains over the course of human life. The external world is a constant reminder of the fixed and unchanging, and thus Spengler sees it as a constant reminder of inertia and death. Therefore, he feels that the manner in which each Culture interprets the external world is the most essential element in determining the course of that Culture. He writes,

A deep identity unites the awakening of the soul, its birth into clear existence in the name of a Culture, with the sudden realization of distance and time, the birth of its outer world through the symbol of extension; and thenceforth this symbol is and remains the prime symbol of that life, imparting to it its specific style and the historical form in which it progressively actualizes its inward possibilities.

Such a statement is rather abstract, so when Spengler goes on to discuss its specific manifestations in the Classical and Faustian cultures, a more concrete idea can be formed of his theory. The Classical man defined his external world as the material, the definite, and the immediately present.

The Classical universe, the Cosmos or well-ordered aggregate of all

near and completely viewable things, is concluded by the corporeal vault of heaven. More there is not.

He discusses the Greek temple as a clear evidence of this understanding, as it is designed to eliminate the feeling of space and gaps. Its curves are so refined as to be indistinguishable, and the whole effect is of centralization and distinctness. Conversely, the Western conception of the external universe is of absolute void, a liberation from all material weight.

...an obligatory consequence of this way of conceiving actuality [is that] the instrumental music of the great eighteenth-century masters should emerge as a master-art -- for it is the only one of the arts whose form-world is inwardly related to the contemplative vision of pure space.

He continues,

This prime feeling of a loosing, solution, of the Soul in the Infinite, of a liberation from all material weight which the highest moments of our music give, sets free also the energy of depth that is in the Faustian soul....

These disparate interpretations of the external world as a symbol for man's true essence, coupled with his cyclical concept of the "morphology of culture" form the foundation upon which the rest of the *Decline* is built. Spengler devotes the majority of the work to explaining this movement from the definite to the indefinite, from the finite to the infinite that has taken place since the days of Greece and Rome, and what this shift means for mankind. I will attempt in the remainder of this section to illustrate specific examples that Spengler utilizes to demonstrate this shift in world history.

As was previously stated, for Spengler the architecture of a Culture is a key manifestation of a people's essence in the material world. It is no surprise then that he first investigates this, the most practical of arts, in the *Decline*. He writes,

...the created expression-space of the Classical arts is equally alien to ours. In no other Culture is the firm footing, the socket, so emphasized. The Doric column bores into the ground, the vessels are always thought of from below upward, whereas those of the Renaissance float above their footing.

This fact has been noted by other authors, and reinforces the interpretation of Classical world-view as opposed to the Faustian that was noted earlier. Many of the architectural works that are most emblematic of both cultures are religious structures, and Spengler quickly segues into a discussion of these temples and how they relate to the deities that were imagined to inhabit them.

The plurality of separate bodies which represents Cosmos for the

Classical soul, requires a similar pantheon -- hence the unique polytheism. The single world-volume, be it conceived as cavern or as space, demands the single god of Magian or Western Christianity.

The Greeks and Romans were willing to make their deities concrete, depicting them in marble or paint, while for Western man God is infinite and shrouded in dark mystery, as daylight "...gives visual bounds and therefore shapes bodily things." Spengler notes Beethoven's tone-colors, Rembrandt's etchings, and the darkness of Valhalla as specific examples of the truth of this theory.

Following an interesting and supplementary discussion of the plastic arts and music, the "soul-image" of the peoples of the "Apollinian" (Spengler uses this word interchangeably for "Classical," as it evokes the concrete ideal that is characteristic of the Culture) and the Faustian cultures take center stage.

This imaginary soul-body ... is never anything but the exact mirror-image of the form in which the matured culture-man looks on his outer world.... The soul-image like the world-image has its directional depth, its horizon, and its boundedness or its unboundedness.

Spengler concludes that the concept of soul for the Apollinian man is found in the role or mask that is so typical of the Greek tragedy, where the external, public aspect is most significant. The author probes deeper into the Greek tragedy to determine that within that form it is specific moments that are exclusively portrayed, while in the work of a playwright like Shakespeare, the entire lives of the characters are considered and brought to bear on every aspect of the drama. Thus he asserts,

The Greek 'soul' is the 'here and now,' the static, 'fixed point,' being ... our tragedy is precisely the opposite.... It awakens the primary feelings of an energetic human being, the fierceness and the joy of tension, danger, violent need, the triumph of overcoming and destroying....

The Faustian soul is depicted through directional biography, where the viewers become aware of the inner distance between persons as evidenced by the Shakespearean soliloquy. Spengler continues his exploration of the "soul-image," looking at Buddhism, Stoicism, and Socialism, but much of this portion is rather uninteresting and unoriginal. Spengler seems to be at his best when he remains in the study of the Classical and Western cultures.

He further analyzes these two cultures' conceptions of science or "nature-knowledge," but it is a little too cryptic and lengthy for me to delve into here.

The second volume of the *Decline*, however, opens with a strikingly poetic section which I feel is important to include summarily.

Regard the flowers at eventide as, one after the other, they close in the setting sun. Strange is the feeling that then presses in upon you -- a feeling of enigmatic fear in the presence of this blind dreamlike earth-bound existence.... The plant is something cosmic; the animal has an additional quality, it is a microcosm in relation to a macrocosm. All that is cosmic bears the trademark of periodicity. It has beat-rhythm.... The word "consciousness" is ambiguous; it contains the meaning Being ("Dasein") and Waking-consciousness (Wachsein). Being possesses beat and direction: waking consciousness is tension and extension. The plant exists without waking-consciousness. The development of theoretical thought within the human waking-consciousness gives rise to a kind of activity that makes inevitable a fresh conflict -- that between Being (existence) and Waking-Being (consciousness).

It is this tension between the quasi-biological unfolding of the individual cultures and the conscious thought and activity of individual men that occupies the majority of the second volume. I will treat it much more briefly than the first, as I have already spoken at length of the "morphology of culture" and it is this concept that dominates the second volume of the *Decline*.

The "high cultures" (those spoken of earlier) which are assessed in the latter volume are for Spengler

...the waking-being of a single huge organism which makes not only custom, myths, technique and art, but the very peoples and classes incorporated in itself the vessels of one single form-language and one single history.

These "organisms" undergo rapid and fundamental changes that Spengler asserts have no causal basis, but move in epochs that are guided by Destiny. (By "epoch" Spengler means "turning point" or "change" and not a period of time.) He believes that the existence of these unexplainable epochs is self-evident, and that "The origins of the earth, of life, of the free-moving animal, are such epochs, and, therefore, mysteries that we can do no more than accept." Needless to say, such a conclusion is intuitive, not rational, and defies attempts to logical justification.

A broad overview of the eight cultures is then offered, and the author maintains that there can be many comparisons made between their evolution as each undergoes a similar structure of development and lasted for a similar duration. For example, when remarking on the feudal period of the Egyptian Culture, Spengler writes,

...[it] presents so astounding a similarity with the course of events in

the Chinese springtime from I-Wang (934-909) and that in the Western from the Emperor Henry IV (1056-1106) that a unified comparative study of all three might well be risked.

He points out numerous general parallels of this kind, and thus attempts to fortify his theory.

At this point the *Decline* descends from the more macroscopic view of cultures into the discussion of cities and their peoples. Spengler points out in his introduction that as a Culture progresses toward a Civilization that

In place of a world, there is a city, a point, in which the whole life of broad regions collects while the rest dries up.

The city-dweller of today is the hallmark of the decline of civilization, as he is

...a new sort of nomad, traditionless, religionless, clever, and deeply contemptuous of the countryman.

When the variety of peoples that invigorate a Culture migrate to cities and become more homogenous, stagnation and ultimately decay begin to set in as a result of a uniformity of ideas and influences, and the city-dweller looks on the past of the Culture with hostility and alienation. In this section, he also addresses the concept of race, declaring that race and environment belong together, and that "...if in [its] home that race cannot now be found, this means that race has ceased to exist." Language is also examined, and its connection with a people.

The last part of the *Decline* is unusually prophetic, and the sections on the state and technology yield diverse commentaries on the political situation in Germany during Spengler's time. Spengler states that the present age is undergoing a transformation from Napoleonism (a military, yet popular world-dominion) to Caesarism (individual states governed by a wholly personal power). It is within these dictatorial states that

'Race' springs forth, pure and irresistible -- the strongest win and the residue is their spoil. They seize the management of the world, and the realm of books and problems petrifies or vanishes from memory.

A more chilling foreboding of National Socialism is hard to imagine. Spengler sees Caesarism as arising in the last stages of a Culture, during the stagnant Civilization, as the spirit of the previously-developed systems is gone and all that exists is their outward form. Looking at the Caesar, Spengler sees such a man as virtually unconnected to his people, yet with an instinct for what they require, and with a great ability to command. Spengler sees the final conflict in the Western world as arising between the democratic societies, with their rule of economics, and the Caesarized societies, with their rule of power.

The final section, on technology, is basically a sketch of a later work by Spengler

called *Man and Technics*, which I will mention later, and gives a survey of the effects of machine technology on mankind. Man has become slave to his creation, because

The machine has forcibly increased his numbers and changed his habits in a direction from which there is no return.

This technology allows Caesarism to triumph, and the sword proves victorious over money. This is the end of the Western age. Spengler closes the *Decline* fatalistically:

We have not the freedom to reach this or to that, but the freedom to do the necessary or to do nothing. And a task that historic necessity has set will be accomplished with the individual or against him.

Fallout from the *Decline*

AS MENTIONED AT THE BEGINNING of this paper, *The Decline of the West* saw considerable sales in Spengler's native country of Germany, and reasonable levels in the rest of Europe and America. Its provocative title and arcane scholarship made the book fall into a wide variety of hands; both the unlearned and the academics examined it, and its themes were the subject of much debate initially in Germany, and later in the world at large. However, there was a virtually universal scorn heaped upon the book and its author from the intellectual community. Without even addressing the specific contents of the book, many asked: how could a truly universal comprehension of the many societies presented in the *Decline* possibly be gained in one man's lifetime? Spengler had written the book in a mere four years, and this certainly was not adequate for a real treatment of such a wide scope. Others attacked many inconsistencies in Spengler's method and its lack of logical rigor. They saw these discontinuities as the inevitable result of extrapolating a broad principle like the "morphology of culture" over four thousand years of human activity. Still others saw in Spengler's analyses of many of the cultures in the *Decline* as virtually identical to those made by the vast majority of historians.

However, very few attacked the work on any but very narrow and erudite grounds, and their objections met with a very small audience. This left the field open for Spengler, who wrote an essay entitled "Pessimism?" three years after the appearance of his opus in which he maintained that his critics had failed to understand the central tenets of the work. He railed against the speculative thinkers that attempted to deconstruct the *Decline*:

The active person lives in the world of phenomena and with it. He

does not require logical proofs, indeed he often cannot understand them. "Physiognomic rhythm" [i.e. the vital connection between individuals and their world] ... gives him deeper insights than any method based on logical proof ever could.... I made assertions in my book which scholarly readers have regarded as completely contradictory. Yet all these are things that have long been felt and cherished privately, though not necessarily consciously, by individuals who are inclined to a life of action.

The content of the essay roughly runs along these lines, as Spengler defends his instinctive analyses against the speculative critics. The essay for the most part accomplished its goal -- it cut away the foundation of his critics' attacks and made his own position even more hard to define. In addition, a noted historian, **Eduard Meyer**, later addressed the German Historical Congress and presented a highly approving critique of the *Decline* and endorsed Spengler's major theses.

His position relatively secure, the author embarked on an attempt to involve himself in the political activities of Germany, which he had long held as a desire. For the five years from 1919-1924, Spengler's popularity and his increase in wealth allowed him to move in more influential social circles, and he allied himself with a number of leading conservative political groups. After a time of political upheaval in both Germany and Russia, Spengler gathered together ideas he had been working on for a number of years and reworked them, entitling the lengthy essay *Prussianism and Socialism* (1920). The public demand for the work was great, as many in Germany wanted to hear Spengler's opinion on such a contemporary issue. In the essay Spengler maintained that true socialism could fulfill its destiny only in the Prussian state, but that such a movement would be entirely alien to the principles laid down by Karl Marx. He attempted to appeal to virtually the whole mass of the German people, and ended up convincing no one. The public was disappointed with the piece and the sheen of Spengler's new fame was tarnished. This did not deter Spengler in his efforts to lead political events, however.

He continued to support a relatively conservative state, but one in which Germans would bring together to satisfy "The soul of the German people," which he believed was "...filled with surprising and dumbfounding capabilities for excellence and failure." Spengler called for the German people to combat their tendency toward lethargy in his 1924 essay *On the German National Character*:

Difficult to set in motion, having little self-assurance, disinclined to pathos in ourselves ... at times when government and diplomacy are conducted along strict traditional lines ... such a national character as ours is doomed to prolonged slumber.

Spengler would also make a particularly prophetic comment in the same essay:

All in all, no other people today is more in need of a leader in order simply to have faith in itself. And yet no other people can mean more

to a great leader. In the right hands, all of its faults will turn to merits. What the outcome of this might be is impossible to foretell with the customary methods of political prognostication.

It is unfortunate that Spengler did not have the vision to see the outcome and warn his countrymen in advance, for these words would become all too real when National Socialism rose to the fore under Adolf Hitler. But as we will see, while Spengler could not predict the disaster, he argued against the new leader and his party vociferously when they came to power.

Spengler's Condemnation of National Socialism

WHEN SPENGLER PUBLISHED in 1931 his rather rambling metaphysical work *Man and Technics*, it was met with less enthusiasm than any of his previous efforts. It was extremely fragmentary in a way that was difficult to avoid, and in my brief readings of the work I was completely puzzled. I could find almost no concrete basis for Spengler's assertions, and was a little overwhelmed by his bold and unfounded statements. Nevertheless, within this small book was a unique attack on the technological society and its disturbing possibilities. Spengler felt that the "Faustian" spirit's desire for the infinite, combined with the technology to compress and negate the hindrance of time could lead to political regimes that might dominate the earth in a cruel and extreme way.

Every work of man, is artificial, unnatural.... This is the beginning of man's tragedy -- for Nature is the stronger of the two. The fight against Nature is hopeless and yet -- it will be fought out to the bitter end.

Few among Germany's leaders took any notice of the book, although it contained a number of veiled diatribes against Nazi principles. This book, with its generally poor attempt at anthropology, brought Spengler's reputation to a new low and he remained out of the public view for almost two years.

He was in increasingly poor health and dismayed at the strange amalgam of principles that had been pouring out of Berlin in the form of Nazi propaganda. He felt that the time for the German people to discern their true desire for the nation was imminent, and fittingly titled what was to be his last significant work *The Hour of Decision* (1933). Although not powerfully anti-Nazi, Spengler views with "misgiving" much of the furor over Hitler and his rise to supremacy. He blasts the "Hitler Youth," accusing them of giving their minds over to the National Socialists, and refers to specific Nazi leaders in a very critical way. He also discusses Italian Fascism, which Spengler saw as a transitional government, held together solely by

the powerful, heroic personality of Mussolini. Finally, Spengler addresses the German people, who he calls

...the least exhausted in the white world, and therefore the one on which may be placed the most hope.

He called for a return to traditional values to help preserve the honor of Germany and the peace of Europe.

Interestingly enough, Spengler's printer sent Adolf Hitler a complimentary copy, but the Nazis paid the work little notice until its sales had totaled 12,000. There was clearly an audience for Spengler's sentiments and when *The Hour of Decision* had some 150,000 copies in print, the Nazi party moved to silence him. It took his National Socialist critics some time to form a real attack on the book, as much of what Spengler had written was very nationalist in nature and echoed what Hitler himself was saying, albeit in altered fashion. In some ways, Spengler had helped prepare the German mind for the extreme nationalism espoused by the Nazi regime with his long emphasis on Germany as a nation and a people with a unique and powerful destiny. However, Nazi leaders railed against Spengler's views as a "perversion" of true National Socialist ideals and effectively forced him to cease in his political writings.

Oswald Spengler spent the last three years of his life in work on the "metaphysical treatise" that he had referred to occasionally in *The Decline of the West*. He was attempting to complete the groundwork for an understanding of the phenomena of "cyclical morphology." The work, titled *The World as History*, was of a much finer quality than any he had done for many years, and 1935 brought Spengler back into the public view. He would not have a chance to develop more new ideas, unfortunately, as he died from a heart attack in May of 1936.

The last words published during his lifetime are from an isolated response to a question concerning the possibilities for world peace. They crystallize Spengler in a unique way:

"Pacifism will remain an ideal, and war a fact, and if the white peoples are resolved to wage war no more, the colored will do so and will be rulers of the earth."

Nationalist, cynical, and prophetic, these words condense some of Spengler's most prominent features briefly, something rarely found in Spengler's writings. Perhaps he was growing more focused in his old age.

Spengler's Influence on Modern Historians

THERE CAN BE LITTLE CONTENTION with the fact that the author of *The Decline of the West* died with his legacy in extreme doubt. Although his main work was semi-intellectual currency for many years, the very irregular quality of his writing and his rather bleak depiction of the future did not ensure him any position as an author of consequence. However, Spengler made numerous predictions concerning future events throughout the course of his life and work, and we have lived to see many fulfilled.

Particularly striking were his considerations concerning the nature of the Russian people and his insistence that Russia's history was to be separate from the "Western" peoples. Spengler also maintained that Russia's history had not yet even begun in the 1920's, regardless of the then-recent Bolshevik Revolution. He felt that the Russian people were soon to embark on their own Destiny, and that in all likelihood it would be "...in opposition to the Faustian spirit." In spite of visions like these, continued scholarship of Spengler (what little that seems to remain) is primarily due to the work of other historians.

Spengler clearly anticipated a perspective that was soon to unite with more traditional historical scholarship, with generally strong results. **Arnold Toynbee's** *A Study of History* is by all accounts a seminal production in the field of world history, and Toynbee acknowledged that Spengler's work was a "remarkable one" with a great deal of imaginative insight. Toynbee's comparative study of civilizations is considered more even-handed, logical, and less overbearing than his predecessor's, while at the same time demonstrating a higher level of scholarship. It is also incredibly massive, far more so than the *Decline*, and comprises nine volumes of approximately three-hundred-fifty pages each.

In it Toynbee attempts to address fundamental questions concerning the causes for growth and decay in a culture, something Spengler felt lay inexplicably within each culture's destiny. Toynbee also addresses his study from a spiritual perspective, something that removes the complete relativity present in Spengler's work, as Toynbee sees the Christian faith as a final truth. The excellence of *A Study of History* led many to read Spengler, and continued to fuel his legacy somewhat.

Social and Cultural Dynamics, a well-considered cyclical history by Russian **Pitirim A. Sorokin**, also directed some attention to Spengler's work. Several other fair comparative histories have served the same purpose. Nevertheless, I would be wrong to say that Spengler is much-read today, as my attempts to gather information on the man and his work was much like trying to get blood from a turnip. Literature simply does not seem to exist in English, especially concerning

Spengler's life. He is a man remembered almost entirely for his work, and that only marginally.

Although I personally enjoyed and found insightful various parts of *The Decline of the West* and segments of his other writings, I was somewhat disappointed. I had been told of an amazing level of scholarship and erudition that was to be found in the *Decline*, and only very brief segments of it lived up to that.

One related topic I feel compelled to share, one I found on the Internet but could not utilize here, was a book by the name of *Spengler's Future* by John J. Reilly. The author takes a program written in BASIC computer code and attempts to predict the next seven centuries (yes, seven) of Western history utilizing the life cycles of four other civilizations as a guide. Some entertaining chapter heads include "At the Court of the Antichrist" and "The World Begins to Crack." The totally inconclusive and fragmented results of the effort only serve to clarify to this writer that without the author's prominent level of study, facility of mind, and intuitive gift, *The Decline of the West* would likely have ended up as total gibberish instead of the reasonably interesting and sometimes penetrating work that it is.

Bibliography

Hollingdale, R.J. (Trans.), *A Nietzsche Reader*(New York: Penguin Books, 1977).

Hughes, H. Stuart, *Oswald Spengler: A Critical Estimate*(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952).

Spengler, Oswald, *Collected Essays*(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

Spengler, Oswald, *The Decline of the West*, abridged (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962).

Spengler, Oswald, *Man and Technics: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life*(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960).

Spengler, Oswald, *Today and Destiny: Vital Excerpts from the Decline of the West*(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940).

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

Spengler, in his *Decline Of The West* makes two central points relevant to our concerns: that histories of various cultures--his principal point of comparison is Classical (Greek)--can be shown to follow a similar pattern and that all aspects of a culture-- art, politics, mathematics, science --have related underlying principles which differ from culture to culture. He reaches conclusions about the current position of Western culture (in the 1920s) and how one can best live within it.

Spengler views cultures as "organic" by which he means that they follow a life pattern, one he names by analogy to seasons. The spring of a culture is the time of the origin of its basic principles, the time of the birth of the religion of that culture. He believes that all great cultures have behind them a great religion. A culture acting "in form" (a comparison to athletes who are at the peak of their form) is in its summer, when all aspects can be seen as working under the principles at the basis of the culture, and when great accomplishments are made--the artifacts of lasting value.

Our culture, as compared to other cultures, is one of directedness and will; Spengler refers to it as Faustian. We see our religion as requiring us to convert others. Our art has a perspective, a point of view and direction. Our music is directed toward a tonal center. Our science is about forces and changes. We apply it to change our world. Our mathematics goes beyond the static geometry of the Classical world to deal with the calculus of tendencies and averages.

All cultures come to a Civilization, an autumn when this breaks down. Mega-cities are characteristic of this time. Politics is motivated by money, and move through Imperialism and the Period of Contending States to Caesarism, a period of despots. Science no longer reaches certainties. People no longer accept common principles or goals, they fight all rules from the past. The arts, rather than working in ways that seem obvious to the artists and the people, follow fashions with constant changes of style. Later in this culture after a period of atheism, people turn to a religious renewal based on the religion developed in the spring of the culture.

Spengler sees our culture as having finished its summer in about 1800--and with Wagner in music. He views developments in all the arts as evidence of decadence. His advice to those living in the Civilization phase is to look for the direction of movement and contribute positively to it--the Civilization will move in the direction of its Destiny, regardless of our choices. We can choose to contribute or to have no impact. "Either Will This, Or Will Nothing At All".

Sections From Spengler, *The Decline Of The West*[Return To Index](#)
[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

Introduction

THE PROBLEM OF "CIVILIZATION"; [24-27]

Looked at in this way, the "Decline of the West" comprises nothing less than the problem of *Civilization*. We have before us one of the fundamental questions of all higher history. What is civilization, understood as the organico-logical sequel, fulfilment and finale of a culture?

For every Culture has *its own* Civilization. In this work, for the first time the two words, hitherto used to express in an indefinite, more or less ethical, distinction, are used in a *periodic* sense, to express a strict and necessary *organic succession*. The Civilization is the inevitable *destiny* of the Culture, and in this principle we obtain the viewpoint from which the deepest and gravest problems of historical morphology become capable of solution. Civilizations are the most external and artificial states of which a species of developed humanity is capable. They are a conclusion, the thing-become succeeding the thing-becoming, death following life, rigidity following expansion, intellectual age and the stone-built, petrifying world-city following mother-earth and the spiritual childhood of Doric and Gothic. They are an end, irrevocable, yet by inward necessity reached again and again.

So, for the first time, we are enabled to understand the Romans as the *successors* of the Greeks, and light is projected into the deepest secrets of the late-Classical period. What, but this, can be the meaning of the fact--which can only be disputed by vain phrases--that the Romans were barbarians who did not *precede* but *closed* a great development? Unspiritual, unphilosophical, devoid of art, clannish to the point of brutality, aiming relentlessly at tangible successes, they stand between the Hellenic Culture and nothingness. An imagination directed purely to practical objects was something which is not found at all in Athens. In a word, Greek *soul*--Roman *intellect*; and this antithesis is the differentia between Culture and Civilization. Nor is it only to the Classical it applies. Again and again there appears this type of strong-minded, completely non-metaphysical man, and in the hands of this type lies the intellectual and material destiny of each and every "late" period. *Pure* Civilization, as a historical process, consists in a progressive exhaustion of forms that have become inorganic or dead.

The transition from Culture to Civilization was accomplished for the Classical world in the fourth, for the Western in the nineteenth century. From these periods onward the great intellectual decisions take place, no longer all over the world where not a hamlet is too small to be unimportant, but in three or four world-cities that have absorbed into themselves the whole content of History, while the old wide landscape of the Culture, become merely provincial, served only to feed the cities with what remains of its higher mankind. *World-city and province*--the two basic ideas of every civilization--bring up a wholly new form-problem of History, the very problem that we are living through today with hardly the remotest conception

of its immensity. In place of a world, there is a *city, a point*, in which the whole life of broad regions is collecting while the rest dries up. In place of a type-true people, born of and grown on the soil, there is new sort of nomad, cohering unstably in fluid masses, the parasitical city dweller, traditionless, utterly matter-of-fact, religionless, clever, unfruitful, deeply contemptuous of the countryman and especially that highest form of countryman, the country gentleman. This is a very great stride towards the inorganic, towards the end--what does it signify?

The world-city means cosmopolitanism in place of "home" . . . To the world-city belongs not a folk but a mob. Its uncomprehending hostility to all the traditions representative of the culture (nobility, church, privileges, dynasties, convention in art and limits of knowledge in science), the keen and cold intelligence that confounds the wisdom of the peasant, the new- fashioned naturalism that in relation to all matters of sex and society goes back far to quite primitive instincts and conditions, the reappearance of the *panem et circenses* in the form of wage-disputes and sports stadia--all these things betoken the definite closing down of the Culture and the opening of a quite new phase of human existence--anti-provincial, late, futureless, but quite inevitable.

This is what has to be *viewed*, and not with the eyes of the partisan, the ideologue, the up-to-date moralist, not from this or that "standpoint," but in a high, time-free perspective embracing whole millennia of historical world-forms, if we are really to comprehend the great crisis of the present.

...

For it will become manifest that, from this moment on, all great conflicts of world-outlook, of politics, of art, of science, of feeling, will be under the influence of the same contrary factor. What is the hallmark of a politic of Civilization today, in contrast to a politic of Culture yesterday? It is, for the Classical rhetoric, and for the Western journalism, both serving that abstract which represents the power of Civilization--*money* It is the money-spirit which penetrates unremarked the historical forms of the people's existence, often without destroying or even in the least disturbing these forms.

It is possible to understand the Greeks without mentioning their economic relations; the Romans, on the other hand, can *only* be understood through these. ...

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

Introduction

THE CONCLUSION--IMPERIALISM [p 27]

Considered in itself, the Roman world-dominion was a negative phenomenon, being the result not of a surplus of energy on the one side--that the Romans had never had since Zama--but of a deficiency of resistance on the other...

Here then, I lay it down that *Imperialism*, of which petrifacts such as the Egyptian empire, the Roman, the Chinese, the Indian, may continue to exist for hundreds or thousands of years ... is to be taken as the typical symbol of the end. Imperialism is Civilization unadulterated. In this phenomenal form the destiny of the West is now irrevocably set. The energy of culture-man is directed inwards, that of civilization- man outwards....

Alexander and Napoleon were romantics; though they stood on the threshold of Civilization and in its cold clear air, the one fancied himself an Achilles and the other read Werther. ...

Let it be realized, then: That the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, hitherto looked on as the highest point of an ascending straight line of world-history are in reality a stage of life which may be observed in every Culture that has ripened to its limit--a stage of life characterized not by Socialists, Impressionists, electric railways, torpedoes and differential equations (for these are only body-constituents of the time), but by a civilized spirituality [p 30] which possesses not only these but also quite other creative possibilities. That, as our town time represents a transitional phase which occurs with certainty under particular conditions, there are perfectly well-defined states (such as have occurred more than once in the history of the past) *later* than the present-day state of West Europe, and therefore that the future of the West is not a limitless tending upwards and onwards for all time towards our present ideals, but a single phenomenon of history, strictly limited and defined as to form and duration, which covers a few centuries and can be viewed and, in essentials, calculated from available precedents.

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

V Makrokosmos: Apollinian, Faustian and Magian Soul ARCHITECTURE AND DIVINITIES [p 97]

Henceforth we shall designate the soul of the Classical Culture, which chose the sensuously present individual body as the ideal type of the extended, by the name (familiarized by Nietzsche) of the *Apollinian*. In opposition to it we have the *Faustian* soul, whose prime symbol is pure and limitless space, and whose "body" is the Western Culture that blossomed forth with the birth of the Romanesque style in the Tenth century on the Northern plain between the Elbe and the Tagus.

"Space" - speaking now in the Faustian idiom - is a spiritual something, rigidly distinct from the momentary sense-present, which *Could* not be represented in an Apollinian language whether Greek or Latin. The Classical... A landscape of Claude Lorrain, on the contrary, is *nothing but* space, every detail being made to subserve its illustration. All bodies in it possess an atmospheric and perspective meaning purely as carriers of light and shade. The extreme of this disembodiment of the world in the service of space is Impressionism.

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

IMITATION AND ORNAMENT [102]

All art is expression-language. This expression is either ornament or imitation. Both are higher possibilities...

I. Imitation

A. Earlier and more characteristic of race

B. Born of the secret rhythm of all this cosmic

C. Every live religion is an effort of the waking soul to reach the powers of the world-around. And so too is Imitation which in its most devoted moments is wholly religious

1. Consists in an identity of inner activity between the soul and body "here" and the world around "there" which, ... become one.

D. Let ourselves go in common song or parade-march or dance

1. creates out of many units one unit of feeling and expression, a "we"

E. All imitation is in the broadest sense dramatic;

1. drama in movements of brush stroke or chisel

2. melodic course of song

3. tone of recitation

4. line of poetry

5. the description

6. the dance

F. Only the living can be imitated

1. can be imitated only in movements

2. belongs to time and direction

G. Expresses something by accomplishing itself

H. Possess beginning and end

II. Ornament - does not follow the stream of life but rigidly faces it

A. Established motives, symbols, impressed upon it

B. Intention not to pretend but to conjure

C. The "I" overwhelms the "Thou."

D. Imitation is speaking with means that are born of the moment and unreproducible

E. employs a language emancipated from speaking

1. stock of forms that possess duration and is not at the mercy of the individual

F. Removed from Time

1. pure extension, settled and stable

G.Expresses by presenting itself to the senses as a finished thing

1.Being as such, wholly independent of origin.

H.Possesses only duration

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix.

THE HISTORY OF STYLE AS AN ORGANISM [107+]

I. Spring

A. Every Spring has two definitely ornamental and non-imitative arts - Carolingian (between styles [107])

1. building
2. decoration

B. Dawn of culture, architecture as ornament comes into being suddenly and with such a force of expression that for a century mere decoration-as-such shrinks away from it in awe.

C. Form-world of springtime at its highest: architecture is lord and ornament is vassal (ornament in the service of all-ruling architectural idea)

1. statuary groups of Gothic cathedrals
2. hymn strophe
3. parallel motion of arts in church music

D. AD 1000 - awakening at one moment Romanesque arrives

- a. dynamic of space
- b. inner and outer construction placed in fixed relation

E. Gothic/Medieval

II. Summer

A. Late period of a style - group of civic and worldly special arts devote themselves to pleasing and clever imitation, become personal

B. Renaissance/Baroque

III. Autumn

A. Soul depicts its happiness, conscious of self-completion

1. return to Nature (Rousseau)
 - a. reveals itself in the form-world of the arts as a sensitive longing and presentiment of the end.. [204]
 - b. features of last decades of a Culture...

(1) Perfectly clear intellect, jocular urbanity, pain of a farewell -

B. Haydn and Mozart, Dresden shepherdesses, pictures of Watteau

C. Transition consists of

1. Classicism - sentimental regard for Ornamentation (rules, laws, types) that has long been archaic and soulless
2. Romanticism - sentimental Imitation, not of life, but of an older Imitation

IV. Winter

A. At the last when Civilization sets in, true ornament and, with it, great art as a whole are extinguished

1. Not architectural style, but taste
2. Methods of painting and mannerisms of writing, old forms and new, home and foreign, come and go with the fashion.
3. Pictorial and literary stock-in-trade destitute of any deeper significance, employed according to taste

B. Final or industrial form of Ornament - no longer historical, no longer in the condition of "becoming" [104]

[Home](#)

VI Music and Plastic: The Arts of Form [115]

ARTS AS THE SYMBOL OF THE HIGHER ORDER The clearest type of symbolic expression that the world-feeling of higher mankind has found for itself is (if we except the mathematical-scientific domain of presentation and the symbolism of its basic ideas) that of the arts of form...And with these arts we count music....

If an art has boundaries at all--boundaries of its soul-become-form--they are historical and not technical or physiological boundaries.

...The choice of art-genus itself is seen to be a means of expression. What the creation of a masterpiece means for an individual arts--the "Night Watch" for Rembrandt or the *Meistersinger* for Wagner--the creation of a *species* of art, comprehended as such, means for the life-history of a Culture. it is epochal. Apart from the merest externals, each art is an individual organism without predecessor or successor. Its theory, technique and convention all belong to its character, and contain nothing of eternal or universal validity. When one of these arts is born, when it is spent, whether it dies or is transmuted into another, why this or that art is dominant in or absent from a particular Culture--all these are questions of Form in the highest sense, just as is that other question of why individual painters and musicians unconsciously avoid certain shades and harmonies or, on the contrary, show preferences so marked that authorship-attributions can be based on them.

The importance of these groups of questions has not yet been recognized by theory... A futile up-and-down course was stolidly traced out. Static times were described as "natural pauses," it was called "decline" when some great art in reality died, and "renaissance" where an eye really free from prepossessions would have seen another art being born in another landscape to express another humanity.

And yet it is precisely in this problem of the end, the impressively sudden end, of a great art--the end of the Attic drama in Euripides, of Florentine sculpture with Michaelangelo, of instrumental music in Liszt, Wagner, and Bruckner--that the organic character of these arts is most evident. ...

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

POPULAR AND ESOTERIC CHARACTER

"Every Culture has its own quite definite sort of esoteric or popular charcter that is immanent in all its doings, so far as these have symbolic importance. We find everywhere in the Western what we find nowhere in the Classical [he means here ancient Greece at the peak of its culture] - the exclusive form. Whole periods - for instance, the Provencal Culture and the Rococo - are in the highest degree select and exclusive, their ideas and forms having no existence except for a small class of higher men. Even the Renaissance is no exception, for though it purports to be the rebirth of that Antique which is so utterly *non*-exclusive and caters so frankly for all, it is in fact, through and through, the creation of a circle or of individual chosen souls, a taste that rejects popularity from the outset. On the contrary *every* Attic burgher belonged to the Attic culture, which excluded nobody; and consequently, the distinction of deep and shallow, which is so decisively important for us, did not exist at all for it. For us, popular and shallow are synonymous - in art as in science = but for Classicla man it was not so.

From Titian painting becomes more and more esoteric. So , too poetry. So, too, music. And the Gothic [he views the Gothic as the dawn of our culture} *per se* had been esoteric from its very beginnings - witness Dante and Wolfram. The Masses of Okeghem and Palestrina, or of Bach for that matter, were never intelligible to the average memeber of the congregation. Ordinary people are bored by Mozart and Beethoven, and regard music generally as something for which one is or is not in the mood. A certain degree of interest in these matters has been induced by concert room and gallery since the age of enlightenment invented the phrase "art for all." But Faustian [he uses this term to mean the essential nature of Western culture] art is not, and by very essence cannot be, "for all." If modern painting has ceased to appeal to any but a small (and ever decreasing) circle of connoisseurs, it is because it has turned away from the painting of things that the man in the street can understand. It has transferred the property of actuality from contents to space - the space *through* which alone, according to Kant, things *are*.

Consider our sciences too. Every one of them, without exception, has besides its elementarygroundwork certain "higher" regions that are inaccessible to the layman - symbols, these also, of our will-to-infinity and directional energy. Indeed, we may take the craving forwide effect as a sufficient index by itself of the commencing and already perceptible decline of Western science. That the sever esoteric of the Baroque age is felt now as a burden, is a symptom of sinking strength and of the dulling of that distance-sense *confesed* the limitation with humility. For us, the polarity of expert and layman has all the significance of a high symbol, and when the tension of this distance is beginning to slacken, there the Faustian life is fading out."

