

Prussianism And Socialism

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Introduction

This essay is based on notes intended for the second volume of *The Decline of the West*. The notes comprise, at least in part, the germinal stage in the development of the entire thesis presented in that work. [1]

(1. See Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, trans. Charles Francis Atkinson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928), I, 46.)

The word "socialism" designates the noisiest, if not the most profound, topic of current debate. Everyone is using it. Everyone thinks it means something different. Into this universal catchword everyone injects whatever he loves or hates, fears or desires. Yet no one is aware of the scope and limitations of the word's historical function. Is socialism an instinct, or a planned system? Is it a goal of mankind, or just a temporary condition? Or does the word perhaps refer simply to the demands made by a certain class of society? Is it the same thing as Marxism?

People who aim to change the word continually fall into the error of confusing what *ought* to be with what *shall* be. Rare indeed is the vision that can penetrate beyond the tangle and flux of contemporary events. I have yet to find someone who has really understood this German Revolution, who has fathomed its meaning or foreseen its duration. Moments are being mistaken for epochs, next year for the next century, whims for ideas, books for human beings.

Our Marxists show strength only when they are tearing down; when it comes to thinking or acting positively they are helpless. By their actions they are confirming at last that their patriarch was not a creator, but a critic only. His heritage amounts to a collection of abstract ideas, meaningful only to a world of bookworms. His "proletariat" is a purely literary concept, formed and sustained by the written word. It was real only so long as it denied, and did not embody, the actual state of things at any given time. Today we are beginning to realize that Marx was only the stepfather of socialism. Socialism contains elements that are older, stronger, and more fundamental than his critique of society. Such elements existed without him and continued to develop without him, in fact contrary to him. They are not to be found on paper; they are in the blood. And only the blood can decide the future.

But if socialism is not Marxism, then what is it? The answer will be found in these pages. Some people already have an idea of what it is, but they are so diligently involved with political "standpoints," aims, and blueprints that no one has dared to be sure. When faced with decisions, we have abandoned our former position of firmness and adopted milder, less radical, outmoded attitudes, appealing for support to Rousseau, Adam Smith, and the like. We take steps against Marx, and yet at every step we invoke his name. Meanwhile the time for fashioning ideologies has passed. We latecomers of Western civilization have become skeptics. We refuse to be further misled by ideological systems. Ideologies are a thing of the previous century. We no longer want ideas and principles, we want

ourselves.

Hence we now face the task of liberating German socialism from Marx. I say *German* socialism, for there is no other. This, too, is one of the truths that no longer lie hidden. Perhaps no one has mentioned it before, but we Germans are socialists. The others cannot possibly be socialists.

What I am describing here is not just another conciliatory move, not a retreat or an evasion, but a Destiny. It cannot be escaped by closing one's eyes, denying it, fighting it, or fleeing from it; such actions would merely be various ways of fulfilling it. *Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt*. The spirit of Old Prussia and the socialist attitude, at present driven by brotherly hatred to combat each other, are in fact one and the same. This is an incontrovertible fact of history, not just a literary figment. The elements that make up history are blood, race—which is created by ideas that are never expressed—and the kind of thought which coordinates the energies of body and mind. History transcends all mere ideals, doctrines, and logical formulations.

For the work of liberating German socialism from Marx I am counting on those of our young people who are sound enough to ignore worthless political verbiage and scheming, who are capable of grasping what is potent and invincible in our nature, and who are prepared to go forward, come what may. I address myself to the German youth in whom the spirit of the fathers has taken on vital forms, enabling them to fulfill a Destiny which they feel within themselves, a Destiny which they themselves *are*. They must be willing to accept obligations despite hardship and poverty; they must possess a Roman pride of service, modesty in the exercise of authority, and the willingness to take on duties readily and without exception rather than demand rights from others. These conditions once met, a silent sense of awareness will unite the individual with the totality. Such potential awareness is our greatest and most sacred asset. It is the heritage of anguished centuries, and it distinguishes us from all other people—us, the youngest and last people of our culture.

It is to these representatives of German youth that I turn. May they understand what the future expects of them. May they be proud to accept the challenge.

I. The Revolution

No people in history has had a more tragic development than our own. In times of serious crisis all other peoples have fought either for victory or momentary setback; with us the stakes have always been victory or annihilation. Witness our military history from Kolin and Hochkirch to Jena and the Wars of Liberation, when the attempt was made on French soil to win Prussia's allies for Napoleon by proposing partition; to the desperate hour at Nikolsburg when Bismarck contemplated suicide; to Sedan, which just barely staved off a general offensive of the armies poised at our borders by preventing Italy's declaration of war; to the frightful tempest of wars on our entire planet, the first thunderclaps of which have just died away. Only in Frederick the Great's and Bismarck's states was resistance at all feasible.

In all these catastrophes Germans have fought Germans. That it was often tribe against tribe or sovereign against sovereign is significant only for the surface of history. Beneath all these conflicts lay the intense discord that inhabits every German soul, an inner struggle that first erupted ominously in the Gothic age, in the personages of Frederick Barbarossa and Henry the Lion at the time of the Battle of Legnano. Has anyone understood this dichotomy in the German soul? Who has recognized in Martin Luther the reincarnation of the Saxon Duke Widukind? What inscrutable drive was it that made Germans sympathize and fight with Napoleon when, with French blood, he was spreading the English idea on the Continent? What makes us conclude that the riddle of Legnano is profoundly similar to that of Leipzig? Why did Napoleon regard the destruction of the little world of Frederick the Great as his most urgent problem, and in his innermost thoughts as an insoluble one?

Now, in the evening of the Western culture, we can see that the World War is the great contest between the two Germanic ideas, which like all genuine ideas are lived rather than expressed. Following its actual outbreak in the Balkan outpost skirmish of 1912, it first assumed the outward appearance of a conflict between two great powers, one of which had everybody, the other nobody on its side. It reached a provisional conclusion in the stage of trench warfare and the devastation of huge armies. During this stage a new formula was found for the unresolved inner discord in the German breast. Currently, owing to a nineteenth century habit of overestimating the economic factor, we characterize the conflict by the superficial terms "socialism" and "capitalism." What is

actually taking place behind this verbal façade is the last great struggle of the Faustian soul.

At the moment in question, although the Germans themselves were not aware of it, the Napoleonic riddle made its reappearance. With the goal of destroying this masterpiece of a state, our most genuine and personal creation—so personal that no other people has been able to comprehend or imitate it, hating it instead like everything daemonic and inscrutable—an English army invaded Germany.

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Believe it or not, that is exactly what happened. The lethal blow in this was not necessarily aimed by the preachers of cosmopolitanism or other treacherous elements. It was we ourselves who brought about this calamity—we Germans, with our almost metaphysical will, our stubborn and selfless determination, our honest and enthusiastic patriotism. This will of ours is by its very nature a handy weapon for any external enemy with the practical sense of the English. It is a precarious compound of political ideas and aspiration, one which only the English are really capable of mastering and implementing. For us, despite all our passion and self-sacrificing zeal, it has led to political dilettantism; its effect on our political existence has been disastrous, poisonous, suicidal. It is our invisible English army, left by Napoleon on German soil after the Battle of Jena.

Our deficient sense of reality, so pronounced as to have the force of a Destiny, has counteracted the other instinct in the German people, and has caused our external history to develop as a steady sequence of dreadful catastrophes. It failed us at the height of the Hohenstaufen period, when the glorious rulers considered themselves exalted above the demands of mundane life, just as it did in the nineteenth century, giving rise to the provincial philistinism that we have personified as "the German Michel." Michelism is the sum of all our weaknesses: our fundamental displeasure at turns of events that demand attention and response; our urge to criticize at the wrong time; our need for relaxation at the wrong time; our pursuit of ideals instead of immediate action; our precipitate action at times when careful reflection is called for; our *Volk* as a collection of malcontents; our representative assemblies as glorified beer gardens. All these traits are essentially English, but in German caricature. Above all, we cherish our private morsel of freedom and guaranteed security, and we are fond of brandishing it at the precise moments when John Bull, with sure instinct, would conceal it prudently.

July 19, 1917, was the first act in the drama of the German Revolution. Rather than simply a change in leadership, it was, as our enemies could tell by the brutal forms it took, the coup d'état of the English element in us, which saw its opportunity at just that time. It was not a revolt against the power of an incompetent, but against power in general. Incompetence at the top level? It is nearer to say that these "revolutionaries," among them not a single true statesman, beheld the mote in the eyes of the men in positions of authority. Did they, at that moment, have anything at all to offer in place of incompetence besides an abstract principle? It was not a popular revolt. The people looked on anxiously and doubtfully, though not without a certain amount of Michel-like sympathy for measures taken against "those at the top." It was a revolution of the caucus rooms. The term "majority party" does not, in our sense, have anything to do with the greater number of the people; it is the name of a club with two hundred members. Matthias Erzberger was tactically the most gifted demagogue among them, excelling at scandal mongering, intrigue, and ambush, a virtuoso at the child's game of overthrowing ministers. He lacked the slightest trace of the English parliamentarian's gift for statesmanship; all he did was borrow their tricks. He attracted a swarm of nameless opportunists who were after some public office or other. These were the late descendants of the philistine revolution of 1848; for them, political opposition was a *Weltanschauung*. These were the latter-day Social Democrats, trying to function without the iron hand of August Bebel. Bebel's acute sense of reality would not have tolerated this shameless spectacle. He would have demanded and achieved a dictatorship either of the Right or the Left. He would have capsized this parliament and put the pacifists and League of Nations zealots before the firing squad.

This, then, was the Storming of the Bastille—*auf deutsch*.

Sovereignty of party leaders is an English idea. In order to put it into effect one would have to be an Englishman by instinct and have mastered the English style of conducting public affairs. Mirabeau had this in mind when he said, "The time in which we live is very great; but the people are very small, and as yet I see no one with whom I would care to go aboard ship." In 1917 not one person had the right to repeat this proud, sad statement. This coup d'état was entirely negative in character. It broke the oppression of political power, it refused to yield to decisions from above, but it lacked the ability to make new decisions. It overthrew the state and replaced it with an oligarchy of party subalterns who regarded opposition as a vocation and responsible government as a

presumption. It undermined, shifted, and dismantled everything piece by piece, to the amusement of political opponents and the despair of observers on the inside. It tried out newly gained power on the most important officials like a native chieftain testing a rifle on his slaves. This was the new spirit that prevailed until, in the black hour of final resistance, the state disappeared.

3

Following the assault by our English insurgents there came, of necessity, the uprising of the Marxist proletariat in November of 1918. The scene changed from the halls of the Reichstag to the city streets. Encouraged by the mutiny of the "Home Army," the readers of the radical press broke loose, even though they had been abandoned by their leaders, who were wise enough by now to be only half-convinced of their cause. Following the revolution of stupidity came the revolution of vulgarity. Once again it was not the people who initiated action, not even the socialistically trained masses; it was a mob led by the vermin of journalism. The true socialists were still engaged in the final struggle at the military front, or lay in the mass graves of Europe. They had risen up in 1914, and now they were being betrayed.

It was the most senseless act in German history. One looks in vain for anything like it in the history of other countries. A Frenchman would justifiably reject a comparison with 1789 as an insult to his nation.

Was that the great German Revolution?

How drab, how feeble, how utterly void of conviction it all was! Where we expected heroes we found ex-convicts, journalists, deserters roaming about yelling and stealing, drunk with their own importance and impunity, ruling, deposing, brawling, and writing poetry. It is said that such types have sullied every revolution. Perhaps that is true. But in other revolutions the entire people rose up with such elemental force that the dregs simply disappeared. Here it was the dregs alone who went into action. Not a sign of the great mass, forged into unity by a common idea.

The party of August Bebel had militant qualities which distinguished it from the socialism of all other countries: the clattering footsteps of workers' battalions, a calm sense of determination, good discipline, and the courage to die for a transcendent principle. Yet the soul of the party expired when its more intelligent leaders of yesteryear

surrendered to the enemy of yesteryear, reactionary philistinism. They did this out of fear of responsibility, out of fear of succeeding in a cause they had championed for forty years. They dreaded the moment when they would have to create reality rather than combat it. When this happened, Marxism and socialism, i.e., class theory and collective instinct, parted ways for the first time. Only the Spartacists retained a modicum of integrity. The smarter ones had lost faith in the dogma, but lacked the courage to break with it openly. Thus we witnessed the spectacle of a working class divorced from the people by a few ideas and doctrines learned by rote. Leaders were actually deserters; followers plodded ahead leaderless; and over on the horizon was a book which the followers had never read and which the leaders had never understood in its proper limitations.