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

THE WILL TO POWER

"If, in fine, we look at the whole picture - the expansion of the Copernican world into that aspect of stellar space that we possess today; the development of Columbus's discovery into a world-wide command of the earth's surface by the West; the perspective of oil-painting and the theater; the sublimation of the idea of home; the passion of our civilization for swift transit, the conquest of the air, the exploration of the Polar regions and the climbing of almost impossible mountain-peaks - we see, emerging everywhere, the prime symbol of the Faustian soul, Limitless Space. And those specially Western creations of the soul-myth calle "Will," "Force" and "Deed" must be regarded as derivative of this prime symbol."

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: Oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxx,415, xvix

IMPRESSIONISM [152-3]

"Impressionism," which only came into general use in Manet's time (and then, originally, as a word of contempt like Baroque and Rococo), very happily summarized the special quality of the Faustian way of art that has evolved from oil-painting. Impression is the inverse of the Euclidean world-feeling. It tries to get as far as possible from the language of plastic and as near as possible to that of music. The effect that is made upon us by things that receive and reflect light is made not because the things *are* there, but a though they "in themselves" *are not* there. The things are not even bodies, but light-resistances in space, and their illusive density is to be unmasked by the brush-stroke. ...

Impressionism is the comprehensive expression of a world-feeling, and it must obviously therefore permeate the whole physiognomy of our "Late" Culture. There is an impressionistic mathematics, which frankly and with intent transcends all optical limitations. It is Analysis, as developed after Newton and Leibniz, and to it belong the visionary images of number- "bodies," aggregates, and the multi-dimensional geometry. There is again an impressionistic physics which "sees" in lieu of bodies systems of mass-points--units that are evidently no more than constant relations between variable elements. There are impressionistic ethics, tragedy and logic, and even (in Pietism) an impressionistic Christianity.

...

Is Impressionism (in the current narrow sense) a creation of the nineteenth century? Has painting lived, after all, two centuries more? Is it still existing? But we must not be deceived in the [p 154] character of the new *episode*, that in the nineteenth century (i.e. beyond the 1800 frontier and in "Civilization") succeeded in awakening some illusion of a great culture of painting, choosing the word *Plein-air* to designate its special characteristic. The materialism of a Western cosmopolis blew into the ashes and rekindled this curious brief flicker--a brief flicker of two generations, for with the generation of Manet all was ended again. I have characterized the noble green of Grünewald and Claude and Giorgione as the Catholic space-colour and the transcendent brown of Rembrandt as the colour of the Protestant world-feeling. On the other hand, *Plein-air* and its new colour scale stand for irreligion. From the spheres of Beethoven and the stellar expanses of Kant, Impressionism has come down again to the crust of the earth. Its space is cognized, not experienced, seen, not contemplated; there is tunedness in it, but not Destiny. Rousseau's tragically correct prophecy of a "return to Nature" fulfils itself in this dying art--the senile, too, return to Nature day by day. The modern artist is a workman, not a creator...

PERGAMUM AND BAYREUTH: THE END OF ART [p 155+]

The last of the Faustian arts died in *Tristan*. This work is the giant keystone of Western music. Painting achieved nothing like this as a finale. ...

....

[157] Between Wagner and Manet there is a deep relationship, which is not, indeed, obvious to everyone but which Baudelaire with his unerring flair for the decadent detected at once. For the Impressionists, the end and the culmination of art was the conjuring up of a world in space out of strokes and patches of colour, and this was just what Wagner achieved with three bars.

[p 158] [Comparison with Alexandria] There, as here in our world-cities, we find a pursuit of illusions of artistic progress, of personal peculiarity, of "the new style," of "unsuspected possibilities," theoretical babble, pretentious fashionable artists, weight-lifters with cardboard dumb-bells--the "Literary Man" in the Poet's place, the unabashed farce of Expressionism, which the art-trade has organized as a "phase of art-history," thinking and feeling and forming as industrial art. ... all is pattern-work. .. the Last Act of all Cultures.

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

THE MORALE OF DAWNING "CIVILIZATION"

"When Nietzsche wrote down the phrase "transvaluation of all values" for the first time, the spiritual movement of the centuries in which we are living found at last its formula. Transvaluation of all values is the most fundamental character of *every* civilization. [Spengler characterizes the final dying phase of a Culture as Civilization.] For it is the beginning of a Civilization that it remoulds all the forms of the Culture that went before, understands them otherwise, practises them in a different way. It begets no more, but only reinterprets, and herein lies the negativeness common to all period of this character. It assumes that the genuine act of creation has already occurred, and merely enters upon an inheritance of big actualities. In the late-Classical, we find the same taking place inside Hellenistic-Roman Stoicism, that is, the long death-struggle of the Apollinian soul. In the interval from Socrates - who was the spiritual father of the Stoa and in whom the first signs of inward impoverishment and city-intellectualism became visible - to Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, every existence-ideal of the old Classical underwent transvaluation. In the case of India, the transvaluation of Brahman life was complete by the time of King Asoka (250 b.c.) As we can see by comparing the parts of the Vedanta put into writing before and after Buddha. And ourselves? Even now the ethical socialism of the Faustian soul, its fundamental ethic, as we have seen, is being worked upon by the process of transvaluation as that soul is walled up in the stone of the great cities. *Rousseau is the ancestor of this Socialism; he stands, like Socrates and Buddha, as the representative spokesman of a great civilization.* Rousseau's rejection of all great Culture-forms and all significant conventions, his famous "Return to the state of Nature," his practical rationalism, are unmistakable evidences. Each of the three buried a millennium of spiritual depth. Each proclaimed his gospel to mankind, but it was to the mankind of the city intelligentsia, which was tired of the town and the Late culture, and whose "pure" (i.e. soulless) reason longed to be free from them and their authoritative form and their severity, from the symbolism with which it was no longer in living communion and which therefore it detested. The Culture was annihilated by dialectic. Socrates was a nihilist, and Buddha. There was an Egyptian or an Arabian or a Chinese desouling of the human being, just as there is a Western. This is a matter not of mere political and economic, nor even of religious and artistic, transformations, nor of any tangible or factual change whatsoever, but of the condition of a soul after it has actualized its possibilities in full.

Culture and Civilization - the living body of a soul and the mummy of it. For Western existence the distinction lies at about the year 1800 - on the one side of that frontier life in fullness and sureness of itself, formed by growth from within, in one great uninterrupted evolution from Gothic childhood to Goethe and Napoleon, and on the other the autumnal, artificial, rootless life of our great cities, under forms fashioned by the intellect. Culture-man lives inwards, Civilization-man outwards in space and amongst bodies and "facts." That which the one feels as Destiny the other understands as a linkage of causes and effects, and thenceforward he is a

materialist - in the sense of the word valid for, and only valid for, Civilization - whether he wills it or no, and whether Buddhist, Stoic or Socialist doctrines wear the garb of religion or not.

Only the sick man feels his limbs. When men construct an unmetaphysical religion in opposition to cults and dogmas; when a "natural law" is set up against historical law; when, in art, styles are invented in place of *the* style that can no longer be borne or mastered; when men conceive of the State as an "order of society" which not only can be but must be altered - then it is evident that something has definitely broken down. The Cosmopolis itself, the supreme Inorganic, is there, settled in the midst of the Culture-landscape, whose men it is uprooting, drawing into itself and using up.

So long as the man of a culture that is approaching its fulfilment still continues to follow straight onwards naturally and unquestioningly, his life has a settled conduct. This is the *instinctive* morale, which may disguise itself in a thousand controversial forms, but which he himself does not controvert, because he *has* it. As soon as Life is fatigued, as soon as a man is put on to the artificial soil of great cities - which are intellectual worlds to themselves - and needs a theory in which suitably to present Life to himself, morale turns into a *problem*. As late as Plato and as late as Kant ethics are still mere dialectics, a game with concepts or the rounding off of a metaphysical system, something that at bottom would not be thought really necessary. The Categorical Imperative is merely an abstract statement of what, for Kant, was not in question at all. But with Zeno and with Schopenhauer that is no longer so. It had become necessary to discover, to invent or to squeeze into form, as rule of being, that which was no longer anchored in instinct; and at this point therefore begin the civilized ethics that are no longer the reflection of Life but the reflection of Knowledge upon Life. One feels that there is something artificial, soulless, half-true in all these *considered* systems that fill the first centuries of all the Civilizations. They are not those profound and almost unearthly creations that are worthy to rank with the great arts. All metaphysics of the high style, all pure intuition, vanishes before the one need that has suddenly made itself felt, the need of a *practical* morale for the governance of a Life that can no longer govern itself. Up to Kant, up to Aristotle, up to the Yoga and Vedanta doctrines, philosophy had been a sequence of grand world-systems in which *formal* ethics occupied a very modest place. But now it became "moral philosophy" with a metaphysics as background. The enthusiasm of epistemology had to give way to hard practical needs. Socialism, Stoicism and Buddhism are philosophies of this type."

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

THE GREAT STYLE, THE HISTORY OF STYLE AS AN ORGANISM [109- 110]

We are now able to see a great style sequence as an organism. here, as in so many other matters, Goethe was the first to whom vision came In his *Winckelmann* he says of Velleius Paterculus; "With his standpoint, it was not given to him to see all art as a living thing that must have an inconspicuous beginning a slow growth, a brilliant moment of fulfillment and a gradual declines like very other organic being, though it is presented in a set of individuals." This sentence contains the entire morphology of art-history. Styles do not follow one another like waves or pulse-beats. It is not the personality or will or brain of the artist that makes the style, but the style that makes the *type* of the artist. The style, like the Culture, is a prime phenomenon in the strict Goethian sense, be it the style of art or religion or thought, or the style of life itself. it is, as "Nature" is, an ever-new experience of waking man, his alter ego and mirror-image in the world-around. And therefore in the general historical picture of a Culture there can be but one style, *the style of the Culture*. The error has lain in treating mere style-phases-- Romanesque, Gothic, Baroque, Rococo, Empire--as if they were styles on the same level as units of quite another order such as the Egyptian, the Chinese (or even a "prehistoric") style. Gothic and Baroque are simply the youth and age of one and the same vessel of forms, the style of the West as ripening and ripened. Hence Ionic columns can be as completely combined with Doric building forms as late Gothic is with early Baroque in St. Lorenz at Nürnberg, or late Romanesque with the late Baroque in the beautiful upper part of the West choir at Mainz.

The test before art-history is to write the *comparative biographies of the great styles*, all of which as organisms of the same genus possess structurally cognate life-histories.

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

PERGAMUM AND BAYREUTH: THE END OF ART [155-6]

The last of the Faustian arts died in *Tristan*. This work is the giant keystone of Western music. Painting achieved nothing like this as a finale. ...

The symptom of decline in creative power is the fact that to produce something round and complete the artist now requires to be emancipated from form and proportion. Its most obvious though not its most significant, manifestation is the taste for the gigantic. Here size is not, as in the Gothic and the Pyramid styles, the expression of inward greatness, but the dissimulation of its absence. This swaggering in *specious* dimensions is common to all nascent Civilizations--we find it in the Zeus altar of Pergamum, the Helios of Chares called the "Colossus of Rhodes," the architecture of the Roman Imperial Age, the New Empire work in Egypt, and American skyscraper of today.

Between Wagner and Manet there is a deep relationship, which is not, indeed obvious to everyone but which Baudelaire with his unerring flair for the decadent detected at once. For the Impressionists, the end and the culmination of art was the conjuring up of a world in space out of strokes and patches of colour, and this was just what Wagner achieved in three bars. A whole world of soul could crowd into these three bars. ... Here the contrast of Western music with greek plastic has reached its maximum. Everything merges in bodiless infinity, no longer even does a linear melody wrestle itself clear of the vague tone-masses that in strange surgings challenge an imaginary space. The motive comes up out of dark terrible deeps. It is flooded for an instant by a flash of hard bright sun. then, suddenly, it is so close upon us that we shrink...

All that Nietzsche says of Wagner is applicable, also, to Manet. Ostensibly a return to the elemental, to Nature, as against contemplation-painting and abstract music, their art really signifies a concession to the barbarism of the Megalopolis, the beginning of dissolution sensibly manifested in a mixture of brutality and refinement. As a step, it is necessarily the last step. An artificial art has no further organic future, it is the mark of the end.

And the bitter conclusion is that it is all irretrievably over with the arts of form of the West. The crisis of the nineteenth century was the death-struggle. Like the Apollonian, the Egyptian and every other, the Faustian art dies of senility, having actualized its inward possibilities and fulfilled its mission within the course of its Culture

What is practiced as art today--be it music after Wagner or painting after Manet, Cézanne, Leible and Menzel-- is impotence and falsehood. One thing is quite certain, that today every single art-school could be shut down without art being affected in the slightest. We can learn all we wish to know about the art-clamour which a megalopolis sets up in order to forget that its art is dead form the Alexandria of the year 200. There, as here in our world-cities, we find a pursuit of illusions of artistic progress, of personal peculiarity, of "the new style," of "unsuspected

possibilities," theoretical babble, pretentious fashionable artists, weight-lifters with cardboard dumb-bells--the "Literary Man" in the Poet's place, the unabashed farce of Expressionism, which the art-trade has organized as a "phase of art-history," thinking and felling and forming as industrial art. Alexandria, too, had problem-dramatists and box-office artists whom it preferred to Sophocles and painters who invented new tendencies and successfully bluffed their public. The final result is that endless industrious repetition of a stock of fixed forms which we see today in Indian Chinese and Arabian-persian art. Pictures and fabrics, verses and vessels, furniture, dramas and musical compositions--all is pattern-work. We cease to be able to date anything within centuries, let alone decades, by the language of its ornamentation. So it has been in the Last Act of all Cultures.

[Home](#)

> Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

CLASSICAL BEHAVIOUR-DRAMA AND FAUSTIAN CHARACTER-DRAMA [165]

The question is now: how far is the man of this Culture himself fulfilling what the soul-image that he has created requires of him?

What will is in the soul-image, character is in the picture of life as we see it, the Western life that is self-evident to Western men. It is the fundamental postulate of all our ethical systems, differ otherwise as they may in their metaphysical or practical precepts, that man has character. Character, which forms itself *in the stream of the world--the personality, the relation of living to doing--* is a Faustian impression of Man. The conception of mankind as an active, fighting, progressing whole is (and has been since Joachim of Floris and the Crusades) so necessary an idea for us that we find it hard indeed to realize that it is an exclusively Western hypothesis, living and valid only for a season. The *carpe diem*, the sturated being, of the Classical standpoint is the most direct contrary of that which is felt by Goethe and Kant and Pascal, by Church and Freethinker, as lone possessing value--*active, fighting and victorious being*.

...

This opposition, further, has produced forms of tragedy that differ from one another radically in every respect. The Faustian *character-drama* and the Apollinian *drama of noble gesture* have in fact nothing but name in common. It is not enough to distinguish Classical and Western tragedy merely as action-drama and event-drama. Faustian tragedy is *biographical*, Classical *anecdotal*; that is, the one deals with the sense of a whole life and the other with the content of the single moment. What relation, for instance, has the entire *inward* past of Oedipus or Orestes to the shattering event that suddenly meets him on his way? There is not the smallest trait in the past existence of Othello--that masterpiece of psychological analysis--that has not some bearing on the catastrophe. Race-hatred, the isolation of the upstart amongst the patricians, the Moor as soldier and as child of Nature, the loneliness of the aging bachelor--all these things have their significance. "Psychology" in fact is the proper designation for the *Western* way of fashioning meant, the word holds good for a portrait by Rembrandt as for the music of *Tristan*, for Stendhal's Julien Sorel as for Dante's *Vita Nuova*. The like of it is not to be found in any other culture. ...

Of deep necessity, therefore, we Faustians understand drama as a maximum of activity; and, of deep necessity also, the Greek understood it as a maximum of passivity.

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

EVERY CULTURE POSSESSES ITS OWN ETHIC [176]

WESTERN mankind, without exception, is under the influence of an immense optical illusion. Everyone *demands* something of the rest. We say "thou shalt" in the conviction that so-and-so in fact will, can and must be changed or fashioned or arranged conformably to the order, and our belief both in the efficacy of, and in our title to give, such orders is unshakable. *That, and nothing short of it, is, for us, morale. In the ethics of the West everything is direction, claim to power, will to affect the distant. here Luther is completely at one with Nietzsche, Popes with Darwinians, Socialists with jesuits; for one and all, the beginning of morale is a claim to general and permanent validity...*

...

The moral imperative as the form of morale is Faustian and only Faustian. It is quite wrong to associate Christianity with the moral imperative. It was not Christianity that transformed Faustian man, but Faustian man who transformed Christianity--and he not only made it a new religious but also gave it a new moral direction. The "it" became "I," the passion-charged centre of the world, the foundation of the great Sacrament of personal contrition. Will-to-power even in ethics, the passionate striving to set up a proper morale as a universal truth, and to enforce it upon humanity, to reinterpret or overcome or destroy everything otherwise constituted--nothing is more characteristically our own than this is. And in virtue of it the Gothic springtime proceeded to a profound--and never yet appreciated--inward transformation of the morale of Jesus. A quite spiritual morale welling from Magian [he uses this term for culture of the Near-East] feeling--a morale or conduct recommended as potent for salvation, a morale the knowledge of which was communicated as a special act of grace-- was recast as a morale of imperative command....

...

Every Classical ethic that we know or can conceive of constitutes man an individual static entity, a body among bodies, and all Western valuations relate to him as a centre of effect in an infinite generality...

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

Spengler

EVERY SCIENCE IS DEPENDENT UPON A RELIGION [188]

...

Each culture has made its own set of images of physical processes, which are true only for itself and only alive while it is itself alive. The "Nature" of Classical man found its highest artistic emblem in the nude statue, and out of it logically there grew up a *static of bodies, a physics of the near*. [Elsewhere, he relates this to Euclidian geometry.] The Arabian Culture can be symbolized by the arabesque and the cavern-vaulting of the mosque, and out of this world-feeling there issued *Alchemy* with its ideas of mysterious substances like the "philosophical mercury," which is neither a material nor a property but by magic can transmute one metal into another. And the outcome of Faustian man's Nature idea was a *dynamic of unlimited span, a physics of the distant*. To the Classical therefore belong the conceptions of *matter and form*, to the Arabian (quite Spinozistically) the idea of *substances* with visible or secret *attributes*, and to the Faustian the idea of *force and mass*.

... That which Classical man saw before him as "motion" in space he understood as ... change of position of bodies; we from the way in which we experience motion, have deduced the concept of a *process*, a "going forward," thereby expressing and emphasizing that element of directional energy which our thought necessarily predicates the courses of Nature....

The rise of a chemical method of the Arabian style betokens a new world-consciousness. The discovery of it, which at one blow made an end of Apollinian natural science, of mechanical statics... Similarly it was just at the time of the definite emancipation of the Western mathematic by Newton and Leibniz that the Western chemistry was freed from Arabic form by Stahl (1660-1734) and his Phlogiston theory. Chemistry and mathematic alike became pure analysis. Then Robert Boyle (1626-91) devised the analytical method and *with it the Western conception of the Element*. That is in fact the end of genuine chemistry, its dissolution into the comprehensive system of pure dynamic, its assimilation into the mechanical outlook which the Baroque Age had established through Galileo and Newton.

What we call Statics, Chemistry and Dynamics--words that as used in modern science are merely traditional distinctions without deeper meaning--are really the *respective physical systems of the Apollinian, Magian and Faustian souls*, each of which grew up in its own culture and was limited as to validity to the same. Corresponding to these sciences, each to each, we have the mathematics of Euclidean geometry, Algebra and Higher Analysis, and the arts of statue, arabesque and fugue.

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

ATHEISM [206]

...

Atheism, rightly understood, is the necessary expression of a spirituality that has accomplished itself and exhausted its religious possibilities, and is declining into the inorganic. It is entirely compatible with a living wistful desire for real religiousness--therein resembling Romanticism, which likewise would recall that which has irrevocably gone, namely, the Culture--... Atheism comes not with the evening of the Culture but with the dawn of Civilization.

But, if this late form of world-feeling and world-image which preludes our "second religiousness" is universally a negation of the religious in us. The structure of it is different in each of the Civilizations...

The spiritual in every living culture is religious, has religion, whether it be conscious of it or not. It is not open to a spirituality to be irreligious; at most it can play with the idea of irreligion as Medicean Florentines did. But the maglopolitan *is* irreligious; this is part of his being, a mark of his historical position. The degree of piety of which a period is capable is revealed in its attitude towards toleration. One tolerates something either because it seems to have some relation to what according to one's experience is the divine or else because one is no longer capable of such experience and is indifferent.

What we moderns have called "Toleration" in the classical world is an expression of the *contrary* of atheism. Plurality of numina and cults is inherent in the conception of Classical religion. But to the Faustian soul *dogma* and not visible ritual constitutes the essence. What is regarded as godless is opposition to doctrine. He begins the spatial-spiritual conception of heresy. A Faustian religion by its very nature cannot allow any freedom of conscience; it would be in contradiction with its space-invasive dynamic. Even free-thinking itself is not exception to the rule. Amongst us there is not faith without leanings to an Inquisition of some sort....

...

FAUSTIAN PHYSICS AS THE DOGMA OF FORCE [209]

The Deism of the Baroque goes together with its dynamics and its analytical geometry; its three basic principles, God, Freedom and Immortality, are in the language of mechanics the principles of inertia (Galileo), least action (D'Alembert) and the conservation of energy (J. R. Mayer).

Western physics is by its inward form dogmatic and not ritualistic. Its content is the *dogma of Force* which is identical with space and distance...

THE LIMITS OF FURTHER THEORETICAL--NOT TECHNICAL--DEVELOPMENT [212-13]

...

...the sudden and annihilating doubt that has arisen about things that even yesterday were the unchallenged foundation of physical theory, about the meaning of the energy-principle, the concepts of mass, space, absolute time, and causality-laws generally. ...It is a doubt affecting the very possibility of a Nature- science. To take one instance alone, what a depth of unconscious Skepsis there is in the rapidly increasing use of enumerative and statistical methods, which aim only at *probability* of results and forgo in advance the absolute scientific exactitude that was a creed to the hopeful earlier generations.

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

ORIGIN AND LANDSCAPE: THE GROUP OF THE HIGHER CULTURES [230- 244]

In the history, the genuine history, of higher men, The stake fought for and the basis of the animal struggle to prevail is ever--even when the driver and driven are completely unconscious of the symbolic force of their doings, purposes and fortunes--the actualization of something that is essentially spiritual, the translation of an idea into a living historical form. This applies equally to the struggle of big style-tendencies in art, of philosophy, of political ideals and of economic forms. But the post-history is void of all this. All that remains is the struggle for mere power, for animal advantage *per se*.

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

CITIES AND PEOPLES [250]

What makes the man of the world-cities incapable of living on any but this artificial footing is that the cosmic beat in his being is every decreasing, while the tensions of his waking-consciousness become more and more dangerous.. [252]this then, is the conclusion of the city's history; growing from primitive barter-centre to Culture-city and at last to world-city, it sacrifices first the blood and soul of its creators to the needs of its majestic evolution, and then the 1st flower of that growth to the spirit of civilization--and so, doomed, moves on to final self-destruction.

...

But the essence of Alexandrinism and of our Romanticism is something which belongs to all urban men, without distinction. Romanticism marks the beginning of that which Goethe, with his wide vision, called world-literature--the literature of the leading world-*city*, against which a provincial literature, native to the soil, but negligible, struggles everywhere with difficulty to maintain itself. ... Consequently in all Civilizations the "modern" cities assume a more and more uniform type...

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

REFORMATION [337-39]

In all Cultures, Reformation has the same meaning--the bringing back of the religion to the purity of its original idea as this manifested itself in the great centuries of the beginning. It was Destiny and not intellectual necessities of thought that led, in the Magian and Faustian worlds, to the budding off of new religions at this point. ...

For Luther, like all reformers in all Cultures, was not the first, but *the last of a grand succession* which led from the great ascetics of the open country to the city-priest. Reformation is *Gothic*, the accomplishment and the testament thereof. Luther's chorale "*Ein' feste Burg*" does *not* belong to the spiritual lyrism of the Baroque. There rumbles in it still the splendid Latin of the *Dies Irae*. It is the Church Militant's last mighty Satan-song. Luther, like every reformer that had arisen since the year 1000, fought the Church not because it demanded too much, but because it demanded too little ...

The last reformers, the Luthers and Savonarolas, were *urban* monks, and this differentiates them profoundly from the Joachims and the Bernards. Their intellectual and urban askesis is the stepping-stone from the hermitages of quiet valleys to the scholar's study of the Baroque. The mystic experience of Luther which gave birth to his doctrine of justification is the experience, not of a St. Bernard in the presence of woods and hills and clouds and stars, but of a man who looks through narrow windows on the streets and house walls and gables.

The mighty act of Luther was a purely intellectual decision. Not for nothing has he been regarded as the last great Schoolman of the line of Occam. He completely liberated the Faustian personality--the intermediate person of the priest, which ha formerly stood between it and the Infinite, was removed. And not it was wholly along, self-oriented, its own priest and its own judge. But the common people could only feel, not understand, the element of liberation in it all. They welcomed, enthusiastically, indeed, the tearing up of visible duties, but they did not come to realize that these had been replaced by intellectual duties that were still stricter. Francis of Assisi had given much and taken little, but the urban Reformation took much and, as far as the majority of people were concerned, gave little.

The holy Causality of the Contrition-sacrament Luther replaced by the mystic experience of inward absolution "by faith alone." He came very near to Bernard of Clairvaux. Both of them understood absolution as a divine miracle: insofar as the man changes himself, it is God changing him. The one and the other preached: "Thou must believe that God has forgiven thee," but for Bernard belief was through the powers of the priest elevated to knowledge, whereas for Luther it sank to doubt and separate insistence. Herein lies the ultimate meaning of the Western priest, who from 1215 was elevated above the rest of mankind by the sacrament of ordination and its *character indelebilis*: he was a hadn with which even the poorest wretch could grasp God. This *visible* link with the infinite, Protestantism destroyed. Strong souls could and did win

it back for themselves, but for the weaker it was gradually lost. Bernard, although for him the inward miracle was successful of itself, would not deprive others of the gentler way, for the very illumination of his soul showed him the Mary- world of living nature, all-pervading, ever near and ever helpful. Luther, who knew himself only and not men, set postulated heroism in place of actual weakness. For him life was desperate battle against the Devil, and that battle he called upon everyone to fight. And everyone who fought it fought it alone.

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: Oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxx, 415, xvix

SCIENCE, PURITANISM [340]

...Pure contemplative philosophy could have dispensed with experiment forever, but not so the Faustian symbol of the *machine*, which urged us to mechanical constructions even in the twelfth century and made "*perpetuum mobile*" the Prometheus-idea of the Western intellect. For us, the first thing is every the *working hypothesis*-- the very kind of thought-product that is meaningless to other Cultures. It is an astounding fact (to which, however, we must accustom ourselves) that the idea of immediately exploiting in practice any knowledge of natural relations that may be acquired is alien to every sort of mankind except the Faustian...

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

THE SECOND RELIGIOUSNESS [345]

...Every great Culture begins with a mighty theme that rises out of the pre-urban countryside, is carried through in the cities of art and intellect and closes with a finale of materialism in the world-cities. But even these last chords are strictly in the key of the whole. There are Chinese, Indian, Classical, Arabian, Western materialisms, and each is nothing but the original stock of myth shapes, cleared of the elements of experience and contemplative vision and viewed mechanistically. The belief is belief in force and matter, even if the words used by "God" and "world," "Providence" and "man."

Unique and self-contained is the Faustian materialism, in the narrower sense of the word. In it the technical outlook upon the world reached fulfillment. The whole world a dynamic system, exact, mathematically disposed, capable down to its first causes of being experimentally probed and numerically fixed so that man can dominate it--this is what distinguishes our particular "return to Nature" from all others. That "Knowledge is Virtue" Confucius also believed, and Buddha, and Socrates, but "Knowledge is Power" is a phrase that possess meaning only within the European-American Civilization. The Destiny element is mechanized as evolution, development, progress, and put into the centre of the system; the Will is an albumen-process; and all these doctrines of Monism, Darwinism, Positivism and what not are elevated into the fitness- moral which is the beacon of American businessmen, British politicians and German progress-Philistines alike--and turns out, in the last analysis, to be nothing but an intellectualist caricature of the old justification by faith.

...

The next phase I call the *Second Religiousness*. It appears in all Civilizations as soon as they have fully formed themselves as such and are beginning to pass, slowly and imperceptibly, into the non-historical state in which time-periods cease to mean anything. (So far as the Western Civilization is concerned, therefore, we are still many generations short of that point.) The Second Religiousness is the necessary counterpart of Caesarism, which is the final *political* constitution of Late Civilization... The material of the Second Religiousness is simply that of the first, genuine, young religiousness-- only otherwise experienced and expressed. It starts with Rationalism's fading out in helplessness, then the forms of the springtime become visible and finally the whole world of the primitive religion, which had receded before the grand forms of the early faith, returns to the foreground, powerful, in the guise of the popular syncretism that is to be found in every Culture at this phase.

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

THE STATE [357]

There are streams of being which are "in form" in the same sense in which the term is used in sports... When [players] are "in form," the riskiest acts and moves come off easily and naturally. An art-period is in form when its tradition is second nature, as counterpoint was to Bach.

The word for race-or breed-education is "training" as against the shaping which creates communities of waking- consciousness on a basis of uniform teachings or beliefs...

THE VESTING OF AUTHORITY [360]

...

The destiny question, for States that exist in reality and not merely in intellectual schemes, is not that of their ideal task or structure, *but that of their inner authority*, which cannot in the long run be maintained by material means, but only by a belief-of friend *and foe*--in their effectiveness. The decisive problems lie, not in the working out of constitutions, but in the organization of a sound working government...

[361]In every healthy State the letter of the written constitution is of small importance compared with the practice of the living constitution... The leader's responsibility is always to a minority that possesses the instincts of statesmanship and represents the rest of the nation in the struggle of history.

The true class-State is an expression of the general historical experience that is always a single social stratum e=which, constitutionally or otherwise, provides the political leading. It is always a definite minority that represents the world- historical tendency of a State...

THE BOURGEOISIE [362]

At the point when a Culture is beginning to turn itself into a Civilization, the non-Estate intervenes in affairs decisively--and for the first time--as an independent force....

The State, with its heavy demands on each individual in it, is felt by urban reason as a burden. So , in the smae phase, the great forms of the baroque arts begin to be felt as restrictive and become Classicist or Romanticist-- that is, sickly or formless, German literature from 1770 is one long revolt of strong individual personalities against strict poetry. The idea of the whole nation being "in training" or Uquot;in form" for anything becomes intolerable, for the individual himself inwardly is no longer in condition. This holds good in morals, in arts and in modes of thought, but most of all in politics. Every bourgeois revolution has as its scene the great city, and as its hallmark the incomprehension of the old symbols, which it replaces by tangible

interests and the craving (or even the mere wish) of enthusiastic thinkers and world-improvers to see their conceptions actualized...

[365] There is another aspect, too under which this epoch has its importance--in it for the first time abstract truths seek to intervene in the world of facts...

[369] The mistrust felt for high form by the inwardly formless non-Estate is so deep that everywhere and always it is ready to rescue its freedom--*from* all form--by means of a dictatorship, which acknowledges no rules and is, therefore, hostile to all that has grown up...

THE PERIOD OF THE CONTENDING STATES [375]

With this enters the age of gigantic conflicts, in which we find ourselves today [written during World War I and revised in twenties]. It is the *transition from Napoleonism to Caesarism*, a general phase of evolution, which occupies at least two centuries and can be shown to exist in all the Cultures...

...

[377] In these conditions so much of old and great traditions a remains, so much of historical "fitness" and experience as has got into the blood of the twentieth-century nations, acquires an unequalled potency. For us *creative piety*, or (to use a more fundamental term) the pulse that has come down to us from first origins, adheres only to forms that are older than the Revolution and Napoleon, forms which grew and were not made. Every remnant of them, however tiny, that has kept itself alive in the being of any self-contained minority whatever will before long rise to incalculable values and bring about historical effects which no one yet imagines...

CAESARISM [378]

By the term "Caesarism" I mean that kind of government which, irrespective of any constitutional formulation that it may have, is in its inward self a return to thorough formlessness. It does not matter that Augustus in Rome, and Huang Ti in China, Amasis in Egypt and Alp Arslan in Baghdad disguised their position under antique forms. the spirit of these forms was dead, and so all institutions, however carefully maintained, were thenceforth destitute of all meaning and weight. Real importance centred in the wholly personal power exercised by the Caesar...

{281}With the formed state having finished its course, high history also lays itself down weary to sleep. Man becomes a plant again adhering to the soil, dumb and enduring. The timeless village and the "eternal" peasant reappear, begetting children and burying seed in Mother Earth.. Men live from hand to mouth, with petty thrifts and petty fortunes and endure...

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

PHILOSOPHY OF POLITICS [382]

...

[384] The essential, therefore, is to understand the time for which one is born. He who does not sense and understand its most secret forces, who does not feel in himself something cognate that drives him forward on a path neither hedged nor defined by concepts, who trusts to the surface--public opinion, large phrases and ideals of the day--he is not of the stature for its events. He is in their power, not they in his. Look not back to the past for measuring-rods! There are times, like our own present and the Grecian age, in which there are two most deadly kinds of idealism, the reactionary and the democratic. The one believes in the reversibility of history, the other in a teleology of history. But it makes no difference to the inevitable failure with which both burden a nation over whose destiny they have power, whether it is to a memory or to a concept that they sacrifice it. The genuine statesman is incarnate history, its directedness expressed as individual will and its organic logic as character.

...The genuine statesman is distinguished from the "mere politician"--the player who plays for the pleasure of the game, the *arriviste* on the heights of history, the seeker after wealth and rank--as also from the schoolmaster of an idea, by the fact that he dares to demand sacrifices--and obtains them, because his feeling that he is necessary to the time and the nation is shared by thousands, transforms them to the core and renders them capable of deeds to which otherwise they could never have risen.

...

[396] ...but in no other civilization has the will-to-power manifested itself in so inexorable a form as in this of ours...

Through money, democracy becomes its own destroyer, after money has destroyed intellect. But, just *because* the illusion that actuality can allow itself to be improved by the ideas of any Zeno or Marx has fled away; because men have learned that in the realm of reality one power-will *can be overthrown only by another* (for that is the great human experience of Contending States periods); there wakes at last a deep yearning for all old and worthy tradition that still lingers alive... And now dawns the time when the form-filled powers of the blood, which the rationalism of the Megalopolis has suppressed, reawaken in the depth. Everything in the order of dynastic tradition and old nobility that has saved itself up for the future, everything that there is of high money-disdaining ethic, everything that is intrinsically sound enough to be, in Frederick the Great's words, the *servant*--the hard-working, self-sacrificing, caring *servant*--of the State--all this becomes suddenly the focus of immense life-forces...

[Home](#)

Oswald Spengler. *The Decline of the West*. An abridged edition by Helmut Werner. English abridged edition prepared by Arthur Helps from the translation by Charles Francis Atkinson. New York: oxford University Press c199 [1926, 1928, 1932]. xxxx,415, xvix

Conclusion [415]

For us, however, whom a Destiny has placed in this culture and at this moment of its development--the moment when money is celebrating its last victories, and the Caesarism that is to succeed approaches with quiet, firm step--our direction, willed and obligatory at once, is set for us within narrow limits, and on any other terms life is not worth the living. We have not the freedom to reach to this or to that, but the freedom to do th necessary or to do nothing. And a task that historic necessity has set *will* be accomplished with the individual or against him.

[Home](#)

The Hour Of Decision

Introduction

No one can have looked forward to the national revolution of this year with greater longing than myself. The sordid Revolution of 1918 I detested from its first day, for it was the betrayal by the inferior part of our people of that strong, live part which had risen up in 1914 in the belief that it could and would have a future. Everything of a political nature that I have written since then has been directed against the forces which had entrenched themselves, with our enemies' help, on the mountain of our misery and misfortune in order to render this future impossible. Every line that I wrote was meant to contribute to their overthrow, and I hope that it has done so. Something *had* to come in one form or another to release the deepest instincts in our blood from that load, if we were, like others, to have a voice and to *act* in the coming world-crises and not merely be their victim. The great game of world politics is not over. Only now are the highest stakes being played for. Every living nation must rise to greatness or go under. But the events of this year allow us to hope that the decision in our case has not yet been made - that we, as in Bismarck's day, shall sooner or later again be subjects and not mere objects of history. The decades in which we live are stupendous - and accordingly terrifying and void of happiness. Greatness and happiness are incompatible and we are given no choice. No one living in any part of the world of today will be happy, but many will be able to control by the exercise of their own will the greatness or insignificance of their life-course. As for those who seek comfort merely, they do not deserve to exist.

The man of action is often limited in his vision. He is driven without knowing the real aim. He might possibly offer resistance if he did see it, for the logic of destiny has never taken human wishes into account. But much more often he goes astray because he has conjured up a false picture of things around and within him. It is the great task of the historical *expert* (in the true sense) to understand the facts of his time and through them to envisage, interpret, and delineate the future - which will come whether we will or no. An epoch so conscious of itself as the present is impossible of comprehension without creative, anticipating, warning, *leading* criticism.

I shall neither scold nor flatter. I refrain from forming any estimate of those things which are only just coming into being. True valuation of an event is only possible when it has become the remote past, and the *definitive* good or bad results have long been facts: which is to say, when some decades have passed. No ripe understanding of Napoleon was

possible before the end of last century, and even we can as yet have no final opinion about Bismarck. Facts alone stand firm, judgments waver and change. In sum, a great event has no need of a contemporary estimate. History itself will judge it when its contemporaries are no longer living.

So much, however, can be said already: the national revolution of 1933 was a mighty phenomenon and will remain such in the eyes of the future by reason of the elemental, super-personal force with which it came and the spiritual discipline with which it was carried through. Here was something Prussian through and through, just as was the uprising of 1914, which transformed souls in one moment. The German "dreamers" stood up with a calm imposing naturalness to open a way into the future. But all the more must those who took part realize that this was no victory, for opponents were lacking. The force of the rising was such that everything that had been or was still active was swept away in it. It was a promise of *future* victories that have yet to be won by hard fighting, and merely cleared the ground for these. The leaders bear the full responsibility therefor, and it is for them to know, or to learn, the significance of it all. The task is fraught with immense dangers, and its sphere lies not within the boundaries of Germany but beyond, in the realm of wars and catastrophes where world politics alone speak. Germany is, more than any other country, bound up with the fate of all the others. Less than any can it be directed as though it were a thing unto itself. And, moreover, it is not the first national revolution that has taken place here - there have been Cromwell and Mirabeau - but it is the first to occur in a politically helpless and very dangerously situated land, and this fact enhances incalculably the difficulty of its tasks.

These tasks are, one and all, only just emerging, are barely grasped and not solved. It is no time or occasion for transports of triumph. Woe betide those who mistake mobilization for victory! A movement has just begun; it has not reached its goal, and the great problems of our time have been in no wise altered by it. They concern not Germany alone, but the whole world, and are problems not of a few years, but of a century.

The danger with enthusiasts is that they envisage the situation as too simple. Enthusiasm is out of keeping with goals that lie generations ahead. And yet it is with these that the actual decisions of history begin.

The seizure of power took place in a confused whirl of strength and weakness. I see with misgiving that it continues to be noisily celebrated from day to day. It were better to save our enthusiasm for a day of real and definitive results - that is to say, of successes in *foreign politics*, which alone matter. When these have been achieved the men of the moment, who took the first step, may all be dead - or even forgotten and scorned, until at some point posterity recalls their significance. History is not sentimental, and it will go ill with any man who takes himself sentimentally!

In any movement with such a beginning there are many possible developments of which the participants are not often fully aware. The movement may become rigid from excess of principles and theories; it may go under in political, social, or economic anarchy, or it may double back upon itself in futility. In Paris in 1793 it was definitely felt "*que ça*

changerait." The intoxication of the moment, which often ruins coming possibilities at the outset, is usually followed by disillusionment and uncertainty as to the next step. Elements come into power which regard the enjoyment of that power as an event in itself and would fain perpetuate a state of things which is tenable for moments only. Sound ideas are exaggerated into self-glorification by fanatics, and that which held promise of greatness in the beginning ends in tragedy or comedy. Let us face these dangers in good time, and soberly, so that we may be wiser than many a generation in the past.

But if a stable foundation is to be laid for a great future, one on which coming generations may build, ancient tradition must continue effective. That which we have in our blood by inheritance - namely, wordless ideas - is the only thing which gives permanence to our future. "Prussianism" (*Preußentum*), as I called it years ago, is important - it is this, precisely, that has just been *tested* - but "Socialism," of whatever description, is not. We need educating up to the *Prussian* standard, which manifested itself in 1870 and 1914 and still sleeps in the depths of our soul as a permanent potentiality. It is to be reached only through the living example and moral self-discipline of a ruling class, not by a flow of words or by force. The service of an idea demands mastery of ourselves and readiness for inward sacrifices to conviction. To confuse this with the intellectual compulsion of a program is to be ignorant of the whole issue. And this brings me back to the book: *Prussianism and Socialism*, [1] in which, in 1919, I began to point out this moral necessity without which there can be no permanent building. All other nations of the world have inherited a character from their *past*. We had no educative past and have therefore still to awaken, develop, and train the character which lies dormant in our blood.

(1. Oswald Spengler, *Preußentum und Sozialismus*, Munich: C. H. Beck.)

The work of which this volume is the first part is written with the same object. I do as I have always done. That is, I offer no wish-picture of the future, still less a program for its realization - as is the fashion amongst us Germans - but a clear picture of the facts as they are and will be. I see further than others. I see not only great possibilities but also great dangers, their origin and perhaps the way to avoid them. And if no one else has the courage to see and to tell what it is he sees, I mean to do so. I have a *right* to criticism since by means of it I have repeatedly demonstrated that which *must* happen because it will *happen*. A decisive series of facts has been set in train. Nothing that has once become a fact can be withdrawn - we are all thereafter obliged to walk in the particular direction, whether we will or not. It would be short-sighted and cowardly to say no. What the individual will not do, that History will do with him.

But to say yes presupposes comprehension, and this book is here to help in comprehension. It is a danger-signal. Dangers are always there. Everyone who acts is in danger. Danger is life itself. But those who link the fate of States and nations with their own must meet these dangers *seeingly* - and to see requires possibly the most courage of all.

The present book arose out of a lecture: *Germany in Danger*, [2] which I delivered at

Hamburg in 1929, without meeting with much comprehension. In November 1932 I began to develop the theme, still in terms of the existing situation in Germany. By the 30th January 1933 it was printed up to page 106. I have altered *nothing* in it, for I write not for a few months ahead or for next year, but for the future. What is true cannot be made null by an event. The title alone I have changed, so as to avoid misunderstandings. It is not the national seizure of power which is a danger; the dangers were there - some of them dating from 1918, others from much further back - and they still persist, since they cannot be got rid of by an isolated event which before taking effect against them must undergo a long development in the right direction. Germany *is* in danger. My fear for Germany has not grown less. The March victory was too easy to open the eyes of the victors to the extent of the danger, its origin, and its duration.

(2. *Deutschland in Gefahr*, Munich: C. H. Beck.)

No one can know what forms, situations, and personalities will arise out of this upheaval, or the reactions which may result from outside. Every revolution makes the external situation of a country worse, and that fact alone requires statesmen of Bismarck's order to deal with it. We stand, it may be, close before a second world war, unable to gauge the distribution of forces or to foresee its means or aims - military, economic, revolutionary. We have no time to limit ourselves to home politics; we have to be "in form" to deal with any conceivable occurrence. Germany is not an island. If we fail to see our relation to the world as - for us in particular - *the* important problem, fate - and what a fate! - will submerge us without mercy.

Germany is the *key* country of the world, not only on account of her geographical situation on the borders of Asia (which is today the most important continent in world policy), but also because Germans are still young enough to experience world-historical problems, to form them and solve them, *inwardly*, while other nations have become too old and rigid to do more than raise defences. But in tackling great *problems*, as in other matters, it is the attack that holds the greater promise of victory.

It is of this that I have written. Will it have the effect I hope for?

Munich, July 1933.

[The Oswald Spengler Collection](#)

The Hour Of Decision

Part One

1. The Political Horizon

Is there today a man among the White races who has eyes to see what is going on around him on the face of the globe? To see the immensity of the danger which looms over this mass of peoples? I do not speak of the educated or uneducated city crowds, the newspaper-readers, the herds who vote at elections - and, for that matter, there is no longer any quality-difference between voters and those for whom they vote - but of the *ruling* classes of the White nations, in so far as they have not been destroyed, of the statesmen in so far as there are any left; of the *true* leaders of policy, of economic life, of armies, and of thought. Does anyone, I ask, see over and beyond his time, his own continent, his country, or even the narrow circle of his own activities?

We live in momentous times. The stupendous dynamism of the historical epoch that has now dawned makes it the grandest, not only in the Faustian civilization of Western Europe, but - for that very reason - in all world-history, greater and by far more terrible than the ages of Caesar and Napoleon. Yet how blind are the human beings over whom this mighty destiny is surging, whirling them in confusion, exalting them, destroying them! Who among them sees and comprehends what is being done to them and around them? Some wise old Chinaman or Indian, perhaps, who gazes around him in silence with the stored-up thought of a thousand years in his soul. But how superficial, how narrow, how small-minded are the judgments and measures of Western Europe and America! What do the inhabitants of the Middle West of the United States know of what goes on beyond New York and San Francisco? What conception has a middle-class Englishman, not to speak of a French provincial, of the trend of affairs on the Continent? What, indeed, does any one of them know of the direction in which his very own destiny is facing? All we have is a number of absurd catchwords such as "overcoming the economic crisis," "understanding of peoples," "national security and self-sufficingness," with which to "overcome" catastrophes within the space of a generation or two by means of "prosperity" and disarmament.

But it is of Germany that I am speaking here: Germany, to whom the storm of facts is more menacing than to any other country and whose existence is, in the most alarming sense of the word, at stake. What short-sightedness and noisy superficiality reigns among

us, and how provincial the standpoint when major problems emerge! Let us set up a ring-fenced Third Empire or, alternatively, Soviet State; let us do away with the army or with property, with economists, or with agriculture; let us give maximum independence to all the little provinces, or alternatively suppress them; let us allow the former lords of industry or administration to get to work again in the style of 1900, or - why not? - let us have a revolution, proclaim a dictatorship (are there not dozens of candidates confident of their fitness for the job?), and all will be well.

But - *Germany is not an island*. No other country is in the same degree woven actively or passively into the world's destiny. Her geographical situation alone, her lack of natural boundaries, make this inevitable. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries she was "Central Europe"; in the twentieth she is again, as in and after the thirteenth century, a frontier against "Asia." For no country is it more essential that its sphere of political and economic thought should reach far beyond its own boundaries. Everything that happens afar involves the heart of Germany.

Our past is having its revenge - seven hundred years of the petty provincial régime of small states with never a breath of greatness, an idea, an aim. This is not going to be made good in two generations. And Bismarck's creative work had the one great fault that he did not train the coming generation to meet the facts of the new form of our political life. [1] The facts were seen, but not grasped. Men could not inwardly adapt themselves to the new horizons, problems, and obligations. They did not *live* with them. And the average German continued to apply to his greater country the old particularist and partisan outlook - shallow and cramped, stupid and parochial. This small-mindedness dates from the time of the Hohenstaufen emperors and the Hansa. The first, whose vision ranged over the Mediterranean, and the second, whose rule extended from the Scheldt to Novgorod, alike fell before other and more securely based powers for want of wise and substantial backing from within their own frontiers. And from that time on, the German has shut himself up in innumerable little fatherlands and petty local interests, measuring world history by his own horizon, and dreaming hungrily and miserably of a kingdom in the clouds - to describe which condition the phrase "German idealism" was invented. To this petty and essentially German mode of thought belong almost all the political ideals and Utopias that have sprouted from the bog of the Weimar State: the International, Communist, Pacifist, Ultramontane, Federal, "Aryan" visions of *sacrum imperium*, Soviet State, or Third Empire, as the case might be. All parties now think and act as if Germany had the world to herself. Trade unions see no further than the industrial area. Colonial policy has always been odious to them because it does not fit in with the scheme of class war. In their dogmatic narrowness they do not, or will not, comprehend that it was precisely the working man for whom the economic imperialism of the years round 1900, with its assured facilities for the sale of products and the purchase of raw materials, was the basic premiss of existence. This the English workman had long before grasped. The enthusiasm of German democracy for disarmament stops short at the frontiers of the French sphere of power. The Federalists would have their already greatly reduced country split up again into a bundle of dwarf states of the old sort, thereby giving foreign powers the opportunity to play off one against the other. And the National Socialists

believe that they can afford to ignore the world or oppose it, and build their castles-in-the-air without creating a possibly silent, but very palpable reaction from abroad.

(1. Spengler, *Politische Schriften*, pp. 227 et seq.)

Added to all this is the universal *dread of reality*. We "pale-faces" have it, all of us, although we are seldom, and most of us never, conscious of it. It is the spiritual weakness of the "Late" man of the higher civilizations, who lives in his cities cut off from the peasant and the soil and thereby from the *natural* experiencing of destiny, time, and death. He has become too wide awake, too accustomed to ponder perpetually over yesterday and tomorrow, and cannot bear that which he sees and is forced to see: the *relentless* course of things, *senseless* chance, and *real* history striding pitilessly through the centuries into which the individual with his tiny scrap of private life is irrevocably born at the appointed place. That is what he longs to forget, refute, or contest. He takes flight from history into solitude, into imaginary far-away systems, into some faith or another, or into suicide. Like a grotesque ostrich he buries his head in hopes, ideals, and *cowardly* optimism: it is so, but it ought not to be, therefore it is otherwise. We sing in the woods at night because we are afraid. Similarly, the cowardice of cities shouts its apparent optimism to the world for very fear. Reality is no longer to be borne. The wish-picture of the future is set in place of facts - although fate has never taken any notice of human fancies - from the children's Land of Do-Nothing to the World Peace and Workers' Paradise of the grown-ups.

Little as one knows of events in the future - for all that can be got from a comparison of other civilizations is the general form of future facts and their march through the ages - so much is certain: the forces which will sway the future are no other than those of the past. These forces are: the will of the Strong, *healthy* instincts, race, the will to possession and power; while justice, happiness, and peace - those dreams which will always remain dreams - hover ineffectively over them.

Further, in our own civilization since the sixteenth century it has rapidly grown more impossible for most of us to gain a general view of the ever more confusing events and situations of world politics and economics or to grasp (let alone control) the forces and tendencies at work in them. True statesmen become rarer and rarer. Most of the doings (as distinct from the events) in the history of these centuries was indeed the work of semi-experts and amateurs with luck on their side. Still, they could always rely upon the people's instinct to back them. It is only now that this instinct has become so weak, and the voluble criticism of blithe ignorance so strong, as to make it more and more likely that a true statesman, with a real knowledge of things, will not receive this instinctive support - even at the level of grudging tolerance - but will be prevented from doing what has to be done by the opposition of all the "know-betters." Frederick the Great experienced the first of these types of opposition; Bismarck almost fell a victim to the second. Only later generations, and not even they, can appreciate the grandeur and creativeness of such leaders. But we do have to see to it that the present confines itself to ingratitude and incomprehension and does not proceed to counteraction. Germans in

particular are great at suspecting, criticizing, and voiding creative action. They have none of that historical experience and force of tradition which are congenial with English life. A nation of poets and thinkers - in the process of becoming a nation of babblers and persecutors. Every real governor is unpopular among his frightened, cowardly, and uncomprehending contemporaries. And one must be more than an "idealist" to understand even this.

We are still in the *Age of Rationalism*, which began in the eighteenth century and is now rapidly nearing its close. [2] We are all its creatures whether we know and wish it or not. The word is familiar enough, but who knows how much it implies? It is the arrogance of the urban intellect, which, detached from its roots and no longer guided by strong instinct, looks down with contempt on the full-blooded thinking of the past and the wisdom of ancient peasant stock. It is the period in which everyone can read and write and therefore must have his say and always "knows better." This type of mind is obsessed by concepts - the new gods of the Age - and it exercises its wits on the world as it sees it. "It is no good," it says; "we could make it better; here goes, let us set up a program for a better world!" Nothing could be easier for persons of intelligence, and no doubt seems to be felt that this world will then materialize of itself. It is given a label, "Human Progress," and now that it has a name, it *is*. Those who doubt it are narrow reactionaries, heretics, and, what is worse, persons devoid of democratic virtue: away with them! In this wise the fear of reality was overcome by intellectual arrogance, the darkness that comes from ignorance of all things of life, spiritual poverty, lack of reverence, and, finally, world-alien stupidity - for there is nothing stupider than the rootless urban intelligence. In English offices and clubs it used to be called *common sense*; in French salons, *esprit*; in German philosophers' studies, *Pure Reason*. The shallow optimism of the cultural philistine is ceasing to fear the elemental historical facts and beginning to *despise* them. Every "know-better" seeks to absorb them in his scheme (in which experience has no part), to make them conceptually more complete than actually they are, and to subordinate them to himself in his mind because he has not *livingly* experienced them, but only perceived them. This doctrinaire clinging to theory for lack of experience, or rather this lack of ability to *make* experience, finds literary expression in a flood of schemes for political, social, and economic systems and Utopias, and practical expression in that craze for organization which, becoming an aim in itself, produces bureaucracies that either collapse through their own hollowness or destroy the living order. Rationalism is at bottom nothing but criticism, and the critic is the reverse of a creator: he dissects and he reassembles; conception and birth are alien to him. Accordingly his work is artificial and lifeless, and when brought into contact with real life, it *kills*. All these systems and organizations are paper productions; they are methodical and absurd and live *only* on the paper they are written on. The process began at the time of Rousseau and Kant with philosophical ideologies that lost themselves in generalities; passed in the nineteenth century to scientific constructions with scientific, physical, Darwinian methods - sociology, economics, materialistic history-writing - and lost itself in the twentieth in the literary output of problem novels and party programs.

(2. Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, II, pp. 305 et seq.)

But let there be no mistake: idealism and materialism are equally parts of it. Both are Rationalist through and through, in the case of Kant as of Voltaire and Holbach; of Novalis as of Proudhon; of the ideologues of the Wars of Liberation as of Marx; of the materialist conception of history quite as much as the idealistic, whether the meaning and aim of it is "progress," technics, "liberty," the "happiness of the greatest number," or the flowering of art, poetry, and thought. In both cases there is the failure to realize that destiny in history depends on quite other, robuster forces. Human history is war history. Among the few genuine historians of standing, none was ever popular, and among statesmen Bismarck achieved popularity only when it was of no more use to him.

But Romanticism too, with its lack of a sense for reality, is just as much an expression of rationalist arrogance as are Idealism and Materialism. They are all in fact closely related, and it would be difficult to discover the boundary between these two trends of thought in any political or social Romantic. In every outstanding Materialist a Romantic lies hidden. [3] Though he may scorn the cold, shallow, methodical mind of others, he has himself enough of that sort of mind to do so in the same way and with the same arrogance. Romanticism is no sign of powerful instincts, but, on the contrary, of a weak, self-detesting intellect. They are all infantile, these Romantics; men who remain children too long (or for ever), without the strength to criticize themselves, but with perpetual inhibitions arising from the obscure awareness of their own personal weakness; who are impelled by the morbid idea of reforming society, which is to them too masculine, too healthy, too sober. And to reform it, not with knives and revolvers in the Russian fashion - heaven forbid! - but by noble talk and poetic theories. Hapless indeed they are if, lacking creative power, they lack also the artistic talent to persuade at least themselves that they possess it. Yet even in their art they are feminine and weak, incapable of setting a great novel or a great tragedy on its legs, still less a pure philosophy of any force. All that appears is spineless lyric, bloodless scenarios, and fragmentary ideas, all of them displaying an innocence of and antagonism to the world which amounts to absurdity. But it was the same with the unfading "Youths" (*Jünglinge*), with their "old German" coats and pipes - Jahn and Arndt, even, included. Stein himself was unable to control his romantic taste for ancient constitutions sufficiently to allow him to turn his extensive practical experience to successful account in diplomacy. Oh, they were heroes, and noble, and ready to be martyrs at any moment; but they talked too much about German nature and too little about railways and customs unions, and thus became only an obstacle in the way of Germany's *real* future. Did they ever so much as hear the name of the great Friedrich List, who committed suicide in 1846 because no one understood and supported his far-sighted and modern political aim, the building of an economic Germany? But they all knew the names of Arminius and Thusnelda.

(3. Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*, for instance, is the work of a pure sentimentalist and a weak logician. A faith that is stronger than any proofs is the distinguishing mark of the Romantic.)

And these same everlasting "Youths" are with us again today, immature, destitute of the slightest experience or even real desire for experience, but writing and talking away about

politics, fired by uniforms and badges, and clinging fantastically to some theory or other. There is a social Romanticism of sentimental Communists, a political Romanticism which regards election figures and the intoxication of mass-meeting oratory as deeds, and an economic Romanticism which trickles out from behind the gold theories of sick minds that know nothing of the inner forms of modern economics. They can only feel in the mass, where they can deaden the dull sense of their weakness by multiplying themselves. And this they call the Overcoming of Individualism.

And like *all* Rationalists and Romantics, they are as sentimental as a street ditty. Even the *Contrat social* and the Rights of Man are products of the Age of Sensibility. Burke, on the contrary, like a true statesman, argued that on his side of the Channel men demanded their due as Englishmen and not as human beings, and he was right. This was practical political thinking, not the rationalistic issue of undisciplined emotions. For this evil sentimentality which lies over all the theoretical currents of the two centuries - Liberalism, Communism, Pacifism - and all the books, speeches, and revolutions, originates in spiritual indiscipline, in personal weakness, in lack of the training imparted by a stern old tradition. It is "bourgeois" or "plebeian," in so far as these are terms of abuse. It looks at human things, history, and political destiny *from below*, meanly, from the cellar window, the street, the writers' café, the national assembly; not from height and distance. It detests every kind of greatness, everything that towers, rules, is superior; and construction means for it only the pulling-down of all the products of civilization, of the State, of society, to the level of little people, above which its pitiful emotionalism cannot soar to understand. That is all that the prefix "folk" or "people" means today, for the "people" in the mouth of any Rationalist or Romanticist does not mean the well-formed nation, shaped and graded by Destiny in the course of ages, but that portion of the dull *formless* mass which everyone senses as his equal, from the "proletariat" to "humanity."

This domination of the rootless urban intellect is drawing to a close. And there emerges, as a final way of understanding things as they are, *Scepticism* - fundamental doubt as to the meaning and value of theoretical reflection, as to its ability to arrive at conclusions by critical and abstract methods or to achieve anything by practical ones; Scepticism in the form of great historical and physiognomic experience, of the incorruptible eye for facts, the real knowledge of men which teaches what they were and are and not what they ought to be; the Scepticism of true historical thought which teaches, amongst other things, that there have been other periods wherein criticism was all-powerful and that these periods have left little impress behind them; and the Scepticism which brings reverence for the facts of world happening, which are and remain inward secrets to be described but never explained, and to be mastered only by men of a strong breed *who are themselves historical facts*, not by sentimental programs and systems. The hard recognition of historical fact which has set in with this century is intolerable to soft, uncontrolled natures. They detest those who establish them, calling them pessimists. Well, but this *strong* pessimism, with which belongs the contempt for mankind of all great fact-men who *know* mankind, is quite a different matter from the cowardly pessimism of small and weary souls which fear life and cannot bear to look at reality. The life they hope for, spent in peace and happiness, free from danger and replete with comfort, is boring and

senile, apart from the fact that it is only imaginable, not possible. On this rock, the reality of history, every ideology must founder.

As regards the international situation of the moment, we are all in danger of misreading it. After the American Civil War (1861-65), the Franco-German War (1870-71), and the Victorian Age, existence and progress among the White races ran so incredibly calm, secure, peaceful, and care-free that one may search in vain through the centuries for anything analogous. Anyone who has lived through that period, or even heard about it from others, is always liable to regard it as normal and the wild present as a disturbance of this natural state of affairs, and to wish that things may soon "look up again." Now, that will *not* be the case, and we shall never see that kind of thing again. We do not realize what led up to this, in the long run, impossible situation. There was the *fact* that standing and expanding armies rendered a war so incalculable that no statesman any longer dared to make one; the *fact* that technical economic development was in a feverish condition which was bound to come to a speedy end because of its dependence on rapidly vanishing conditions; and, finally, the resultant *fact* that the grave unsolved problems of the time were being pushed more and more into the future, loaded as an unavowed commitment on to the shoulders of the heirs and heirs' heirs, so successfully that men ceased to believe in their reality although they were looming out of the future with steadily growing insistence.<

If few can stand a long war without deterioration of soul, none can stand a long peace. This peace period from 1870 to 1914, and the memory of it, rendered all White men self-satisfied, covetous, void of understanding, and incapable of bearing misfortune. We see the result in the Utopian conceptions and challenges which today form part of every demagogue's program; challenges to the age, to the State, to parties, and in fact to "everyone else," in complete disregard of the limits of possibility or of duty, doing, and forgoing.

This all too long peace over a period of growing excitement is a fearful inheritance. Not a statesman, not a party, hardly even a political thinker is today in a safe enough position to speak the truth. They all lie, they all join in the chorus of the pampered, ignorant crowd who want their tomorrow to be like the good old days, only more so - although statesmen and economic leaders at least ought to be alive to the frightful reality. Only look at our leaders of today! Once a month their cowardly and dishonest optimism announces the "up-branch of the cycle" and "prosperity," on the strength of a mere flutter on the stock exchange caused by building-speculations: the end of unemployment, from the moment that a hundred men or so are given jobs, and as the climax the achievement of "mutual understanding between the nations," as soon as the League - that swarm of parasitic holiday-makers on the Lake of Geneva - has formulated any sort of a resolution. And in every conference and every paper the word "crisis" is bandied about in connexion with any passing disturbance of the peace. And thus we deceive ourselves, blind to the fact that we have here one of those incalculable great catastrophes that are the *normal* form in which history takes its major turns.

For we live in a mighty age. It is the greatest that the Western Civilization has ever

known or will know. It corresponds to the Classical Age from Cannae to Actium, to the age illumined by the names of Hannibal, Scipio, and Gracchus, Marius, Sulla, and Caesar. [4] The World War was but the first flash and crash from the fateful thundercloud which is passing over this century. As then, at the commencement of the *Imperium Romanum*, so today, the *form* of the world is being remoulded from its foundations, regardless of the desires and intentions of "the majority" or of the number of victims demanded by every such decision. But who understand this? Who is facing it? Does one of us consider himself lucky to be there to see it? The age is mighty, but all the more diminutive are the people in it. They can no longer bear tragedy, either on the stage or in real life. They crave happy endings of insipid novels, so miserable and weary are they. But the destiny which pitched them into these decades now takes them by the collar and does with them what has to be done, whether they will or no. The coward's security of 1900 is at an end. Life in danger, the real life of history, comes once more into its own. Everything has begun to slide, and now only that man counts who can take risks, who has the courage to see and accept things as they are. The age is approaching - nay, is already here - which has no more room for soft hearts and weakly ideals. The primeval barbarism which has lain hidden and bound for centuries under the form-rigour of a ripe Culture, is awake again now that the Culture is finished and the Civilization has set in: that warlike, healthy joy in one's own strength which scorns the literature-ridden age of Rationalist thought, that unbroken race-instinct, which desires a different life from one spent under the weight of books and bookish ideals. In the Western European peasantry this spirit still abounds, as also on the American prairies and away in the great plains of northern Asia, where world-conquerors are born.

(4. See *The Decline of the West*, II, pp. 418 et seq.)

If this is "Pessimism," then he who feels it to be so must be one who *needs* the pious falsehood or veil of ideals and Utopias to protect and save him from the sight of reality. This, no doubt, is the refuge resorted to by most white men in this century - but will it be so in the next? Their forefathers in the time of the Great Migration and the Crusades were different. They contemned such an attitude as cowardly. It is from this cowardice in the face of life that Buddhism and its offshoots arose in the Indian Culture at the corresponding stage in time. These cults are now becoming fashionable with us. It is possible that a Late religion of the West is in process of formation - whether under the guise of Christianity or not none can tell, but at any rate the religious "revival" which succeeds Rationalism as a world philosophy does hold quite special possibilities of *new* religions emerging. People with tired, cowardly, senile souls seek refuge from the age in something which by reason of its miraculous doctrines and customs is better able to rock them into the sleep of oblivion than the Christian churches. The *credo quia absurdum* is again uppermost. But the profundity of world-suffering - a feeling that is as old as the brooding over the world itself, the moan over the absurdity of history and the cruelty of existence - arises not from things themselves, but from morbid reflection on them. It is the annihilating judgment upon the worth and the strength of men's own souls. A profound view of the world need not necessarily be saturated with tears.

There is a Nordic world-feeling, reaching from England to Japan, which is full of joy just because of the burden of human destiny. One challenges it for the sake of conquering it, and one goes under proudly should it prove stronger than one's own will. This was the attribute depicted in the old, genuine parts of the Mahabharata which tell of the fight between the Kurus and Pandus; in Homer, Pindar, and Aeschylus; in the Germanic sagas and in Shakespeare; in certain songs of the Chinese Shu king, and in the world of the Samurai. It is the *tragic* view of life, which is *not* yet dead, but will blossom anew in the future just as it blossomed in the World War. All the very great poets of the Nordic Cultures have been tragedians, and tragedy, from ballad and epic onward, has been the deepest form of this *brave* pessimism. The man who is incapable of experiencing or enduring tragedy can never be a figure of world significance. He cannot *make* history unless he experiences it as it really is - tragic, permeated by destiny, and in consequence meaningless, aimless, and unmoral in the eyes of the worshippers of utility. It marks the parting of the ways between the superior and subordinate ethos of human existence. The individual's life is of importance to none besides himself: the point is whether he wishes to escape from history or give his life for it. History recks nothing of human logic. Thunderstorms, earthquakes, lava-streams: these are near relatives of the purposeless, elemental events of world history. Nations may go under, ancient cities of ageing Cultures burn or sink in ruins, but the earth will continue to revolve calmly round the sun, and the stars to run their courses.

Man is a beast of prey. [5] I shall say it again and again. All the would-be moralists and social-ethics people who claim or hope to be "beyond all that" are only beasts of prey with their teeth broken, who hate others on account of the attacks which they themselves are wise enough to avoid. Only look at them. They are too weak to read a book on war, but they herd together in the street to see an accident, letting the blood and the screams play on their nerves. And if even that is too much for them, they enjoy it on the film and in the illustrated papers. If I call man a beast of prey, which do I insult: man or beast? For remember, the larger beasts of prey are *noble* creatures, perfect of their kind, and without the hypocrisy of human moral due to weakness.

(5. See Spengler, *Man and Technics*, pp. 19 et seq.)

They shout: "No more war" - but they desire class war. They are indignant when a murderer is executed for a crime of passion, but they feel a secret pleasure in hearing of the murder of a political opponent. What objection have they ever raised to the Bolshevik slaughters? There is no getting away from it: conflict is the original fact of life, is life itself, and not the most pitiful pacifist is able entirely to uproot the pleasure it gives his inmost soul. Theoretically, at least, he would like to fight and destroy all opponents of pacifism.

The further we advance into the Caesarism of the Faustian world, the more clearly will it emerge who is destined ethically to be the subject and who the object of historical events. The dreary train of world-improvers has now come to an end of its amble through these centuries, leaving behind it, as sole monument of its existence, mountains of printed paper. The Caesars will now take its place. High policy, *the art of the possible*, will again

enter upon its eternal heritage, free from all systems and theories, itself the judge of the facts by which it rules, and gripping the world between its knees like a good horseman.

This being so, I have only to show here the historical position in which Germany and the world now stand and how this position is the inevitable outcome of the history of past centuries, and will just as inevitably pass on to certain forms and solutions. That is Destiny. We may deny it, but in so doing we deny ourselves.

[The Oswald Spengler Collection](#)

The Hour Of Decision: Part Two

II. World Powers And World Wars.

**SORRY: ON LINE SOON OTHER
SECTIONS ALL AVAILABLE**

[The Oswald Spengler Collection](#)

The Hour Of Decision: Part Three

III. The White World-Revolution.

This, then, is the look of the age of world wars, at the beginning of which we find ourselves standing. But behind it appears the second element of the mighty upheaval, the World Revolution. What does it want? In what does it consist? What does the word at very bottom mean? We are as far from understanding its full content today as from grasping the historical significance of the first world war, which lies behind us. It is not, as half of us think, a question of the threat to economic existence from the Bolshevism of Moscow, nor, as the other half think, of the "liberation" of the working class. These are only surface questions. In the first place, this revolution is not a merely impending threat. We are in the midst of it, and not since yesterday or today, but since more than a century ago. It crosses the "horizontal" struggle between states and nations by a "vertical" between the ruling classes of the white nations and the others, and in the background the far more dangerous second part of this revolution has already set in - the whites in general are under attack by the collective mass of the "coloured" population of the earth, which is slowly becoming conscious of its community.

This struggle is being waged not only between strata of humanity but also between strata of the spiritual life right down to the individuals. Almost every one of us has this opposition of thought and feeling in him, though without being conscious of it. That is why so few arrive at seeing clearly on which side they stand. But that very fact shows the inward necessity of this decision, which reaches far beyond one's personal desires and activities. There is very little to be gained out of the catchwords derived from the way of thinking that prevails at the moment - such as Bolshevism, Communism, class struggle, capitalism, Socialism - each of which is believed by the user to convey the exact meaning of the problem simply because he is unable to see deep down into the facts. The same thing has occurred in all former Cultures at the equivalent stage, little as we know of the details. [1]

(1. *The Decline of the West*, II, pp. 419 et seq., 451 et seq.)

But in the case of the Classical Age we do know enough. The climax of the revolutionary movement lies in the period between the Gracchi and Sulla, but the struggle set in a good century earlier with C. Flaminius, whose agrarian law of 232 Polybius rightly describes [2] as the beginning of the demoralization of the masses. This development was only temporarily interrupted and diverted by the war against Hannibal, towards the end of

which slaves were drafted to the "citizen" army. From the time of the murder of the Gracchi and of their great opponent, the younger Scipio Africanus, the power of ancient Roman tradition to preserve the State dwindled rapidly. Marius, a man of the lower classes, and not even of Roman origin, created the first army that was based, not on universal conscription, but on the recruitment of paid volunteers who were personally attached to him, and proceeded with this army to launch a pitiless and sanguinary attack on the fundamental relationships in Rome. The older generations, trained for centuries in the statesmanship and sense of moral responsibility that had given Rome its position as a world power, were to a large extent exterminated. The Roman Sertorius attempted to found a rival state in Spain with the aid of the barbarous races there, and Spartacus roused the slaves of Italy to wipe out all that Rome meant. The war against Jugurtha and the Catilinarian Conspiracy revealed the deterioration of the ruling classes themselves, whose uprooted elements were prepared at any moment to appeal to the country's enemy and the mob of the Forum in support of their sordid financial interests. Sallust was perfectly right - it was for the sake of cash, whereof the mob and the rich speculators were equally greedy, that the honour and greatness of Rome, its race and its idea, went down in ruin. But this cosmopolitan mass of people which had swarmed into the city from all sides was - just as is the case now - not mobilized and organized from within to fight for its "right" of self-government, its "liberation" from the oppression of the ruling classes, but from without, as a means to the ends of business politicians and professional revolutionaries. From these circles there emerged - as today - the "dictatorship from below," which is the inevitable final result of radical democratic anarchy. Polybius, with his experience of statesmanship and his keen eye for the trend of events, foretold this with certainty thirty years before C. Gracchus.

"So when they begin to lust for power and cannot attain it through themselves or their own good qualities, they ruin their estates, tempting and corrupting the people in every possible way. And hence when by their foolish thirst for reputation they have created among the masses an appetite for gifts and the habit of receiving them, democracy in its turn is abolished and changes into a rule of force and violence. For the people, having grown accustomed to feed at the expense of others, and to depend for their livelihood on the property of others, as soon as they find a leader who is enterprising but is excluded from the honours of office by his penury, institute the rule of violence; and now uniting their forces massacre, banish, and plunder, until they degenerate again into perfect savages and find once more a master and monarch." [3]

"And for this change [for the worse] the populace will be responsible when on the one hand they think they have a grievance against certain people who have shown themselves grasping, and when, on the other hand, they are puffed up by the flattery of others who aspire to office. For now, stirred to fury and swayed by passion in all their counsels, they will no longer consent to obey or even to be the equals of the ruling caste, but will demand the lion's share for themselves. When this happens the state will change its name to the finest sounding of all, freedom and democracy, but will change its nature to the worst thing of all, mob-rule." [4]

(2. Polybius, *The Histories*, II, 21.)