In a revolution the victor is never a single class (the common interpretation of 1789 is false, "bourgeoisie" is just a word). The true victor—and this cannot be repeated often enough—is the blood, the idea become flesh and spirit, a force that drives the totality onward. The victors of 1789 called themselves the bourgeoisie; but *every* true Frenchman was then and is today a bourgeois. Every true German is a worker. It is part of his way of life. The Marxists held power, but they gave it up voluntarily; the insurrection came too late for their convictions. The insurrection was a lie.

4

Do we know anything at all about revolution? When Bakunin was opposed in his intention to crown the Dresden revolt of 1848 by burning all public buildings, he declared, "The Germans are just too stupid for that," and went on his way. The indescribable ugliness of our November Days is without precedent. Not one forceful moment, nothing in the least inspiring. Not one great man, no enduring words, no incisive actions; only pettiness, loathsomeness, and folly. No, we are not revolutionaries. No emergency, no party, no press can stir up an anarchic tempest having the same force as that exhibited in the name of order in 1813, 1870, and 1914. This revolution seemed to everyone, except for a handful of fools and opportunists, like the collapse of a building, perhaps most of all to the socialist leaders themselves. It was a unique situation: they had won suddenly what they had coveted for forty years, absolute power—and they were miserable. The same soldiers who fought as heroes for four years under the black-white-red banner turned spineless and impotent under the red flag. This revolution did not

impart fortitude to its adherents; it robbed them of it.

The classical site of Western European revolutions is France. The resounding of momentous phrases, streams of blood in the streets, *la sainte guillotine*, terrifying nights of conflagration, heroic death at the barricades, orgies of the crazed masses—all these things point up the sadistic mentality of this race. The whole repertoire of symbolic words and deeds for the perfect revolution originated in Paris, and we only gave a bad imitation of them. The French showed us in 1871 what a proletarian insurrection looks like in the face of enemy artillery. And this was surely not the only time.

The Englishman attempts to persuade the domestic enemy of the weakness of his position. If he is unsuccessful he simply takes sword or pistol in hand and, eschewing revolutionary melodrama, presents him with the choice. He decapitates his king, for instinct tells him that this is required as a symbol. For him, such a gesture is a sermon without words. The Frenchman does such things out of *revanche*, for the sheer pleasure of watching a bloody scene. He is titillated by the clever idea of lopping off the royal head. Without human heads impaled on spikes, aristocrats hanging from lampposts, and priests slaughtered by housewives, he would be frustrated. He could care less about the outcome of such days of *grandeur*. The Englishman desires the goal, the Frenchman desires the means.

What was our desire? All that we accomplished was a travesty of both techniques. We produced pedants, schoolboys, and gossips in the Paulskirche and in Weimar, petty demonstrations in the streets, and in the background a nation looking on with faint interest. A real revolution must involve the whole people: one outcry, one brazen act, one rage, one goal.

The real German Socialist Revolution took place in 1914. It transpired in legitimate and military fashion. In its true significance, scarcely comprehensible to the average person, it will gradually overshadow the sordid events of 1918 and make them appear as phases in the long-range development of the Revolution itself.

And yet popular historical opinion will not give prominence to this Revolution, but to the November uprising. It is easy to imagine how, under ideal conditions, a true proletarian revolution might have started at the time. This only indicates the glaring cowardice and mediocrity of those who declared themselves in support of the proletarian cause. Great revolutions are fought with blood and iron. What might the great popular leaders, the Independents and the Jacobins, have done in this situation? And what did the Marxists

do? They had the power, they could have done just about anything. One great man from the ranks of the people could have had the entire nation behind him. Yet never has a mass movement been more thoroughly ruined by the incompetence of its leaders and their lieutenants.

The Jacobins were prepared to sacrifice everything because they sacrificed themselves: "*Marcher volontiers, les pieds dans le sang et dans les larmes,*" as Saint-Just put it. They did battle against the majority within the nation and against half of Europe at the front. They swept everything along with them. They created armies out of nothing. They won victories without officers or weapons. If only their parrot-like German imitators had unfurled the red banner at the front and declared war to the death against capitalism! If only they had set an example by staking their lives in the struggle! Had they made this choice they would not only have breathed life into the mortally exhausted army and its officers, they would have won over the entire West as well. It was a moment when personal sacrifice would have spelled victory.

But they ducked out. Instead of stepping to the command of red legions they grabbed top positions in well-salaried workers' soviets. Instead of winning the battle against capitalism they conquered window panes and liberated stores of provisions and state treasuries. Instead of selling their lives they sold their uniforms. This revolution failed from cowardice. Now it is too late. We shall never recover what was lost during the Armistice. The mass ideal degenerated into a series of corrupt wage deals, forced through without reciprocal promises. In their valor these "revolutionaries" did not shrink from sponging on the rest of the people, on the farmers, the civil servants, and the intellectuals. Instead of initiating action they bellowed the slogans "soviet," "dictatorship," and "republic" so often that within two years' time they will have become a laughing-stock. The only "action" that occurred was the overthrow of the monarchy. And yet a republican form of government has nothing at all to do with socialism.

All this proves that, as opposed to the rest of the people (and it turns out that it *is* opposed to them), the "fourth estate," which is actually a negative concept, [2] is incapable of constructive action. It proves that if this was indeed the socialist revolution, then the proletariat cannot be its most effective champion. No matter what is yet to ensue, this question is now definitely resolved. The social class trained by August Bebel for the decisive struggle has failed right down the line. And it has failed for all time, because momentum of this sort, once lost, can never be regained. A grand passion cannot be

replaced by embitterment. From now on let there be no illusions among the advocates of the erstwhile "socialist" program; they have completely alienated the valuable element of the working class. Formerly the leaders of a great movement, they will one day find themselves as big-mouthed heroes of street brawls in the suburbs. From the sublime to the ridiculous is but one step.

(2. *The Decline of the West*, II, 354 ff.)

5

Such, then, was the great German Revolution, the event that was heralded in poetry and song for generations. It was a spectacle of such fearful irony that decades must pass before the Germans can see it in its true light: a revolution that succeeded in overthrowing its own aims, and that now aims for something else—without knowing exactly what.

Let us imagine for the moment that we are citizens of the future looking back on these three revolutions: the honorable English Revolution, the superb French Revolution, and the absurd German Revolution. We can conclude that through these events the three latest peoples of the Western world attempted to achieve the three ideal forms of existence enunciated in the famous motto: "Liberty, equality, and brotherhood." These ideals appear in the political programs of liberal parliamentarism, social democracy, and authoritarian socialism. In each case it seemed that such ideals were a new concept for these peoples, whereas in reality the ideals were the purest and most extreme expression of their wholly personal and immutable patterns of life.

In antiquity the purpose of revolutions was to establish the basis on which a stable existence was at all feasible. Despite the outward signs of passionate struggle that accompanied them, they were all defensive actions. No one, from Cleon on down to Spartacus, ever thought to look beyond the immediate crisis toward a general reordering of ancient society. The three great Western revolutions, on the other hand, have dealt essentially with a problem of power: Is the will of the individual to be subjected to the common will, or vice versa? Once a decision was reached, the intention was to force it on the whole world.

English instinct decided that power belongs to the individual. Life is a free-for-all, every man for himself, the stronger man wins. The English opted for liberalism and the belief

in the inequality of men. The state was to exist no longer; everyone was to fight his own battles, for in the end it would benefit all.

The instinct of the French decided that all men are equal, and hence power should belong to no one. There was to be no such things as subordination, and therefore no order and no state—in fact, nothing at all. This theoretical ideal of anarchy has, in practice, been periodically reaffirmed (in 1799, 1851, 1871, and 1918) by the despotic rule of generals and presidents.

Both of these systems may be called democracy, but for very different reasons. Neither had anything to do with class struggle in the Marxist sense. The English Revolution, which produced the type of citizen who leads his life in private and is responsible only to himself, directed its action against the state rather than the estates. The secular and religious powers that sustained the state were abolished, and in their place came a reliance on the advantages of England's insular location. The estates still exist today, recognized and respected by all—even by the workers, who honor them instinctively. Only the French Revolution was a genuine "class conflict," but it was a conflict between social rather than economic ranks. In France the privileged few were integrated with the homogenous mass of the people, the bourgeoisie.

In contrast to these two, the German Revolution grew out of a theory. German, or more precisely, Prussian instinct declares that power belongs to the totality. The individual serves the totality, which is sovereign. The king, as Frederick the Great maintained, is only the first servant of his people. Each citizen is assigned his place in the totality. He receives orders and obeys them. This is authoritarian socialism as we have known it since the eighteenth century. It is essentially nonliberal and antidemocratic, at least when compared with English liberalism and French democracy. But it is also clear that the Prussian instinct is antirevolutionary. The task of transposing the state organism from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century—a process that might be described as liberal and democratic but in an entirely different, Prussian sense—was one for organizational talent. But the radical theoretical mind invented a "fourth estate" out of a portion of the citizenry, which was senseless in a country of farmers and civil servants. Theory gave the name "third estate" to the most numerous segment of the population, the one containing a motley variety of occupations and professions, thus singling it out as an element in a "class conflict." And finally, it made the socialist idea a prerogative of the "fourth estate." With these abstractions in mind the theorists set out in November, 1918, to achieve what

had actually been in existence for a long time. Beclouded by slogans, they failed to apprehend the actual state of affairs, and in the end succeeded in destroying it. They not only ruined the state, they also crushed Bebel's party, the masterpiece of a truly socialist man of action, a genuinely authoritarian and militant organization, the best weapon the workers had in their battle to infuse the state with the spirit of the new century.

That is what makes this revolution so desperately comical. It succeeded admirably in setting its own house on fire. What the German people had promised itself in 1914; what it had already begun to bring about, slowly and dispassionately; what millions of men had died for on the battlefields—all this was denied and destroyed. And then embarrassment set in. Nobody knew how to convey the impression that an active revolution was actually taking place. Such an explanation was urgent, because the workers, who had expected something quite different, viewed their leaders with increasing distrust. The constant barking of slogans into thin air was no solution.

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And so the German Michel, that inveterate liberal, set the overturned throne aright and seated himself upon it. The guileless heir to this revolutionary prank, intensely antisocialist by nature, he was equally repelled by Conservatives and Spartacists and fearful that these groups might one day discover what they have in common. He was Schiller's Karl Moor in an easy chair, tolerant of all political faiths including the most questionable ones—provided that they upheld the republican-parliamentarian-democratic principle, provided that they were long on talk and short on action, provided that they kept out of his sight such authoritarian qualities as resoluteness, audacity, and disciplined obedience. To protect himself, our good friend Michel beckoned to the one outstanding personality of the November episode, and it is not insignificant that this man was a dyed-in-the-wool soldier. Whereupon Michel immediately reverted to his old distrust of the military spirit, without which the Weimar farce would have ended swiftly.

This sorry display of ignorance, incompetence, weakness, and indignity should suffice to discredit parliamentarism forever in Germany. Under the black-red-yellow banner, which has now become the everlasting symbol of folly, we witnessed a repetition of all the stupidities of 1848, when politics was likewise not action but empty talk and theorizing. The liberal of 1917 was in his glory. He had his armistice, his League of Nations, his peace, and his government. Michel doffed his cap with a smile in the expectation that

John Bull would be "simply splendid." But his smile turned to tears as he signed the papers: John Bull was using a crazed Frenchman as his business manager.

In the heart of the German people Weimar is doomed. It is not even a laughing matter. The ratification of the Constitution has been greeted by absolute indifference. Its authors thought that the dawn of parliamentarism had arrived, whereas even in England it is rapidly growing dusk. Such as it is, the English system presupposes the presence of strong personalities, distributed between two very old, mutually complementary political groups. In Weimar, where there was a desperate lack of strong personalities, it was believed that political opposition was the very hallmark of the parliamentary system. And so they dutifully started opposing a government that no longer existed. It was like a schoolroom when the teacher is away.

The future will most certainly look on this episode with profound contempt. The year 1919 is the nadir of German dignity. The Frankfurt Paulskirche contained honest fools and academicians, altogether a comical collection of eggheads. In Weimar one had the feeling that clever operators were behind the scenes. It makes no difference whether the acting politicians were conspirators themselves or just the dupes of conspirators; these parties confused the fatherland all too often with their own advantage. What we now have is a pre-Thermidor *Directoire*. Woe to us if we have to make up for the phase we passed over!