(3. Ibid., VI, 9.)

(4. Ibid., VI, 57.)

This dictatorship is for the white races of today not a mere threat: we are already completely under its sway and moreover so submerged and so assured of its normality that we do not even notice it. The "dictatorship of the proletariat" - that is, of its profiteers the trade unions and party officials of all tendencies - is an accomplished fact, whether governments are actually formed by them or, owing to the timidity of the "bourgeoisie," are dominated by them. This condition was what Marius aimed at, but failed to obtain, owing to entire want of statesmanlike ability. But what he lacked his nephew Caesar possessed, and in full measure. He brought the terrible period of the revolution to an end by *his* form of "dictatorship from above," which set the unlimited authority of a superior personality in the place of partisan anarchy. It was a form to which he gave his name for all time. His murder and its consequences could not affect it in any way. From his reign onward, the struggle is waged no longer for gold or to gratify class hatred, but solely for the possession of absolute power.

With the fight between "Capitalism" and "Socialism" it has nothing to do. On the contrary, the class of big financiers and speculators, the Roman *equites* (a term which since Mommsen has quite erroneously been translated "knights"), always had a perfectly good understanding with the populace and its organizations, the voting clubs (*sodalicia*) and the armed bands like those of Milo and Clodius. [5] They supplied money for elections, insurrections, and bribes, and C. Gracchus in return handed over to them the provinces for unlimited exploitation under State protection. There they spread incredible misery by plundering, usury, and the selling of whole towns into slavery. To crown all, they took possession of the law-courts, where they were able to sit in judgment on their own crimes and acquit each other. They, for their part, promised the dictator everything, only to drop him and his well-meant reforms as soon as they had secured their own advantages. This alliance between stock exchange and trade unions exists now as then. It is part of the natural evolution of such periods, arising as it does from a common hatred of State authority and of the leaders of productive economy, the two obstacles in the way of the anarchic principle of effortless money-making. Marius - a political simpleton like so many popular leaders - and his backers Saturninus and Cinna, thought no differently from Gracchus; and therefore Sulla, the dictator of the nationalist side, after the storming of Rome organized a terrible butchery among the financiers, from which as a class they never recovered. After Caesar they completely disappeared from history as a *political* element. Their existence as a political power was intimately bound up with the age of democratic party-anarchy and did not survive it.

(5. *The Decline of the West*, II, pp. 455 et seq.)

This revolution of more than a century in duration has fundamentally nothing to do with economics. It is a long disintegration-period in the life of the Culture as a whole, considered as a living body. The inward form of the life falls to pieces, and with it goes the power to give it outward expression through the creative works which collectively

form the *history* of states, religions, and arts, after that power has matured to its extreme limits. The individual man with his private existence *follows* the trend of the whole. His doings, his attitude, intention, thought, experience, inevitably form an element, however small, in this development. If he confuses this with purely economic questions, it is already a sign of the decay that is going forward within himself too, whether he feels and knows it or not. It goes without saying that economic *forms* are just as much a part of civilization as states, religions, ideas, and arts. [6] But what is commonly meant by economics is not the forms of economic life that grow up and wither *independently of human will*, but the material product of economic activity, which nowadays is simply equated in the meaning to civilization and history, and the decline of which is regarded, materialistically and mechanically, as the "cause" and content of the world catastrophe.

(6. *The Decline of the West*, II, pp. 472 et seq.)

The scene of this revolution of life, its foundation, and, at the same time, its expression, is the Megalopolis which is found arising in the Late period of all Cultures. [7] Into this world of stone and petrification flock ever-growing crowds of peasant folk uprooted from the land, the "masses" in the terrifying sense, formless human sand from which artificial and therefore fleeting figures can be kneaded: parties, organizations modelled on program and ideal, but in which that inherent power of growth that the course of the generations had saturated with tradition, and that most of all expresses itself in the fruitfulness of all life - the instinct for the permanence of family and race - is extinct. An abundance of children, the chief sign of a healthy race, becomes tiresome and absurd. [8] This is the gravest sign of the egoism of the Megalopolitans, who have themselves become atoms, of the egoism which is the opposite not of present-day collectivism - between these two there is no difference; a pile of atoms is no more alive than a single one - but of the urge to live on in the blood of posterity, in the creative care for it, in the lastingness of the name. Cold intelligence, on the other hand, that solitary bloom, the weed of the pavements, sprouts in incredible masses. It is no longer the thrifty deep wisdom of old peasant families, which remains true as long as the stock to which it belongs endures, but the mere intelligence of the day, of the daily papers, ephemeral literature, and national assemblies, the bloodless intellect whose criticism gnaws away everything that is left standing of the genuine - that is, the naturally grown - Culture.

(7. *The Decline of the West*, II, pp. 99 et seq.)

For the Culture is a *growth*. The more perfectly a nation represents, shows the true stamp and style of, its Culture - and amongst the noblest creations of a Culture are its nations themselves - the richer its organic disposition by status and rank, and the more genuine the respect of distances between ranks, from the strong-rooted peasantry to the urban patriciate. Here the high level of form, tradition, training, and custom, innate superiority in the ruling families, circles, and personalities, signify the life, the *destiny* of the whole. A *society* in this sense remains untouched by "rational" classifications and visions, or else it has ceased to exist. Above all, it is *constituted according to rank and not "economic classes."* The latter, the material, English point of view - which has developed with and by the growth of Rationalism since Adam Smith and was formulated in a shallow and

cynical system by Marx a century or so ago - is not made any more right by the fact that it has won out to this moment, when it dominates the entire thought, vision, and will of the white nations. It is a sign of the *decline* of society, and nothing more. Before this century is through, men will ask themselves in amazement how this valuation of social forms and degrees on the basis of employer and employed - that is, according to the *amount* of money that the individual has or intends to have as fortune, income, or wages - ever came to be taken seriously. For under this standard it is the mere amount of money that counts, not the social position in which it was acquired and turned into a real possession. It is the standpoint of proletarians and parvenus, who are at bottom one and the same type, the same weed of a metropolitan pavement - from the thief and tub-thumping agitator to the speculator in stocks or party advantage.

But "society" implies having Culture, having "form" down to the last detail of manners or thoughts, a "code" that has been built up by long discipline over whole generations, a strict moral outlook on life which penetrates the whole of existence with a thousand unspoken and rarely conscious obligations and ties, but through them forms all members of society into a living unit - often irrespective of national frontiers, as was the case with the nobility of the Crusades and that of the eighteenth century. This it is that determines rank; this is what is meant by belonging to "society." Among Germanic races it is called, almost mystically, honour. This honour was a force which permeated the lives of whole generations. Personal honour was only the sense of the unqualified responsibility of the individual for the social honour, the professional honour, the national honour. The individual shared the life of the community, and the existence of the others was at the same time his own. Whatever he did, the responsibility was shared by all who came after him, and in those days it was not only a man's spirit that died when he was dishonoured, when his own or his family's sense of honour had been mortally wounded, whether by his own fault or a stranger's. Everything that we call *duty*, the basis of all genuine rights, the original substance of every sort of dignity, may be traced back to honour. The peasantry and every kind of handicraftsman, the merchant and the officer, the civil servant and the prince of ancient lineage - all have their honour. Those who have it not, those who "see no point in" maintaining the decencies *vis-à-vis* themselves as well as others, are "vulgar." This is the opposite of nobility, according to the code of every true society; and not poverty or want of money, as envious beings suppose today, when all instinct for superior living and feeling has been lost and the public manners of all "classes" and "parties" are equally debased.

Into the old aristocratic society of Western Europe, which by the end of the eighteenth century had reached a level of existence and refinement of form which could not be surpassed and was already becoming fragile and sickly in certain respects, the successful Anglo-Puritan bourgeoisie thrust its shoots in the eighteen-forties. Its ambition was to vie with the nobility in its mode of life and if possible be merged into it. In this absorption of new currents of human life one sees how strong these forms of ancient growth were. The planters in Spanish South America and English North America had long since formed a true aristocracy on the model of the Spanish grandee and the English lord. The second of these groups was annihilated in the Civil War of 1861 and replaced by the parvenus of

New York and Chicago and their revenues from capital milliards. Later, from 1870 onwards, the new German bourgeoisie spread itself into the strict life of the Prussian officer and official class. But this is the very essence of social existence: that that which rises to higher rank by its own ability and its inward force must be disciplined and ennobled by this rigid form and its unconditioned ethic if it is thenceforth to represent it and hand it down to posterity in sons and grandsons. A live society renews itself perpetually by precious blood which pours into it from below and from outside. The capacity of the living form to take in, refine, and assimilate, without becoming unsure in the process, is a test of its strength. But as soon as this form of life becomes anything but self-evident, or even takes notice of critics who dispute the need for its existence, it is all up with it. For then one loses sight of the necessity of a structure that assigns to every sort of person and human activity their place in the life of the whole - the realization of the essential unlikeness, *inequality*, of the parts that is identical with organic formation. One ceases to have a clear conscience as to one's own rank and forgets how to meet subordination as a matter of course, but to the same extent the lower orders forget, *only as a consequence of this*, to practise this subordination and to recognize it as necessary and justified. Here, as always, revolution begins from above, only to make way presently for revolts from below. "Universal" rights have from time immemorial been given to those who had not even thought of claiming them. But society rests upon the inequality of men. That is a natural fact. There are strong and weak natures, natures born to lead or not to lead, creative and untalented, honourable, lazy, ambitious, and placid natures. Each has its place in the general order of things. The more significant the Culture, the more it resembles the structure of a noble animal or vegetable body and the greater are the differences between its constituent elements - *the differences, not the contrasts, for these are only introduced by reasoning*. No good retainer dreams of regarding peasants as his equals, and every foreman who knows his job refuses to allow unskilled labourers to address him on terms of equality. This is the *natural* feeling in human relations. "Equal rights" are contrary to nature, are an indication of the departure from type of ageing societies, are the beginning of their irrevocable decline. It is a piece of intellectual stupidity to want to substitute something else for the social structure that has grown up through the centuries and is fortified by tradition. There is no substituting anything else for Life. After Life there is only Death.

And that, at bottom, is the intention. We do not seek to alter and improve, but to destroy. In every society degenerate elements sink constantly to the bottom: exhausted families, downfallen members of generations of high breed, spiritual and physical failures and inferiors. One has only to glance at the figures in meetings, public-houses, processions, and riots; one way or another they are all abortions, men who, instead of having healthy instincts in their body, have only heads full of disputatiousness and revenge for their wasted life, and mouths as their most important organ. It is the dregs of the great cities, the genuine mob, the underworld in every sense, which everywhere constitute the opposition to the great and noble world and unite in their hatred of it: political and literary Bohemia, wastrel nobility (Catiline and Philippe Égalité, Duke of Orleans), shipwrecked academicians, adventurers and speculators, criminals and prostitutes, loiterers, and the feeble-minded, mixed with a few pathetic enthusiasts for some abstract

ideal. A mushy desire for revenge for some bad luck that has spoilt their lives, the absence of any instinct of honour and duty, and an unlimited thirst for money without work and for rights without responsibilities bring them together. It is from this befogged milieu that the heroes of the moment of all popular movements and Radical parties arise. Here the word "Liberty" takes on the bloody significance that it has in the declining ages. What is meant is: liberation from all the bonds of civilization, from every kind of form and custom, from all the people whose mode of life they feel in their dull fury to be superior. Pride and quietly borne poverty, silent fulfilment of duty, renunciation for the sake of a task or conviction, greatness in enduring one's fate, loyalty, honour, responsibility, achievement: all this is a constant reproach to the "humiliated and insulted."

For, once more be it said, the opposite of *noble* is not poor, but *vulgar*. The debased thought and feeling of this underworld *makes use* of the uprooted masses of great cities who no longer trust their own instincts, in order to achieve their own ends and gratify their desires of revenge and destruction. That is why this helpless crowd is so persistently inoculated by the spoken and written word with "class consciousness" and "class hatred"; and why the ruling classes - the "rich" and "powerful" - are shown, in direct inversion of their real significance, as criminals and exploiters, until finally the accusers offer themselves as saviours and leaders. All the "people's rights," the discussion of which was started from above by sick consciences and loose Rationalist thinking, are now demanded as a matter of course from below by the "disinherited," never for the people; for they have always been given to those who had never thought of asking for them and do not know what to do with them. Neither is it desired that they should, for these "rights" are not meant for the "people," but for the dregs of self-designated "people's representatives"; and out of these a Radical bloc is formed whose trade is to fight against the formative forces of the Culture and puts the masses in tutelage by means of the franchise, freedom of the press, and terrorism.

Thus is born Nihilism, the abysmal hatred of the proletarian of higher form of every sort, of culture as its essence, of society as its upholder and historical product. That anyone should *have* "form," master it, feel comfortable with it, whereas the common person feels fettered by it and unable to move freely under it; that tact, taste, a sense for tradition, should be things that belong to highly cultivated beings by inheritance; that there are circles in which a sense of duty and renunciation are not absurd, but lend distinction: all this fills the Nihilist with a dull fury which in earlier times crept away into corners and there foamed at the mouth in the manner of Thersites, but is now widely diffused in the white nations as an actual world-outlook. For the Age has itself become vulgar, and most people have no idea to what extent they are themselves tainted. The bad manners of all parliaments, the general tendency to connive at a rather shady business transaction if it promises to bring in money without work, jazz and Negro dances as the spiritual outlet in all circles of society, women painted like prostitutes, the efforts of writers to win popularity by ridiculing in their novels and plays the correctness of well-bred people, and the bad taste shown even by the nobility and old princely families in throwing off every kind of social restraint and time-honoured custom: all of these go to prove that it is now

the vulgar mob that gives the tone.

But while one half of the world smiles at the well-bred forms and ancient customs, because it no longer regards them as inherently imperative and does not suspect that it is a question of "to be, or not to be," the other half is unchaining the hatred that burns to destroy, the envy of everything that is not available to all, that is prominent and must be pulled down. Not only tradition and custom, but every kind of refinement - beauty, grace, taste in dress, easy good manners, elegance of speech, control of one's limbs, education and self-discipline - irritate the vulgar soul till its blood boils. A finely formed face, the light and dainty step of a slim foot on the pavement, are contradictions of democracy. The preference of *otium cum dignitate* to boxing matches and six-day races, the appreciation of fine arts and poetry, even the delight in a well-kept garden of flowers and rare fruits are things to be burnt, smashed, or stamped out. Culture, because of its superiority, is *the enemy*. Its creations cannot be understood or inwardly assimilated; because they are not available for all they must be annihilated.

Such is the trend of Nihilism. It occurs to no one to educate the masses to the level of true culture - that would be too much trouble, and possibly certain postulates for it are absent. On the contrary, the structure of society is to be levelled down to the standard of the populace. General equality is to reign, everything is to be equally vulgar. The same way of getting money and the same pleasures to spend it on: *panem et circenses* - no more is wanted, no more would be understood. Superiority, manners, taste, and every description of inward rank are crimes. Ethical, religious, national ideas, marriage for the sake of children, the family, State authority: all these are old-fashioned and reactionary. The picture of the streets of Moscow shows the goal, but let no one suppose that it is a spirit from Moscow that has conquered here. Bolshevism's home is Western Europe, and has been so ever since the English materialist world-view, which dominated the circles where Voltaire and Rousseau moved as docile pupils, found effective expression in Jacobinism on the Continent. The democracy of the nineteenth century already amounted to Bolshevism: it lacked only the courage of its logical conclusions. It is only a step from the Bastille and the equality-demanding guillotine to the ideals and street-fighting of 1848, the year of the Communist Manifesto, and only a second step from there to the fall of Western Tsarism. Bolshevism does not menace us, it governs us. Its idea of equality is to equate the people and the mob, its liberty consists in breaking loose from the Culture and its society.

There is one other thing that belongs of necessity to a ripe Culture. That is *property*, the thought of which causes delirious outbursts of envy and hatred from the vulgar-minded. Property, that is, in the original sense: old and permanent possession, inherited from forefathers or acquired over long years by the heavy and devoted work of the owner and cherished and increased for his sons and grandsons. Wealth is not the mere background of superiority, but, above all, the *result* and *expression* of it, a function not only of the way in which it has been acquired, but also of the ability needed to shape and use it as a true cultural element. Let it for once be said outright, though it is a slap in the face for the vulgarity of the age: property is not a vice, but a *gift*, and a gift such as few possess. For

it, too, is the product of long training through generations of distinction; occasionally it is acquired in families that have worked their way upward - by self-education on a groundwork of sound and strong race-character, but practically never by original talent alone, without some precondition of educated environment and past example. It is not a question of *how much* one has, but of *what* one has and the way in which one has it. Mere quantity as an end in itself is vulgar. One can have, and will to have, property as a means to power - this is a subordinating of economic successes to political aims, and it affirms the ancient experience that money belongs with leadership in war and State. This was Caesar's conception when he conquered and plundered Gaul, and that of Cecil Rhodes when he got the mines of South Africa into his hands in order there to found an empire after his own heart. No poor nation can have great political successes, and so long as it regards poverty as virtue, and riches as sin, it does not deserve any. This was the fundamental though only half-conscious meaning of the old Germanic expeditions by sea and land, for with the booty acquired, ships were built and followers enlisted. This type of will-to-power is hallmarked by a royal generosity. It is the opposite of greed and miserliness and equally remote from parvenu prodigality and womanish love of one's neighbour. But this is beside the point. I am speaking of property-owning in so far as it implies the tradition of a Culture. It signifies inward superiority, it marks a distinction from whole classes of people. Not much is needed: a small well-preserved homestead, a worthy craft reputedly practised, a tiny garden bearing evidence of cultivation by loving hands, a miner's spotless home, a few books or reproductions of classical art. The point is that these objects should be transformed into a *personal* world, should bear the stamp of the owner's personality. True possessions are soul, and only through that soul Culture. To estimate them by their money value is, however you look at it, either an incomprehension or a desecration. To divide them after the owner's death is a sort of murder. That was the Germanic conception of inheritance: morally an indissoluble unit, permeated by the soul of the dead owner who had administered it, and not a divisible sum. But who realizes this? Who today has eyes and feeling for the inward, almost metaphysical difference between property and money? [9] True estates are those with which one is inwardly bound up, as is a Germanic warrior with the arms which he takes to the grave with him as his property, a farmer with the farm on which his forefathers worked, a merchant of the old type with his firm which bears the family name, a true craftsman with his workshop and his calling; something, in a word, whose values cannot be expressed in words but only in a close tie, the breaking of which means death. That is why real "property" in the deeper sense is always immovable. It clings to the owner. It *consists* of things and is not merely *invested* [10] in them like "fortune," which can only be defined quantitatively and has actually no home. Families who are making their way upward, therefore, seek a family seat as the original form of real estate, and those who are descending in the scale try to turn it into cash. And herein lies one of the differences between Culture and Civilization.

(9. *The Decline of the West*, II, pp. 480 et seq.)

(10. *Politische Schriften*, pp. 138 et seq., 269.)

But "money" is an abstraction, [11] a pure sense of values in market language, which can only be measured mathematically by some currency or other. Its sole charm lies in the fact that one can come into it overnight - whether by gambling and burglary or by political deals and speculation with sums that one does not possess - or again can throw it away from one moment to the next. On this point proletarians and parvenus are in agreement, and here too there is an inner relationship between Bolshevism and Americanism. The money that a Radical politician or a speculator manages to get, he insists on *displaying*. The palaces of the newly-enriched Jacobins, the smart financiers who began with the French tax-farmers of the eighteenth century, and the American millionaires, tell their own tale; and just so was it in ancient Rome, where the display of all-too-quickly amassed wealth evoked the satire of Martial, Juvenal, and Petronius. Everything of course is really spent by such owners upon themselves, even when they "found" something, "give" lavishly, or provide someone else with a subsidy: the *spectator* is to them the essential. Let the whole world know, or what good is it? They enjoy the spending as spending. They like to play the Maecenas, because they have heard of its being "done," but they get no further than being what in Munich is called a *Wurzen*, a snobbish patron, a copy of the Roman Trimalchio. They fill their house with things they are unable to appreciate; it is only the price that matters. The art-dealers one and all batten on them now as in Caesar's time. [12] But the most unmeaning "wasters" and debauchees are nevertheless to be found in obscure taverns, where unclean gains and party salaries are drunk and gambled away, and not in the town-houses of old patricians and the country estates of old families. But because culture, the tradition of enjoyment which knows how to make much out of little, is lacking and cannot be had for money, jealousy of this kind of superiority torments all vulgar-minded people. This must be said again and again, and particularly in these days when "national" revolutionaries rave like mendicant friars about universal poverty and squalor - in delightful agreement with the Marxists, who declare the possession of any sort of wealth to be criminal and immoral and war upon everything that has this superiority in things of high culture and any who surpass others in the ability to acquire, maintain, and worthily use property, and that from envy of such ability, which they themselves completely lack. *High culture is inseparably bound up with luxury and wealth*. Luxury, that matter-of-course environment of things of culture that belongs spiritually to one's personality, is a premiss of all creative periods. The birth of a great art, for instance, is not possible at the present time because the true artistic *life* died out with the last century. Then it had its home in "society," where connoisseurs and the creators of important works could meet, and not among art-dealers, art-critics, and snobs, the "people" or the "public." And wealth, collected in the hands of the few and among the ruling classes, is amongst other things the foundation for the training of generations of leading minds through the example of a highly developed environment without which there is no healthy economic life and no development of political talent. An inventor himself can be poor, but in a beggarly people there are no great tasks to bring his gifts to maturity; often, indeed, he is not even conscious of possessing them. It is the same with the ability of statesmen and artists. That is why Germans have since 1648 been a world-remote people of theoreticians, poets, and musicians, for these alone can thrive on no money. They confused, and still today

confuse, romantic visions with actual policy, for one need not pay a price for visions - except success. But wealth is a relative conception. To be "not too well-off" in England in 1770 corresponded to being very rich in Prussia. And poverty likewise: the Prussian nobility at its prime was poor, and therefore in comparison with England poor in statesmanlike qualities; for these are bred, with few exceptions, in the life of the great world; but although poor, it did not *feel* itself as living in poverty. [13] The absence of any considerable property or income is no misfortune or misery, so little does its presence signify happiness in the ordinary sense. Not the fact itself but a certain brooding over it, the sense of differences as *contrasts*, and jealousy, turn it into a misfortune. To feel miserable one must first be brought to loathe one's humble lot, and this has from all time been the demagogue's interest. In the Nuremberg of Dürer, say, the plain man enjoyed without envy the splendour of the upper classes. Something of the glitter of his own city was reflected in him; he considered that his life-course depended upon it and was sure he could never feel happy anywhere else. It is precisely the labourers and the craftsmen, with their uneducated reasoning, who are conscious that property means above all responsibility, care, and work. But from the eighteenth century, when the Rationalist view of life, history, and human destiny began to prevail, envy - which is quite foreign to the nature of good and industrious workers, was systematically *cultivated* by the underworld of democratic politicians and by writers of the moment such as Rousseau, who by this means earned money or satisfied their morbid feelings. The desire for other people's property - which is called "stolen goods," regardless of the work and ability put into it - was developed into a world outlook and produced appropriate politics from below.

(11. *The Decline of the West*, II, pp. 481 et seq.)

(12. Friedländer, *Römische Sittengeschichte* (1920), III, pp. 97-117.)

(13. Nor, of course, of poverty as an advantage - as some people need telling again and again. Loud praise of poverty is precisely as suspicious as scorn of riches; it is a cloak for anger at one's own inability to put an end to it.)

It was only then that the social revolution began to have the economic tendency which found expression in agitators' theories, and this tendency was concerned not with the organization and aims of the economic system, but with the monetary value of its investments and products. *Contrasts* between rich and poor were created, in order to start the struggle between them. The idea was that "everything" available for turning into money should be shared out or held in common; if possession of it could not be obtained, it was to be destroyed so that others should not continue to possess it. From this way of feeling and thinking, not of the lower orders of society, but of their self-nominated spokesmen, everything arose that in the Classical Age was called the equal distribution of goods, and today is called class war and Socialism. It is the struggle from the above and the below of society, and it is fought between leaders of nations and leaders from the underworld to whom the working classes are but objects and means for their own aims. Ageing society puts up only a feeble defence; its born enemies, however, continue to attack ruthlessly, until the rising Caesarism of the proletarian dictatorship makes an end

of the Gracchan and Catilinarian tendencies.

We have thus obtained the premisses on which to set out the full extent, aims, duration, and logical outcome of the "white" revolution. No one has as yet ventured to do this; and indeed the attempt may have been impossible until the consequences of the first world war had brought us to the threshold of the decisive decades. Scepticism (*Skepsis*), the first requirement for the historic outlook, for history seeing through itself - just as contempt for humanity is the essential requirement for a profound knowledge of it - does not stand at the beginning of things.

This revolution does *not* commence with the materialistic Socialism of the nineteenth century, still less with the Bolshevism of 1917. It has been "in permanence" (to borrow one of its current phrases) since the middle of the eighteenth century. It was then that Rational criticism, proudly named the philosophy of Enlightenment, [14] began to turn its attention from the theological systems of Christianity and the traditional world-philosophy of the scholars - which was nothing more than theology without the will to system - to the facts of actuality, the State, society, and finally the evolved forms of economics. It commenced by depriving the concepts of nation, right, government, of their historical content, and interpreting the difference of rich and poor quite materialistically as a *moral* contrast, which was insisted upon by the agitators rather than honestly believed. *At this point "Political Economy" came in*, a materialistic science - founded about 1770 by Adam Smith in association with Hartley, Priestley, Mandeville, and Bentham - that had the presumption to regard men as appurtenances of the economic situation [15] and to "explain" history in the light of prices, markets, and goods. To it we owe the conception of work, not as the content of life and calling, but as the commodity in which the worker trades. [16] The whole history of the formative passions and the creative characters of strong personalities and races is ignored - the will, focused on commanding and ruling, on power and booty; the inventive urge, hatred, revenge, pride in personal strength and its successes; and equally, on the other side, jealousy, laziness, the poisonous emotions of the inferior. And there remain nothing but the "laws" of money and prices, which find expression in statistics and graphs.

(14. *The Decline of the West*, II, p. 305.)

(15. *Ibid.*, p. 469.)

(16. *Politische Schriften*, pp. 79 et seq.)

At the same time there set in the flagellantism of the decaying, all-too-witty society, which could applaud the satires on its own absurdities. The admirers of *The Marriage of Figaro* by Monsieur "de" [17] Beaumarchais, performed in spite of the royal veto at the Château Gennevilliers to the simpering court nobility; of the novels of Monsieur "de" Voltaire, devoured in the highest circles from London to Petersburg; of Hogarth's drawings, *Gulliver's Travels*, and Schiller's *Robbers* and *Intrigue and Love* (the only inspired works that exist in revolutionary literature) - were anything but a lower-class public. As to what was written by the intellectuals of high society itself, the *Letters of*

Lord Chesterfield, the *Maxims* of La Rochefoucauld, and *Système de la nature* of Baron D'Holbach, it is all so very clever in style as to be unintelligible outside that circle - and it should be remembered that reading and writing were by no means universal among even the middle classes. [18]

(17. Not only these literary bluffers from the *petite bourgeoisie*, sons of Caron the watch-maker and Arouet the revenue officer respectively, but even "de" Robespierre was still at the time of the National Assembly thus aping nobility. They wished to be counted as belonging to the society which they were destroying: a characteristic trait of all revolutionaries of this order.)

(18. Likewise the Socialist plays and novels of the eighties and those written by Bolsheviks after 1918, which those against whom the attack was launched pay to see or read in every capital in Western Europe.)

All the better were the professional demagogues, who had learnt nothing but speech-making and pamphlet-writing, able to see the value of these works as a source for first-rate catchwords with which to stir up the masses. In England disturbances began in 1762 with the case of Wilkes, who was condemned for insulting the Government in the press, and thereupon elected again and again to the House of Commons. At meetings and in systematic riots the war-cry was: "Wilkes and Liberty," rioting for the cause of freedom of the press, universal suffrage, and even a republic. In that period Marat had written, in England and for Englishmen, *The Chains of Slavery* (1774). The revolt of the American colonies in 1776 and their proclamation of the universal rights of man and the Republic, their trees of liberty and associations were in reality the outcome of English movements during these years. [19] From 1779 onward there arose the clubs and secret societies which spread over the whole country, aimed at revolution, and from 1790, headed by Fox and Sheridan, sent congratulatory addresses, letters, and advice to the Convention and the Jacobins. Had not the reigning English plutocracy been far more vigorous than the cowardly court of Versailles, revolution would have broken out in London earlier than in Paris. [20] The Paris clubs, particularly the Feuillants and Jacobins, were nothing but copies of the English in their programs, their organization of branches all over France, and the form of their agitation; while the English in turn translated "*citoyen*," the French form of address between members, into "citizen" and the newly-coined "citizeness," and adopted, further, the phrase, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" and the designation "tyrants" for kings. Since then, and even in our own time, this remains the form which preparation for revolution takes. It was in those days that there arose the "universal" demand for freedom of the press and of public meetings *as a means thereto* - the central demand of political Liberalism, the desire to be free from the ethical restrictions of the old Culture. Yet the demand was anything but universal; it was only called so by the ranters and writers who lived by it and sought to further private aims through this freedom. But the older society itself, obsessed as it was by *esprit*, the "educated" classes corresponding to the philistines of the nineteenth century - that is, the very *victims* of this freedom - exalted it into an ideal which stood above any criticism of its background. Today, when both the hopes of the eighteenth and the results of the

twentieth century lie before us, we may be permitted to discuss it. Freedom from what, for what? Who financed the press and the agitation? Who gained by it? These liberties have shown themselves everywhere in their true light: as a means to be used by Nihilism in levelling society, and by the underworld in inoculating the masses of the great cities with the particular opinion - it has none of its own - which promises the best result for its aims. [21] This is why these liberties, of which universal suffrage is one, are checked, suppressed, and completely inverted, once they have done their work and given the power into the hands of their exploiters. It was so in Jacobin France in 1793, in Bolshevik Russia, and in Germany's trade-union Republic of 1918. When were there more suppressions of newspapers, in 1820 or in 1920? Liberty has always been the liberty of those who wish to obtain the power, not to abolish it.

(19. The Loyalists - i.e., Americans not in favour of the Republic - emigrated at this time more or less of their own free will into Canada.)

(20. It did not come to this in Germany because there was no real capital with its equipment of agitators, literary hacks, and professional criminals. The ideologies were there. We need only recall Georg Forster and others, who in Mainz and later in Paris appeared as Jacobins and died for their opinions. In 1793 the political clubs on Anglo-French models had to be suppressed by an Imperial law.)

(21. "No one clamours for freedom of the press but him who seeks to misuse it." - Goethe.)

This active Liberalism progresses from Jacobinism to Bolshevism logically. These are not in opposition of thought and will, but are the Early and the Late form, the beginning and the end, of one single movement. It began about 1770 with sentimental "social-political" tendencies: the structure of society according to class and rank was to be destroyed; and there was to be a "Return to Nature," to the uniformity of the herd. The place of class was to be taken by that which has no class: money and intelligence, counting-house and lecturer's chair, arithmeticians and clerks; in place of form-ordered existence, life without form, manners, obligations, respect. It was only about 1840 that this "social-political" tendency passed into an "economic-political" one. The scapegoats are now no longer the aristocrats, but the possessors, from peasant to entrepreneur. The disciples of the movement are promised, not equal rights, but the privilege of the unpropertied; not freedom for all, but the dictatorship of the city proletariat, the "workers." But this represents no change of a world outlook - which was, and still is, materialistic and utilitarian - but solely a change in revolutionary methods. The professional demagogues now mobilize a different section of the nation for class war. At first, about 1770, peasants and craftsman were approached with some hesitation, both in England and France. The *cahiers* of small-town and country deputies in 1789, which were supposed to represent the "Cry of the Nation," were composed by professional ranters [22] and were not understood at all by the greater part of the electorate. These classes were too deeply rooted in tradition to be unconditionally available as means and weapons. Without the mob from the eastern suburbs - the fists of the capital, always handy - the Reign of Terror in Paris would have been impossible. It is not true that the

problem was one of *economic* necessities. Rates and taxes were *sovereign* rights. Universal suffrage was intended as a blow against the *structure of society*. Hence the failure of the Convention: peasantry and craftsmen were no reliable following for professional demagogues. They possessed a native sense of respect and self-respect. They had too much instinct and too little town-intelligence. They were industrious and had learnt something; besides, they wished to leave the farm or the workshop to their sons. No permanent effect could be made upon them by programs and catchwords.

(22. A. Wahl, *Studien zur Vorgeschichte der französischen Revolution* (1901), p. 24.)

Only about 1840 did the pamphlet-and-platform demagogy of Western Europe, [23] whose development had proceeded on uniform lines, discover a better medium for their ends in the uprooted mass of men who had gathered round the North-European coal area [24] - the type of the industrial worker. It is time we were clear in our own minds about one fact which has been completely smothered in the mist of the party politicians' wars: it was not the "economic distress," into which "capitalism" has brought the "proletariat," that led to the rise of Socialism, but the professional agitation which created this "clear-eyed" outlook on things, just as it had drawn an utterly false picture of the distressed peasant class before 1789 [25] - purely because it was hoped thereby to get a whole-hearted following. And the uneducated and half-educated middle class believed in this picture and does so to this day. The word "worker" has been surrounded by a halo since 1848, without consideration of its meaning and the limits of its application. And the "working class," which does not exist in the economic structure of a single nation [26] - for what have miners, sailors, tailors' apprentices, metalworkers, waiters, bank officials, ploughmen, and scavengers in common with one another? - becomes a *political* reality, an attacking *party*, which has split all "white" nations into two armies, of which the one has to feed, and to give its blood for a host of party agents, tub-thumpers, newspaper-writers, and "people's representatives," who pursue their own private aims. That is the purpose for which it exists. The contrast between Capitalism and Socialism - words for which, all this time, literature has searched in vain for a definition, for catchwords are not to be defined - is not derived from any reality, but is purely a built-up challenge. Marx introduced these terms into the English engineering industry, he did not draw them from it; and even so he could only do it by ignoring the existence of all the people engaged in agriculture, commerce, traffic, and administration. This picture of the time had so little to do with the world of reality and its inhabitants that, in theory, the South even became separated from the North: the boundary lay somewhere about the line Lyon-Milan. In the Latin South, where one needs little to live on and does little work, where there is no coal and therefore no industrialism, where thought and feeling are racially different, there developed anarchist and syndicalist tendencies whose wish-picture was the dissolution of the great national organisms into systemless, small self-sufficing groups, Bedouin-like swarms occupied in doing nothing. But in the North, where hard winters mean harder work and make such work not only possible but essential, where from time immemorial the battle has been against hunger and cold combined, there arose out of the Germanic will-to-power, and its urge to large-scale organization, systems of authoritarian Communism which aim at a proletarian

dictatorship over the whole world. And, simply because in the nineteenth century the coalfields of these northern lands had attracted an assemblage of people and of national wealth of a hitherto unheard-of order of magnitude, a very different impetus was given to demagoguery both within them and outwards from their boundaries. The *high* wages of English, German, and American factory-workers triumphed, precisely because they were anything but "starvation rates," over the low wages of the land-workers in the South, and only because of this "capitalistic" superiority of party means did Marxism triumph over the theories of Fourier and Proudhon. The peasantry had already ceased to exist for all of them. As a *weapon* in the class war it had small value, not merely because it was not available on the pavements at any and every moment, but also because its traditions of property and labour were contrary to the views of theory. It was therefore ignored by the catchwords of the Communist program. Bourgeoisie and proletariat - that is the picture one can take in, and the simpler one is, the less one notices how much there is left outside this scheme.

(23. Its celebrated leaders belonged one and all to the bourgeois class. Owen, Fourier, Engels were entrepreneurs; Marx and Lassalle "academics"; Danton and Robespierre had been lawyers, Marat a physician. The rest were literary men and journalists. There was not a single working man among them.)

(24. *Politische Schriften*, pp. 331 et seq.)

(25. Promptly abandoned when it was found not to have the desired result. In reality, in Louis XVI's time the peasant was better off in France than anywhere else in Europe.)

(26. *The Decline of the West*, II, p. 479.)

Every demagoguery forms its program according to the section of the nation which it hopes to mobilize for its purpose. In Rome, from Flaminius to C. Gracchus, it was the Italian peasant farmers who wanted land, so that they might till it. Hence the division of the Gallic area south of the Po by the former and the demand for the division of the *ager publicus* by the latter. But Gracchus went under because the peasants, who had moved into Rome in masses to vote, had to go home again for the harvest. After this experience the demagoguery of the type of Cinna and Catiline had to rely upon slaves and, above all, instead of on industrious journeymen (like demagoguery in the Greek cities from Cleon's time) upon the unskilled populace of mixed origins which prowled about the streets of Rome and asked to be fed and amused: *panem et circenses*. And precisely because, for the next century, these masses had to be won over by ever-increasing expenditure, they grew, even after Caesar, to a size which made them a standing danger to the Government of the world empire. The lower the type of such a following, the more usable it is. For this reason has Bolshevism, ever since the Paris Commune of 1871, made far less effort to influence the skilled, industrious, and sober worker than the work-shy rabble of the cities which is ready at any time to plunder and murder. For this reason also have the ruling trade-unionist parties in Germany, from 1918 right into the peak years of unemployment, been careful to allow no legal differentiation between the workless and the work-shy. At that time, while assistance was being given to the supposedly

unemployed, there was a dearth of workers, especially on the land, and no one seriously tried to remedy it. The sickness-relief funds were misused by thousands as a means of evading work. Unemployment in its early stages was positively fostered by Marxism. The concept "proletarian" excludes all joy in work. A worker who knows his job and is proud of his achievement has no qualifications for proletarianism. He is a drag on the revolutionary movement. He has to be proletarianized, demoralized, before he is of use to it. That is the true Bolshevism by which this Revolution will reach its climax, but by no means its close.

It is characteristic of the superficial way in which the whole "white" world thinks that this Bolshevism is regarded as a Russian creation, threatening to conquer Europe. Actually, it was born in Western Europe, and born indeed of logical necessity as the last phase of the liberal democracy of 1770 and the last triumph of political Rationalism - which is to say, of the presumptuous intention to control living history by paper systems and ideals. Its first outbreak on a large scale, after the July conflicts of 1848, was the Paris Commune of 1871, which came near to mastering the whole of France. [27] Only the army prevented it [28] - that and the German policy which gave the army its moral support. It was then, and not in Russia in 1917, that out of the facts of a besieged capital were born the workers' and soldiers' councils which Marx (a simpleton in practical matters) ever afterwards commended as the possible form for a Communist government. It was then that the mass slaughters of opponents were carried out which cost France more lives than the whole of her war against Germany. It was then that the work-shy rabble were in power, and not the working class: deserters, criminals and bullies, literary men and journalists, with among them, as always, many foreigners: Poles, Jews, Italians, and even Germans. But it was a specifically French form of revolution. There was no mention of Marx, but all the more of Proudhon, Fourier, and the Jacobins of 1792. A loose alliance of the large cities (that is, of their lowest classes) was to overthrow and conquer the open country and provincial towns - a notion typical of Latin anarchy. Something similar had been attempted in 1411 by the butcher Caboche with the militarily organized Parisian populace, and the same idea was copied faithfully in Petersburg in 1917 with just such another "Western" populace and with the same catchwords. The "Asiatic" side of this Russian revolution, however, which hardly emerged at the time and has still not succeeded in overcoming the Western Communistic forms of Soviet rule, found its earliest expression in Pugatchev's insurrection (1772-75), which seized the whole of the Upper Volga region and even for a time Moscow, putting Tsarism itself in peril. The fanatically religious [29] peasantry, including whole Cossack tribes, killed everything in the way of representatives of Petrine, European-made Russia who fell into their hands - officers, officials, and, above all, the new nobility. They would have treated the representatives of the Soviet bureaucracy in the same way, and their descendants would gladly have it happen today - perhaps they will really do it tomorrow. Hatred of this foreign type of government, against which the Moscow of these days is less and less able to defend itself, is very old; it goes back to the insurrection of the "Strelitz" against Peter the Great. Democrats and Socialists from the West cannot appreciate a feeling so alien to their own way of thinking. It marks the contrast between the real Bolshevism, which seethes underground among all "white" nations and has produced these very democrats and Socialists, and that other form, the

hatred which is piling up among all the *coloured* populations of the world against the whole white civilization, its revolutionary currents with the rest.

(27. The insurrection broke out also in Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, Le Creusot, Narbonne - these all, very significantly, in the South.)

(28. Chapter II, Section 7.)

(29. "It was God's will that Russia should be chastised by me, His humble tool," said Pugatchev, when brought before his judges.)

And now what is the attitude of "society" in the West-European Civilization since 1770, and particularly since 1848, towards the *fact* of this revolution from below, which has long since reached the stage of scorning and deriding its Liberal beginnings and the concessions they have won, such as freedom of the press, of unions, and of meeting, finally universal suffrage - after exploiting them to the furthest limits of disintegration? By "society" we mean here that which is now generally called the "middle classes" in England and "bourgeoisie" on the Continent - the peasants being, as usual, ignored. [30] It is a chapter of shame that here presents itself to the historian of the future. Built up though it was on the basic human facts of rulership, grade, and property, society met the Nihilist attack upon these with submission, "understanding," acclamation, and support. This intellectual suicide was the common fashion of last century.

(30. The use of *citoyen* and *bourgeois* in France since 1789 is the actual expression of this *will* of town against country.)

It must be stated again and again that this society, in which in our own time the transition from Culture to Civilization is taking place, is *sick*, sick in its instincts and therefore in its mind. It offers no defence. It takes pleasure in its own vilification and disintegration. From the middle of the eighteenth century it has broken up more and more into *Liberal* and *Conservative* circles - the latter representing merely the opposition set up in desperate self-defence against the former. On the one side there is a small number of people who, possessed of the true political instinct, see what is going on and whither it is leading and exert themselves to prevent, moderate, or divert accordingly; people of the kind who formed Scipio's circle in Rome (and whose outlook inspired Polybius' historical work), and, again, Burke, Pitt, Wellington, and Disraeli in England, Metternich, Hegel, and Bismarck in Germany, and Tocqueville in France. They sought to defend the conserving forces of the old Culture - State, monarchy, army, consciousness of standing, property, peasantry - even in cases where they had reason to object, and are therefore cried down as "reactionary." This word, which the Liberals invented, is thrown back at them now by their Marxian pupils, in that they try to prevent the logical outcome of their actions: such is our reputed progress. On the other side stands almost everything that has the urban intelligence or, if not, at least looks up to it as the badge of superiority in the conditions of today and in terms of the power of the future - the future that is already the past.

At this point journalism becomes the dominant expression of the time. It is the critical

esprit of the eighteenth century diluted and lightened for intellectual mediocrity - and let us not forget that age means to part, to dissect, to disintegrate. Drama, poetry, philosophy, even science and history [31] are turned into leading articles and feuilletons written with an unashamed bias against everything that is conservative and has formerly inspired respect. "Party" becomes the Liberal substitute for rank and State; revolution, in the form of periodic mass elections fought by all available means of money, brains, and even - after the Gracchan method - physical violence, is exalted into a constitutional process; government, as the meaning and duty of State existence, is either opposed and derided or degraded to the level of a party business. But the blindness and cowardice of Liberalism goes further still. Tolerance is *extended* to the destructive forces of the city dregs, not *demande*d by them. In Western Europe Russian Nihilists and Spanish anarchists are gushed over in "good" society with revolting sentimentality and passed on from one fashionable hostess to another. In Paris and London, above all in Switzerland, both they and their undermining activities are carefully protected. The Liberal press rings with maledictions of the prisons in which the martyrs of liberty languish, and not a word is dropped in favour of the countless defenders of the State, down to the simple soldier and policeman, who are blown into the air, crippled by bullet-wounds, or slaughtered in the exercise of their duty. [32]

(31. Think of Haeckel, for instance. And Mommsen's *Roman History* is a pamphlet of a man of '48 against "Junkers and parsons," with a completely misleading representation of the inner development of Rome. Eduard Meyer was the first to write an unbiased history of these events in his *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Gracchen* and *Caesars Monarchie und das Prinzipat des Pompejus*.)

(32. When Schopenhauer left a sum in his will for the dependants of soldiers who fell in Berlin in 1848 - no one else would have given a thought to *these* victims of the Revolution - literary men, headed by Gutzkow, cried out at so scandalous an action. It was the same spirit which inspired the sympathy expressed with the Bolshevist mass-murderer Trotsky when the "bourgeois" governments of Western Europe refused State protection to enable him to visit a watering-place.)

The concept of the proletariat, created of deliberate intention by Socialist theoreticians, has been accepted by the middle classes. Actually it has nothing to do with the thousand branches of strict and skilled labour - from fishing to book-printing, from tree-felling to engine-driving - and is scorned and felt as a disgrace by industrious, trained workers. It was intended solely to secure the amalgamation of these workers with the city mob for the purpose of overthrowing the social order. But Liberalism centred political thought upon it by employing it as though it were an established concept. Under the name Naturalism there arose a pitiable school of literature and painting which exalted filth to aesthetic charm, and vulgar feeling and thinking to a binding world-view. "People" no longer meant the community of the whole nation, but that section of the city masses which set up in opposition to this community. The proletarian appeared as the hero on the stage of the progressive bourgeoisie, and with him the prostitute, the shirker, the agitator, the criminal. From this time onward it has been "modern" and superior to see the world

from below, from the perspective of a bar-parlour or a street of ill repute. The cult of the proletarian arose during that period, and in the Liberal circles of Western Europe, not in 1918 in Russia. A fatal notion of things, half false and half stupid, began to pervade educated and semi-educated minds: "the worker" becomes the real person, the real nation, the meaning and aim of history, politics, public care. The fact that all men work, and moreover that others - the inventor, the engineer, and organizer - do more, and more important, work is forgotten. No one any longer dares to bring forward the class or *quality* of his achievement as a gauge of its value. Only work measured in hours now counts as labour. And the "worker," with all this, is the poor unfortunate one, disinherited, starving, exploited. The words "care" and "distress" are applied to him alone. No one has a thought left for the countryman's less fertile strips of land, his bad harvests, his losses by hail and frost, his anxiety over the sale of his produce; or for the wretched existence of poor craftsmen in strongly industrialized areas, the tragedies of small tradesmen, fishermen on the high seas, inventors, doctors, who have to struggle amid alarms and dangers for each bite of daily bread and go down in their thousands unheeded. "The worker" alone receives sympathy. He alone is supported, cared for, insured. What is more, he is made the saint, the idol, of the age. The world revolves round him. He is the focus of the economic system and the nurseling of politics. Everybody's existence hinges on him; the majority of the nation are there to serve him. The dull lump of a peasant, the lazy official, the swindling tradesman, are legitimate targets for mirth, not to mention judges, officers, and heads of businesses, who are the popular objects of ill-natured jest; but no one would dare to pour the same scorn on "the working man." All the rest are idlers, egoists; he is the one exception. The whole middle class swings the censer before this phantom. No matter what one's own achievements in life may be, one must fall on one's knees before him. His being stands above all criticism. It was the middle classes who successfully "put over" this notion of him, and the very business-like "representatives of the people" continue to sponge upon this legend. They dinned it into the wage-earners until they believed it; until they felt themselves to be really ill-treated and wretched, until they lost all sense of proportion with regard to their output and their importance. Liberalism *vis-à-vis* the demagogic trend is the form of suicide adopted by our sick society. With this perspective it gives itself up. The merciless, embittered class war that is waged against it finds it prepared to capitulate politically, after having helped spiritually in the forging of the enemy weapons. Only the Conservative element - weak as it was in the nineteenth century - can, and in the future *will*, hinder the coming of this end.

Who is it, then, who has flattered and organized this mass of wage-earners in the cities and industrial areas, provided them with catchwords, driven them by cynical propaganda into the class war against the majority of the nation? It is *not* the industrious and highly trained workman, the "vagabond," as he is contemptuously called in the Marx-Engels correspondence. In a letter to Marx on the 9th May 1851 Engels speaks of the democratic Red and Communistic mob, and on the 11th December 1851 writes to him: "What is the rabble good for if it forgets how to fight?" The manual worker is merely a means to the private ends of professional revolutionaries. He is to fight for the satisfaction of their hatred of the conservative forces and their thirst for power. [33] If only workers were to

be recognized as representatives of the workers, the benches of the Left would be very empty in all parliaments. Among the originators of their theoretical programs and leaders of revolutionary campaigns there is not one who actually worked for years in a factory. [34] The political Bohemia of Western Europe in which Bolshevism grew up from the middle of the nineteenth century was composed of the same elements which went to the making of the revolutionary Liberalism of 1770. Whether the February Revolution of 1848 in Paris was for "Capitalism" or that of June against it, whether "Liberty and Equality" were to be secured for the middle class in 1789 or for the lower orders in 1793 and 1918, the aims of the inciters of these movements and their ultimate motives were in fact all exactly the same; and no different is the situation in Spain today, and perhaps that in the United States tomorrow. It is from the intellectual "mob," with the failures from all academic professions, the spiritually unfit and morally inhibited, at its head, that the gangsters of Liberal and Bolshevik risings are recruited. Their "dictatorship of the proletariat" - which is to say, their own dictatorship with the help of the proletariat - is to be their revenge on those who are happy and successful, as a last means of appeasing the morbid vanity and vulgar greed for power which alike arise from unsettled self-respect, the final expression of depraved and misdirected instincts.

(33. Friedrich Lenz has demonstrated in *Staat und Marxismus* (1921, 1924) that it was only on these grounds that Marx attacked the states of the Holy Alliance, particularly Prussia and Russia, before he became a Socialist in 1843; and that he was still willing, at a much later date, to drop his own Communistic theory of the industrial proletariat and replace it by a rising of the peasants for the better success of his plan to destroy Tsarism.)

(34. What mostly happened, in fact, was that the worker who "worked his way up" by industry and ability rose to the management of a business. Bebel branded this in his fury as a betrayal of the working classes. In his opinion the only conscious aim of the worker should be to arrive by way of a party secretaryship at mass-leadership.)

Among all these jurists, journalists, schoolmasters, artists, and technicians one is apt to overlook one type, the most sinister of all: the sunken priest. Religion is the personal relation to the powers of the world around us, expressed in a world view, in pious usages and the personal attitude of renunciation. A church is the organization of a priesthood which fights for its temporal power. It brings the forms of religious life, and therewith the people who cling to them, under its power, and it is therefore the born enemy of all other forms of power: State, rank, or nation. During the Persian Wars the priesthood of Delphi agitated on behalf of Xerxes and against the national defence. Cyrus was able to conquer Babylon and overthrow Naboned, the last king of the Chaldees, because the priesthood of Marduk was in league with him. The histories of ancient Egypt and ancient China are full of examples of the sort, and in the West there was only occasionally truce between monarchy and church, throne and altar, nobility and priesthood, when an alliance between them against a third party promised to be advantageous. "My kingdom is not of this world" is the deep saying which is true of every religion and is betrayed by every church. But every church from the very fact of its existence falls in with the conditions of historical life; it thinks in terms of political power and material economy; it wages war in diplomatic and military fashion, and shares with other institutions of power the

consequences of youth and age, rise and decay. Above all, in respect of conservative policy and tradition in State and society, it is not honest and *qua* church cannot be so. All young sects are at bottom hostile to State and property, class and rank, and are attracted to universal equality. [35] And the policy of any church that has grown old, conservative as it may be with regard to itself, is always being tempted to become in relation to State and society Liberal, democratic, or Socialistic - that is, levelling and destructive - as soon as the struggle between tradition and the mob sets in.

(35. And every revolutionary movement, on the contrary, has the quite unintentional and often unobserved tendency to take on the forms of a cult. The cult of Reason in the French Revolution is one example, Lenin's mausoleum another.)

All priests are human beings, and hence the fate of churches becomes dependent upon the human material of their continuously changing personnel. Even the strictest selection - and it is as a rule masterly - cannot prevent vulgar instincts and vulgar thought from becoming frequent and even predominant in times of social degeneration and revolutionary demolition. In all such times there is a priest-rabble which drags the dignity and faith of the church through the mud of party politics, allies itself with the revolutionary forces, and, by sentimental talk about loving one's neighbour and helping the poor, eggs on the underworld to set about destroying the social order - that order with which the church is irrevocably and fatally bound up. A religion is that which the soul of the faithful is. A church is worth just so much as the priest-material of which it is composed is worth.

At the beginning of the French Revolution we have, besides the swarm of degenerate abbés, who for years had mocked at authority and rank in their writing and preaching, the runaway monk Fouché and the renegade bishop Talleyrand, both of them regicides and thieves *en grand*, Napoleonic dukes and traitors to their country. From 1815 onward the Protestant priest tends to become more and more a democrat, Socialist, and party politician. Lutheranism, which is hardly a church, and Puritanism, which is not one at all, have neither of them as such promoted any destructive policy. The individual priest went on his own account among "the people" and into the workers' party, spoke in electoral assemblies and parliaments, wrote on "social" questions, and ended as a demagogue and Marxian. The Catholic priest, however, who was more firmly attached to his church, pulled it over with him. It became woven into the party agitations, at first as an effective medium and finally as a sacrifice to this policy. A Catholic trade-union movement with Socialist-Syndicalist tendencies existed in France as early as Napoleon III's reign. In Germany the first example of such arose after 1870, inspired by the fear that the "Red" trade unions would gain sole power over the masses in the industrial areas. And it at once came to an understanding with these. *All* workers' parties are dimly aware of their common cause, however much the executive groups may hate each other.

Truly, it is a long time since Leo XIII's view of world politics commanded a following, and a true prince of the church like Cardinal Kopp ruled over the clergy in Germany. At that period the church was conscious of being a conservative force, and it knew well that its fate was bound up with that of the other conservative forces - State authority,

monarchy, the social order, and property - that it stood, in the class war, unconditionally against the Liberal and Socialist forces, on the "Right," and that its prospect of outlasting the revolutionary age depended upon doing so. But the change has come quickly. Spiritual discipline is shaken. The activities of the mob element in the priesthood tyrannize over the church right up to the highest positions, and those who hold them are forced to keep silence to hide their impotence from the world. Church diplomacy, formerly directed from above in so distinguished a manner, and exercising its tactical judgment over things decades ahead, gives way increasingly to the vulgar methods of day-to-day politics, to party democratic agitation from below, with its contemptible dodges and specious argumentation. Thought and action are on the level of the cosmopolitan underworld. The traditional striving for temporal power is reduced to petty ambition in the direction of election successes and alliances with other "mob" parties for the sake of material results. The mob element in the priesthood, once severely curbed, now prevails, with its proletarian way of thinking, over the really worthy section of the clergy that considers the soul of a man to be worth more than his vote and takes metaphysical problems more seriously than demagogic raids upon economic life. Tactical mistakes, such as the Spaniards made in imagining they could separate the destinies of throne and altar, would *not* have been made a few decades back. But since the end of the World War the church - in Germany above all, where, being an ancient power of rigid traditions, it had to pay heavily in prestige with its own adherents by descending to street level - has sunk to class wars and association with Marxism. There is in Germany a Catholic Bolshevism which is more dangerous than the anti-Christian because it hides behind the mask of a religion.

Now, all Communist systems in the West are in fact derived from Christian theological thought: More's Utopia, the Sun State of the Dominica Campanella, the doctrines of Luther's disciples Karlstadt and Thomas Münzer, and Fichte's State Socialism. What Fourier, Saint-Simon, Owen, Marx, and hundreds of others dreamed and wrote on the ideals of the future reaches back, quite without their knowledge and much against their intention, to priestly-moral indignation and Schoolmen concepts, which had their secret part in economic reasoning and in public opinion on social questions. How much of Thomas Aquinas' law of nature and conception of State is still to be found in Adam Smith and therefore - with the opposite sign - in the Communist Manifesto! Christian theology is the grandmother of Bolshevism. All abstract brooding over economic concepts that are remote from any economic experience must, if courageously and honestly followed out, lead in one way or another to reasoned conclusions against State and property, and only lack of vision saves these materialist Schoolmen from seeing that at the end of their chain of thought stands the beginning once more: effective Communism is *authoritative bureaucracy*. To put through the ideal requires dictatorship, reign of terror, armed force, the inequality of a system of masters and slaves, men in command and men in obedience - in short: Moscow. But there are two sorts of Communist. The one, the credulous type, obsessed by doctrine or feminine sentimentality, remote from and hostile to the world, condemns the wealth of the wicked who prosper and also, at times, the poverty of the good who do not prosper. This lands him either in vague Utopias or throws him back upon asceticism, the monastic life,

Bohemia, or vagabondism, which proclaims the futility of all economic effort. But the other, the "worldly" type with the realist political outlook, hopes through its followers to destroy society, either from envy or revenge, because of the low place assigned in it to their personality and talents, or, alternatively, to carry away the masses by some program or other for the satisfaction of his own will-to-power. But this, too, likes to hide itself under the cloak of some religion.

Marxism is indeed a religion, not in the sense of its founder, but in that which his revolutionary following has imparted to it. Like any church it has its saints, apostles, martyrs, fathers, bible and mission. Like any church it has dogmas, heresy-tribunals, an orthodoxy and a scholasticism, and, above all, a popular moral - or rather two, for believers and unbelievers. And does it make any difference that its doctrine is materialistic through and through? Are those priests who agitate on economic questions any less so? What are, actually, Christian trade unions? Christian Bolshevism, neither more nor less. Since the beginning of the Rationalist age - that is, since 1750 - there is materialism both with and without Christian terminology. As soon as one mixes up the concepts of poverty, hunger, distress, work, and wages (with the moral undertone of rich and poor, right and wrong) and is led thereby to join in the social and economic demands of the proletarian sort - that is, money demands - one is a materialist. And then the pressing inward need for a high altar is supplied by the party secretariat, for a poor-box by election funds - and the trade-union official becomes the successor to St. Francis.

This materialism of the Late megalopolis is a *practical* cast of thought and action, whatever the "faith" may be that accompanies it. It is the mode of regarding history and public and personal life "economically" and of looking upon economics, not as a thing of vocations and the content of lives, but as the method by which with the least exertion the most money and pleasure can be secured: *panem et circenses*. Most people nowadays do not realize at all how materialistic they are in themselves and their thought. They may be zealous in prayer and confession and have the word "God" for ever on their lips, [36] they may even be priests by calling and conviction, and yet be materialists. Christian morality is, like every morality, renunciation and nothing else. [37] Those who do not feel it to be so *are* materialists. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" means: do not regard this hard meaning of life as misery and seek to circumvent it by party politics. But for proletarian election propaganda the precept is certainly not suitable. The materialist prefers to eat the bread that others have earned in the sweat of their face, the peasant, the craftsman, the inventor, the captain of industry. But the famous "eye of a needle," through which many a camel passes, is not too narrow for the "rich man" only; it is equally narrow for the man who extorts bigger wages and shorter working hours by means of strikes, sabotage, and elections - and for him, too, who engineers these for the sake of his own power. It is the utility-moral of the slave-souls: slaves, not because of their situation in life - for that we are all without exception, from the destiny of being born at a particular time and place - but because to regard the world from below is mean. Does one regard the state of being rich with envy or with contempt? Does one acknowledge the man who has by personal superiority worked his way up to the rank of a leader - from locksmith's apprentice, say, to founder and owner of a factory - or hate him

and try to pull him down? That is the test. But this materialism, to which renunciation is incomprehensible and absurd, is nothing but egoism of individuals and classes, the parasitic egoism of inferior minds, who regard the economic life of other people, and that of the whole, as an object from which to squeeze with the least possible exertion the greatest possible enjoyment: *panem et circenses*. Such people look upon personal distinction, industry, success, joy in achievement as wickedness, sin, and treason. It is the moral of class war, which lumps all this together under the name Capitalism (which had from the first a *moral* significance) [38] and sets it up as a target for proletarian hate, while on the other side it aims at welding the wage-earners into one political front with the underworld of the great cities.

(36. The very prevalence of this fashion in speech and writing today shows that the word has become a catchword, an empty concept, and anything but the expression of religious renewal and inner experience. There are profound religions and great men's religious convictions that are atheistic, pantheistic, or polytheistic, in China, India, the Classical world, and in the West today. The old Germanic word *god* was a neuter plural and was only turned into a masculine singular by Christian propaganda. The ways in which we seek to interpret the impenetrable mystery of the world around and the fact we do it have nothing to do with the *order* of the religious view and attitude. But here there is confusion of "religious" with "confessional," the acknowledgment of certain doctrines and precepts, and with "clerical," the recognition of the claims of a priesthood. In reality the profundity of a religion depends upon the personality of him in whom it lives. Without lay piety even a definitely priestly religion is non-viable.)

(37. *The Decline of the West*, II, pp. 272 et seq.)

(38. *Politische Schriften* ("*Preußentum und Sozialismus*"), pp. 77 et seq.)

Only the "worker" is permitted and commanded to be an egoist, not the peasant or craftsman. He alone has rights instead of obligations. The others have obligations and no rights. He is the privileged class whom the others have to serve by their labour. The economic life of the nation exists for him and must be organized solely with a view to his comfort, whether it falls to pieces in the process or not. That is the world outlook - fashioned by the "people's representative" class and by academic riff-raff from professor to priest - by which the lower orders of society are demoralized in order that they may be mobilized in the interests of the leaders' hatred and thirst for power. For this reason Socialists of higher quality and conservative ways of thinking, like Lassalle, supporter of monarchy, and Georges Sorel, who looked upon the defence of fatherland, family, and property as the noblest task of the proletariat (and of whom Mussolini has said that he owes more to him than to Nietzsche) are difficult to reconcile with Marx and are therefore never quoted according to their true intent.

Among the many sorts of theoretical Socialism or Communism it is, of course, the lowest, and in its ultimate intentions the most dishonest, that has won the day; the one which has been most ruthlessly directed towards acquiring power over the masses for the professional revolutionaries. We may call it Marxism or not as we please. It is equally

unimportant which theory supplies the catchwords for propaganda or behind which non-revolutionary world-outlook it conceals itself. The practical thought and intention is all that matters. He who is vulgar thinks, feels, and acts vulgarly and will not be changed by donning priestly robes or waving national flags. Whoever founds or leads trade unions or Labour parties anywhere in the world today [39] is almost of necessity bound to succumb very quickly to the Marxist ideology, which slanders and persecutes all political and economic leadership, the social order, authority and property, under the collective concept of Capitalism. He will at once find among his followers the now traditional conception of the economic system as class war, and will be forced to depend upon it if he wishes to remain a leader. Once for all, proletarian egoism, with its aims and methods, is the form in which the "White" Revolution has been working itself out for almost a century, and it makes little difference whether it calls itself a social or a Socialist movement and whether its leaders insist on being Christians [40] or not. The floraison of world-improvement theories fills the first ascending century of Rationalism from the *Contrat social* (1762) to the Communist Manifesto (1848). [41] In those days men believed, like Socrates and the Sophists, in omniscience of human reason and its ability to control destinies and instincts and to order and direct historical life. Even in the Linnaean system the human being took rank as *homo sapiens*. The beast in man, which gave a forceful reminder of its existence in 1792, was forgotten. Never were people further removed from the scepticism of the true judge of history and the wise man who in all ages knows that "man is wicked from his youth up." It was thought that the nations could be organized according to doctrinaire programs with a view to their ultimate bliss, and at any rate the readers of the materialistic Utopias believed in them - though how far the writers did is another matter.

(39. This applies to the Left wing of the very national English Labour Party and to German National Socialism as much as to Spanish anarchist clubs and American and Japanese trade unions, little as they wish, at times, to hear Marx mentioned.)

(40. The leader of the Catholic Miners' union said, speaking at Essen on the 18th January 1925: "Social ideas establish themselves either by way of reform *or by way of force*. This is not intended as a threat, but as an established fact, and if a revolution does come again, I do not think that the heads of the German business leaders will be saved." The Catholic unions have repeatedly, with the applause of the "atheistic" ones, demanded the expropriation of mining property and industrial establishments at today's valuation - that is, without compensation. This is the expropriation of the expropriators of the Communist Manifesto (cf. the pamphlet: *Christentum oder Klassenkampf?* by F. Holtermann, Berlin). The growing discontent of the worthier section of the clergy against the priestly elements which helped to develop Catholic Bolshevism and drive it into an alliance with Social Democracy, is so great and has spread so extensively from them to the peasantry and middle classes that the formation of a German National Church - such as the famous Vicar-General of the bishopric of Konstanz, von Wessenberg, tried to establish at the time of the Vienna Congress - is not beyond the bounds of possibility.)

(41. *The Decline of the West*, II, pp. 453 et seq.)

But after 1848 all this came to an end. One of the reasons why the Marxian system became the most effective was that it was the last. Anyone who today draws up political or economic programs for the salvation of "mankind" is out of date and tiresome. He is near to becoming ridiculous. But the upsetting effect of such theories on blockheads - who in Lenin's estimation amount to ninety-five per cent of all humanity - is still very great (and is actually on the increase in England and America), except in Moscow, where there is only a pretence, for political purposes, of believing in it.

The classic "political economy" of 1770 and the equally old materialistic, or "economic," conception of history, both of which deduce the destinies of millennia from the concepts of "market," "price," "goods," belong fundamentally to this same category. They are inwardly related, in many ways identical, and lead inevitably to dreams of a Third Empire such as the nineteenth-century faith in "progress" looked for as in some way the end of history. It was the materialistic travesty of the conceptions of a Third Kingdom held by great Gothic Christians like Joachim de Floris. [42] It was to establish perfect bliss on earth, the fool's paradise of all the poor and wretched, who more and more came to be identified with "the worker." It was to bring with it the end of anxiety, the *dolce far niente*, and eternal peace; and the road to it was to be made by class war and the abolition of property, the breaking down of interest-slavery, State Socialism, and the destruction of all masters and plutocrats. It was triumphant *class egoism*, labelled "welfare of mankind" and raised morally to heaven.

(42. *The Decline of the West*, I, p. 363.)

The ideal of the class war [43] appears first in 1789 in the famous propaganda pamphlet of Abbé Sieyès - again a Catholic priest! - on the Third Estate, which was to level the two above it. From this young-revolutionary Liberal form it developed logically into the Bolshevist late form of 1848, which transferred the struggle from the political to the economic domain, not for the sake of economic life, but for the purpose of securing political aims by its destruction. If "middle-class" ideologists discover any difference between idealism and materialism in this connexion, they must be unable to see through the foreground of catchwords into the depths of the ultimate aims, which in the one and the other case are absolutely the same. All class-war theories have been drawn up with the object of mobilizing the masses of the large cities. The "class" which could be used for fighting had first to be *created*. The aim was described in 1848, when the first experience of revolutions lay well behind, as the dictatorship of the proletariat, but that first experience might equally have been called the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie - for that is all that Liberalism sets out to be. It is the ultimate meaning of constitutions, republics, and parliamentarism. But in reality what was *meant* in each case was dictatorship of the demagogues, and the demagogues' intention was in part, by the aid of a systematically demoralized mob, to annihilate nations out of pure revenge and in part to gratify their thirst for power by enslaving them.

(43. *Politische Schriften*, pp. 74 et seq.)

Every ideal is born of someone who has need of it. The ideal of the Liberal, as of the

Bolshevist, class war was created by people who had either striven unsuccessfully to gain admittance to a higher class of society than their own or found themselves in one to whose ethical standard they could not rise. Marx is a "failed bourgeois," hence his hatred of the bourgeoisie. And the same applies to all the other lawyers, writers, professors, and priests: they had chosen a profession to which they were not called. This is the moral premiss of professional revolution.

The ideal of class war is, as we all know, an *overthrow*. Not the construction of anything new, but the destruction of what exists. It is an aim without a future. It is the will-to-nothing. Utopian programs are designed only for the spiritual bribery of the masses. The only serious intention is in the object of the bribery, the creation of class as a fighting force by means of systematic demoralization. Nothing is a better welder than hate. We ought, though, to speak of class envy rather than class hatred. For in hatred there is a silent acknowledgment of the opponent, while envy is the crooked glance from below up to something higher, which remains uncomprehended and unattainable and must therefore be pulled off its perch, sullied and despised. The vision of the proletarian future, therefore, embraces not only the *happiness* of the *many*, [44] which consists in happily doing nothing - once more, *panem et circenses* - and perpetual peace in which to enjoy it, free from all anxiety and responsibility; but also, and primarily, with typical revolutionary bad taste, the opportunity of gloating over the *unhappiness* of the *few*, of the once mighty, the wise, the aristocratic, and the rich. [45] Every revolution proves it. It is only half the fun for the lackeys of yesterday to gorge at their masters' table; their masters must also wait upon them.

(44. The Liberal formula: "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" derives from the English materialists of the eighteenth century, among whom were devout theologians of the stamp of Paley and Butler. It developed logically into the Bolshevist formula of the reign of the proletarian masses. There is no longer any talk of innate differences of rank. Only quantity matters, quantity of happiness and of happy people. Qualities do not count.)

(45. This too is an ideal of Christian theology, which it counts it among the joys of paradise that one may watch the tortures of the damned: "*Beati in regno coelesti videbunt poenus damnatorum, ut beautitudo illis magis complaceat.*" - Thomas Aquinas.)

The target of class war, which about 1789 had been waged against "tyrants" (kings, squires, parsons), began about 1850 - for by that time the political struggle had been transferred to the economic sphere - to be "*Capitalism.*" It is hopeless to try to define this catchword - for such it is. It is no product of economic experience, but is meant to have a *moral*, not to say semi-Christian implication. [46] It is intended to express the essence of economic evil, the great sin of superiority, the devil disguised as economic success. In certain middle-class circles it has even become a term of abuse for everyone who is disliked, every person of rank, successful entrepreneurs and tradesmen as well as judges, officers, and scientists, or even peasants. It denotes everyone who is not a "worker" or labour leader, everyone who has not failed through inferior ability. For all malcontents, for the spiritual mob, it serves as one comprehensive label for those who are strong and

sound.

(46. *Politische Schriften*, pp. 77 et seq.)

"Capitalism" is in no sense a form of economy or a "bourgeois" method of making money. It is a way of looking at things. There are economists who have discovered it in the time of Charlemagne and in the most primitive villages. Since 1770 economists have regarded the economic system, which is really one side of nation's historical existence, from the standpoint of the English merchant. [47] The English nation was at that time engaged in monopolizing world commerce. Hence its reputation as a "nation of shopkeepers." But the merchant is only a middleman. The existence of economic life is a *premiss* of his own activity in making himself the centre of gravity around which others, in the role of producers and consumers, revolve. This position of power is what Adam Smith describes, his "science." And that is why economics to this day starts from the viewpoint of *prices* and envisages goods and markets instead of economic life and active human beings. And this is why, henceforth, and especially since the rise of Socialist theory, labour also counts as goods, and wages as its price. In a system of this sort there is no room either for the work of the higher executive and inventor or for that of the peasant. All one sees is manufactured goods - and oats or pigs. It will not be long before peasants and craftsmen have been quite forgotten and the division of mankind into categories will - as with Marx - result in two only: the wage-earner and the others, the "exploiters."

(47. *The Decline of the West*, II, pp. 469, 483-4. Even Sombart (*Der moderne Kapitalismus*, 1919, I, p. 319) describes the purport of every economic system as being organization for economic *traffic*.)

Thus arose the artificial division of "humanity" into the two classes, producers and purchasers, [48] which in the hands of class-war theorists are falsely contrasted as capitalists and proletarians, bourgeoisie and labour, exploiters and exploited. Of the trader, however, the real capitalist, one hears nothing. The manufacturer or the farmer is the *visible* enemy, because he accepts hired labour and pays wages. The notion is senseless, but effective. The stupidity of a theory has never prevented its being effectively used. Criticism appertains to the author of a system - the believer in invariably uncritical.

(48. Sombart says in the same passage: "Capitalism is an organization for economic traffic in which invariably two different groups of the population, bound together by the market, co-operate: the owners of the means of production, who also control them (economic *subjects*), and the mere workers (economic *objects*)." But this, though "Liberal," is already half-way to Marx. It applies neither to the peasants nor to craftsmen.)