It is equally certain that the dismal comedy of this counterfeit revolution will end. The outside world is preparing for a new phase of the World War. Things happen fast these days. In our National Assembly, a degenerate Reichstag, the politicians are using the ruins of our demolished state to build a makeshift shelter. Soon the only activities there will be graft and fraudulent dealings in salaries, merchandise, and official positions. Meanwhile, other people are beginning to think differently about the events of last year. They are comparing what is now being constructed with what was there previously. They are beginning to understand that, in reality, a people can never choose between different types of government. It can choose the outer trappings of government, but not the essential thing, the spirit of government—even though public opinion constantly confuses the two. What gets written into a constitution is never essential. The important thing is how the instinct of the people interprets it. The English Parliament governs according to unwritten and, in part, quite undemocratic laws that have evolved through long practice. And that is precisely why it is so successful.

Make no mistake, the revolution is not yet ended. No matter how you interpret it, as senseless or significant, as a failure or as an auspicious beginning, as the prelude to a world revolution or merely as a mob uprising in a single country, the fact remains that we are in the midst of a crisis. And like everything organic, like every disease, this crisis will follow a more or less typical course that cannot be influenced by artificial means. In the light of this fact such ethical distinctions as "just cause" and "treachery" are quite worthless. >From now on, revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries alike must have expert knowledge of human nature; they must be able to grasp and exploit the immediate situation with deliberateness and sobriety. Instead of practicing the ancient art of diplomatic psychology on diplomats and sovereigns, they must learn to apply it to the mass mind, which responds much more rapidly to errors of tact.

Popular leaders, even those of mediocre intelligence, have an infallible knack for this sort of thing. The lack of instinct shown by our present political leaders is perhaps best explained by the typical German thoroughness of their "theoretical" training. The truly popular leader must have an absolutely accurate sense of the duration, the tempo, the rhythm, the crescendo and decrescendo of each phase of the situation; one false move and he will lose all control. What is more, he must know exactly which factors he *can* control, and which ones he must allow to run their course, waiting out the time when he can exploit them in a broader context or, by skillful manipulation, steer them in the direction he deems necessary. Great revolutionaries have always possessed the tactical know-how of great generals. For an army, the prevailing mood of a single hour can spell victory or defeat.

To the theoretical mind, the most important part of a revolution is its beginning, when forces are arrayed in clear and definite opposition to each other. The skeptical mind prefers, however, to study the final phase of a revolution, for it has much greater significance and is psychologically more instructive. Matters of state have never been so complicated as they are today. The outbreak of the German Revolution was at the same time the betrayal of our nation to the enemy. As a result, our emotional attitude toward Marxism differs radically from that of all other countries. In 1792, nation and revolution were one and the same; in 1919, they are opposites. The English Revolution confined itself to an island, and the French insurgents, owing to their bravery in the field, were

able to keep the situation in hand at all times. In our own revolution, each new phase occurs under pressure of foreign designs. Paris, London, and New York are all involved—not with their labor movements but with their armies, which they will send against us should the German Revolution take on undesirable forms. That is the way our Marxists wanted it, and they had better be prepared to take the consequences. Besides the Spartacists' hand grenades and the machine guns of the Reichswehr, we have the French Army of Occupation and the English fleet to reckon with.

Our newspapers are full of "heroic" bolshevist pronouncements. Every day we can take our pick among massacres of Western capitalists—on the editorial pages. Journalism is no substitute for a true revolutionary front line, backed up by heavy artillery. The longer they preach about world revolution the less threatening it becomes. There is mostly anger, and very little confidence, in the revolutionary talk we hear and read these days. It should be pointed out that not even the Russian revolutionaries made cowardice in the face of the enemy a cardinal point in their program. And it must not be forgotten that many of those who participated in the November insurrection did so, not out of enthusiasm for this or that political solution, but because they were hungry and desperate, because their nerves could no longer stand the strain. The decisions reached at Versailles have caused the state of war to continue. But how much longer can the psychological effect of those decisions be an aid, rather than an obstacle, to the designs of the Marxists? The general strike has outlived its usefulness as a weapon. The past year has dissipated whatever energies the Marxist movement had to start with, and at this point revitalization is out of the question. The absurd goings-ons in the National Assembly are bound to produce nothing but contempt for the parliamentary idea.

There comes a time in every revolution when the people will settle for peace and domestic order at any price, when no revolutionary minority can persuade them, not even with the most drastic methods, to make fundamental political decisions. When this point is reached the revolution has virtually come to an end, and no one has the power to avoid its effects or postpone them. We need only compare the actual number of votes cast in the Jacobin plebiscite with those cast at the installation of Bonaparte as first consul to see that the French people had finally had enough of the revolution. We are now rapidly approaching this terminal point in the German Revolution. And the patience of the German people will be exhausted even more quickly.

Nevertheless, it is not only the confirmed advocates of radical change who are in danger

of committing errors; their equally confirmed opponents can make mistakes just as easily. A strong but indeterminate feeling of disappointment is still a long way from the actual decision to capitulate. The sense of political failure that is widespread in the German people today is like an open wound that is sensitive to the touch. If the opposition were to make the slightest attempt to end the revolution by violence, they would release in the people an irresistible wave of bitterness and fury such as the radicals themselves are no longer capable of arousing. We would experience a protest of contagious force, a sudden quickening of the popular mood which resolute leaders could exploit for action of a very drastic sort. While it is true that such a development would not affect the duration or essential meaning of historical events, it would nonetheless alter their form and intensity to a decisive degree. Things could get very bloody.

We have now reached a crucial stage in this revolution, a time when the inscrutable mass mind could confuse even the most knowledgeable observers by giving a surprise twist to the course of events, as it has in previous great revolutions. Does the tense silence that prevails in some quarters of our country indicate the presence of an indomitable will? Is the irritable clamoring we hear from other quarters to be interpreted as a growing awareness of final defeat? Is it too late for the insurgents to take action? Too early for the opposition?

It is common knowledge that certain political structures which seem invincible at the moment can, after two years' time, fall of their own weight. That was true in 1918 and will again be true, though with a nearly opposite effect, in the near future. Yesterday's courtiers can be the regicides of today, and today's regicides, the princes of the future. In such times no one can be sure of how long his convictions can endure.

But to what unit of time should we now adapt our thinking? Should we start thinking in months, or in years? The tempo and duration of the German Revolution were determined by the time and manner in which it began. No one may have knowledge of these factors, yet they exist and they operate with the inevitability of Destiny. Whoever tries to interfere with them will perish. The Girondists perished because they thought that the climax of the revolution was behind them; Babeuf met his fate because he believed that the climax was yet to come. The intrinsic nature of the Revolution would remain intact even if new wars were to break out, even if a great personality were to make his appearance. Such occurrences might cause a sudden and complete change in the historical *appearance* of the German Revolution—which is all that matters to the

ordinary observer—but their true function would be to confirm its deeper and more essential significance. A great man is one who understands the spirit of his time, who is himself the incarnation of that spirit. He does not come to destroy, but to fulfill it.

Let us now investigate the origins of the spirit of German socialism.

II. Socialism as a Way of Life

8

Six thousand years of higher human history lie before us. Amid the great mass of persons and events that have appeared on the entire planet we can distinguish those elements that make up history in the proper sense: the spectacle and destiny of the great cultures. They appear to the eye of the observer as formal entities having a basically similar structure, as visible manifestations of powerful forces of the human soul, as the real and vital expressions of the most profound mysteries of human evolution.

In each culture there resides an immutable principle which gives it its particular features of belief, thought, feeling, and action, of government, art, and social structure. This same principle has brought forth what we know as the various "types" of man: the Classical, Indic, Chinese, and Western. Each has had its own unity of instinct and consciousness, its own "race" in the spiritual sense.

Moreover, each of these cultural units is complete in itself and independent of all others. Traditional historiography has been interested solely in historical influences on cultures, not realizing that such influences are in fact of the most superficial kind. Inwardly, all cultures remain just what they are. They arise and flourish on Nile and Euphrates, Ganges and Hwang Ho, in the Semitic Desert, on the shores of the Aegean, or on the river-lined plains of Northern Europe. Each culture gathers together the human beings in its locality and breeds them to form a people; a people, in other words, is not the creator but the creature of its culture. [3] Dorians and Ionians, Hellenes and Etrusco-Romans, the peoples of ancient China, Teutons and Latins, Germans and Englishmen—each people has its own peculiar mentality and significance, each stands in passionate contrast to the others. Seen from the outside and compared with foreign cultures, each assumes a unified

form: we speak of Classical man, Chinese man, and Western man.

(3. *The Decline of the West*, II, 165.)

At the base of every culture lies an idea that is expressed by certain words of profound significance. In Chinese culture these words are *tao* and *li*; for the Apollonian Greeks this cultural idea was contained in the words *lógos* and *tò ón* ("that which is"). In the languages of Faustian man the basic cultural idea is expressed by the words "will," "strength," and "space." Faustian man differs from all others in his insatiable will to reach the infinite. He seeks to overcome with his telescope the dimensions of the universe, and the dimensions of the earth with his wires and iron tracks. With his machines he sets out to conquer nature. He uses his historical thinking to take hold of the past and integrate it into his own existence under the name of "world history." With his long-range weapons he seeks to subdue the entire planet, including the remains of all older cultures, forcing them to conform to his own pattern of life.

How long, we may well ask, will this striving continue? After a certain number of centuries each culture is transformed into a civilization. What was formerly alive becomes rigid and cold. Expansiveness of mind and spirit is replaced by a lust for expansion in the material world. "Life" in the sense used by Meister Eckart becomes "life" in the political and economic sense; the militant power of ideas becomes imperialism. One sign of the onset of this transformation is the enunciation of ultimate but very earthly ideals; a mood of ripeness, of age and experience begins to take hold within the culture. Socrates, Lao-tse, Rousseau, and Buddha each presaged a downward turn in his respective culture. [4] All of these thinkers are inwardly related. None possessed a genuine metaphysics; each of them was the proponent of practical but terminal ideas and attitudes to which we have applied such comprehensive titles as Buddhism, Stoicism, and socialism.

(4. *The Decline of the West*, I, 351 ff.; II, 305 ff.)

Socialism, then, is not an instinct of dark primeval origin like the instincts that found expression in the style of Gothic cathedrals, in the lordly mien of great emperors and popes, or in the founding of the Spanish and British empires. It is, rather, a political, social, and economic instinct of realistically-minded peoples, and as such it is a product

of one stage of our civilization—not of our culture, which came to an end around 1800. And yet this instinct, totally directed to the outside world, still nourishes the old Faustian will to power and the infinite; now it has become the direful will to absolute domination of the world in the military, economic, and intellectual sense. It can be felt in the historical fact of the World War and in the concept of a world revolution, the idea of forging the swarming multitudes of humanity into a single whole. The imperialism of Babylon aimed only at control of the Near East, while that of the Indic people was limited to India itself; Greek and Roman imperialism was bounded by Britain, Mesopotamia, and the Sahara, and China's empire extended no further than the Caspian Sea. Modern imperialism, on the other hand, aims at possessing the entire globe. We recognize no borders or limits at all. By means of a new *Völkerwanderung* we have made America a part of Western Europe. We have constructed on every continent our special kind of cities, and have subjected the native populations to our own way of life and thought. Such activity is the highest possible expression of our dynamic sense of world power. What we believe, what we desire, is meant to be binding on all. And since life has come to mean for us external, political, social, and economic life, all must submit to our political, social, and economic ideal, or perish.

This drive toward universal domination is what I have termed "modern socialism." We are now growing more and more conscious of its presence. It is what we of the Western world have in common. It is active in every human being from Warsaw to San Francisco, and each of our peoples is fascinated by the spell of its promises and potentialities.

Yet we are the only peoples who partake of it. Classical, Chinese, or Russian socialism in this sense does not exist.

Still, at the base of this powerful collective consciousness there is inner hostility and contradiction. Concealed within the soul of every culture is a single, irreparable fissure. The history of each culture is a never-ending conflict between peoples, classes, individuals, or tendencies within an individual—it is always the same awesome problem. As soon as one historical element makes its appearance it immediately calls forth an opposing element. Nietzsche has identified for us the great dichotomy of Classical life which reappeared again and again in various forms: Apollo and Dionysus, Stoics and Epicureans, Sparta and Athens, senate and plebs, tribunate and patriciate. With Hannibal at Cannae, Epicurean Hellenism stood in opposition to the Rome of the Stoics and senators. At Philippi, the Spartan element of Rome was defeated by the Athenian element

personified by the Caesars. Even in Nero's matricide we can discern a triumph of the Dionysian idea of *panem et circenses* over the Apollonian rectitude of the Roman matrons. Throughout all the epochs of Chinese history, in Chinese life and thought, battles and books, we can perceive the antithesis connected with the names of Confucius and Lao-tse and the untranslatable concepts of *li* and *tao*. Similarly, it is one and the same schism in the Faustian soul that has shaped our destiny through the Gothic and Renaissance, Potsdam and Versailles, Kant and Rousseau, socialism and anarchism, and which will go on shaping it right up to our last days.