"Capitalism" and "Socialism" are both of an age, intimately related, produced by the same outlook and burdened with the same tendencies. Socialism is nothing but the capitalism of the lower classes. [49] The Manchester Free Trade doctrine of Cobden and

the Communist system of Marx were both born in 1840 and in England. Marx even welcomed free-trade Capitalism. [50]

(49. What I described in *Preußentum und Sozialismus*, and what has always been misunderstood, was Socialism as an *ethical* attitude, not as a materialistic, economic principle.)

(50. He said in 1847: "Generally speaking, the protectionist system today is conservative, whereas the Free Trade system has a destructive effect. It destroys the former nationalities and renders the contrast between proletariat and bourgeoisie more acute. In a word, the Free Trade system is precipitating the social revolution. And only in this revolutionary sense do I vote for Free Trade." - (Appendix to *Elend der Philosophie*.)

"Capitalism from below" wishes to sell its goods - namely, paid labour - at as high a price as possible, without regard to the purchasing power of the buyer, and to supply as little as possible. Hence the hatred of Socialist parties for quality-work and piece-work and their efforts to do away where possible with the "aristocratic" distinction between the payment of skilled and unskilled labour. They wish to force up the price of manual work by means of strikes - the first general strike took place in England in 1841 [51] - and, finally, by expropriating the factories and mines, to place the fixing of wages in the hands of the bureaucracy of the labour leaders, who at this stage will be in control of the State. For that is the under-meaning of State ownership. "Capitalism from below" describes the property that talented and superior people have worked to acquire as "stolen," in order to get enough fists clenched for it to be appropriated without work. This, then, is the origin of the class-war theory, economically constructed with a view to the worker's vote and politically designed for the benefit of the labour leader. It was a short-range aim. Inferior minds can see no further than the morrow in their outlook on the future, and they act accordingly. Class war was meant to bring destruction and nothing else. It was to clear away the forces of tradition, both political and economic, to give scope to the revenge and dominion of the forces of the underworld. What lies in store beyond that victory, when class war has long passed away, no one in these circles has troubled to inquire.

(51. That the Marxian strike has, however, no economic aims, but a political purpose, becomes evident to most people only through the experience of a general strike. German Socialists have often enough said that it is the *lost* strikes rather than the successful ones which are of interest to the party; they stoke the fires of hate and weld the "class" closer together.)

Thus after 1840 the real and infinitely complicated economic life of the white nations was subjected to annihilating attack from *two* sides. Attack from above, by the league of financiers and speculators, "high finance," pervaded it with its bonds and credits and boards of directors, making the administrative work of professional entrepreneurs (among whom were numerous former employees who had worked their way up by their industry and talent) dependent upon its intentions and interests. The actual economic employer sank to being the slave of the financier. He might be working for the success of a factory while it was being ruined by a gamble on the stock exchange of which he knew nothing.

[52] Attack from below, by the unions fashioned by the labour leaders, which set to work slowly but surely to destroy the economic organism. The theoretical weapon of the one is the scientific "Liberal" economics, which forms public opinion on economic questions and brings its arguments and decisions to bear on legislation; the weapon of the other is the Communist Manifesto, the principles of which are likewise used to influence the legislature by the "Left" of all parliaments. And *both* represent the principle of the "International," which is purely Nihilistic and negative. It is directed against the bounds set by the historical forms - and every form, every structure, is a setting of bounds - of the nation, the State, and the *national* economies whose *sum* is world economy. All these stand in the way of both high finance and professional revolutionaries. Therefore they are repudiated and marked for destruction.

(52. *Politische Schriften*, pp. 138 et seq., 305 et seq.)

But both types of theory are now out of date. All that could be said has long been said, and both theories have been so thoroughly discredited since 1918 by their prophecies, whether concerning New York or Moscow, that although they continue to be quoted, no one believes in them. The world revolution began under the shadow of them. It has perhaps reached its height today, but is far from being at an end, for it is assuming forms that are free from all theoretical twaddle.

And now at last it is possible to record the "successes" which the World Revolution has *achieved*. For the Revolution has reached its goal. It no longer menaces, it triumphs. *It has won*. And if its supporters argue the contrary to others or to their own horrified consciences, this is but one more case of the fate that eternally in human history pursues the fighter - the realization, with cruel distinctness, that the goal reached is quite different from that aimed at, and, in most cases, that it was not worth the trouble.

The success this time is enormous. It is for all white nations so terrifying that no one sees, or dares to see, all its implications; the originators have not the courage to acknowledge it as their work, neither has the remnant of "society," as it survives among the middle classes, the courage to confront them with the fact. The first part of the way from Liberalism to Bolshevism was traversed in fighting against the political forces. Today these are destroyed, devoured, crushed. Once more, as in the Rome of the Gracchi, we are shown that everything that the few big and strong beasts of prey, the statesmen and conquerors, have created through the centuries can be gnawed away in a short time by the mass of small animals, the human vermin. The old and honourable forms of the State lie in ruins. They have been replaced by formless parliamentarism, a dust-heap of what was once authority, art of governing and wisdom of State. And on it the parties, those hordes of business-politicians, scramble for the booty. Dynastic sovereignty has been replaced by election that each time brings new hordes of the unfit into State affairs.

And among these parties it is everywhere Labour and its trade unions (pursuing political aims with economic means, and economic means with political means), with their pooling of leader-material programs and methods of agitation, that have set the fashion for all. *All* seek to win over the masses of the great cities, pelt them with the same

senseless hopes, and whip them on with the same accusations. Hardly a party now dares to suggest that it represents any *other* section of the nation but the "worker." Whether from cowardice or from hope of successes at the poll, they treat him almost without exception as a privileged class. In all countries they have succeeded in demoralizing him, turning him into a most exacting, discontented, and therefore unhappy creature, putting him in the melting-pot with the rabble of the streets to produce a like-minded unit, a "class," to breed from him the type of the proletarian in spirit - which by the mere fact of its existence guarantees revolutionary success, which despises industriousness and achievement as a betrayal of the "cause," and whose highest ambition it is to become a leader of the masses and pillar of the Revolution.

It makes no difference whether these class-war fronts have taken the form of bureaucratic parties or trade unions, such as the Marxian, Catholic, and National unions in Germany and similar ones in England; whether they have the Latin form of anarchist and Socialist clubs as in Barcelona and Chicago, or whether they exist, as once in Russia and now in America, in underground movements and only rally visibly at the moment of action. One and all they consist of controlling groups of professional demagogues and a sheeplike following which has to serve the scarcely comprehended ultimate aim and be sacrificed to it. The governments have long ago become their executives, either because the mass-leaders themselves possess the parliamentary power or because their opponents, hypnotized by the "worker" ideology, lack courage to think and act for themselves.

They reign supreme in economics also, in this case using political means for a political object. And this object has never been lost sight of: class war against the organic forces and forms of economic life known as Capitalism. Since 1848 *the ultimate aim is its annihilation, and this has now been achieved. The world-economic crisis of this year and a good many next years is not, as the whole world supposes, the temporary consequence of war, revolution, inflation, and payment of debts. It has been willed. In all essentials it is the product of the deliberate work of the leaders of the proletariat.* Its roots lie far deeper than is thought. Its effects are only to be overcome in long, hard battles against everything that is popular today, and much of this can never now be undone. Courage to see what is actually happening would be the initial requirement, and I fear that the stock of this is very low. At no time has the whole world shown such cowardice before the general opinion of parliaments, parties, speakers, and writers. They are all on their knees before the "people," the masses, the proletariat, or whatever they may call that which blindly and unsuspectingly serves as weapon for leaders of the World Revolution. The reproach of being "the enemy of the worker" causes every politician to blanch.

But who, then, really won the World War? Certainly not any State, neither France nor England nor America. Nor white "Labour," though it did to a great extent pay for it: first with its blood on the field, then with its standard of life in the economic crisis. It was the noblest victim of its leaders. It was ruined for their ends. *The labour leader won the War.* That which in every country is called the Labour party and the trade union, but is in reality the trade union of party officials, the bureaucracy of the Revolution, gained the mastery and is now ruling over Western Civilization. It has driven the proletariat from

strike to strike, from street-fight to street-fight and has itself proceeded from one devastating parliamentary resolution to another, either in virtue of its own power or because of the terror of the beaten middle classes. The governments, everywhere in the world, have since 1916 become more and more rapidly dependent on them and are obliged to obey their orders if they do not wish to be overthrown. These brutish inroads into the structure and meaning of economic life they must either allow to be made or make them themselves. Such attacks are wholly in the interests of the lowest grade of labour, the merest "hands," and take the form of extravagant raising of wages and reduction of working hours, of devastating taxes on the profits of management, on old family property, on industry, and on the peasantry. The sack of society has been accomplished. It was the reward of the mercenaries in the class war. The natural centre of gravity of the economic body, the economic judgment of the real experts, was replaced by an artificial, non-expert, party-political one. The equilibrium was destroyed and the structure collapsed. But this had for decades been the openly avowed intention of Western Bolshevism, and so economic catastrophe was a *tactical victory*, little as Labour had suspected or intended it. This overthrow of capitalism, prefigured ever since 1840 and enthusiastically lauded by Bebel, this "Last Judgment" on the bourgeoisie, *ought*, it is true, to have automatically brought about the longed-for dictatorship of the proletariat (that is, of its creators and leaders).

It has not done so, we think - and yet, has it not? Quite apart from Moscow, what but this was the trade-union Republic in Germany? Is not economic, bureaucratically administered Socialism the reigning ideal in the national Labour parties of Germany, England, and even Italy? Have not the men with creative economic ideas, the promoters of private economic enterprise, been sacrificed to this dictatorship on the platform of the world-economic ruin? The economic *leader*, the *expert* in economic life, has been ousted by the party leader, who, if he know nothing of economics, knows all there is to know about demagogic propaganda. He rules as a bureaucrat in the drafting of economic legislation, which has displaced the free decisions of the man who knows, as leading spirit in countless committees, courts of arbitration, conferences, cabinet meetings and whatever the forms of his dictatorship may call themselves, and even in the Fascist ministry of Corporations. He is out for State Socialism, for the elimination of private initiative, for economic "planning" - all of which mean the same thing: Communism. No matter if the "worker" be sacrificed with the "boss," the professional "labour leader" has at last the desired power in his hands and is able to avenge the underworld against those who, by the accident of birth which endowed them with talents and natural superiority, were called to see things from above and to govern.

I am well aware that most people will refuse with horror to admit that this irrevocable crashing of everything that centuries have gone to build was intentional, the result of deliberate working to that end. But so it is; there is proof of it. The process began as soon as the professional revolutionaries of Marx's generation had realized that, in North-West Europe, the dependence of industry on coal had become the vital factor of economic life. The bare existence of the growing masses of the nations depended on its flourishing. As regards England, this was already the case; as to Germany they were hopeful, and the

doctrinaires who viewed the world diagrammatically as bourgeoisie and proletariat assumed as a matter of course that the same development must take place everywhere. But how did it stand with Spain and Italy, which had no coal? Or even with France, not to mention Russia? [53] It is amazing how narrow the horizon of these theologians of the class war was and remained, and how little this has been realized until our day. Did they ever include Africa, Asia, or Latin America in the sphere of their economic researches and prophecies? Did they waste one thought on the coloured workers of tropical colonies? Were they aware that these were omitted and why they had to be omitted? They talked of the future of "humanity," and instead of taking the whole planet into their field of vision they stared fixedly at a few European countries, whose State and society they intended to destroy.

(53. In the preface to the second Russian edition of the Communist Manifesto (1882) Marx and Engels set up a theory of evolution which entirely contradicts that expressed in *Capital*. Here the road to definitive Communism is, all at once, to run by way of the reputed village Communism of the peasants, the *mir*, instead of through an absolute domination of the bourgeoisie. There was in Russia neither bourgeoisie nor proletariat in the Western European sense, and the two demagogues therefore adapted their "conviction" to the masses whom they wished to mobilize against the Petrine State. The labour leaders of Moscow, on the contrary, proceeded, in the interests of the Western "truth," to fight the peasants for the sake of a working class which hardly existed.)

In the case of these, however, they saw that this would be possible if they paralysed the vitality of industry, and the systematic attack upon it began with the attempt to make its organized working impossible. This was done in the first place by forcibly reducing the daily hours of wage-earners in factories (at first in them only) in contrast to the higher work of executives, inventors and engineers. [54]

(54. This *intellectual* work can never be limited to a definite number of hours. It pursues and tyrannizes over its victims during their periods of rest, on their travels, and in their sleepless nights. It makes a real rest from thought and real relaxation impossible and uses up the most able men of the time. No worker for wages breaks down from overstrain or mental collapse. But among these others it happens in innumerable cases. So much for the demagogues' picture of the gourmandizing, idle bourgeois!)

In the eighteenth century the working day amounted to more than twelve hours, though without it being legally fixed, this being the usual practice among Nordic peasants and artisans. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was limited in England to twelve hours, and about 1850 was again reduced by the Ten-Hour Bill, which incidentally was fiercely opposed by the workers themselves. [55] When the bill was finally passed, it was acclaimed in revolutionary circles as a victory for the working class and rightly, as the crippling of industry. The blow, it was believed, would be fatal. From that time the trade unions of all countries undertook to exert increasing pressure to reduce the working day still more and to extend the rule to all wage-earners. Towards the end of the century the limit was nine hours, and at the end of the World War eight hours. Today, as we approach the middle of the twentieth century, the forty-hour week is the minimum of the

revolutionary demand. Since at the same time the ban on Sunday work is more strictly enforced, the individual worker delivers only half of the original, possible, and natural quantum of what he has to sell - namely, labour. And thus the "worker," who according to the Marxian doctrine is the *only* one who works, has become, to a great extent unwillingly, the one who works the least. What profession would tolerate so slight an output?

(55. Because they did not wish to be prevented from making full use of their working power, as every tailor might do. This healthy instinct still forces its way up, in spite of all Labour agitations, as is seen in the desire for overtime work and subsidiary occupations.)

This was the fighting method of the strike in a disguised, slowly penetrating form. It first took on meaning through the fact that the price for this form of goods, the weekly wage, was not only not reduced, but was forced steadily upward. Now, the "value," the actual product of the work done, is not an independent quality. It is a result obtained from the organic whole of industrial labour, in which the administrative work of controlling and regulating operations, the obtaining of materials, the marketing of products, the thinking out of costs and yield, of lay-out and equipment, and of new possibilities, are of far greater importance. The total output depends upon the order and amount of head-work, not hand-work, that is put into it. If there is no yield, if the product is unsaleable, then the work put into the process has been valueless and ought really not to be paid for at all. This is what happens to the peasant and the craftsman. But through the activities of the trade unions the hourly wage of the handworker has been removed from the unit of the organism. It is settled by the party leader, not by the economic leader, and if the latter does not and cannot consent to it, it is enforced by strikes, sabotage, and pressure on parliament. In the last hundred years it has risen by a great deal in proportion to the earnings of peasants and craftsmen. Everyone actively employed in the economic system is dependent for his gain on the economic situation - everybody except the wage-earning workman. He has a claim to the wage-level that is fixed inorganically and fought for by party-political means, even when it can only be maintained by allowing works to fall into decay, cutting out profits altogether, and selling goods at less than cost price - until the factories themselves give in, and a malicious feeling of triumph runs through the ranks of the labour leaders who have once more won a victory on the road to their eventual goal.

Today, when the birth of the class-war theory is nearly a hundred years behind us and no one any longer really believes in it, it seems doubtful whether these leaders are still conscious of the end for which all this work of destruction was originally designed and started. There is, however, a tradition and method which over long years has grown up among them by which they are bound to work unceasingly for reduction of work and increase of wages. It is this which proves their ability in the eyes of the Party. And if today the original dogmatic meaning is forgotten and the good conscience of the believer is lacking, the effect is still there, though it may be traced back to other causes: a new means of agitation, the finding of a new sin against the working class which may be fathered upon Capitalism.

Once the doctrine of "surplus value" had power to sway the undeveloped reasoning of the

masses: the *whole* output of industrial production was equal to the value of executive manual labour and had to be allotted accordingly. What the manufacturer deducted from it - for upkeep of the works, payment for raw materials, salaries, interest: the "surplus value," in fact - was *robbery*. The administration, the inventors, the engineers, all did no work whatever; and if they had done, mental work such as theirs, which was a kind of doing nothing, had no real value. It was the same "democratic" tendency which scorned and would have destroyed quality of any sort, and thought only in terms of quantity, even in manual work. The "aristocratic" distinction between skilled and unskilled labour had to be abolished. Both should receive equal payment. Piece-work and superior production were branded as betrayal of the cause. This attitude has triumphed, and post-War Germany in particular is its triumph. It has eliminated competition among the workers, stifled the impulse to attain higher levels of skill, and thereby reduced the total output. That all this was Nihilism, the will-to-destruction, we see from the practice prevailing in Moscow today. There the situation of 1840 was re-established in every respect as soon as "the goal" had been realized: long working hours, low wages; the widest possible gulf - wider even than in America - between the payment of skilled and unskilled work, and the importation of foreign engineers to replace their own - who had been killed off, as, according to the doctrine of the Communist Manifesto, they merely exploited the worker without doing anything: their worth was not realized until later.

The idea that the worker had a right to the "full value" of his work, which was equated with the total yield of the undertaking, persisted until the end of the century. This at least set a natural limit for the wage-demands. But side by side with and out of it arose, from about the seventies onward, the far from theoretical method of forcing up wages by the *political* pressure of the workers' organizations. It was no longer a question of the limits fixed by the economic system to this exploitation in favour of the one class, but only of the limits of political, parliamentary, revolutionary *power*. In almost all "white" countries, about the turn of the century and in Germany most conspicuously after 1918, there existed, side by side with the constitutional Government a subsidiary one consisting of trade unions of every variety. Its task was primarily to feed the electorate with wages and purchase the right to do so from the "bourgeois" powers by granting them permission to govern. The "working-class vote," handled as such by all party leaders, had become the decisive factor for everything to which parliaments dared to commit themselves. Thus the *political wage*, for which there were no longer any natural, economic limits, became an established fact. The wage-tariffs, which the State was bound to support, were fixed by the party, not calculated economically, and the high tariff of trade unions became a right which no bourgeois party or government dared to touch or call in question. The political wage soon outdistanced the "full value" of the work. It drove industry in the "white" countries to desperate measures of self-help and self-preservation and so landed it in the tangled situation of which the result is the world-economic catastrophe now before us. *Wage-Bolshevism*, working through strikes, sabotage, elections, and government crises, drained so much blood from the economic life of nations - not Germany's alone - that fevered efforts had to be made to make good these losses by every imaginable device.

We must realize how comprehensive is the term "political wage" before we can estimate the pressure of this wage-dictatorship on the economic life of nations. Reaching out far beyond money payment, it embraces concern for the "worker's" whole existence, the burden of which is taken from him to be loaded on to "the rest." "The worker" has become a pensioner of society and of the nation. Every human being has, like every animal, to defend himself against the incalculable workings of destiny - or to submit to them. Each has his *own personal cares, full responsibility* for himself, and must inevitably make his own decisions in all dangers threatening himself and his aims. No one dreams of relieving, at the expense of others, farmers from the consequences of bad harvests, cattle disease, fire, and failing markets; or artisans, doctors, engineers, tradespeople, and scientists from the threat of economic ruin and unfitness for work owing to insufficient qualifications, sickness, or accident. Each of these has to deal with such things himself and at his own expense or else bear the consequences and beg or go under in any other way he pleases. Such is life. The craving to insure oneself, against old age, accident, sickness, unemployment - in short, against fate in every conceivable form - which is a sign of shrinking vitality, beginning from Germany has now embedded itself in one way and another in the mentality of all "white" nations. The victim of misfortune cries out to others without any will to help himself. But there is a difference which denotes the victory of Marxian thought over *the original Germanic, individualist* instincts of delight in responsibility and of the personal struggle with fate, the *amor fati*. All the rest in seeking to evade or to meet the unforeseen do so according to their own resolve and in their own strength; it is only the "worker" who is spared this decision. He alone can rest assured that others will think and act for him. The degenerating effect of this freedom from all responsibility, which is seen similarly in children of very rich parents, [56] has overtaken the whole working class, especially in Germany: at the first sign of any distress, appeal for help is made to the State, the party, society, or, in any case, "others." We have forgotten how to take decisions ourselves and to live under the stress of real anxiety.

(56. The result is the preposterous importance attached to *minor* anxieties - the "problems" of fashion or of cooking, of married or unmarried lovers' quarrels, and, above all, of boredom, which leads to weariness of living. Vegetarianism becomes a sport, and erotic taste a "world outlook." One commits suicide if one cannot have the desired evening frock or lover, or because one cannot agree about a dinner or an outing.)

But this means a further burden laid on the higher work in the community for the benefit of the lower. For this part of the political wage also - insurance of every kind against fate, the building of workers' dwellings (no one thinks of demanding these for farm labourers), the construction of playgrounds, convalescent homes, libraries, and the special terms for food, railway journeys, and amusements - is all paid for directly or indirectly by taxation of "the rest" for the working man. *This in fact is an essential part of the political wage*, and it receives very little thought. At the same time the national wealth of which we are given the amount in figures is an economic fiction. It is calculated - as "capital" - from the yield of economic undertakings or from the market prices of interest-bearing shares, and it falls with these when the value of the working factories is threatened by the burden

of high wages. A factory that is thus made to close down is, however, of no more value except for the scrap-heap. Under the dictatorship of the trade unions, Germany's economic system had in the four years 1925-29 to meet an extra load of 18,225,000,000 marks annually in respect of increased wages, taxes, and grants for social purposes. [57] This means *one-third of the national income spent one-sidedly*. One year later the sum had grown to far beyond twenty milliard marks. What are two milliards for reparations compared with this? It endangered the financial position of the Reich and the currency. Its drag on the economic system was not even taken into account when the effects of wage-Bolshevism were in question. It was the expropriation of the whole economic system in the interests of one class.

(57. Report of the Langnamverein, 1929, p. 6.)

There is higher work, and lower: nothing can deny or alter this truth. It is the expression of the fact that Culture exists. The higher the stage of development in a Culture, the more powerful its creative force, the greater the difference between *determining* and *subordinate* actions of all kinds; whether political, economic, or artistic. For Culture is ordered, intellectualized life, a maturing and self-perfecting form, which calls for an ever higher grade of personality. There is work for which one must have an inner call, and other work that one *must* do, because one *can* do nothing better to earn a living. There is work for which only a few men of superior rank are competent, and other work which is valuable only in terms of duration and volume. Whichever it is, one is born to it. That is fate. It cannot be altered either by Rationalist or by sentimental-romantic equality-talk.

The global output of work for which the Western Culture is responsible, which is *identical* with it, becomes greater every century. At the time of the Reformation it amounted to many times what it had been in the age of the Crusades, and it grew to immense size in the eighteenth century, in response to the dynamism of creative leaders' work, which had of necessity made the demand for the lower type of mass labour greater and greater. But it is for that very reason that the proletarian revolutionary - who sees Culture from below and, not possessing it himself, is unable to understand it - seeks to destroy it, to do without "quality" work, or any work even. If there are no more men having Culture - to his mind they are a luxury and superfluity - there will be less work, and, above all, inferior work which anyone can do. I once read in a Socialist paper that when the money-millionaires have been abolished, the brain-millionaires must be sent after them. Real creative work is a vexation to such people. They hate its superiority and envy its success, whether the result takes the form of power or of wealth. The charwoman of a hospital is of more importance to them than the principal physician; the ploughman is worth more than the farmer who improves the grain and breeds pedigree cattle, the stoker more than the inventor of the engine. A transvaluation of economic values - to use a Nietzschean phrase - has come about, and as, in the eyes of the masses, any value translates itself into money, into pay, the lower-grade mass labour ought to be better paid than the higher work of outstanding personalities - and this is being brought about.

There have been consequences that no one yet has really understood. This "white" worker, whom Labour party leaders and a cowardly middle class vie with each other in

flattering and spoiling, is becoming a luxury animal. Do let us leave out idiotic comparisons with millionaires who are "well off" - it is not a question of people who live in palaces and keep armies of servants. Take an modern industrial worker's private cost of living in comparison with that of a yeoman. About 1840 the mode of living was much the same for both. Today the former works far less than the other, but the manner in which the peasant - whether in Pomerania, Yorkshire, or Kansas - lives, feeds, and clothes himself contrasts so pitifully with what a metal worker, from the Ruhr area to Pennsylvania, spends on his keep and above all on his amusements that the latter would immediately strike at the suggestion that he should ever again take up this way of life with twice the work, and perpetual anxiety over bad harvests, markets, and debts into the bargain. That which appears as the minimum for existence and is regarded as "poverty" in the great Northern cities would seem extravagant in a village an hour's journey away - not to mention the style of living in the area of South-European land-Communism, where the simplicity of coloured races still exists. But this luxury of the working classes is a fact, and who pays for it? Not the work that is done. Their output is not worth so much by a long way. It is others who have to work, all the rest of the nation, to meet it. There are fools - and if Ford was serious in what he said and wrote, he is one of them - who believe that the workers' increased purchasing-power will preserve the level of economic life. But did those unoccupied masses in Rome after the Gracchan period do so? People talk of the home market without considering what this really is. Let this new dogma of the "white" trade unions be tested: pay the worker, not in money, but in the products of his own labour: in locomotives, chemicals, and paving-stones, and let it be his business to sell them.

He would not know what to do with them. He would be horrified to find how little these things are worth. It would also transpire that the same degree of Culture, the same intellectualized taste, is needed for the intelligent spending of money as for earning it by superior achievement. Luxury can be elegant or vulgar, and no one can alter the fact. It is the difference between a Mozart opera and a musical comedy, but the luxury wage is definitely not the complement of a refined craving for luxurious conditions. It is only the purchasing power of a higher rank of society that makes quality industry possible. The lower orders merely feed an entertainment industry, as in ancient Rome.

But this vulgar luxury of great cities - little work, much money, and still more amusement - exercised a fatal influence upon the hard-working and simple men of the open country. They learnt to know of needs of which their fathers would never have let themselves dream. Self-denial is hard when one has the opposite before one. The flight from the land set in: first the farm-hands and maids went, then the farmers' sons, and in the end whole families who did not know whether or how they could hold the paternal heritage in the face of all this distortion of economic life. It has been the same in all Cultures at that stage. There is no truth in the belief that Italy became depopulated after Hannibal's time by the large landed estates. It was the "*panem et circenses*" of cosmopolitan Rome that did it, and it was only when the land had lost its population and became worthless that the farming of large estates by means of slaves developed. [58] Otherwise it would have become a wilderness. The depopulation of the villages began in England in 1840, in

Germany in 1880, in the Middle West of the United States in 1920. The peasant is tired of working without wages when the town offers him wages without work. So away he goes - to become a "proletarian."

(58. *The Decline of the West*, II, p. 106.)

The worker himself was innocent in the matter. He does not feel his mode of life to be luxurious; quite the contrary. He became wretched and dissatisfied like every unearning privileged person. That which yesterday was the object of extravagant desires has today become a matter of course and by tomorrow will be a state of distress calling loudly for help. The labour leader spoilt his man when he appointed him a praetorian of the class war. At the time of the Communist Manifesto he was to be *made* morally a proletarian to this end; now he is encouraged, to the same end, to hope that he will one day no longer be one. But in the one case as in the other the unjustified level of the political wage has led to more and more things becoming indispensable.

But can this wage, which has become *an independent quantity alongside those of economics*, possibly be paid any longer? What with? By whom? Close inspection shows that the conception of economic *profits* has undergone an imperceptible change under the pressure of the forcing up of wages. Only a healthy economic life can be productive. There is a natural, unforced profit as long as the wages involved in a process are functionally dependent on it. Once this becomes an independent, a *political*, quantity, an uninterrupted blood-letting which no living body can stand, there begins an artificial, morbid way of estimating economic operation, a race between the market, which *must* keep on top if the whole is not to collapse and bleed away, and the hurrying advance of wages with the accompanying taxes and the social contributions which are indirect taxes. The feverish tempo of increasing production comes chiefly from this secret wound in the economic life. The incitement to buy luxuries is diffused by every form of advertisement; the foreign market among coloured peoples is extended and imposed by force. The economic imperialism of the great industrial states, which uses military means to secure market areas and keeps them to their role as such, is intensified by the urge to self-preservation of the heads of industry, who have to hold their own under the perpetual political-wage pressure of Labour. From the moment that a real or apparent "recovery" of industry occurs in any part of the "white" world, the trade unions put in new wage-claims in order to secure for their followers profits which actually are non-existent. In Germany, when the reparations payments were suspended, it was at once assumed that these "savings" must go to benefit the working class. The natural result of luxury wages was an increase in the cost of production - and correspondingly a fall in the value of money - and here, too, there was political intervention, in that selling-prices were maintained or lowered by statute to secure the purchasing-power of the wages. Thus, the repeal of the Corn Laws in England about 1850 was a disguised form of wage-increase. Its effect was to sacrifice the agricultural labourer to the industrial worker, and since then this has been attempted or actually carried out everywhere, owing in part to the absurd economic pronouncement of bankers and other "experts" that the world should be divided into agrarian and industrial countries in order to obtain a practicable organization of "world

economy." What, in these circumstances, was to become of the peasant class in industrial countries no one inquired. It was the mere object in Labour politics, *the* enemy to the monopoly interest of Labour. All Labour organizations are hostile to the land-workers, whether they admit it or contest it. Similarly the price of coal and iron was fixed under parliamentary pressure without regard to the cost of extraction, though this is bound up with these very wages; all sorts of special prices for the working classes were also insisted upon, and these had then to be made good by a rise in the normal prices for "the rest." If this damaged or even ruined the market, that was the private affair of the entrepreneurs, and the more their position was shaken, the more triumphant the trade unions felt themselves.

One result of the effects of this class war was the increasing need of productive industry for "credit," for "capital" - that is to say, for imaginary money values, which are there only as long as one believes in their existence and when the least doubt arises dissolve into nothingness in the form of a crash on the stock exchange. It was a despairing attempt to replace the lost real values by phantom values. The hey-day of a new and wily banking method had set in, by which enterprises were financed and at the same time controlled by the banks, which not only gave credit, but *created* it on paper, a ghostlike, homeless, and airy finance-capital. Old family properties have been more and more rapidly converted into joint-stock companies, made fluid, so that the money thus raised might fill the gaps in the circulation of expenditure and receipts. The indebtedness of productive industry - for shares are at bottom nothing but a debt - grew to fabulous proportions, and when the necessity of paying interest on it, as well as wages, began to look threatening for the latter, the final weapon of the class war was brought out: the demand for expropriation of the works by the State. By this means wages to be definitely withdrawn from the economic balance-sheet and regarded as State salaries, which will be fixed by the governing Labour parties at will and for which the means of the rest of nation will be commandeered by fiscal Bolshevism.

The final, decisive results of this folly of luxury wages have become increasingly apparent since 1900. The growing desolation of the agricultural countryside brought ever greater crowds into the sphere of the *panem et circenses* of the cities and tempted industry to enlarge its undertakings - no misgivings as to the disposal of the products having yet arisen. Between 1900 and 1914 fifteen million of countryfolk from South and East Europe migrated to the United States, where the farming population was already on the decrease. [59] In the North of Europe there was internal migration to the same amount. In the mining area of Briey, for instance, there were in 1914 more Polish and Italian than French miners. And then Nemesis overtook this development from a side which the class-war leaders had never taken into account, and had indeed never noticed.

(59. The pure farming population came to a standstill about 1900, declined by 100,000 from about 1910 onward, by half a million from 1920, and by a million from 1925.)

Marx both admired and hated the industrial system of the "white" countries of the North as the masterpiece of the bourgeoisie. He had eyes only for the home of it in England, France, and Germany, and his successors accepted this provincial horizon as the orthodox

premiss of all tactical considerations. But the world was bigger than that, was something more than an area which meekly and obediently absorbed the exports of little Northern Europe. The mass of white workers lived not by industry itself but *by the industrial monopoly of the Northern great powers*. Only on the basis of this fact could the political wage be paid without leading to immediate catastrophe. But outside and beyond the class war of the working class with society within the field of the white nations, a race struggle of quite other dimensions raised its head; no labour leader had foreseen it, and no one to this day has realized, or dared to realize, the fateful relentlessness of its advance. The competition of white workers among themselves had been suppressed by trade-union organization and wage-tariffs. The difference that had grown up since 1840 between the standard of living of the industrial worker and the land-worker presented no dangers, as all the politico-economic rulings - customs, taxes, statutes - were unilateral, made by the industrial side against the agricultural. *But in the new struggle it was the coloured worker's standard of living which competed with the luxury wage of the white working-class.*

Coloured wages are a quantity of a different order and different origin from those of the white. They are dictated, not demanded, and are kept down if necessary by force of arms. This is not called "reaction" or "injustice to the proletariat," but colonial policy; and the English worker, at least, has been quite agreeable to it, having learned to think imperially. In demanding the "full" value of the proceeds as the workers' wages, Marx tried to suppress one fact which it would have been more honest to note and take account of: the proceeds of the Northern industries include the cost of tropical raw materials - cotton, rubber, metals - and this in turn includes the *low* wages of coloured labour. The overpayment of white labour therefore depends upon the underpayment of coloured labour. [60]

(60. Similarly, the purchasing-power of white wages is increased by the fact that the home agriculture has to face the competition of supplies produced on coloured wages, while it is itself tied to high scales of wages and expense generally.)

Soviet Russia prides itself on the tactics of undercutting by which it attacks the vitality of the "white" economic system: namely, the setting back of its own working-class - if necessary by starving them or (as in Moscow in 1923) shelling them. But as a matter of fact the method had been in process of development for a long time, and without any forcing, all over the globe. And it struck with terrific effect, not so much on the quality of Western industrialism as on the very existence of the white working-class. Were the Soviets so dogma-blinded as not to see this, or were they heralds of the will-to-annihilate of the Asiatic race-consciousness that is awakening and means to exterminate the Western Culture-peoples?

In the South African mines, whites and Kaffirs work side by side: the whites for eight hours at the rate of two shillings an hour, the Kaffirs for twelve hours at the rate of one shilling a day. This grotesque disproportion is maintained by the white trade-unions, which veto any attempt of the coloured workers to organize themselves and bring pressure to bear on their political parties to prevent the ejection of the whites, lock, stock,

and barrel, although this is the obvious course. But this is only one example of the general situation between white and coloured labour all the world over. Japanese industry is driving its white competitors out of the field in every part of Southern and Eastern Asia by its low wages and has already made its appearance on the European and American market. [61] Indian textile goods are seen in London. And in the midst of this a fearful thing is happening. As late as 1880 the only exploited coal measures lay in Northern Europe and North America. Now they have been discovered and opened up in every continent. White Labour's monopoly of coal has vanished. And what is even more serious, industry has freed itself to a very large extent from dependence on coal through water-power, oil, and electrical power-transmission. It is now free to move about, and it does so. What is more, *it moves everywhere away from the domain of white trade-union dictatorships into countries with low wages*. The dispersion of Western industry has been in full swing since 1900. The mills of India were established as branches of English factories, with the idea of getting "nearer the consumer." Such was the original intention, but the West-European luxury wage has led to a very different result. In the United States industry has migrated more and more from Chicago and New York to the Negro areas in the South, and it will not halt at the Mexican frontier. There are growing industrial areas in China, Java, South Africa, South America. The flight of highly developed techniques to the colour areas continues, and the white luxury-wage is beginning to be rather theoretical, since the work by which it is earned is no longer wanted.

(61. At the beginning of 1933 the wage of the sixty-hour week in the Japanese textile industry was about \$1.68, and that of the forty-eight hour week in Lancashire about \$8.50.)

Even by 1900 the danger was immense. The structure of the "white" economic system was already undermined. It threatened to break down at the first world-historical upheaval under the load of the political wage, the reduced hours of work that men would stand, the saturation of all foreign markets, and the emergence of foreign industrial areas which were outside the jurisdiction of white Labour-parties. Only the unbelievable peace after 1870, which was diffused over the "white" world by its statesmen's dread of making incalculable decisions, [62] maintained the universal delusion *vis-à-vis* the catastrophe that was approaching with sinister speed. The gloomy presages of its coming were not noticed or not seriously considered. A fateful, shallow, almost criminal optimism - the faith in unswerving progress, as expressed in figures - dominated the leaders of Labour and of industry alike, not to mention the politicians, and found support in the morbid inflation of the fictitious finance-capital which all the world took to be real property, real and indestructible money value. But even by 1910 individual voices had been heard recalling that the world was in process of being satiated with the products of industry, including those of industrialized large-scale farming. Here and there proposals were made for an agreement between the powers upon a voluntary quota system of production, but there was no response. No one believed in any serious dangers. No one wanted to believe in them. And in any case the premisses were unsound, as such propositions came from one-sided observers who saw the economic system as an independent quantity and not as the expression of something far stronger, the policy of the creeping world-revolution

which had forced economics into wrong forms and tendencies. The causes lay too deep to be even touched by inquiries into crisis and trade-cycle problems. And it was already too late. One more short breathing-space of self-delusion was permitted: the preparation for the World War, which claimed innumerable hands, or at any rate withdrew them from production work, as soldiers of the standing armies or as workers in war industries.

(62. See Chapter I, Section 3; Chapter II, Section 7.)

Then came the Great War, and with it - not caused by it, but merely no longer averted - the economic collapse of the white world. It would have come in any case, only more slowly and in less appalling forms. But this war was waged from the first by England, the home of *practical* Labour-Socialism, for the economic destruction of Germany, the youngest great power, the economic unit which was developing the most rapidly and on superior lines, and for her perpetual exclusion as a competitor in the world's markets. The more completely statesmanlike thinking foundered in the chaos of events, leaving only military and crude economic tendencies in the field, the more clearly everywhere emerged the sombre hope of ruining first Germany, then Russia, then the individual powers of the Entente, and finally the home industrial and financial position, and so of rescuing the home workers from the impossible situation. But even that was not the actual beginning of the catastrophe that followed, which developed out of the fact that, after 1916, the dictatorship of the working classes *vis-à-vis* State government had established itself, openly or secretly, in all white countries, whether actively engaged in the War or no, and that, although varying greatly in form and degree, it followed invariably the same revolutionary tendency. It overthrew or controlled all governments. It wormed its way into all armies and navies. It was - and rightly - more dreaded than the War itself. And after the War was ended, it worked up the wages of inferior mass-labour to a grotesque height and at the same time imposed the eight-hour day. When the workers came home from the War, there arose everywhere in the world, despite the enormous loss in human lives, the famous house-famine, due to the desire of the victorious proletariat to live under middle-class conditions - and his achievement of it. It was the pathetic symbol of the fall of all the ancient powers of class and rank. Seen from this aspect, the universal inflation of State finances and economic credits was for the first time understood for what it was: one of the most effective forms of Bolshevism, by which the ruling classes of society might be dispossessed, ruined, proletarianized, and as a result excluded from political government. Since then the world has been ruled by the low short-sighted thought of the vulgar man who has suddenly come into power. *That was the victory!* The destruction is complete, the future is almost hopeless, but the spirit of revenge upon society is appeased. Meanwhile things now appear as they *are*. The pitiless logic of history takes its revenge on the avengers - on the vulgar mentality, on the envious, the dreamers, the enthusiasts, who have been blind to the great and chilling facts of reality.

Thirty million white workers are workless today, in spite of the great war-losses and leaving out of account those other millions who are only partially occupied. This is *not* the result of the War, for half of them live in countries which took barely any part, or no part at all, in the War; neither is it the result of war debts or misguided currency

manoeuvres, such as other countries can show. *Unemployment stands everywhere in exact proportion to the height of the political wage-tariffs.* It hits the individual countries in exact proportion to the respective numbers of *white* industrial workers. In the United States it is first the Anglo-Americans, whose labour is no longer required, then the East and South-East European immigrants, and finally, a long way behind them, the Negroes. It is just the same in Latin America and South America. In France the number is smaller, primarily because her Socialistic deputies know the difference between theory and practice and sell themselves with all speed to the reigning financiers instead of extorting wages for their constituents. But in Russia, Japan, China, and India there is no lack of work, because there are no luxury wages. Industry has fled to the coloured races, and in white countries only the labour-saving inventions and methods pay for themselves, because they relieve the wage-pressure. For decades now the increase of production with the same number of workers by means of technical refinements has been the ultimate means of enduring this pressure. Now it can no longer be borne, because the markets are lacking. Formerly the wages of Birmingham, Essen, and Pittsburgh provided the world standard, but now this is given by the coloured wage of Java, Rhodesia, and Peru. And to that must be added the levelling down of the aristocratic society of the white nations with their inherited wealth, their gradually acquired taste, their need of *real* luxury, which sets the example to others. The Bolshevism of the death duties and supertaxes levied at the dictates of envy - in England even before the War [63] - and the inflations which transformed whole fortunes into nothing have done their work thoroughly. But it is this genuine luxury that had created and maintained quality work, had allowed entire quality-industries to grow up, and had kept them alive. It tempted and *educated* the middle strata to greater refinement in its own demands. The greater this luxury, the more flourishing the economic system. Napoleon of old knew this. He did not concern himself with economic theories and was the better able to understand the economic life. It was from his *court* that the impulse came to revive the economic system which the Jacobins had destroyed, for a higher social order was again being formed - on the English model, it is true, because the old régime was murdered or ruined, save for some jejune and impoverished remnants. When the wealth that has accumulated among the ruling class is annihilated by the mob, when it becomes an object of suspicion and scorn, a danger to the owner, then the Nordic will to acquire property, will-to-power through property, ceases to create that wealth. Economic - spiritual - ambition dies out. Competition no longer pays. We sit in corners, go without things, and save - and this "saving," which always means the saving of other people's work, inevitably drives every highly developed economy to disaster. All this works together. Low-grade white labour is worthless, the labour mass in the Northern coal areas has become superfluous. It is the first great defeat of the white nations by the mass of the coloured nations - which embraces Russians, South Spaniards and South Italians, and peoples of Islam just as much as the Negroes of English-speaking America and the Indians of Latin America. It is the first menacing sign that the white world-supremacy is faced with the possibility of an overthrow by the forces of colour, as the result of the class war in its rear.

(63. *Politische Schriften*, pp. 264 et seq., 307 et seq.)

And no one withal dares to look into the real causes of this catastrophe, or down into its abysses. The white world is governed primarily by idiots - if it is governed at all, which one is entitled to doubt. Around the sick-bed of the white economic system stand ridiculous authorities who can see no further ahead than next year and from their narrow and long obsolete economic "capitalistic," "Socialistic" standpoints discuss minor palliatives. And finally: cowardice makes blind. No one speaks of the consequences of this century and more of the world revolution which has risen from the depths of our great cities and destroyed economic life - and not that alone. No one sees it, no one dares to see it.

The "working man" is, now as before, the idol of the world, and the "labour leader" is placed above criticism in deference to the tendency for which his existence stands. For all the loud abuse of Marxism, Marxism itself speaks in every word of it. Its most whole-hearted opponents are, all unwittingly, obsessed by it. And every one of us is a bit of a Socialist or Communist in the bottom of his heart. [64] Hence the universal unwillingness to admit the *fact* of the prevailing class-war and to deduce its consequences. Instead of ruthlessly opposing the causes of the catastrophe, so far as that is at all possible, we try to suppress the results, the symptoms - and not even to suppress them, but to whitewash, conceal, and deny them. There is not the beginning of any reconsideration of the revolutionary wage-level, but the *new revolutionary* demand for the forty-hour week, a further step on the way to Marxism, a further curtailment of white labour's output without reduction of income, a further rise in the cost of white labour, that is - for it is axiomatic that the political wage must not fall. No one dares to tell the mass of the workers that their victory has been their heaviest defeat; that labour leaders and Labour parties have led them to it for the sake of appeasing their own hunger for popularity, power, and well-paid posts; and that these are still far from the idea of releasing their victims and effacing themselves. But all the time the coloured races are working long and cheaply right to the limit of their working-capacity; in Russia under the knout, but elsewhere with the silent conviction that already they hold the hated white men, their masters of today - *or of yesterday?* - in their power.

(64. See Chapter III, Section 10.)

Then there is that catchword of "abolishing" unemployment, "providing" employment - that is to say, superfluous, useless work, since there is no longer any essential, profitable, useful work to be had in these conditions - and no one admits to himself that the cost of this production without a market, of these faked Potemkin villages in an economic wilderness, must some time be made good by means of "fiscal Bolshevism" (which includes provision of fictitious means of payment) from the relics of the healthy peasant class and urban society. Then, again, there is dumping, by means of systematic depreciation of the currency, whereby one particular country seeks to maintain a market for its products at the expense of others. This is at bottom a false and too easy miscalculation of real wages and real costs of production by which the buyer is deceived and of which, once more, what is left of the property of the rest of the nation has to bear the costs in the form of depreciation of values. But the fall of the pound, a huge sacrifice for England's pride, did not diminish the number of the unemployed - no, not by one man.

There is only one form of dumping which has its natural roots in economic life and is therefore successful, the form of cheaper wages and greater output of labour. This is the basic reason for the destructive influence of Russian exports and of the factual superiority of "coloured" areas of production like Japan, whether they are engaged in industry or agriculture and whether they are killing white production by their own exports or by exporting themselves or by keeping home products so cheap as to exclude imports.

Finally there is the last desperate measure resorted to by the mortally stricken economies of nations: *autarchy* - or whatever big word may be chosen to describe this attitude of the dying animal. It manifests itself in the reciprocal putting down of economic barrages by political methods, by hostile tariffs, import prohibitions, boycotts, blockage of currency transfers, and everything else that has been or will be invented to establish a "state of siege" that almost represents actual war conditions and may one day put it into the heads of the militarily stronger powers that such gates may possibly be opened and economic capitulation enforced by a timely allusion to tanks and bombing squadrons. For, again be it said: the economic system is no self-contained kingdom; it is inseparably bound up with world politics; it is unthinkable without a strong foreign policy, and therefore, in the last resort, it is dependent upon the military strength of the country in which it lives or dies. [65]

(65. *Politische Schriften*, pp. 325 et seq.)

But what is the sense of defending a fortress if the enemy is *within* it, if *treason* in the form of class war leaves it doubtful whom and what one is really defending? Here lie the real and difficult problems of our time. But the *raison d'être* of grave questions is precisely that they should call forth the best efforts of the best brains. And when we see how, all the world over, they are whittled down, *lied* down, to the level of small fictitious problems, so that small men with small ideas and small expedients can make themselves important; when the "guilt" of the economic catastrophe is laid upon the War and the war debts, on inflation and currency difficulties, and when "returning to prosperity" and "ending unemployment" are all that people can find to say, and say unblushingly, about the finale of an overwhelming world-historical epoch - then may we well despair of the future. We live in one of the mightiest ages in all history, and no one sees, no one realizes it. We are experiencing a volcanic eruption that is without parallel. Night has set in, the earth trembles, and streams of lava are rolling down over entire nations - and we send for the fire-brigade! But this is the mob all over, mob rule in contrast to the handful of the thoroughbreds. It is the great individuals who *make* history, and whatever presents itself "*en masse*" can only be its *object*.

The world-revolution, however, is *not* over. It will outlast the middle, and possibly the end, of the century. It strides on unchecked towards its ultimate decisions with the historical ruthlessness of a great destiny which no past Civilization has been able to evade and to which all white nations of the present must inevitably succumb. Anyone who announces its end or believes that he has overcome it is simply incapable of understanding it. Its most forceful decades are only now setting in on us. Every leading personality in the age of the Gracchan Revolution - Scipio as much as his opponent

Hannibal, Sulla no less than Marius - every great event, the fall of Carthage, the Spanish Wars, the revolt of the Italian allies, and the slave-revolts from Sicily to Asia Minor, are simply forms in which this deep inward crisis of society, the organic structure of the Culture-peoples, moves towards its fulfilment. It was the same in the Egypt of the Hyksos period, in the China of the "Contending States," and everywhere else in "contemporary" sections of history, [66] little as we may know about it. In this respect we are all slaves of history's "will," the organs of an organic happening, working with it and for it; and, as Schiller says, he who would set out to manage it prudently must himself train it towards its non-fulfilment. In this tremendous duel between major tendencies, which is being fought throughout the white world in wars, revolutions, strong personalities that are vessels of high success and deep tragedy, powerful but fugitive creations, the offensive comes at present from below, from the city masses, and the defensive from above is still feeble and lacks the good conscience which necessity brings. The end will be in sight only when the relation is inverted. And this is near at hand.

(66. *The Decline of the West*, II, pp. 410-11, 416, 427.)

In such times there are, under whatever names, two *natural* parties, two fronts in the class war, two internal forces and tendencies, and *only* two, no matter how many party organizations exist or whether such exist at all. There is proof of this in the progressive Bolshevization of the masses in the United States, in the Russian style that informs thoughts, hopes, and wishes. That *is* a party. [67] So far there is no focus of resistance against it in that country, which has no yesterday and perhaps no morrow. The brilliant episode of the dollar and dollar society, starting from the War of Secession in 1865, seems to be approaching its end. Will Chicago be the Moscow of the New World? In England the Oxford Union, which is the principal students' club of the most aristocratic university in the country, has passed by a sweeping majority the resolution: "that this House will in no circumstance fight for King and Country." What this signifies is the end of the mentality which has up till now reigned among all party-formations. It is not impossible that the Anglo-Saxon powers are beginning to fade out. And the West-European Continent? The country least troubled with this white Bolshevism is - Russia, which has no longer any "party," but a governing "horde" of the old Asiatic type under that name. Neither is there any longer faith in a program; there is only the fear of death - through being deprived of one's food-card or one's pass, banishment to a labour camp, bullet, or rope.

(67. Chapter III, Section 9.)

Vainly, in their cowardice, whole classes of society seek a conciliatory middle class between radical tendencies of "Right" and "Left." The age itself is Radical. It will have no compromises. There is no doing away with or denying the *fact* of the existing superiority of the Left, or the awakening will to a Right movement, which for the present has a footing only in close circles, in certain armies, and, among other places, in the English House of Lords. That is why the English Liberal party has vanished and why its heir, the Labour party, will also vanish in its present form. That is why the centre parties in Germany vanished without resistance. The will to the middle way is the senile wish for

peace at any price, for a Switzerland of nations, for *historical abdication*, as if thereby the blows of history could be avoided. The opposition of graded social structure and town masses, of tradition and Bolshevism, of the higher existence of the few and the lower of mass labour (however labelled), is upon us. There is no third alternative.

But it is just as much an error to believe in the possibility of a single party. Parties are Liberal-Democratic forms of *Opposition*. They presuppose a counter-party. *One* party is as impossible in a State as is one State in a stateless world. The political frontier - of country or mentality - always separates *two* powers from each other. It is the infantile disease of all revolutions, this belief in a triumphant unity when in fact the problem of the age from which they themselves spring *demand*s discord. Not in this wise are the great problems of history to be solved. They must and will mature and so pass on to new problems, new battles. The "*Total State*," an Italian catchword which has an international vogue, was realized by the Jacobins during the two years of the Terror. But as soon as they had annihilated the fallen powers of the old régime and founded the dictatorship, they split up themselves into Girondists and Montagnards, and the first-named of these occupied the place left vacant. Their leaders fell victims to the Left, but their successors in turn treated the Left in the same way. Then, with Thermidor, there set in the period of waiting for a successful general. It is possible to destroy a party in so far as it consists of an organization and a bureaucracy of salaried officials, but not one which is a movement, a spiritual and intellectual force. The struggle, which is a necessity of nature, is merely transferred within the surviving party, in which two fronts will be formed to carry it on. The fact may be gainsaid or covered up, but it is there.

This is true of Fascism and of every other of the many movements after the Fascist model that have arisen or (as, say, in America) are arising. Here every individual is confronted with an inevitable choice. It behoves him to know definitely where he stands, on the Right or the Left; otherwise the course of history, which is stronger than all theory and ideological dreaming, will decide for him. Conciliation is as impossible today as in the time of the Gracchi.

Western Bolshevism is dead nowhere - except in Russia. Its fighting organizations may be destroyed, but it lives on in new forms: as Left wing of the party which thinks it has conquered it; as a mentality as to the existence of which in their own thought individuals and masses alike are capable of complete self-deception; [68] and as a movement that breaks out suddenly one day in organized forms.

(68. Chapter III, Section 10.)

What do we mean by "Left"? Last century's catchwords such as Socialism, Marxism, Communism, are out of date; they no longer mean anything. We use them to avoid disclosing where we really stand. But the age demands clarity. "Left" is party, [69] is what believes in parties, for this is a Liberal form of the fight against high society, of class war since 1770, of the longing for majorities, for "all" to be in the running, for quantity instead of quality, for the herd against the master. But the true Caesarism of all declining Culture takes its stand upon small, strong *minorities*. "Left" is that which has a

program, for a program presupposes an intellectual, Rationalistic, and Romantic belief in the power to control reality by abstractions. "Left" is the noisy agitation at the street corners and in public meetings, [70] the art of overthrowing city crowds by strong words and weak arguments: it was in the time of the Gracchi that Latin prose developed into that oratorical style which is good for nothing but the hair-splitting rhetoric which we find in Cicero. "Left" is the enthusiasm for mass in general as a foundation for one's individual power, the will to level everything distinctive, to equate the artisan with the people while casting derisive side-glances at the peasantry and bourgeoisie.

(69. *The Decline of the West*, II, pp. 449 et seq.)

A party is not only antiquated as a form; its basis is also a mass ideology that is already antiquated, it sees things from below, it runs after the thought of the majority. "Left" is, finally and above all, lack of respect for property - although no race has so strong an instinct of possession as the Germanic, and that precisely because it has been the strongest-willed of all historical races. Will-to-possession is the Nordic *meaning of life*. It controls and shapes our whole history, commencing from the conquering expeditions of semi-mythical kings down to the form of the family at the present day, which dies when the idea of property fades out. Where the instinct for this is lacking, "race" is not.

The great danger for the coming middle of our century lies in this, that we are prolonging the life of that which we could overthrow. It is a generation of semi-solutions and transitions. But as long as this is possible, the Revolution is *not* at an end. The Caesarism of the future will not persuade, it will conquer by force of arms. Only when all this has become self-evident - when we feel majorities to be a pretext, and despise them; when someone arises who is able to look down upon the mass, on party in every sense of the word, and on all programs and ideologies - only then will the Revolution have been overcome. Even in Fascism there exists the Gracchan fact of two fronts - on the left the lower-class town population and on the right the nation graded up from peasantry to ruling classes - but the fact is kept under by the Napoleonic vigour of one individual. This polarity is not, and cannot be, liquidated, [71] and it will emerge again, the moment when this iron hand leaves the helm, in the bitter struggle of his Diadochi. For Fascism is also a transition. It had its origin in the city mobs and began as a mass party with noise and disturbance and mass oratory. Labour-Socialist tendencies are not unknown to it. But so long as a dictatorship has "social service" ambitions, asserts that it is there for the "worker's" sake, courts favour in the streets, and is "popular," so long it remains an interim form. The Caesarism of the future fights solely for power, for empire, and against every description of party.

(71. Apart from the fact that in a Southern country that has a semi-tropical mode of life and a "race" to correspond, that is industrially weak and therefore has an undeveloped proletariat, the Nordic sharpness of opposition does not exist. In such a country as England, for instance, this kind of Fascism could neither arise nor maintain itself.)

Every ideological movement believes in the definitiveness of its achievements. It repudiates the idea that "after it" history should go on. It still lacks the Caesarian

scepticism and contempt for humanity, the deep sense of the fleetingness of all phenomena. Mussolini's creative idea was grand, and it has had an international effect: it revealed a possible form for the combating of Bolshevism. But this form arose out of imitating the enemy and is therefore full of dangers: revolution from below, organized and participated in for the greater part by men from below; an armed party-militia, paralleled in Caesar's Rome by the bands of Clodius and Milo; the tendency to subordinate intellectuals and economic leadership to executive working-out because of an inability to understand it; to disregard other's property, to confuse the conceptions of nation and mass - in a word, the Socialistic ideology of last century.

This all belongs to the past. What anticipates the future is not the being of Fascism as a party, but simply and solely the figure of its creator. Mussolini is no party leader, although he was formerly a labour leader; he is the *lord* of his country. Probably his prototype Lenin would also have arrived at that point had he lived longer, for he certainly had a cool ruthlessness *vis-à-vis* his party and he had also the courage to lead the retreat from ideologies of every kind. Mussolini is first and foremost a statesman, ice-cold and sceptical, realist, diplomat. He does in very truth rule alone. He sees *everything* - and that is the rarest gift in an absolute ruler. Even Napoleon was isolated by his entourage. The most difficult victories of a ruler, and the most *essential*, are not those won over enemies, but those won over his own supporters, the praetorians, the "Ras," as they are called in Italy. That is the best of the born ruler. He who does not know this and has neither the power nor the courage for it swims like a cork on the waves, on the summit and yet impotent. The perfection of Caesarism is dictatorship - not the dictatorship of a party, but that of one man against all parties, and, most of all, above his own. Every revolutionary movement reaches its victory with a vanguard of praetorians - who are henceforth of no more use, but merely dangerous. The *real* master is known by the manner in which he dismisses them, ruthlessly and without thanks, intent only on his goal, to reach which he must first pick his men - and this he knows how to do. The French Revolution ran contrary to this in the beginning: no one had the power, everyone wanted it; everyone commanded, no one obeyed.

Mussolini is a master-man with the Southern cunning of the race in him, like the condottieri of the Renaissance, and is therefore able to stage his movement in entire consonance with the character of Italy - home of opera - without ever being intoxicated by it himself, though even Napoleon was not quite free from this weakness, and in the case of Rienzi, for instance, it was fatal. When Mussolini appeals to the Prussian archetype, he is right: he is far less closely related to Napoleon than to Frederick the Great, and even to Frederick's father.

I have now reached the point when the definitive word must be said about "Prussianism" and "Socialism." In 1919 I compared the two, the one a living *idea* and the other the catchword of a whole century, [72] and was - I am tempted to add: "of course" - not understood. People no longer know how to read - this great art, still known in the age of Goethe, has died out. They skim printed pages "mass-wise," and, as a result, the reader demoralizes the book. I showed that in the working class, as Bebel welded it into a

powerful army, in its discipline and loyal subordination, its good comradeship, its readiness for the ultimate sacrifice, there still lived that Old-Prussian "style" which first proved itself in the battles of the Seven Years' War. What mattered then was the *individual* Socialist as a character, his "moral imperative," not the Socialism hammered into his head, which was a wholly un-Prussian mixture of foolish ideology and vulgar greed. I pointed out also that this type of *being "in form" for a task* was a tradition going back to the Teutonic Order, by which in the Gothic centuries - as again today - the frontier guard of the Faustian Culture was kept up against Asia. This ethical attitude, unconscious as is every genuine life-style, and therefore to be awakened and trained only by living example and not by talk and writing, stood forth in its splendour in August 1914 - the army had trained Germany - and was betrayed by the parties in 1918 when the *State* went under. Since then this disciplined will has again raised its head in the National movement; not in its programs and parties, but in the ethical attitude of an élite, as individuals; [73] and it is possible that, starting from this foundation, the German people may by perseverance be slowly trained for its difficult future. This is essential if we are not to succumb in the battles that lie ahead.

(72. *Politische Schriften*, pp. 1 et seq.)

(73. In 1924 I tried to describe this attitude in my *Politische Pflichten der deutschen Jugend*.)

But the shallow-minded cannot get away from the Marxian thought of last century. Throughout the world they think of Socialism not as a moral attitude of life but as economic Socialism, Labour Socialism, as a mass ideology with material aims. Program Socialism of every sort is thinking from below, building on base instincts, canonizing the herd-feeling which everywhere today lurks behind the slogan of "overcoming individualism"; it is the contrary of Prussian feeling, which has *livingly experienced* through exemplary leaders the necessity of disciplined devotion and possesses accordingly the inward freedom that comes with the fulfilment of duty, the ordering of oneself, command of oneself, for the sake of a great aim.

Labour-Socialism in every form, on the other hand, is, as I have already shown, [74] definitely English in origin. It arose, about 1840, simultaneously with the victory of the joint-stock company and the rootless "financial" form of capital. [75] Both were the expression of Free Trade Manchesterism: this "white" Bolshevism is capitalism from below, wage-capitalism, just as speculative finance-capital in respect of its method is Socialism from above, from the stock exchange. Both grew out of the same intellectual root: thinking in money, [76] trading in money on the pavements of the world's capitals, whether as wage-levels or profits on exchange rates makes no odds. There is no contradiction between economic Liberalism and Socialism. The Labour market is the stock exchange of the organized proletariat. The trade unions are trusts for forcing up wages on the lines followed by oil, steel, and bank trusts of the Anglo-American type, whose finance-Socialism penetrates, dominates, sucks, and controls them to the point of systematic expropriation. The devastating *dispossessing* effect of bundles of shares and bonds, the separation of mere "credit" from the responsible directive work of the

entrepreneur, who no longer knows to whom his work actually belongs, has not received anything like adequate consideration. Productive economy is in the last resort nothing but the will-less object of stock-exchange manoeuvres. It was only the rise of the share system to domination that enabled the stock exchange (formerly a mere aid to economy) to assume the decisive control of economic life. Finance-Socialists and trust magnates like Morgan and Kreuger correspond absolutely to the mass-leaders of Labour parties and the Russian economic commissars: dealer-natures with the same parvenu tastes. From both sides, today as in the days of the Gracchi, the conservative forces of the State - army, property, peasant, and manager - are being attacked.

(74. Chapter III, Section 13; *Politische Schriften*, pp. 75 et seq.)

(75. *Politische Schriften*, pp. 139 et seq., 269.)

(76. *The Decline of the West*, II, p. 456.)

But the Prussian style demands not only a mere precedence of higher policy over economics; it demands that the economic life should be *disciplined* by a powerful State, which is the precondition of free initiative in private enterprise - for, whatever else it may be, it is *not* a mere super-party, complete with program and ready to press organization to the point of abolishing the idea of property (*Eigentum*); which, precisely among Germanic peoples, denotes *freedom* of the economic will, and lordship over that which is one's own. [77] "Disciplining" is the training of a racehorse by an experienced rider and not the forcing of the living economic body into the strait-jacket of an economic plan or its transformation into a press-the-button machine. "Prussian" is also the *aristocratic* ordering of life according to the grade of achievement. Prussian is, above all, the undisputed precedence of foreign policy, the successful steering of the State in a world of states, over internal policy, which exists solely to keep the nation in form for this task and becomes mischievous and criminal as soon as it begins to follow independently its own ideological aims. Herein lies the weakness of most revolutions, whose leaders, having risen through demagogy and learnt nothing else, are unable to find their way from thinking on party lines to thinking in terms of statesmanship. This was the case with Danton and Robespierre. Mirabeau and Lenin died too soon, Mussolini was successful. But the future belongs to the great fact-men, now that the world-improvers, who have preened themselves on the stage of world history since Rousseau, have vanished and left no trace.

(77. The Old-Germanic word *eigan* means *to rule*; not only to *have* something, but to be in absolute control of it.)

Prussian is, lastly, a character which disciplines itself, such as that of Frederick the Great, which he himself paraphrased as consisting in being the First Servant of the State. Such a servant is no lackey, but when Bebel opined that the German people had the soul of a lackey, he was right as far as the majority were concerned. His own party proved it in 1918. The lackeys of success are more numerous with us than elsewhere, although they have in all ages and all nations crowded the herd of humanity. It is a matter of

indifference whether Byzantinism performs its orgies before money-bags, political success, a title, or merely Gessler's hat. When Charles II landed in England, there were suddenly no Republicans left. To be a servant of the State is an *aristocratic* virtue, of which few are possessed. If this is "Socialistic," it is a proud and exclusive Socialism for men of race, for the elect of life. Prussianism is a very superior thing which sets itself against every sort of majority- and mob-rule; above all, against the dominance of the mass *character*. Moltke, the great educator of the German officer, the finest example of true Prussianism in the nineteenth century, was thus constituted. Count Schlieffen summed up his personality in the motto: "Talk little, do much, be, rather than seem."

This idea of a "Prussian" existence will be the starting-point for the ultimate overthrowing of the World Revolution. There is no other possibility. I said, as far back as 1919: Not everyone is a Prussian who is born in Prussia; the type is possible anywhere in the white world and actually occurs, though rarely. It lies at the root of the *provisional* form of national movements everywhere - there is nothing definitive about them - and the question is to what extent it can be liberated from the quickly ageing, popular, party-democratic elements of Liberal and Socialist Nationalism that control it, for the time being. The silent national feeling of the English about 1900, which today has begun to waver, the boastful, shallow chauvinism of the French, so noisily in evidence in the Dreyfus Affair, were both of this order and found support, the one in the cult of the navy, the other in the army. America possesses nothing of this kind - "hundred-per-cent American" is a phrase - but she needs it if she is to endure as a nation at all after the approaching crash between crouching Communism and the high finance which is already undermined. The Prussian idea is opposed to finance-Liberalism as well as to Labour-Socialism. Every description of mass and majority, everything that is "Left," it regards as suspect. Above all, it is opposed to any weakening of the State and to the desecrating misuse of it for economic interests. It is conservative and "Right," and it grows out of whatever fundamental life-forces still exist in Nordic peoples: instinct for power and possessions; for possessions *as* power; for inheritance, [78] fecundity, and family, which three belong together; for distinctions of rank and social gradation, whose mortal enemy was (or is) Rationalism from 1750 to 1950. Present-day Nationalism is, together with the monarchical idea latent in it, a transition. It is a preliminary step towards Caesarism, no matter how far away that may seem. It is there that we find abhorrence of all Liberal and Socialist party systems, of every kind of popularity (which invariably compromises the object of it), of everything which rises up in masses and will have its say. This trait, though it may be buried deep under tendencies more in keeping with the age, has the future on its side - and the future's leaders. All really great leaders in history go "Right," however low the depths from which they have climbed. It is the mark of the *born* master and ruler. This applies to Cromwell and Mirabeau as much as to Napoleon. The riper the age, the more prospects does this road open up. The elder Scipio went under in the conflict between the traditions of his origins, which forbade an illegal dictatorship, and the historical position which he had obtained (without desiring it) through saving Rome from the Carthaginian danger. He died in a distant land. At that time the revolutionary movement was only just beginning to undermine the tradition-bound forms, so that the younger Scipio had still a very weak position against

the Gracchi, but Sulla's was already a very strong one against Marius, and finally Caesar, who had begun as a Catilinarian, met with no more party opposition at all, for the Pompeians were not a party, but supporters of an individual. The World Revolution, strong as it may be at the beginning, ends, not in victory or defeat, but in *resignation* on the part of the forward-driven masses. Their ideals are not refuted, but merely become boring, and eventually no one can be excited about them. Anyone who talks about the end of the "bourgeoisie" writes himself down as still a proletarian, and the future is not for him. A "non-bourgeois" society can be maintained only by a Terror, and only for a few years at that, for presently people are sick of it - and incidentally the labour leaders will meanwhile have become new bourgeois. This is not a process that appeals to the taste of true leader-natures.

(78. From the inherited farm, workshop, or old-established firm to hereditary monarchy. The Republic has, from 1789, been a form of *opposition* to the hereditary idea, and nothing more.)

Socialism of every kind is today as antiquated as its first Liberal form and as everything else that is connected with party and program. The century of the worker cult, 1840 to 1940, is irrevocably ending, and those who acclaim "the worker" at this stage have no understanding of the time. This worker is stepping back into the whole of the nation, no longer its spoilt nurseling, but as the lowest grade in an urban society. The *contrasts* worked up in the class war will again become the permanent differences [79] of high and low, and will be accepted as such. It is the resignation of the Imperial period in Rome, the period in which there were no economic problems of this nature left. But how much can be destroyed and levelled down in the final stages of world anarchy! So much, indeed, that in certain white nations there will be no material left from which a Caesar could create his structure, his *army* - for armies will in future take the place of parties - and his State.

(79. Chapter III, Section 11.)

Is there, in that which in all white countries that took part in the War calls itself (vaguely enough) "Youth" and the "front-generation," [80] anything like a weight-carrying foundation for such men and for the tasks of the future?

(80. Does this mean the men who were twenty to fifty in 1918, or those who are twenty or thirty years old today?)

The profound shock of the Great War, which swept away everyone's lazy illusions of security and of progress being the meaning of history, is nowhere more evident than in the spiritual chaos left in its wake. The fact that we are not in the least aware of this and believe that we carry within us a new order is the best possible proof of its existence. To those who were born about 1890 the sight of a really commanding figure has been denied. The figures of Bismarck and Moltke, not to speak of those of other countries, had already vanished in the mists of a historical literature. They might have formed a standard for real greatness, but not without a living present; and the War produced not one important monarch, prominent statesman, or victorious battle-thinker at the decisive

point. All the statues and street-names in the world will not change the fact. The result was a complete lack of the sense of authority among the millions who returned home on both sides. It was seen in youth's unrestrained criticism of everything that came to hand, of men and of things, while never a trace of *self-criticism* was seen. It laughed at yesterday without suspecting that its power persisted. Most of all, the chaos manifested itself in the way in which everyone screamed for a dictatorship on his own lines without knowing of any dictator or being able to recognize one, in the way in which a leader was chosen and worshipped one day and rejected the next - Primo de Rivera, d'Annunzio, Ludendorff - and the way in which leadership was a problem to be discussed, not a fact to be waited for and accepted from the moment it was there. Political dilettantism talked large. Everyone wrote to tell his future dictator what he ought to do. Everyone demanded discipline from other people, because he was incapable of disciplining himself. Because they had forgotten what a State's governor is, men became hysterical over programs and ideals and plunged in speech and writing into wild dreams of this and that imperative transformation - assuming quite as a matter of course that such were possible. The lack of respect for history has at no time been greater than in these years. That history had its *own* logic, on which all programs are shipwrecked, no one knew or would admit. But Bismarck attained his end because he had comprehended the course of history in his century and adapted himself to it. That was high policy, the art of the *possible*.

From the "youth" of Germany, England, Spain, all the white countries, who in their incomprehension hoped to "end" a two centuries' process of world change from below - and in the form of Bolshevism, of which they had such store in themselves - came the typical revolutionary outcry against "individualism." But they are all small individuals - very small - without talent or depth, but for that very reason obsessed by the convulsive need to be admittedly right. They therefore hated the superiority of people greater than themselves, men who could regard themselves with at least a tinge of scepticism. *All revolutions are humourless* - and this causes their fall. Petty obstinacy and lack of humour: that is the definition of fanaticism. They were quite unaware that leadership, authority, and respect on the one hand, and "Socialism" on the other, are irreconcilable. This anti-individualism is the theoretical fashion of the moment among the intellectuals-in-spite-of-themselves of all white countries. Yesterday it was individualism that was the mode, and as a matter of fact there is not so much difference between the two. Feeble as is this type of *Geist*, it is the only one they possess. It is the megalopolitan "literariness," nothing more, and anything but novel; for the Jacobins had already talked themselves hoarse over it. Lack of intelligence is not quite a good enough weapon wherewith to defeat Rationalism.

And in what does it consist, the "Socialism" of these heroes who take the field against the freedom of personality? It is the impersonal Asiatic collectivism of the East, the spirit of the great plains [81] in association with the Western *levée en masse* of 1792. And what in fact is it that is "in revolt"? The insignificant, with number as their sole power. There is a great deal of underground Slav in them; remnants of prehistoric races and their primitive reasoning; *envy*, too, of Russianness, whose undeveloped will exempts it from the torment which possesses inferior minds when they want something but do not know

what, are obliged to want it and do not dare. He who has not the courage to be the hammer must be content to play the part of the anvil. The part is not without its consolations. The urge to be released from one's own will, to be submerged in the lazy majority, to know the happiness of a lackey's soul, to be spared the master's anxieties - all this is here disguised under big words. The Romanticism of the insignificant! The apotheosis of the herd-feeling! The last final way to idealize one's own dread of responsibility! This kind of hatred of individualism, arising out of cowardice and shame, is a mere caricature of that of the great fourteenth- and fifteenth-century mystics, with their anti-egoism, the "*Lassen der Ichheit*" of the "*Theologie deutsch*." [82] They were strong souls who livingly experienced the tremendous, truly Germanic solitude of the "I" in the world, and out of their torment conceived the burning desire to go up in God or the All or whatever they might call it, and which turned out in fact to be themselves. The *strong, unbending* "I" was their destiny. Every attempt to overstep its boundary merely showed that it had none. Today there is a simpler method: one turns "Socialist" and runs down the "I" of other people.

(81. *The Decline of the West*, II, p. 295, footnote.)

(82. *Ibid.*, p. 292.)