Yet even so, this Destiny is unified. The discord and antithesis serve a higher reality. Epicureanism is but another form of Stoicism; Aeschylus brought together Apollo and Dionysus; Caesar combined senate and plebs; the Taoism of Lao-tse helped to create Confucianist China. And the Western peoples whose instinct is anarchic are themselves truly socialistic in the larger Faustian sense.

III. Prussians and Englishmen

10

Three Western peoples have embodied socialism in this larger sense: Spain, England, and Prussia. Florence and Paris were the sources of the anarchic antithesis to socialism: Italy and France. The conflict between these two dispositions toward life and the world forms the basic outline of what we call modern world history.

The Gothic spirit, with its tremendous urge to break through all limitations, manifested itself in the figures of the great emperors and popes, in the Crusades, the imposing cathedrals, the institution of knighthood, and the religious orders. In the fifteenth century the soul of Florence rose up to oppose this spirit. What we call the Renaissance [5] is the anti-Gothic principle of artistic limitation and graceful thinking. Characteristic of its narrower focus are the myriad robber-principalities, republics, and *condottieri* that sprang up in the Italy of the time, the small-scale, opportunistic political scheming reflected in Machiavelli's classic work, and the modesty with which even the Vatican pursued its plans for hegemony. It was a protest against the depth and breadth of Faustian universalism. The Italian people, as a type, had its origin in Florence.

(5. *The Decline of the West*, I, 232 ff.)

The second appearance of the antithetical element occurred in France during the *grand siècle*. There we find Racine assuming an artistic role analogous to that of Raphael; the *esprit* of the Parisian salons recaptured the atmosphere of the Medici palace; the policy of the Borgia and Sforza clans found its continuation in the predatory wars of Louis XIV; and this king's famous dictum, "*L'état c'est moi*," is an expression of the Renaissance ideal of the free and masterful personality. France and Italy are truly close relative.

Between the birth dates of these two peoples came Spain's outstanding century, dating from the Sack of Rome (1527), when the Spanish spirit conquered the spirit of the Renaissance, to the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659), when Spain was finally forced to yield to France. [6] This episode marked the last grand flourishing of the Gothic principle. The Castilian grandee is the last of the feudal knights (Don Quixote, the Spanish Faust!). The Society of Jesus is the final, indeed the only, great institution since the knightly orders established as a weapon against the infidels. The empire founded by the Spanish Habsburgs was the realization of the Hohenstaufen ideal, just as the Council of Trent realized the ideal of the papacy.

(6. *The Decline of the West*, II, 388 ff.)

With the advent of the Spanish-Gothic spirit of the Baroque, a severe and impressive style of living spread throughout the Western European world. The Spaniard sensed within himself a great mission—not an "ego" but an "id." He was either a soldier or a priest. He served either God or his king. In fact, it was not until the rise of Prussia that such a stringent and submissive ideal was again embraced. Prussians ought to have recognized familiar traits of character in the Duke of Alba, the man with an incomparable sense of duty. The Spanish and the Prussians are the only peoples who rose up against Napoleon. What we call the modern state was created in the Escorial. All the techniques of modern statesmanship had their origin in Madrid: national and dynastic politics on the grand scale, cabinet diplomacy, the use of war as a deliberate and calculated move in the intricate chess game of grand strategy. Bismarck was the last of the Spanish-style statesmen.

In Florence and Paris, border disputes sufficed to satisfy the urge for conquest. Leibniz once suggested to Louis XIV that he overrun Egypt—and the King refused. Columbus sought aid for his expedition in both cities—in vain. Since that time Italian and French

political thought has centered on such matters as subduing Pisa, securing the Rhine border, reducing the neighboring country's territory, and humiliating the enemy. How different these petty concerns are from those of imperial Spain! The Spanish spirit was out to conquer the earth and establish an empire that would never see the setting sun. We need only compare the Spanish *conquistadores* with the *condottieri* in Italy. It was the Spaniards who first made the entire globe the object of Western-European political planning. Italy itself became a Spanish province. And it is important to understand the spiritual conflict that led to the Sack of Rome: this action put an end to the Renaissance Church. The Spanish-Gothic mentality, which holds sway even today in the Vatican, rose up at that time against the Renaissance Church and the closely related Reformation churches. Since then the idea of world domination have never been put aside. From that moment on, the spirit of the Italian and French peoples has remained hostile to the Church, though less as a religion institution than as the embodiment of the Spanish concept of universal hegemony. This explains the "Gallic" religious policy pursued by the French kings, by the Revolution, by Napoleon, as well as the anti-clerical attitude of the Italian monarchy. The Church, however, found support in Madrid and Vienna.

Vienna, too, is a creation of the Spanish spirit. Language alone does not make a people. In this instance a people, the Austrian people, was created first by the aura of its court life, then by its clergy, and finally by its nobility. In the process it has alienated itself irrevocably from the rest of the Germans, for a people with firm historical roots can never change, even though it may consider itself from time to time as undergoing change. The Austrian people is Spanish and Habsburg by nature, whether there are living members of the Habsburg family or not. Austrian thinkers may deny this, but Austrian instinct confirms it. Spanish Germany, represented by the Imperial Court, met its defeat in 1648 at the hands of French Germany, i.e., the multitude of individual princes. From then on these princes chose to think, live, and act according to the particularist and provincial style of Versailles, their ambitions limited to minor extensions of their private borders, their ears deaf to major plans of conquest. The climax of Spanish ambition was reached when Wallenstein proposed the march on Constantinople and the transformation of the Baltic Sea into a base for the Spanish fleet. His defection and fall mark the turning point. Spanish-French Germany was defeated at Königgrätz. Yet even as late as 1914, Austria's declaration of war against Serbia was a diplomatic move staged in the Spanish cabinet manner of the sixteenth century. England, on the other hand, did not declare the World War in this fashion, but forced its outbreak by means of tactically superior

techniques developed during the nineteenth century.

The English Peace of Fontainebleau and the Prussian Peace of Hubertusberg, both signed in 1763, brought France's great century to a close. With a decline of the Latins, the control of Western Europe's destiny passed into the hands of the Germanic peoples. The birth of the modern English nation occurred in the seventeenth, that of the Prussian nation in the eighteenth century. They are the youngest and the last of the Western peoples. Freshly created from unspoiled humanity, they possess the Faustian will to power and infinity in its purest, most vital form. Compared with them, France and Italy seem small indeed, and their epochs of political success appears as mere interludes in a great historical drama. Only the Spanish, the English, and the Prussians have given European civilization *universal* ideas: ultramontanism, capitalism, and socialism in a higher sense than the one implied by the word as it is used today.

Yet we must realize that France's decline also meant the end of Western culture. Paris inherited the creative principles of Early Gothic, the Italian Renaissance, and the Spanish Baroque, and combined them in their final, ripest, and sweetest form, the rococo style. Indeed, French culture is the *only* culture. England meant the beginning of civilization. French style is a style of manners, intellect, and taste; England has perfected the style of practical living, of money.

11

I should like to make clear what I mean by the term "Prussianism." The name, of course, refers to an area of Europe where certain attitudes took on impressive shape and began to evolve. But Prussianism is, first and foremost, a feeling, an instinct, a compulsion. It is the embodiment of spiritual and intellectual traits—and that means also of certain physical qualities—that have long since become the distinguishing characteristics of a race, or rather of the best and most typical representatives of this race. Certainly not every person born in England is "English" in the racial sense; and not everyone born in Prussia is genuinely "Prussian." This word denotes everything we Germans possess by way of destiny, will, inner drive, and ability, and nothing of our vague ideas, desires, and whims. There are true Prussian types in all of Germany—I am thinking of men like Friedrich List and Hegel, of certain inventors, scholars, engineers, and organizers, but especially of a particular type of German worker. Since the Battles of Rossbach and Leuthen there have been many Germans who in the depth of their souls have harbored a

small strain of Prussianism, a potential source of energy which can become active at great moments of history. As yet, however, the only real Prussian achievements have been the creations of Frederick William I and Frederick the Great: the Prussian state and the Prussian people.

Every supreme reality begets later realities. The Prussian element is again making itself felt in the Germans, or rather in the German type, of today; it is gradually reducing the effectiveness of outmoded ideologies. Although the best Germans are not aware of it, Prussianism, with its combination of realism, discipline, energy, and *esprit de corps*, is a great promise for the future. At the moment, the German people, indeed every individual German, is threatened by what we have dubbed "the German Michel"—the hodgepodge of faded beliefs which we often think of as ingenuous, but which really are useless or even dangerous for Western civilization.

The concept of "the Germans" as used in the idealistic sense by professors and enthusiasts is an artificial construct based on the spurious foundation of a common language. It is unpolitical and impractical; it does not denote a "race" in the sense of instincts having a unified function in the real world. The idea is made up of the ossified remains of the Medieval Gothic mentality, together with the confused gropings of eternally childish souls. The Romantic movement in Germany, with its dreamy politics of 1848, once again brought these traits to the fore. Gothic vestiges, mixed with bits and shreds of English ideas, comprise the basis for such trivial beliefs as cosmopolitanism, international friendship, and universal humanitarianism. In serious cases people have been induced to treason by naively adopting such ideologies, singing and writing and talking about things which the Spanish sword and English money have actually achieved.

Such are the perennial provincialists, the simple-minded heroes of the German *Bildungsroman*, who may undergo a certain amount of inner development but who display an astounding lack of talent when it comes to dealing with things of the real world. Such are the portly gentlemen of our bowling clubs, our beer halls, and our parliamentary assemblies, who excuse their own lack of ability by griping about the governmental departments they manage so badly. They are the ones with the sleepy tendency toward English liberalism and its hostility to the state, a feeling that pleases them even though they are ignorant of the strong initiative displayed by the private English citizen in political and other matters. Theirs is the narrow-minded, Italian and French preference for smallness in politics, the refusal to pursue political thought beyond

the boundaries of their immediate neighbors. They consider order as inimical to culture, and yet they have been unable to capture the spirit of the culture they praise so highly. At the same time they are the outspoken advocates of Spanish-style ecclesiastical authority, which only leads to squabbles among the various denominations.

Such, then, are our "typical Germans": impractical, servile, stupid but honest, formless without any promise of improvement, old-fashioned, small-minded, thought-stifling, and degrading. They are the inner enemy of every true German as an individual and of all Germans as a nation. Together they represent the "German Michel," of the five "typical" personifications of modern creative peoples, the only one that is negative in character. They represent a form of Gothic humanity that has resisted the efforts of post-Renaissance and post-Reformation culture to create a race in the new sense of the term.

12

The organized colonization of the Slavic frontier involved Germans of all tribes, but the area was ruled by nobles from Lower Saxony. Thus the Prussian people, by origin, is closely related to the English. It was the same Saxons, Frisians, and Angles who, as roving Viking bands, and often under Norman and Danish names, subdued the Celtic Britons. Saxon settlements sprang up along the Thames just as they had in the desert-like region near the Havel and Spree Rivers, a stretch of land comparable in desolate expanse and fateful importance only to Latium, the Roman Campagna. By contemplating the rigid figures of Duke Widukind, the Margrave Gero, and Henry the Lion, we can gain an impression of the type of men who first set this people on its path of Destiny.

But the Viking spirit and the communal spirit of the Teutonic knights gradually gave rise to two antithetical ethical imperatives. One side bore the Germanic idea actively within itself, while the other felt itself subject to it: personal independence on the one hand, and suprapersonal community spirit on the other. Today we refer to these concepts as "individualism" and "socialism." Virtues of the most exalted kind are summarized by these words: in the one case personal responsibility, self-reliance, determination, and initiative; and in the other, loyalty, discipline, selflessness, and a sense of obligation. To be free *and* to serve—there is nothing more difficult than this. A people whose spirit and being are capable of it, a nation that can truly serve and be free, deserves to take upon itself a great destiny.

Service—that is the style of Old Prussia, similar to that of Old Spain, which also created

a people by engaging in knightly warfare against the heathen. Not "I" but "we"—a feeling of community to which every individual sacrifices his whole being. The individual does not matter; he must offer himself to the totality. All exist for all, and all partake of that glorious inner freedom, the *libertas oboe dientiae* which has always distinguished the best exemplars of Prussian breeding. The Prussian army, Prussian civil service, and August Bebel's workers' brigades are all products of this breeding principle. The urge to individuality and independence, however, later drove many of those with Viking blood in their veins—Englishmen, Germans, and Scandinavians—to seek their fortunes on the American prairie. This adventure was, in effect, a late resumption of the expeditions from Greenland at the time of the *Eddas*, when Vikings touched the Canadian coast: a tremendous migration of Teutons filled with a longing for distance and limitless expanses, teams of adventurers who were to lay the groundwork for yet another people with Saxon characteristics. Yet this new people was to arise apart from the maternal soil of the Faustian culture, and thus lacked the "inner basalt" of which Goethe speaks in his poem "America." It retained certain races of noble blood and the concomitant virtues of vigor and industriousness, but was without roots and therefore without a future.