One's own "I" gives no more trouble. The levelling out of brains is complete: one meets "in the mass," wills "in the mass," thinks "in the mass." Those who do not think with it, who think for themselves, are felt to be enemies. It is now the mass, and not the godhead, in which the lazy, stupid "I," suffering from all manner of inhibitions, "submerges" itself: and that, too, is "release." It is almost mystical. They knew that in 1792. It is the craving of the mob to run and act with the rest. But the Prussian "style" is renunciation by one's own free will, the strong "I" bowing before a great duty and task, an act of self-government, and, as such, the height in individualism that is possible in the present.

The Celtic-Germanic "race" is the strongest-willed that the world has ever seen. But this "I will - I will!" which fills the Faustian soul to the brim, which is the ultimate meaning of its being, and controls every expression of its Culture in thought, deed, and standards, awakened also the consciousness of the "I's" complete loneliness in endless space. Will and loneliness are in the last resort the same thing. Hence Moltke's taciturnity and, from another aspect, the need in Goethe's softer and more feminine nature for perpetual confessions before a self-chosen environment which pervades all his works. It was the yearning for an echo out of space, the suffering of a tender soul from the monologue of its existence. One may pride oneself on this loneliness or suffer from it; escape it one cannot. The religious man of "eternal truths," such as Luther, sighs for grace and salvation from this fate, fights it, even defies it. But the political man of the North develops out of it a gigantic *defiance of reality*: "Thy trust is in thy sword more than in Thor," says an Icelandic saga. If there is such a thing as individualism in the world, it is this of an individual defying the whole universe, his knowledge of his own unbending will, his delight in ultimate decisions and love of destiny itself even at the moment when it is breaking him. And being "Prussian" consists in bending of one's own *free* will. The worth of the sacrifice lies in the fact that it is *hard*. If a man has no "I" to offer up, he

should not talk of loyalty. He merely runs along behind someone on to whom he has shifted the responsibility. If there is anything that *should* amaze us today, it is the poverty of the Socialist ideal by which it is hoped to save the world. This is no release from the forces of the past; it is the continuation of their worst tendencies. It is *cowardice* in the face of life.

True - truly *Prussian* - loyalty is what the world most needs in this age of great catastrophes. We can only lean on what offers resistance. It is on the realization of this that the true leader takes his stand. A leader who has risen from the masses must know, better than most, that masses, majorities, parties, are no genuine liegemen. They merely want advantages. They leave their leader in the lurch as soon as he demands sacrifices. If he thinks and feels as a product of the mass, history will treat him as a mere demagogue. It is the parting of the ways to Left and Right: the demagogue lives with the masses always as one of themselves; the born ruler can use them, but he despises them. He fights his most difficult battles, not against the enemy, but against the swarm of his all-too-devoted friends.

This is why *armies*, and not parties, are the future form of power; unselfish, devoted armies, such as Napoleon never possessed after Wagram. His old soldiers were reliable; not so his senior officers - and the value of any army depends in the first place on these. [83] They came to regard him not as the commander but as the perpetual giver. Once the required sacrifices outweighed the advantages, it was all up with the Grand Army.

(83. Chapter II, Section 7.)

It is high time that the "white" world, and Germany in the first place, should consider these facts. For behind the world wars and the still unfinished proletarian world-revolution there looms the greatest of all dangers, the *coloured* menace, and it will require every bit of "race" that is still available among white nations to deal with it. Germany, of all countries, is not an island, as the political ideologues who would make it the object of their programs seem to imagine. It is but a small spot in a great, fermenting world, though undoubtedly a spot in a decisive position. But it alone has Prussianism as a fact within itself. With this treasure of exemplary Being it may become the "educator" of the "white" world, and perhaps its saviour.

[The Oswald Spengler Collection](#)

The Hour Of Decision: Part Four

IV. The Coloured World-Revolution

The Western Civilization of this century is threatened, not by one, but by two world revolutions of major dimensions. In *both* their real compass, their profundity, and their workings have so far escaped recognition. The one comes from below, the other from without: *class war and race war*. The one now lies to a large extent behind us, although its decisive blows - in the Anglo-American zone, for instance - are probably still to come. The other first became definite in the World War, and it is rapidly acquiring direction and form. In the next few centuries both will fight side by side, *possibly as allies*: it will be the severest crisis through which the white peoples will have to pass in common - whether united or not - if they intend to have any future.

Such a "revolution from without" has set itself up against each of the past Cultures also. It has arisen invariably among the hopeless downtrodden races of the outer ring - "savages" or "barbarians" - who were exploited without means of redress by the unassailable superiority of a group of Culture-nations which had reached high maturity in their political, military, economic, and intellectual forms and methods. This "colonial style" is present in every High Culture. But such hatred did not exclude a secret contempt for the alien life-form, which, as it gradually became more familiar, was scoffingly analysed and in the end boldly evaluated according to the limits of its efficacy and no more. They, the outsiders, saw that many things could be imitated, and that others either could be rendered innocuous or were not so potent as had been supposed in the first panic. [1] They looked on at the wars and revolutions occurring within this world of ruling nations and were perforce initiated into the mysteries of armaments, [2] economics, and diplomacy, and thus came at last to question the reality of the foreigners' superiority. And once they detected a weakening in those foreigners' resolution to command, they began to reflect on the possibilities of attack and victory for themselves. Thus it was in China in the third century B.C., when the barbarous peoples north and west of the Hwang Ho and south of the Yangtze-kiang were drawn into the decisive battles of the great powers, and in the Arabian world of the time of the Abbassids, where Turkish-Mongolian races appeared first as mercenaries and then as masters. And thus it was in the Classical Age above all, where we have an exact picture of events, which resemble at every point those towards which we are irrevocably moving.

(1. Jugurtha's judgment of Rome.)

(2. The Libyans and "seafaring nations" by the Egyptians of the New Empire, the Germans by Rome, the Turks by the Arabs, and the Negroes by France.)

The Barbarian attacks on the Classical world begin with the Celtic movements after 300 B.C., which invariably had Italy as their objective. In the decisive battle of Sentinum (295), Gallic races supported the Etruscans and Samnites against Rome, and they were also employed with success by Hannibal. About 280, other Celts conquered Macedonia and northern Greece, where, in consequence of internal political struggles, all State power had ceased to exist, and they were checked only at Delphi. In Thrace and Asia Minor they founded Barbarian empires over a Hellenized and partially Hellenic population. Somewhat later in the East of Alexander the Great's decayed empire, the Barbarian reaction against the Hellenic culture set in, forcing it by innumerable insurrections [3] to give ground step by step. Thus, from about 100 B.C. a Mithridates, in alliance with South Russian "savages" (Scythians and Bastarnae) and counting upon the ever-increasing determination of the Parthians to push from Eastern Iran towards Syria, had reasonable expectations of destroying the Roman State, in the chaotic condition to which class wars had reduced it. Not until it reached Greece was his advance stopped. Athens and other cities joined him, as well as certain Celtic races which were still established in Macedonia. In the Roman armies there was open revolution. Individual sections fought against each other, and the commanders killed each other in the very presence of the enemy (Fimbria). It was then that the Roman army ceased to be a national body and transformed itself into a personal retinue of individuals. The soldiers that Hannibal had led against Rome in 218 were not really Carthaginians, but drawn in the main from the wild races of the Atlas mountains and southern Spain. And with those Rome had later, from 146 onward, to wage a terrible and never-ending struggle. (It was the losses of these wars that brought the Roman peasantry to revolt in the Gracchan disturbances.) With these same peoples, later still, the Roman Sertorius attempted to found a State in opposition to Rome. After 113 B.C. there came the Celtic-Germanic onset of the Cimbri and Teutones, which was only repulsed after whole Roman armies had been wiped out by the revolutionary leader, Marius, and he again had just returned from his victory over Jugurtha, who had armed Northern Africa against Rome and by bribing the Roman politicians had for years prevented any counteraction. About 60 B.C. there came a second Celtic-Germanic movement (Suevi, Helvetii), to forestall which Caesar conquered Gaul, and at the same time Crassus was defeated and killed by the Parthians. But that was the end of *reaction by expansion*. Caesar's plan for reconquering the Alexandrian Empire and thereby removing the Parthian menace was never carried out. Tiberius had to set back the frontier in Germany after it had proved impossible to replace the troops annihilated in Varus' defeat and the first great insurrection of the frontier legions had taken place on the death of Augustus. Thenceforward the policy was that of systematic defence. But the army was taking in more and more Barbarians. It became an independent power. Germans, Illyrians, Africans, Arabs, sprang up as leaders, while the men of the *Imperium* sank into the Fellaahdom of "perpetual peace." And when the great attacks came from North and West, it was *not the civil population alone* that treated with the invaders and passed voluntarily into a subject relation to them: the Late pacifism of a tired Civilization.

(3. Eduard Meyer, *Blüte und Niedergang des Hellenismus in Asien* (1925).)

Yet for whole centuries it was possible to make a systematic defence against these conditions, because the *orbis terrarum* of the Roman Empire was an enclosed area with frontiers that could be guarded. The position of the present *Imperium* of the white nations, which embraces the whole globe and *includes* the coloured races, is far more difficult. White humanity has scattered itself to all quarters in its ungovernable urge to infinite distance: over both Americas, South Africa, Australia, and innumerable strategic points between. The Yellow-Brown-Black-Red menace lurks *within* the field of the white power. It penetrates into and participates in the military and revolutionary agreements and disagreements of the white powers and threatens one day to take matters into its own hands.

What, then, does the "coloured" world include? Not only Africa, the Indians - as well as the Negroes and half-breeds - of the whole of America, the Islamic nations, China, and India extending to Java, but, above all, Japan and *Russia*, which has again become an Asiatic, "Mongolian" State. When the Japanese beat Russia, a ray of hope shot up all over Asia: a young Asiatic State had, by Western methods, forced the greatest power of the West to its knees and thereby destroyed the aureole of invincibility which surrounded Europe. It was as a beacon, in India, in Turkey, even in Cape Colony and the Sahara. So it *was* possible to pay back the white peoples for all the pains and humiliations of a century! Since then the profound cunning of the Asiatics has been thinking out methods inaccessible to European thought and superior to it. And now Russia, after suffering in 1916 its second great defeat, from the West, has removed its "white" mask, to the mocking satisfaction of its ally England, has again become Asiatic with all its soul, and is filled with a burning hatred of Europe. It took with it the experiences of Europe's internal weakness and used its knowledge to invent new and crafty methods of fighting, which it has instilled into the whole of the earth's coloured population, with the idea of a common resistance. This, side by side with the triumph of Labour-Socialism over Society among the white nations, is the second *real* consequence of the World War which brought us no nearer to understanding any one of the actual problems of world policy and has settled none. This war was a defeat of the white races, and the Peace of 1918 was the first great triumph of the coloured world: symbolized by the fact that today it is allowed to have a say in the disputes of the white states among themselves in the Geneva League of Nations - which is nothing but a miserable symbol of shameful things.

That Germans abroad should be ill-treated by coloured people at the orders of English and French was not a surprisingly novel procedure. This method began in the Liberal Revolution of the eighteenth century: in 1775 the English enrolled men of Indian race to attack, burn, and scalp the American republicans, and it should not be forgotten how the Jacobins mobilized the Negroes of Haiti for the "Rights of Man." But that coloured men from all over the world should be massed on European soil to fight for whites against whites, that they came to know the secrets of the most modern war-methods *and the limits of their efficacy*, and were sent home with the conviction of having beaten white powers, all this fundamentally altered their view of the world's power-distribution. They

came to feel their own common strength and the weakness of the others; they began to despise the whites as erstwhile Jugurtha despised mighty Rome. It was not Germany that lost the World War; the West lost it when it lost the respect of the coloured races.

The importance of this shift in the political centre of gravity was first realized in Moscow. In Western Europe it is still not realized. The white ruling nations have abdicated from their former rank. They negotiate today where yesterday they would have commanded, and tomorrow they will have to flatter if they are even to negotiate. They have lost the feeling of the self-evidence of their power and are not even aware that they have lost it. In the "revolution from without" they have ceded the choice of the hour, to America and, above all, to Asia, whose frontier now lies along the Vistula and the Carpathians. For the first time since the siege of Vienna by the Turks they have again been put on the defensive, and they will have to commit great forces, both spiritual and military, into the hands of very great men if they intend to weather the first mighty storm, which will not be long in coming.

In Russia in 1917 both Revolutions, the White and the Coloured, broke out together. The one, the shallow, urban Revolution of Labour-Socialism, rhetorical and literary through and through, with its Western faith in party and program, its *littérateurs*, academic proletarians, and Nihilistic agitators of the Bakunin type, and its alliance with the dregs of the great cities, killed off Petrine society, which was predominantly Western in origin, and staged a noisy cult of the "working man." The technics of the machine, so alien to and hated by the Russian soul, became all at once a god and the meaning of life. But below all this the other Revolution of the muzhik, the village, the true Asiatic form of Bolshevism, was doggedly, silently rising, big with promise. The peasant's eternal hunger for the land, which drove all the soldiers back from the front to take part in the great land-distribution, was the first expression of it. Labour-Socialism soon discovered the danger. After an initial alliance it used the hatred nursed by all urban parties, whether Liberal or Socialist, for the peasantry to wage war against this conservative element, which, in history, has invariably outlasted all the political, social, and economic formations of the city. It dispossessed the peasants, reintroduced in fact the serfdom and compulsory labour which Alexander II had abolished in 1862, and by its hostile and bureaucratic administration of agriculture - every Socialism, when it passes from theory to practice, soon becomes choked in bureaucracy - carried matters so far that today the fields are allowed to run wild, the abundant live-stock of the past has shrunk to a fraction, and starvation of the Asiatic order has become a permanent condition that only a weak-willed race, born to an existence of slavery, could endure.

But here "white" Bolshevism is rapidly on the wane. The Marxian face is only worn for the benefit of the outside world, for Southern Asia, Africa, America, where it is desired to let loose and direct rebellion against the white powers. A new Asiatic stratum of rulers has taken over from the Semi-Westerns. It again lives in the villas and palaces around Moscow, keeps its staff of servants, and already permits itself to indulge in a barbaric luxury worthy of predatory Mongolian khans of the fourteenth century. Here is "wealth," in a new form that can be paraphrased in proletarian circumlocutions.

There will also be a return to peasant property, to private property in general. The fact of serfdom does not preclude this, and it can be done; for the *army*, and no longer the civilian "party," has the power. The soldier is the one creature who does not go hungry in Russia, and he knows why this is so and for how long. This power is unassailable from abroad on account of the geographical extent of its empire, but it attacks itself. It has mercenaries and allies all over the world, disguised like itself. Its strongest weapon is the new revolutionary, truly Asiatic diplomacy which acts instead of negotiating, from below and from behind, by means of propaganda, murder, and insurrection, and this gives it a vast advantage over that of the white countries; for these, in spite of their politically-minded advocates and journalists, have not yet quite lost the aristocratic style that derives from the Escorial and counts Bismarck as its last great master.

Russia is the lord of Asia. Russia *is* Asia. Japan belongs to Asia only geographically. From the ethnographical point of view it undoubtedly stands closer to the eastern Malayans, the Polynesians, and certain Indian peoples on the west side of America. But on the sea it is what Russia is on land: lord of a wide domain in which Western powers no longer count. England is not even remotely master of "her" Empire to the same extent, even in the coloured "Crown"-colonies. Japan extends her influence over a wide radius. It is felt in Peru and on the Panama Canal. The alleged blood-relationship between Japanese and Mexicans has on occasion been emphasized and toasted on both sides. [4] In Mexico, in the beginning of 1914, leading Indian circles plotted the "Plan of San Diego," having for its object the invasion of Texas and Arizona by an army of Indians, Negroes, and Japanese. The white population was to be massacred, the Negro states were to become independent, and a greater Mexico was to arise as a State for the pure Indian race. [5] Had this plan been carried into execution, the World War would have started with a completely different distribution of the powers and been based on other problems. The Monroe Doctrine, in the form of dollar-imperialism, pointed towards Latin America, would have been wiped out by it. Russia and Japan are today the only *active* forces in the world. Through them Asia has become the decisive element in world happenings. The white powers are actuated by its pressure in their dealings and do not even know it.

(4. L. Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color* (1920), pp. 131 et seq.)

(5. In Mexico City there stands a statue of the last Aztec emperor, Guatemozin. No one would dare to put up one of Cortez.)

This pressure consists in the activity of the Coloured, racial Revolution, which is already using the White Revolution of the class war as its tool. We have already referred to the backgrounds of the economic catastrophe. After the revolution from below in the form of Labour-Socialism had with its weapon, the political wage, made the breach, coloured economy, headed by Russia and Japan, pressed in with the lower wage, and it is now proceeding to complete the destruction. [6] To this must be added political-social propaganda in enormous quantities, the true Asiatic diplomacy of our day. It pervades all India and Japan. It has led in Java and Sumatra to the erection of a race front against the Dutch and the disintegration of army and navy. It pays court, all the way from Eastern Asia, to the highly gifted Indian race living from Mexico to Chili, and it inculcates for the

first time in the Negroes a community-feeling that is being directed against the white ruling nations.

(6. When we hear that in Java Japan sells bicycles for less than \$3 and electric light bulbs for less than two cents, while white countries have to ask four times as much even to cover the cost to themselves; when the little Javanese peasant with his wife and family offer the self-harvested sack of rice at half the cost which the modern planter with his white officials is obliged to demand, then indeed we get a glimpse into the abysses of this struggle. Since Western technique is no longer secret and can be copied to perfection, the contrast is no longer in the method of construction, but only in the cost of that production.)

Here, too, the White Revolution has since 1770 been preparing the soil for the Coloured one. The literature of English Liberals like Mill and Spencer, whose trains of thought reach back into the eighteenth century, supplied the "world outlook" to the higher schools in India. And thence the way to Marx was easy for the young reformers themselves to find. Sun-Yat-Sen, the leader of the Chinese Revolution, found it in America. And out of it all there arose a revolutionary literature of which the Radicalism puts that of Marx and Borodin far into the shade.

Like the North American revolt against England, the independence movement in Spanish America, dating from Bolivar (1811), is unthinkable without the Anglo-French revolutionary literature of 1770 - plus the example of Napoleon. At first it was exclusively a struggle between whites, between the landowning Creole aristocracy, which had lived in the country for generations, and the Spanish bureaucracy, which kept up the lordly principle of colonial subordination. Bolivar, a pure-blooded white like Miranda and San Martín, conceived the plan of erecting a monarchy that would be supported by a purely white oligarchy. The Argentinian dictator, Rosas, a powerful figure in the "Prussian" style, also stood for this aristocracy against the Jacobinism which soon spread from Mexico to the extreme South, finding support in the anti-clerical Masonic lodges and demanding universal equality, even of race. With this began the movement of Indians, pure and half-breeds, not only against Spain, but against white blood generally. It has gone on without intermission, and today it is nearing its goal. Humboldt, even so far back, remarked the pride in Iberian descent exhibited there, and the tradition of a Visigothic and Basque ancestry is still found in Chili's aristocratic families. [7] But the greater part of this aristocracy died out or found its way back to Europe during the reign of anarchy which began in the middle of the nineteenth century, and now policy is dictated by the "caudillos," warlike demagogues from the coloured population. Among them are pure-breed Indians of great talent like Juárez and Porfirio Díaz. Apart from Argentina, the proportion of the upper classes which is white, or calls itself so, is from a quarter to one tenth of the population. In certain states the doctors, advocates, teachers, even officers, are exclusively Indians, who feel themselves akin to the half-breed proletariat of the towns (the "mechopelo") in the hatred with which white property inspires them, whether it is in the hands of Creoles, Englishmen, or North Americans. In Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador, Aymara is the second official and educational language. There is open practice of a cult based on the alleged Communism of the Incas, which

receives encouragement from Moscow. The race ideal of a pure Indian rule is perhaps on the verge of realization.

(7. And from the forcibly converted Arabs and Jews - the Marranos - known by their strictly Catholic names, such as Santa Anna, Santa Maria, San Martín.)

In Africa it is the Christian missionary - above all, the English Methodist - who in all innocence, with his doctrine that all men are equal before God and that wealth is sinful, ploughs the soil on which the Bolshevist envoy sows and reaps. And from the North and the East the missionary of Islam follows up his tracks with great success, penetrating in these days as far as the Zambesi in Nyassaland. Where a Christian school stood yesterday, a mosque stands tomorrow. The warlike, manly spirit of this religion is more intelligible to the Negro than the doctrine of pity, which merely takes away his respect for the whites; and the Christian priest is suspected above all because he represents a white ruling race, against which Mohammedan propaganda, political rather than dogmatic, [8] directs itself with cool decision.

(8. But there is also an Ethiopian Methodist Church, which is anti-European and from its home in the United States carries out mission work that leads to revolts, as for instance in Natal in 1907 and in Nyassaland in 1915.)

This general Coloured Revolution over the whole earth marches under the disguise of very varied tendencies: national, economic, social. It directs itself now against the white governments of colonial empires (India) or of its own land (the Cape), now against a white upper stratum (Chile), now against the power of the pound or the dollar - any alien economic system, in fact. It may even be found opposing its own financial world for doing business with the whites (China), or its own aristocracy or monarchy. Religious motives also contribute: hatred of Christianity or of any form of priesthood and orthodoxy whatever, of manners and customs, world outlook, and moral. But ever since the Boxer Revolution in China, the Indian Mutiny, and the revolt of the Mexicans against the Emperor Maximilian, there will be found, deep down, everywhere one and the same thing: hatred of the white race and an unconditional determination to destroy it. As to whether age-old, weary Civilizations like the Indian and the Chinese can preserve order without foreign rule, nobody cares. All that matters is whether they are in a position to throw off the white yoke, and that is the case. Who will be the next sovereign over the coloured powers - Russia, Japan, or some great adventurer with an armed host at his back - will be decided later, or perhaps not at all. The ancient Egyptian Civilization changed its rulers many times after 1000 B.C. - Libyans, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans. It was never again capable of self-government, but always equal to a new and victorious revolt. And whether even one of the many other aims is being or will be realized is for the moment quite beside the point. The great historical question is whether the fall of the white powers will be brought about or not. And on this point the overwhelming unity of resolve that has formed itself may well give us something to think about. What resources of spiritual and material power can the white world really muster against this menace?

Very few, it would seem at the first glance. For one thing, its peoples are weary of their Culture. Spiritual substance has consumed itself in the fire of high form and the striving

after inward perfection. In very many cases only the glow is left, in many only ashes, but it is not so everywhere. The less a nation has been called upon to lead in the whirlwind of history in the past, the more has it retained of the chaos which may become form. And when the storm of great events rushes over it, as in 1914, hidden sparks suddenly burst into flame. Precisely in the Germanic race, the strongest-willed that has ever existed, great possibilities lie sleeping.

But in speaking of race, it is not intended in the sense in which it is the fashion among anti-Semites in Europe and America to use it today: Darwinistically, materially. Race purity is a grotesque word in view of the fact that for centuries all stocks and species have been mixed, and that warlike - that is, healthy - generations with a future before them have from time immemorial always welcomed a stranger into the family if he had "race," to whatever race it was he belonged. Those who talk too much about race no longer have it in them. What is needed is not a pure race, but a *strong* one, which has a nation within it.

This manifests itself above all in self-evident elemental fecundity, in an abundance of children, which historical life can consume without ever exhausting the supply. God is, in the familiar words of Frederick the Great, always on the side of the big battalions, and now if ever this shows itself. The millions who fell in the World War were the pick of all the white world had in the way of race, but the test of race is the speed with which it can replace itself. A Russian once said to me: "The Russian woman will make good in ten years what we sacrificed in the Revolution." *That* is the right instinct. Such races are irresistible. The trivial doctrine of Malthus, preached everywhere today, which extols barrenness as progress, only proves that these intellectuals have no "race," not to mention the idiotic idea that economic crises can be surmounted by an atrophied population. It is just the other way round. The "big battalions," without which there is no world policy, give protection, strength, and internal riches to the economic life also.

A woman of race does not desire to be a "companion" or a "lover," but a *mother*; and not the mother of *one* child, to serve as a toy and distraction, but of many: the instinct of a strong race speaks in the pride that large families inspire, in the feeling that barrenness is the hardest curse that can befall a woman and through her the race. Out of this instinct arises the primitive jealousy which leads one woman to take away from another the man whom she covets as the father of her children. The more intellectual jealousy of the great cities, which is little more than erotic appetite and looks upon the other party as a means of pleasure, and even the mere fact of *considering* the desired or dreaded number of children who are to be born, betrays the waning of the race urge to permanence; and that instinct for permanence cannot be reawakened by speeches and writing. Primitive marriage, or whatever other deep-rooted folk-custom has ever been practised to sanctify procreation, was anything but sentimental. A man wants stout sons who will perpetuate his name and his deeds beyond his death into the future and enhance them, just as he has done himself through feeling himself heir to the calling and works of his ancestors. That is the *Nordic* idea of immortality. These peoples have known no other and desired none. It is the source of that tremendous yearning for fame, the wish to live on among posterity

through one's work, to see one's name perpetuated on monuments or at the least held in honourable memory. For this reason the inheritance idea is inseparable from Germanic marriage. When the notion of property crumbles away, the meaning of the family fades into nothingness. He who lays hand on one attacks the other too. The idea of inheritance, which is inherent in the life of every farm, every workshop, every old-established firm, and all inherited callings, [9] and has found its highest symbolical expression in hereditary monarchy, is the guarantee of strong race-instincts. Not only is it untouched by Socialism; its very existence signifies Socialism's downfall.

(9. That is why there are generations of officers, judges, and clergy. It is the basis of all nobilities, patriciates, and guilds.)

But the decay of the white family, the inevitable outcome of megalopolitan existence, is spreading, and it is devouring the "race" of nations. The *meaning* of man and wife, the will to perpetuity, is being lost. People live for themselves alone, not for future generations. The nation as society, once the organic web of *families*, threatens to dissolve, from the city outwards, into a sum of *private atoms*, of which each is intent on extracting from his own and other lives the maximum of amusement - *panem et circenses*. The women's emancipation of Ibsen's time wanted, not freedom from the husband, but freedom from the child, from the *burden* of children, just as men's emancipation in the same period signified freedom from the *duties* towards family, nation, and State. The whole of Liberal-Socialistic problem-literature revolves about this suicide of the white race. It has been the same in all other Civilizations. [10]

(10. *The Decline of the West*, II, pp. 103 et seq.)

The consequences lie before us. The coloured races of the world have up till now been twice as strong numerically as the white. But about 1930 Russia had an annual excess of births of four million, Japan of two million; and India, between 1921 and 1931, increased her population by thirty-four million. In Africa the extraordinarily prolific Negro population will increase still more enormously now that European medicine has been introduced to check disease, which was so strong a selective factor. In contrast to this, Germany and Italy have a surplus of births of less than half a million, England - the country of publicly encouraged birth control - less than half this amount, and France and the old-established Yankee element in the United States [11] none at all. This Yankee element, until now the dominant "race" of Germanic stamp, has been rapidly dwindling for some decades. The increase of population comes entirely from the side of the Negroes and emigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe since 1900. In France some Departments have lost over a third of their population in the last fifty years. In certain cases the birth-rate is only half the death-rate. There are small towns and villages which are almost empty. From the South there is an influx of Catalonians and Italians as land-workers. Poles and Negroes are found in every grade, even the middle classes. There are black clergymen, officers, and judges. It is these prolific immigrants, accounting for a tenth of the population, who alone keep the number of "Frenchmen" up to anything approaching the old level. But the genuine Frenchman will soon be no longer master in France. The apparent increase of the white population all over the world, little as it is in

comparison with the volume of the coloured increase, rests upon a temporary illusion: the number of children grows ever smaller, and only the number of adults increases, not because there are more of them, but because they live longer.

(11. This applies equally to the white element in South Africa and Australia.)

But a strong race requires not only an inexhaustible birth-rate, but also a severe selection process, which is provided by the resistances to living represented by misfortune, sickness, and war. Nineteenth-century medicine, a true product of Rationalism, is from this point of view also a phenomenon of age. It prolongs each life whether this is desirable or no. It prolongs even death. It replaces the number of children by the number of greybeards. It promotes the world outlook of *panem et circenses* by estimating the value of life by the number of its days, not by their usefulness. It prevents the natural process of selection and thereby accentuates the decay of the race. The number of incurable mental cases in England and Wales has increased during twenty years from 4.6 to 8.6 per thousand. In Germany the number of the feeble-minded is almost half a million, in the United States over a million. According to a report sponsored by ex-President Hoover, the youth of America has a record of 1,360,000 with hearing impaired or "so defective in speech that they require remedial treatment and training," 1,000,000 with "weak or damaged hearts," 675,000 presenting "behaviour problems," 450,000 "mentally retarded to such a degree that they require special education," 300,000 cripples, and 60,000 "blind or in need of sight-saving instruction." But added to these are the terrible numbers of abnormal people of every description, mental, spiritual, and physical, the hysterical, moral, and nerve cases who can neither beget nor bear healthy children. Their number is unobtainable, but we can gauge it by the number of doctors who live by them and the mass of books that are written about them. From this degenerate crop comes the revolutionary proletariat, with its hatred born of grievances, and the drawing-room Bolshevism of the aesthetes and literary folk, who enjoy and advertise the attractiveness of such states of mind.

It is a well-known fact that important persons are seldom first children and almost never only ones. The marriage that is poor in offspring is a menace not only to the quantity but to the quality of the race. What a nation needs quite as badly as a healthy race is the existence of an élite to lead it. But an élite such as that formed by the overseas civil service in England and the officer-corps in Prussia - or, for that matter, the Catholic Church - which unwaveringly, and in total disregard of money or origins, upheld its ethic and made good in difficult situations, becomes impossible when the available material rises nowhere above the average. Life's selection must have taken precedence of it; only then can the class selection take place. A strong stock demands strong parents. Something of the barbarism of the past ages must still be present in the blood beneath the strict form of an old Culture, ready to surge up in difficult times, to save and to conquer.

Barbarism is that which I call strong race, [12] the eternal warlike in the type of the beast-of-prey man. It often seems to have ceased to exist, but it is crouching in the soul ready to spring. Given a big challenge - and it is on top of the enemy. It is dead only when Late urban pacifism, with its weary desire for peace at any price, short of that of its

own life, has rolled its mud over the generations. That is the spiritual self-disarmament, following on the physical, which comes of unfruitfulness.

(12. I repeat: race that one *has*, not a race to which one *belongs*. The one is ethos, the other - zoology.)

Why is the German people the least exhausted of the white world, and therefore the one on which may be placed the most hope? Because its political past has given it no opportunity to *waste* its precious blood and its great abilities. This is the one blessed aspect of our wretched history since 1500: it has used us *sparingly*. It turned us into dreamers and theoreticians in matters of world policy, made us ignorant of the world, narrow, quarrelsome, and provincial; but that can be got over. It was no organic defect, no inherent lack of ability - the days of the Holy Roman Empire are there to show that. Good blood, the foundation of every kind of intellectual as well as physical superiority, there was and still is. Great history is exacting. It devours the racially best elements. It devoured ancient Rome in a few centuries. The Nordic migrations, which had come to standstill in Southern Europe a thousand years before, set in again on the grand scale on the discovery of America, taking oceans in their stride. Vigorous Spanish families, of predominantly Nordic origin, migrated in numbers to the new continent, where they could fight, explore, and rule. By about 1800 the best aristocracy of the Spanish stamp was there and vigorous life had died out in the mother country. Similarly the class in France whose vocation was to rule was used up by high policy from Louis XIII onwards - and not by that alone, for high Culture must be paid for dearly too. And the Anglo-Saxon has been used up even more by the British Empire. What there was of higher material there did not find its way into counting-houses and minor official posts, but followed the Viking urge to a life of danger and wandered to all parts of the globe, either meeting its end in innumerable adventures and wars or succumbing to the effects of climate, or remaining abroad to establish, as in North America, the foundation of a new ruling class. What was left became "conservative," by which in this case is meant uncreative, full of unproductive hatred of everything new and unforeseen. Germany, too, has lost a great deal of its best blood in foreign armies and to foreign nations. But the provincialism of its political conditions tuned down the ambitions of young talent to service at small courts, in small armies and administrations. [13] These settled down to form a healthy and prolific middle class. The nobility remained for the most part a superior peasantry. There was no high society and no fullness of life. "Race," in the people, was asleep, waiting for the call of a great age. But in this people there lies, notwithstanding the devastation of the last decades, a store of excellent blood such as no other nation possesses. It *can* be roused and *must* be spiritualized to meet the stupendous tasks before it. The battle for the planet has begun. The pacifism of the century of Liberalism must be overcome if we are to go on living.

(13. Except in the Habsburg State, which likewise diluted and wasted the German stock within its boundaries.)

How far in fact have the white nations advanced towards pacifism? Is the outcry against war an intellectual gesture or a serious abdication from history at the cost of dignity,

honour, liberty? Yet life *is* war. Can we dismiss its meaning and yet retain it? That is what the craving for the peace of felloahdom, for protection against everything that disturbs the daily routine, against destiny in every form, would seem to intimate: a sort of protective mimicry *vis-à-vis* world history, human insects feigning death in the face of danger, the "happy ending" of an empty existence, the boredom of which has brought in jazz music and Negro dancing to perform the Dead March for a great Culture.

But this cannot, must not, be. The hare may perhaps deceive the fox, but human beings can *not* deceive each other. The coloured man sees through the white man when he talks about "humanity" and everlasting peace. He scents the other's unfitness and lack of will to defend himself. This is why a great educational effort is essential: what I have called "Prussian," but which may, for all I care, call itself "Socialist" - what's in a word? It must be education which rouses the sleeping energy not by schooling, science, or culture, but by living example, by *soul discipline*, which fetches up what is still there, strengthens it, and causes it to blossom anew. We cannot permit ourselves to be tired. Danger is knocking at the door. The coloured races are *not* pacifists. They do *not* cling to a life whose length is its sole value. *They take up the sword when we lay it down.* Once they feared the white man; now they despise him. Our judgment stands written in their eyes when men and women comport themselves in their presence as we do, at home or in the lands of colour themselves. Once they were filled with terror at our power - as were the Germanic people before the first Roman legions. Today, when they are themselves a power, their mysterious soul - which we shall never understand - rises up and looks down upon the whites as on a thing of yesterday.

But the greatest danger has not yet been even named. What if, one day, class war and race war joined forces to make an end of the white world? This lies in the nature of things, and neither of the two Revolutions will disdain the aid of the other simply because it despises its supporters. A common hate extinguishes mutual contempt. And what if some *white* adventurer - and there have been many such - whose wild soul cannot breathe in the hothouse of civilization and seeks to satiate its love of danger in fantastic colonial ventures, among pirates, in the Foreign Legion - should suddenly see this grand goal staring him in the face? It is through such natures that history springs her great surprises. The loathing of deep and strong men for our conditions and the hatred of profoundly disillusioned men might well grow into a revolt that meant to annihilate. This was not unknown in Caesar's time. In any case: when the white proletariat breaks loose in the United States, the Negro will be on the spot, and behind him Indians and Japanese will await their hour. Similarly a black France would have little hesitation in outdoing the Parisian horrors of 1792 and 1871. And would the white leaders of the class war ever hesitate if coloured outbreaks opened up a way for them? They have never been fastidious in the means they use. It would make no difference if the voice of Moscow ceased to dictate. It has done its work, and the work goes forward of itself. We have waged our wars and class wars before the eyes of colour, have humiliated and betrayed each other; we have even summoned it to take part in them. Would it be anything to wonder if at last colour were to act on its own account?

At this point advancing history towers high over economic distress and internal political ideals. The elemental forces of life are themselves entering the fight, which is for all or nothing. The prefiguration of Caesarism will soon become clearer, more conscious and unconcealed. The masks will fall completely from the age of the parliamentary interlude. All attempts to gather up the content of the future into parties will soon be forgotten. The Fascist formations of this decade will pass into new, unforeseeable forms, and even present-day nationalism will disappear. There remains as a formative power only the warlike, "Prussian" spirit - everywhere and not in Germany alone. Destiny, once compacted in meaningful forms and great traditions, will now proceed to make history in terms of formless individual powers. Caesar's legions are returning to consciousness.

Here, possibly even in our own century, the ultimate decisions are waiting for their man. In presence of these the little aims and notions of our current politics sink to nothing. He whose sword compels victory here will be lord of the world. The dice are there ready for this stupendous game. *Who dares to throw them?*

The Oswald Spengler Collection