Such was the origin of the English and Prussian types. The difference between them is that between a people whose soul has developed out of an awareness of insular security, and one that has been forced to maintain a frontier without natural borders to protect it from its enemies. In England, "splendid isolation" replaced the organized state. A stateless nation was only possible under those conditions; isolation was the necessary ingredient in the development of the spirit of modern England, a spirit that first gained full confidence in the seventeenth century, when the English became the undisputed masters of their island. It is a case of creative topography: the English people shaped and formed itself, while the Prussian people was shaped in the eighteenth century by the Hohenzollern, who brought with them the frontier experience of southern Central Europe, and who had thus become advocates of the organized state.

As real political entities, as state and non-state, Prussia and England embody the maximum and minimum functioning of the suprapersonal socialistic principle. The liberal English "state" is completely intangible; it makes not a single claim on the individual citizen, nor does it make of him a meaningful element in a political system. It serves him exclusively as a means to an end. During the century between Waterloo and

the World War, England went without compulsory education, compulsory military service, and compulsory social security—out of sheer antipathy to these negative privileges. The hostility of the English toward centralized organization is neatly expressed in their word "society," which has displaced in their thinking the ideal notion of the "state." The concept entered the French Enlightenment as *société*, Montesquieu arrived at this opinion: "*Des sociétés de vingt à trente millions d'hommes—ce sont des montres dans la nature.*" This was an anarchical French idea, but in British formulation. Rousseau, as is well known, used this word to conceal his hatred of rules and commands issued by authority; and Karl Marx, whose pattern of thought was likewise predominantly English, merely followed suit. Lessing, as a representative of the German *Aufklärung*, employed the term *Menschengeschlecht* in the sense of "human society." Goethe, Schiller, and Herder preferred the word *Gesellschaft*, which then became a favorite expression of the German liberals, who used it to blot out of their minds the nobler but more demanding idea of the *Staat*.

England did away with the principle of the organized state, and put in its place the notion of the free private citizen. The citizen demands permission to fight alone in the ruthless struggle for existence, for this is the only way he can satisfy his Viking instincts. Buckle, Malthus, and Darwin later postulated that the basic essence of "society" was the naked struggle for existence. And they were absolutely right, at least as far as their own country and people were concerned. To be sure, in modern England this principle operates in a highly refined and perfected fashion. But evidence of a more rudimentary adherence to it can be found in the Icelandic sagas, where such behavior is obviously spontaneous and not borrowed from another culture. The forces with which William the Conqueror took England in 1066 could be called a "society" of knightly adventurers, and English trading companies have subdued and expropriated entire countries—most recently, since 1890, the inland regions of South Africa. Gradually the entire English nation assumed the characteristics of a "society." The Old Norse instinct for piracy and clever trading has, in the end, influenced the Englishman's attitude toward all of reality, including property, work, foreign peoples, and the weaker individuals and classes among his own people. The same instinct has also yielded political techniques that are extremely effective weapons in the struggle for mastery of the globe.

A concept complementary to that of "society" is the "private citizen." He represents the sum of certain positive ethical qualities which like all great ethical virtues are not acquired through training or education, but are borne in the blood and perfected after

passing through generation after generation. The peculiarly English style of politics is essentially one that involves private citizens or groups of such individuals. This, and only this, is the very meaning of parliamentary government. Cecil Rhodes was a private citizen who conquered foreign countries. The American billionaires are private citizens who rule foreign countries by means of an inferior class of professional politicians. German liberalism, on the other hand, is ethically valueless. It merely says "No!" to the state, and is unable to justify its opposition by offering equally high-minded and vigorous positive suggestions.

Among the political attitudes that prevail in Germany today, only socialism has the potentiality of inner value and integrity. Liberalism is for the simple-minded, for those who like to chat a great deal about things they can never achieve. That is how we Germans are; we cannot possibly be like the English, we can only be caricatures of them—and that we have been often enough. Every man for himself: that is an English idea. Every man for every other man: that is the Prussian way. Liberalism, however, means "the state for itself, and every man for himself." That is a formula *impossible* to follow unless one is willing to take the liberal course, which is to say one thing while being dead set against its opposite, but in the end to let the opposite take over anyway.

There are in Germany a number of unpopular and disreputable political philosophies, but none is more fervently despised than the liberal view. Liberalism, in its German form, has always stood for mental sterility, for the ignorance and incomprehension of historical necessities. It has meant the inability to cooperate with others or to make sacrifices for others. Its position has always been one of entirely negative criticism, though not as an expression of an indomitable will to change society—as manifested by Bebel's Socialists—but simply out of the desire to "be different." While our liberals have never been at a loss for "standpoints" to adopt, they have lacked the inner vitality and discipline, the confidence and purposeful vigor that are so characteristic of the English form of liberalism. They are, in fact, nothing but obstacles on our historical path.

Since Napoleonic times liberalism has captured the minds of our educated classes. Pseudo-intellectuals (Nietzsche's "cultural philistines") and ivory-tower scholars, shut off from the real world by a barrier of abstract knowledge, have been its staunchest defenders. Even the historian Mommsen, who mastered his difficult field of knowledge with true Prussian aplomb, and who recognized and admired the Prussian elements in Roman history, adopted as a member of the Assembly an uncomprehending standpoint of

opposition to Bismarck's policies. An interesting comparison could be drawn between Mommsen and the English translator and editor of his *History of Greece*, George Grote, a banker and liberal.

With rabbit-like prolificacy, our writers and professors have sired book after book and scheme after scheme in which the English concepts of the free citizen, the free personality, the people as sovereign, and of a universal, free, and progressive humanity are lifted out of the reality of English business offices and emblazoned high in the German clouds. Bismarck, whom Bruno Bauer called in 1880 a "socialist imperialist," had some interesting things to say about these scholars who mistake the world of their books for the real world. August Bebel once demonstrated his infallible instinct by soundly berating the academics who had entered his party. He felt out the anti-Prussian instinct of the German intellectual, who was secretly undermining his country's order and discipline. And time has proved him right. Since Bebel's death, "educated" Socialists have cracked the strength of the party and joined forces with our "educated" middle-class liberals. Together, the two groups are now staging in the Court Theater at Weimar a revival of the ideological drama of the Frankfurt Paulskirche, in which professors hold scholarly conversations about the wording of a paper constitution.

13

In their "splendid isolation" the English have achieved on the basis of their ethical instinct a unity, both internal and external, such as no other modern Western European people has attained. England has produced a unique form of respectable society, a class of "ladies and gentlemen" joined together by a strong sense of common interest and by uniform patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior. Since 1750 this magnificent type of society has been the model for all of modern civilization, and in France first of all. The artistic fashion known as "Empire" served as a background for this style of living. It was essentially a practical and restrained form of rococo, and it imbued this society's whole environment with elegant and refined taste. In this connection we think today particularly of the masters of the civilized portrait, Gainsborough and Reynolds.

The English were united by a common feeling of success and good fortune, unlike the Prussians, who were moved by a sense of challenge and duty. We may think of the English as Olympians of the business world at the banquet table, or as Vikings returned from distant explorations, but not as knights on the field of battle. Next to noble

parentage, wealth is the major condition for acceptance in the group; it is also the criterion for rank within the group's social structure. Wealth is the Englishman's prime virtue, his distinguishing mark, his goal and his ideal. Today, only England has what may be called social culture, although it does not possess any other, more philosophical form of culture. The English are a people of profound superficiality; we Germans, in the "land of poets and thinkers," so often display merely a superficial profundity.

There is not and cannot be a German or Prussian type of society like the English. A society made up of separate egos, lacking the unifying pathos of a common purpose and goal, always strikes us as somewhat ridiculous. In imitation of the English "club" and "banquet," our German individualists and liberals have invented the *Verein* and the *Festessen*; these are his devices for the development of "cultural solidarity."

The Prussian style of living, in contrast to all this, has produced a profound and vigorous rank-consciousness, a feeling of unity based on an ethos of work, not of leisure. It unites the members of each professional group—military, civil service, and labor—by infusing them with a pride of vocation, and dedicates them to activity that benefits all others, the totality, the state. Such a feeling of solidarity within each group finds symbolic expression in words: at the top level there are *Kamaraden*, in the middle *Kollegen*, and at the bottom, but with the same sense of pride, *Genossen*. The bond of unity at all levels is a supreme ethos of dedication, not of success. The distinguishing feature of membership is rank, not wealth. The captain is superior to the lieutenant, even though the latter may be a prince or a millionaire. The French used the term "*bourgeois*" during their Revolution to underscore the ideal of equality, but this corresponds neither to the English nor the German sense of distance in social relations. A feeling for distance is common to both Germanic peoples; we differ only in the origins of the feeling. When a German worker uses the word "*bourgeois*" he means a person who, in his opinion, has merely obtained a certain social rank without performing any real work—it is the English ideal seen from the German perspective. England has its snobs, Germany its title-seekers.

The centuries-old feeling of group solidarity in both countries has brought forth a magnificent conformity of physical and mental attitudes, in the one case a race of successful businessmen, in the other a race of workers. One important symbol of this process, albeit an external one, is the English taste in men's clothing. England has produced civilian dress in the purest sense: the uniform of the private individual. Their fashion holds unopposed sway in all of Western Europe. England has clothed the world

in its uniform, the symbol of free trade, private fortune-making, and "cant." The counterpart of this English style is the Prussian uniform. It is an emblem of public service, not of private existence. Rather than symbolizing the success gained by diligent activity it stands for that activity itself. "I am the first servant of my state," said the Prussian king whose father had made the wearing of uniforms a customary practice among the nobility. How many have fully understood the significance of the phrase "the king's mantle"?

England's fashion in men's wear is a matter of social obligation, even stricter than the specifications for uniform-wearing in the Prussian state. Whoever is anybody in England would not think of appearing before his peers in "civilian" dress, i.e., contrary to fashion and custom. But only the Englishman is capable of making a proper appearance in this "gentleman's" costume. The *Bratenrock* of the provincial German philistine is a poor copy of the English model. Beneath it the philistine German heart continues to throb for "freedom" and "human dignity." The *Bratenrock* is the symbol of the ideals of 1848, and is worn today with pride by the German socialists-gone-liberal. [7]

(7. The Frenchman, who regards Faustian drives as embarrassing, gives his creative attention to women's fashions rather than the uniforms of profession and success. In France, business and civic duty have had to give way to *l'amour*.)

To the Prussian way of thinking, the will of the individual is subsumed under the will of the totality. The officers' corps, the members of the civil service branches, August Bebel's army of workers, and ultimately the German *Volk* of 1813, 1870, and 1914 have all felt, willed, and acted as a suprapersonal unity. This is not just herd instinct; it is an expression of sublime strength and freedom, something which the outsider can never understand. Prussianism is exclusive. Even in its proletarian form it rejects the workers of other countries together with their egoistic pseudo-socialism. Servility, snobbishness—these are words for attitudes that are understood and despised only when they degenerate. The genuine Prussian despises no one; but he is himself feared.

The English, indeed the whole world, will never understand that the Prussian ethic carries with it a profound inner independence. For people of sufficient mental capacities a system of social obligations guarantees a supreme freedom of the inner life, which is not possible under a system of social privileges. A mentality such as that of General Moltke is unthinkable in England. The Englishman pays for his *practical* freedom with the loss of the other kind of freedom: he is inwardly a slave, whether as puritan, rationalist,

sensualist, or materialist. For two centuries now he has been the inventor of all philosophies that do away with inner independence. Most recently he has produced Darwinism, which makes man's entire psychic makeup dependent on material forces. Incidentally, the particularly crass form of Darwinism propagated by Büchner and Haeckel has become the *Weltanschauung* of the German philistine.

The Englishman belongs to his "society" in the spiritual sense as well. His clothing is also an expression of his uniformed conscience. He cherishes his right to act as a private citizen, yet for him there exists no such thing as private thinking. His life is governed by a unified, theologically oriented philosophy of little real content, as fashionable as frockcoat and gloves. The term "herd instinct" is appropriate here, if anywhere.

14

The German Reformation has had no inner consequences. Lutheranism was an end, not a beginning. [8] Gothic Germany was on its deathbed, but rose up one final time to perform this great, personal act. Luther himself is understandable only in the context of the Renaissance mood that prevailed in the visible Church of his time. Its public image was that of the Medici court; popes and cardinals were actually *condottieri*; Church administration systematically robbed the faithful of their private fortunes; religious faith itself was a formal matter, and the proportion of penance to sin had become just as much a question of taste as the relationship between column and architrave. The Northern Gothic sensibility reacted angrily to these developments, but the ensuing revolt was in fact naïve and peasant-like; it produced a Church minus the papacy, and Gothic faith minus the clever emphasis on formalities. It stopped far short of the innermost core of the Church's institutional strength. The revolt arose from the spirit of negation; its fruitful passion could not endure for very long.

(8. *The Decline of the West*, II, 296.)

In its wake came the flourishing spirit of the Baroque, when the Spanish created the Counter-Reformation and the contentious Jesuit Order. This was a truly creative and affirmative movement, and it brought Catholicism to new heights of vital power. Following this, in the seventeenth century, the new Northern nations set about creating new forms of religious life using the limitless possibilities offered by Christianity. Common to all these attempts was the rigorous will to action, a far cry from the leisurely culture of Florence and the sterile, self-castigating dialectic of Pascal and the French

Jansenists.

The results were revolutionary Independentism in England and, under its influence, the Pietistic movement in Swabia and Prussia. Pietism, with its quiet persuasiveness, had a momentous effect on the Prussian type that began to emerge at the time. It helped produce individuals who, on the outside, performed obedient and self-effacing service for their state, but whose inner life was free of the limitations imposed by worldly existence—people with a tender, profound abundance of emotion and genuine inner simplicity. Queen Louise, William I, Bismarck, Moltke, and Hindenburg are prime examples of this type, persons whose piety has virtually been free of dogma. They have concealed their piety from others, feeling that it is best exemplified by dutiful public action and not by public confessions.

The English Independent, on the other hand, was externally free, just as his Norman forebears were free. He fashioned for himself a pure lay religion using the Bible as fundament, granting to each individual the privilege of interpreting the text as he wished. Whatever the Independent undertook was therefore, as it were by definition, morally correct. The Englishman never entertains a single doubt on this score. Success is a proof of Divine Providence. While the Pietist regarded himself as solely responsible for the morality of his behavior, the Independent placed this responsibility with God. No one has the power to alter such deep convictions. Rationalizations can always be devised for compulsive desires, and, should compulsion lead to decay and decline, that is simply the inevitability of fate.

With truly remarkable self-assurance the instinct of the English formed its own religious consciousness from the sterile, doctrinaire, formalistic, and thus typically French teachings of Calvin. In the minds of Cromwell and his soldiers the doctrine of predestination meant that the nation was the Community of Saints, the English nation in particular was the Chosen People. Every act was justified before God simply because it was possible to perform; every guilt, every brutality, indeed every crime committed on the path to success was "predestined by God" and thus He alone was responsible. On the basis of this boundless self-confidence and ruthlessness, England has become the mighty nation that it is.

Although Pietism exerted its most powerful influence in the German-speaking areas of Europe, it was hardly a direct expression of a German race. It definitely had impractical and provincial traits. It brought small circles of believers together in a spirit of intimate

congeniality. For them life became an ideal of service; one's meager portion of earthly existence amid toil and misery took on meaning only in the framework of some higher duty.

Yet such a duty had to be imposed, and this was the superb accomplishment, partly willed and partly unintentional, of the great Hohenzollerns, the heirs to the knightly ideal of the East European colonies. From amid all the blemishes of princely and urban egotism, from beneath all the weakness of royalty, there emerged the idea of Old Prussia, the one great idea that has come forward in Germany since that time. It has won a place in the souls of the best Germans ever since, even when their hearts have been opposed to it.

The Pietism of Swabia eventually degenerated into middle-class sentimentality, or gave up its best minds—Hegel, for example—to the North, where the Old Prussian ideal brought forth a new type, the hard-thinking proponent of this religious sensibility. A profound contempt for mere wealth, luxury, convenience, pleasure, and prosperity characterizes the Prussian spirit of these centuries. Here we find the germ of the later ideals of military and public service. All these comforts are incompatible with the knightly sense of dignity and obligation. But for the English they are gifts of God; comfort, for them, is proof of Divine Providence, and they accept it with devout gratitude.

A sharper contrast is hardly imaginable. Work, for the pious Independent, is a consequence of the Fall; the Prussian regards it as a Divine Commandment. Two interpretations of the nature of work are here at odds with each other: work as business and as vocation. Let us contemplate the sound and sense of these words. "Vocation" means "calling": a call from God Himself. In this view, work is in itself morally good. To the Englishman and American, moral success is contained in the *goal* of work, in success, money, wealth. Work is merely a path toward these goals, to be chosen with special consideration of its comfort and security. Obviously, conflict is unavoidable on the path to success, but the Puritan conscience can justify any means. Whoever stands in the way is simply pushed aside—individuals, whole classes, whole nations. That, after all, is the will of God. It is easy to see how such ideas, once applied in real life, can bring a nation to the very greatest heights of achievement.

In order to overcome man's inborn lethargy, the Prussian socialist ethic maintains that the chief aim of life is not happiness. "Do your duty," it says, "by doing your work." The

English capitalist ethic says, "Get rich, and then you won't have to work any more." There is doubtless something provocative about this latter motto. It is tempting, it appeals to very basic human instincts. The working masses of ambitious nations have understood it well. As late as the nineteenth century it produced the Yankee type with his irresistible practical optimism. The other motto is forbidding. It is for the few who wish to inject it into the community and thus force it upon the masses. The first maxim is for a stateless country, for egoists and Viking types with the urge for constant personal combat, such as we find in English sportsmanship. It implies extreme independence of mind, the right to gain happiness at the expense of all others, as long as one's strength holds out—in other words, scientific Darwinism. The other, however, is an expression of the socialist idea in all its profundity: the will to power, the struggle for happiness, but for the happiness of the totality, not of the individual. In this sense Frederick William I, and not Marx, was the first conscious socialist. The universal socialist movement had its start with this exemplary personality. Kant, with his categorical imperative, provided the movement with a formula.

In the final phase of Western European culture two great schools of philosophy were founded, the English school of egoism and sensualism around 1700, and the Prussian school of idealism around 1800. They express what these nations are, as ethical, religious, political, and economic entities.

Philosophy in itself is nothing—a collection of words, a series of books. Nor is it either true or false, in itself. It is language of the life of a great mind. For the Englishman, Hobbes is speaking the truth when he sets up the "selfish system" of egoism and the optimistic Whig philosophy of the common good ("the greatest happiness for the greatest number"). And Shaftesbury also speaks the truth, for the Englishman, with his portrait of the gentleman, the Tory, the sovereign personality living life to the fullest. Yet for us Kant is just as truthful with his contempt for "happiness" and usefulness, his categorical imperative of duty. Hegel, in our view, speaks the truth when, with his powerful sense of reality, he places the concrete destiny of individual nations, and not the well-being of "human society," at the center of his historical deliberations. Mandeville, in his *Fable of the Bees*, declares that the egoism of the individual is the driving force of the state; Fichte says it is the obligation to work. Which is the highest goal—freedom *by means of* wealth, or freedom *from* wealth? Ought we to prefer Kant's categorical imperative: "Behave as if the precepts governing your behavior were to become law for all," or Bentham's "Behave in such a way that you will have success"?

Vikings and knights—both of these types live on the antithesis of the English and Prussian moral systems. The philosophical teachings that have since arisen out of these separate worlds of sensibility, the progeny of the philosophers of both nations, all bear the same distinguishing marks. The Englishman is a utilitarian, in fact the only one in Western Europe. He cannot be otherwise, and whenever he attempts to deny this strongest inner drive of his the result is the phenomenon that has become famous as "cant"—it can be found in its purest form in the letters of Lord Chesterfield. The English are a nation of theologians. Their great revolution took on primarily religious forms, and following the abolition of the state no language except theological language remained with which to express the concerns of communal life. And so it has been: a biblical interpretation of questionable business dealings can ease the conscience and greatly increase ambition and initiative. Out of consideration for the chances of success in the personal struggle for existence, the theological mentality tends to avoid naming by its proper name the true goal of all activity: wealth.

If there is a similar conflict within the Prussian atmosphere, then it is concerned with position and rank. In many cases one is tempted to call it excessive ambition and title-seeking. In principle, however, it is a manifestation of the will to take on higher responsibility because one feels ready to do so.

15

Among all the peoples of Western Europe these two are distinguished by a rigid social hierarchy. This is a sign of their drive for dynamic activity. It puts every individual in the precise location in which he is needed most. Such an ordering is the result of a wholly unconscious and involuntary conservation of energies. It is natural and proper to a particular people only; no other people, no man of genius or ever so powerful will can possibly re-create it. It is an expression of the people's fundamental moral and ethical attitude. Centuries are required for the clarification and realization of this special feeling for social structure. The Viking spirit and the spirit of the medieval knights are apparent here also: the ethos of success and the ethos of duty. The English people is structured along lines of wealth and poverty, the Prussian along lines of command and obedience. The meaning of class distinctions is thus completely different in these two countries. In an association of independent private citizens the lowest class is the group that has

nothing; in a true state the lowest class is the group that has nothing to say. In England democracy means the possibility that everyone can get rich; in Prussia it means that the existing ranks are open to everyone. Within the structure of Prussian society the individual receives his place according to his ability, not according to the demands of tradition.

France (and this means Florence as well) has never had a natural and instinctive class structure of this sort, not even before 1789. Social anarchy was the rule; there existed arbitrary privileged groups of various sizes and composition, and no firm system of relationships among them. Besides the class of court nobility there were the judicial nobles; there were types such as the *abbé* and the *tenants généraux*, and fine distinctions such as those between factions of the urban merchant class. This lack of hierarchic social structure existed in France from the very beginning, and is an outcome of the typically French penchant for *égalité*. In England nobility gradually came to mean primarily the nobility of wealth, in Prussia the nobility of military achievement. The French noble class has never attained such a uniformity of social significance. The English Revolution was directed against the state, i.e., against the "Prussian" sense of order in the Church and in public life. The German Revolution fought against the "English" system of wealth and poverty, which originated in industrial and commercial developments of the nineteenth century and had become the focal point for anti-Prussian and antisocialist tendencies. The French Revolution was not directed against a foreign, and therefore immoral, order; it combatted order per se. That is democracy, French style.

Here, finally, we can grasp the profound ethical meaning of the slogans "capitalism" and "socialism." They represent two systems of social stratification, one that is based on wealth and the uninhibited struggle for success, and one that is founded on authority and legislation. The Englishman would never accept commands from someone poorer than himself, nor would the Prussian ever pay homage to wealth for its own sake. Yet even the class-conscious worker in the erstwhile party of August Bebel obeyed the party leadership with the same sureness of instinct as the English laborer respects a millionaire as a recipient of divine favors. Proletarian class conflict is incapable of affecting such deeply rooted attitudes. The entire English labor movement is based on the distinction between rich and poor within the working class itself. Under such conditions it is impossible to imagine anything like the iron discipline of a Prussian-style party of millions.

"Unequal distribution of wealth" is the typically English proletarian formula, used repeatedly by Shaw. Though it sounds ridiculous to us, it is precisely appropriate to the ideal of living professed by the civilized Viking. With due respect to the magnificent flowering of this ideal in the Yankee type, we might speak of two forms of socialism existing in the Anglo-Saxon world and in Germany: socialism for the billionaires and socialism for civil servants. As an example of the first type we can point to Andrew Carnegie, who first transformed a large amount of public funds into a private fortune, only to turn around and distribute it with sovereign gesture among public enterprises. His pronouncement, "Whoever dies poor dies in dishonor," implies a high regard for the will to power over the totality. This kind of private socialism, in extreme cases simply the dictatorial administration of public monies, ought not to be confused with the socialism of true public servants and administrators (who themselves can be quite poor). Examples of this latter form of socialism are the otherwise quite different personalities of Bismarck and Bebel.

George Bernard Shaw is today the prime exponent of "capitalistic" socialism, which still sees wealth and poverty as the controlling factors in the economic sphere. "Poverty is the greatest of evils and the worst of crimes" (*Major Barbara*). He preaches against the "cowardly masses that cling to the feeble prejudice that it is better to be good than rich." The worker should try to get rich—this was the policy of the English trade unions right from the beginning. That is why there has never been a socialism in the proletarian sense in England, from Owen to Shaw—it was impossible to distinguish from the capitalism of the lower class.

For us, the controlling factor of society is the interplay of command and obedience in a strictly ordered community, be it state, party, officers' corps, or civil service. The member of any one of these communities is a servant of that community. *Travailler pour le roi de Prusse*—that means doing one's duty without giving oneself up to corrupt notions of private profit. The wages paid to Prussian officers and civil servants since the days of Frederick William I have been ridiculously small when compared to the sums required to belong even to the middle class in England. But the Prussians have worked harder, more selflessly, and more honestly. The real compensation for this work is rank. It was the same in August Bebel's party. This workers' state-within-a-state did not want to get rich, it wanted to rule. During their enforced strikes these workers starved often enough, but in the interest of gaining power, not for higher wages. They struck in support of a philosophy that was supposedly or actually opposed to that of their employers. They

struck for a moral principle, and a defeat in their battle could ultimately mean a moral victory.

English workers were completely unable to understand this. They were not poor, and during their strikes they accepted the hundreds of thousands of pounds offered to them by German workers, who imagined that their comrades across the Channel were fighting for the same cause. Thus the November Revolution in Germany was a case of insubordination in the workers' party as well as in the armed forces. The sudden transformation of the disciplined labor movement into a wild struggle for higher wages, fought by single groups independent of each other, was a victory for the English idea. Its failure was underscored by the fact that a new, highly disciplined organization reappeared in the Army. The only really talented personality to appear on the scene was a soldier. The German Revolution will continue in this manner, as a series of successes and failures of military authority.

16

The same contrast prevails in the economic thought of both countries. Political economists have committed the fateful error of thinking solely in materialistic terms. Instead of considering the multiplicity of economic instincts in the world, they always speak in general terms of the economic stratification of "man," of "the modern age," and of "the present." When using such language the scientific discipline of political economics displays all the shortcomings of its English origins. For it had its start among modern Englishmen, with all their self-confidence and lack of psychological tact. It became their only "philosophy"; it corresponded to their sense of mercantile competition, success, and personal gain. With this purely English interpretation of economic affairs they have infected the minds of the Continent since the eighteenth century.

The Teutonic knights that settled and colonized the eastern borderlands of Germany in the Middle Ages had a genuine feeling for the authority of the state in economic matters, and later Prussians have inherited that feeling. The individual is informed of his economic obligations by Destiny, by God, by the state, or by his own talent—these are simply different words for the same fact. Rights and privileges of producing and consuming goods are equally distributed. The aim is not ever greater wealth for the individual or for every individual, but rather the flourishing of the totality. Thus Frederick William I and his successors colonized the marshlands in the East, regarding

this as their divine mission. The modern German laborer, with his fine sense of reality, has thought and acted along precisely these lines, although the theories of Karl Marx have obscured for him the close connections between his own aims and those of the Old Prussians.

The pirate instinct of the insular nation has a wholly different understanding of economic affairs. There economic activity is considered a matter of combat and booty—ultimately, the individual's share in the booty. The Norman state, which developed a refined technique of amassing money reserves, was based entirely on the piracy principle. The feudal system was introduced as a magnificent and elegant means to the same piratical end. The barons exploited the land apportioned to them, and were in turn exploited by the duke. The goal of all was wealth. God bestowed it on the venturesome. The modern science of accounting had its start with these sedentary pirates. The words "check," "account," "control," "receipt," "record," and the modern term for the English treasury, "Exchequer," originated in the accounting chambers of the Norman Duke Robert le Diable (died 1035). [9] When England was conquered in 1066 the Norman barons expropriated the Saxons, their tribal relatives, in the same way. Their descendants have inherited their outlook.

(9. *The Decline of the West*, II, 372.)

The same style is still apparent today in every English trade company and every American trust. Their aim is not to work steadily to raise the entire nation's standard of living, it is rather to produce private fortunes by the use of private capital, to overcome private competition, and to exploit the public through the use of advertising, price wars, artificial stimulation of the consumer, and strict control of the ratio of supply and demand. When the Englishman speaks of national wealth he means the number of millionaires in the country. As Friedrich Engels wrote, "Nothing is more foreign to the English mentality than solidarity." Even in sports and recreation the Englishman sees a test of personal, and especially physical, superiority. He engages in sports for the sake of national and world records; he enjoys prize-fighting, a sport that is closely related to his economic habits and is quite alien to the minds of gymnasts in Germany.

All this proves that the economic existence of England is synonymous with business, i.e., a refined form of piracy. The English instinct regards all commodities as booty, items to be manipulated in order to get rich. The English machine industry was created in the interest of commerce and trade, its chief aim being the production of cheap goods. When

English agriculture began to limit wage cuts by fixing its own prices, it was simply abandoned in the interest of commerce. The battles between capital and labor in English industry in 1850 were concerned with the commodity "labor"—one side wanted to get it cheap, the other wanted a high price for it. Everything that Marx has to say with grudging admiration about "capitalistic society" refers principally to English, and not to a universal, economic instinct.

The sublime term "free trade" is part and parcel of Viking economics. The Prussian, i.e., socialist term would be "state control of the exchange of goods." This assigns to trade a subordinate rather than a dominant role within the complex of economic activity. We can understand why Adam Smith harbored a hatred of the state and the "cunning beasts called statesmen." Indeed, government officials must have the same effect on tradesmen as policemen on burglars and naval cruisers on the crews of pirate ships.

Likewise characteristic of the Englishman is his overestimation of the importance of capital sums for economic health. The materialist finds it impossible to understand that the English concept of capital is psychologically, and therefore practically (the practical life is, after all, an expression of psychic conditions) different from the French system of private means and the Prussian concept of administrative funds. The English have never been good at psychology. They have always considered their own ideas as logically binding on "mankind." In fact, all of modern political economics rests on the basic error of equating economic life everywhere in the world with an exclusively English interest in business, and the error is committed even by those who reject the theories of the Manchester school. Marxism, in the very act of negating this theory, has adopted its patterns quite completely. This explains the grotesque fiasco of all predictions concerning the outbreak of the World War; it was said that the collapse of world economy would follow within a few months.

English-style capitalism is the only true counterpart to Marxist socialism. The regulation of economic affairs by the state, a Prussian idea, transformed German capitalism instinctively into a socialist economic pattern. The first step in this process was the protective tariff legislation of 1879. The large syndicates were, in effect, economic states within the state. They represent "capitalism's first practical and systematic large-scale attempt, although it was not consciously planned, to understand the mysteries of its own techniques and to gain control of social forces which up to then had been regarded as natural and unfathomable, requiring passive, blind submission" (Lensch, *Drei Jahre*

Weltrevolution).

Nevertheless, German liberalism—the Englishman within us—still worships free trade, not just the freedom of the human spirit. In doing so, the "liberal" German cuts his silliest figure. Because he has misunderstood and tended to favor certain Viking instincts, he has "summarily" rejected the authoritarian state, the suprapersonal will, and the suppression of the individual in favor of the totality. By adopting this attitude he has acted, or so he believes, "metaphysically." That is the belief of "educated" Germans who lack practical experience: the professors, the poets and thinkers, all those who write profusely and never *do* anything. They cannot, of course, understand or morally accept the other form of liberalism, the pirate principle of free trade with its every-man-for-himself philosophy. They simply have never grasped the connection between the abstract notion of the autonomous self and the practical application of this notion in the offices of the large industrial and commercial firms. Therefore German stock-market liberalism has hitched the German professor to its own wagon. It has sent him to the political meetings to talk and be talked to. It has put him in the editor's chair, where with philosophical acumen he has turned out article after profound article, conveying to a gullible public (for whom the newspaper has long since replaced the Bible as the source of Truth) political opinions that were commercially desirable to maintain. It has sent him to the legislative assembly to say "Aye" and "Nay," thereby assuring for commercial interests, which never cared anyway for theories and constitutions, the creation of more and more opportunities for bribery and piracy.

This English-German liberalism now exerts a business-like control over practically all the important German newspapers, the entire educated class, and the liberal party. But the professors are not aware of this. In England the liberal is a liberal through and through; he is ethically free, and for this reason also economically free, and is quite conscious of the connection. The German liberal has two discrete personalities, the ethical and the commercial. The one personality thinks, the other acts and controls; only the latter personality is aware of the mutual relationship—and finds it amusing. [10]

(10. *The Decline of the West*, II, 402 ff.)

Thus we find two great economic principles opposed to each other in the modern world. The Viking has become a free-tradesman; the Teutonic knight is now an administrative official. There can be no reconciliation. Each of these principles is proclaimed by a German people, Faustian men *par excellence*. Neither can accept a restriction of its will,

and neither can be satisfied until the whole world has succumbed to its particular idea. This being the case, war will be waged until one side gains final victory. Is world economy to be worldwide exploitation, or worldwide organization? Are the Caesars of the coming empire to be billionaires or universal administrators? Shall the population of the earth, so long as this empire of Faustian civilization holds together, be subjected to cartels and trusts, or to men such as those envisioned in the closing pages of Goethe's *Faust*, Part II? Truly, the destiny of the world is at stake.

French economic thought has been just as provincial as that of the Renaissance. Provincialism is characteristic of the mercantile system under Louis XIV, of the physiocratic school of Turgot during the Enlightenment, but also of the socialistic planning of Fourier, who aimed at dividing "society" into small economic units to be called "phalansteries" (cf. the late novels of Zola). Only the three genuinely Faustian peoples possess the inner drive to create an economic system for the whole world. The knightly Spaniards made an attempt when they incorporated the New World into their empire. As true soldiers they refrained from theorizing about their economic expansion, but by broadening geographical and political horizons they prepared the way for a new kind of economic thought.

The first country to formulate a theory about its economic activity was England, which created the notion of "political economics" to explain its own practice of universal exploitation. As businessmen the English were clever enough to realize the power of the written word over the most book-conscious nation of all times. And they persuaded their nation that the interests of its pirates were those of the entire world. They succeeded in combining the notion of freedom with that of free trade.

The third and last of these Faustian peoples, like the Spanish a true military nation, lacked the practical shrewdness of the English. Prussia's accomplishments within its own economic sphere received in theory, with the aid of the other-worldly German philosophy of idealism, the exalted title of socialism. But the true creators of Prussian economic life were not able to recognize their creations in this theoretical guise. Thus there arose a bitter conflict between two unnecessarily hostile factions: one made up of theorists, and another in charge of practice. We have now reached the stage where it is imperative for each of the sides to come to terms with the other and to accept the task that faces both. Shall the world be ruled by capitalists or by socialists? This question cannot be decided by two countries in competition. It has become an internal question for each and every

country. As soon as the weapons used against foreign states are put aside, they will be raised again in civil war. Today, in every country, there is an English and a Prussian economic party. And when the classes and factions are tired of warfare, individual mastertypes will keep it up in the name of principle. Amid the great conflicts of the Classical age between the Apollonian and Dionysian principles, the Peloponnesian War developed out of a war between Athens and Sparta into a contest between oligarchy and demos in all cities. The decisions reached at the battles of Philippi and Actium had to be fought over again in the time of the Gracchi, filling the Roman Forum with blood. In the Chinese world the corresponding war between the Tsin and Tsu Empires, between the philosophies of *tao* and *li*, lasted for a century. In Egypt great mysteries of the same kind are concealed beneath the mystery of the Hyksos period, the hegemony of eastern barbarians. Were they summoned, or did they come because the Egyptians had become desperately exhausted by civil strife? Will the Western world assign the same role to the Russians? Our trivial peacemongers can have their talk about reconciliation among nations; they will never reconcile *ideas*. The Viking spirit and the spirit of the knights will fight it out to the finish, even though the world may emerge weary and broken from the bloodbath of this century. [11]

(11. *The Decline of the West*, II, 414 ff.)

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This brings us to the political aspects of the English-Prussian antithesis. Politics is the highest and most powerful dimension of all historical existence. World history is the history of states; the history of states is the history of wars. [12] Ideas, when they press for decisions, assume the form of political units: countries, peoples, or parties. They must be fought over not with words but with weapons. Economic warfare becomes military warfare between countries or within countries. Religious associations such as Jewry and Islam, Huguenots and Mormons, constitute themselves as countries when it becomes a matter of their continued existence or their success. Everything that proceeds from the innermost soul to become flesh or fleshly creation demands a sacrifice of flesh in return. Ideas that have become blood demand blood. War is the eternal pattern of higher human existence, and countries exist for war's sake; they are signs of readiness for war. And even if a tired and blood-drained humanity desired to do away with war, like the citizens of the Classical world during its final centuries, like the Indians and Chinese of today, it

would merely exchange its role of war-wager for that of the object about and with which others would wage war. Even if a Faustian universal harmony could be attained, masterful types on the order of late Roman, late Chinese, or late Egyptian Caesars would battle each other for this Empire—for the possession of it, if its final form were capitalistic; or for the highest rank in it, if it should become socialistic.

(12. *The Decline of the West*, II, 361 ff., 416 ff.)

An inseparable element of any political pattern is, however, the people that has created this pattern, that bears it in its blood, that alone is capable of embodying it. Taken by itself, a political pattern is an empty concept. Anyone can speak its "language." But no one can truly re-create it or imbue it with genuine reality. In politics as in other ways, there is no choice. Each culture and each single people within a culture arranges its affairs and fulfills its destiny according to patterns that are congenital and essentially immutable. A philosophical debate about "monarchy" or "republic" is really a quarrel about words. The monarchic form of government *an sich* is just as unreal a concept as the cloud form *an sich*. An ancient Classical "republic" and a Western European "republic" are two incommensurate things. The ultimate meaning of great political crises is something other than a change in the form of government. When a crisis elicits the cry of "monarchy" or "republic" it is really nothing more than a cry, the verbal cue in a melodramatic scene, although it is the only thing most people in a given epoch can understand and be inspired by. In reality, following such ecstatic moments a people will always return to its own political pattern, the essential quality of which can almost never be expressed in popular language. The instincts of a vigorous race are so strong that they can come to grips with any form of government that historical accident may put in their path, and mold it to their own purposes. And when this takes place no one is conscious that the political pattern in question has been realized in name only. The true political shape of any given country is not to be found in the wording of its constitution; it is, rather, the unwritten and unconscious laws according to which the constitution is put into effect. Without reference to the particular nations under discussion, the words "republic," "parliamentarism," and "democracy" are meaningless.

Accordingly, the "parliamentary form of government" is a specifically English phenomenon, unthinkable except as the product of the Viking character of the English, their insular situation, and the centuries-long process by which they have combined a certain method of conducting business affairs with a whole social ethic. To attempt to

imitate it is futile. "Parliamentarism" in Germany is either nonsense or treason. England has succeeded in poisoning all countries to which it has offered the "medicine" of its own form of government. And conversely: should the final development of Western civilization, i.e., the civilization that now rules the world as a whole, make this form of government impossible, England would surely lose its political viability as a nation. English socialism would commit treason if it tried to do away with Parliament. For England is a free society of private individuals, to whom insularity has offered the opportunity of abolishing the "state" and substituting for this purely formal idea a series of wars, lasting through 1916 and waged by soldiers and sailors hired away from foreign countries. This stateless parliamentarism presupposes a firm two-party system, in which the parties must be related to each other in a very special way with respect to organization, practice, interests, moods, customs, and spirit.

What the English call "parties"—the word means different things in different countries—were originally groupings of nobility, which became separated during the revolutions of 1642 and especially 1688 along lines of the Anglican and Puritan faiths. This means, of course, that the basic motive for their separation was a difference in ethical outlook. The nautical Norse ancestors, of whom we read in the Icelandic sagas, bequeathed different traits to each new group. The Tories inherited their pride in noble blood, their aristocratic respect for inherited authority, for landed property, for military feats and bloody conflict. In the Whigs we can discern the Norseman's delight in piracy and plunder, his pursuit of quick and easy triumphs with abundant portable booty, and his esteem for cunning and cleverness rather than physical strength. Today's English imperialist and free-tradesman is the end product of a centuries-long process during which these basic Norse traits have been sharpened and refined, thus resulting in an ever more careful breeding within the actual ruling class. The democratization of England in the nineteenth century was only apparent; in reality the nation continued to be led, as in Prussia, by a minority possessing unified, firm capabilities for practical action. The sublime exercise of this will and this practical talent continued right through to the end of the last war.

Business—in the piratical sense—is the sum and substance of this politics, no matter whether Tories or Whigs are the bosses at any given moment. Both types are, of course, "gentlemen" first and foremost, members of the same distinguished society, displaying the same admirable conformity of social attitudes. For this reason it is possible for Englishmen, though at times they may engage in bitter hostilities against each other, to

settle momentous disputes by means of private conversation and private correspondence. Thus they are able to get many things done solely on the basis of the end justifying the means. In any other country such disputes would founder on the hubbub of clumsy, legalistic popular assemblies. The English party leader goes about his nation's business as a private individual. When he meets with political success he declares that "England" was behind his policies. When his policies, though successful, involve dealings that are diplomatically or morally embarrassing, he resigns from his post, whereupon the nation admonishes him with puritanical severity for his lack of manners, and by applauding his resignation rejects the uncomfortable consequences of his actions. Yet all the while the nation thanks God for the grace He has bestowed on England by this politician's successful work.

Such behavior is feasible only if both parties are of the same mind on essential issues. It is true that the Tories brought about Napoleon's downfall and took him off to St. Helena after he had spread Whig ideas over the Continent. But Fox was not at all an unconditional opponent of war with Napoleon. And when in 1815 Robert Peel led Cobden's free-trade system to final victory, thus preferring the economic subjugation of the world to its transformation into a military protectorate, the Tories readily recognized in the Whig system some of their own principles. Tory politics during the reign of Edward VII caused the World War; yet the Whigs, opponents of the war, accepted this possibility tacitly by welcoming "liberal imperialists" into their ranks.

This kind of activity is the true "parliamentarism," and not the worthless and ineffective externals that are considered as "parliamentarism" in Germany today, such as the doling out of ministers' portfolios to party leaders or the exposing of the parliamentary process to the widest publicity. In the British system, the final decisions of the party leaders are a secret even to the parliamentary majority. The publicly visible activities of the politicians are *fable convenue*, and the exemplary tact of both parties sees to it that the illusion of "government by the people" is rigorously upheld in reverse proportion to the actual meaningfulness of the term.

The idea that parties, above all English parties, are segments of the people at large is dilettantish nonsense. In reality there can be no such thing as popular government or government by the people, except in political units comprising a few villages. Only hopelessly liberal Germans still cling to this notion. In all places where English political systems have penetrated, the government actually lies in the hands of a very few men

who, with dictatorial arbitrariness, exert their power within the party on the basis of their experience, their superior will, and their tactical skill.

The question therefore arises concerning the relationship between people and party. What meaning can elections have in the modern Western nations? Who does the electing? And whom or what does he elect? The sense of the English system is that the people elect a *party*, and not just a "representative" of its will and opinions, for these are more or less influenced by the party leadership in any case. The parties are very old and firmly established institutions, whose business it is to conduct the political affairs of the entire English nation. The individual Englishman realizes the practicality of such an institution, and from election to election he supports the party whose declared intentions correspond most closely to his own opinions and interests. He also realizes the unimportance of the individual "representative" appointed quite arbitrarily by the party. Indeed, the phrase "fatuous electorate" fits the average representative better than the voting mass itself. It is significant that English workers have quite often voted for an employer nominated by one of the age-old parties rather than for a workman candidate. In each case, after sober appraisal of the situation, they have regarded it as more advantageous to vote in this way. In America, where the genuine Englishman no longer stands behind the system, the custom now is for the parties to deliver one set of promises to the people, and another to the trust that fills the party coffers; the first set is published, the second is kept.

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We have now broached the decisive question of how the job of politics is paid for in countries that have the parliamentary form of government. The naïve democratic enthusiasts simply do not notice that in this day and age, when all nations, with or without their consent, are led by a politics of commercial interests, the question of finances is crucial, not to the spirit of the constitution but to the much more important spirit of its practical application. Guileless enthusiasts probably think in terms of representatives' salaries, but that is an irrelevant matter. Whereas the monarchs of the Baroque age disposed of state income as they saw fit, modern political parties merely administrate and allocate these funds. This being the case, it is purely a question of expediency whether big business decides to mollify the electorate, the representatives, or the party leadership itself. The first of these alternatives fits the pattern of English parliamentarism, and in the eighteenth century was practiced in the grand style as vote

purchasing. In the course of time this method has become superfluous. Tories and Whigs from upper-class groups having clearly defined social attitudes are now the spokesmen for purely commercial interests, and their sponsors differ only occasionally with respect to the most advantageous form and moral rationale for a particular undertaking. Interest groups once divided have gradually merged under the aegis of the democratized parties.

In anarchic France, where clubs and private associations of rapidly changing number and strength assume the names of parties, the custom has been to pay the representatives, either in cash or by subtler means. The socialist representatives are just as receptive to these techniques as all the others. Often enough, a Frenchman sets out on a political career with the certainty that after a few years he can buy a castle.

In Germany, where the parties approach the people with ideological programs, liberalism has had to do favors for the stock exchange, while heavy industry has gained control of the nationalistic wing. Heavy industry and the stock exchange pay for political agitation and also for a favorable press (partly through advertisement contracts). If the Weimar Constitution remains in effect even for just a few years, representatives' posts favorable to certain commercial interests will be available for a set price. The very first elections for the Weimar Assembly revealed the beginnings of such practices.

That democracy and universal suffrage are reliable tools of capitalism has been proved in all countries that have adopted these methods on the English model. While the liberal professor hails the Constitution of Weimar as the fulfillment of his dreams, the capitalist liberal welcomes it as the simplest and probably cheapest way to subject politics to the business office and the state to the grafters.

All this characterizes the hegemony of the Viking spirit over Western civilization, which up to now has been largely English civilization. The form in which the essentially nontransferable parliamentarism of England has insisted itself upon the Continent and gradually the whole world is the "constitution." It has made criticism of the existing government an integral part of government itself. But the stateless character of government that evolved within English society have given all new constitutions based on the English model a definite antistate tendency. The result has been, on the one hand, the creation of pseudo-parties that have vainly attempted the English technique of putting executive power in the hands of the party leadership. On the other hand an "opposition" has appeared on the scene, but it is a destructive rather than a constructive opposition because of the constant friction between the group in power and the party principle, or

among the parties themselves as a result of their widely divergent conceptions of party privilege. Mirabeau, the cleverest mind in France at the time it surrendered to the Viking idea, would certainly, had he lived longer, have returned to absolutism in order to save his country from the pseudo-parliamentarism of the sovereign clubs. The word "intrigue" expresses quite fully the attitude assumed by the anarchic French, in place of the careful strategy of the English, to make such methods conform to their way of life.

Consequently, the most practicable form of anarchy, instituted now and again in France to achieve amazing but ephemeral successes, has been a kind of despotism-of-the-moment. This is the case with Mazarin and Richelieu, and since 1789 it has been the secret goal of even the smallest political clubs. Its classic expression was the dictatorship of a foreign soldier, Napoleon.

Machiavelli, amid the confusion of Renaissance politics, put his hopes on Cesare Borgia to achieve something quite similar. Of all Western nations, France and Italy have not brought forth a single political idea. The state of Louis XIV, like Napoleon's empire, was an isolated incident, not a durable system. As an organic form capable of development, the absolute monarchy of the Baroque age was a Habsburg and not a Bourbon creation. From Philip II to Metternich, the house of Habsburg set the style for the governmental practices of nearly all courts and cabinets; the court of the *roi soleil* made its impression solely by costume and ceremony. Proof of this is Napoleon's very Renaissance-like bearing and appearance. Only in Florence and Paris was a successful military officer able to play such a non-traditional role and to institute such a fantastic and transitory type of state. In fact, there was no typical governmental system in France. Rousseau, the theoretician of political anarchy, derived his concept of the social contract from the firmly established "society" of England, which functioned politically with absolute instinctual confidence. The social contract idea ultimately required dictatorship as an occasional and arbitrary means of rescuing society from the confusion of individual wills. In the event of a revolution Napoleon could have become prime minister in England, field marshal in Prussia, and both at once in Spain—with full dictatorial power. Only in France and Italy is he conceivable in the costume of Charlemagne.

In Prussia, however, there existed a true state in the most exacting sense of the word. In Prussia there were, strictly speaking, no private individuals. Every single person who lived in this system, which functioned with the precision of a good machine, was an integral member of that system. For this reason the task of administration could not be assigned to private individuals, as the parliamentary system prescribes. Administration of

public funds was an official function, and the politicians responsible for it were state officials, servants of the commonwealth. In England business and politics were synonymous; in France the swarm of professional politicians called into office by the constitution had become hirelings of the business interests. In Prussia the purely professional politician has always been a disreputable figure.

When, therefore, the democratization of government became unavoidable in the nineteenth century, the English pattern had to be shunned since it was contrary to the Prussian style. Here, democracy could not mean private freedom, for that was tantamount to commercial license and would have led to a form of private politics that would use the state as a tool. The knightly ideal of "all for all" underwent a modern reinterpretation—but not in the sense of forming parties that reached down to the masses every few years, giving them the privilege of either voting for a party-endorsed candidate or not voting at all, while the party itself, if it was in the "opposition," reached upward to interfere with the work of government. Rather, the "all for all" principle took the form in Prussia of assigning to every individual, depending on his practical, moral, and intellectual abilities, a certain measure of command and obedience. That is to say, each citizen was allotted a very personal rank and degree of responsibility, and like an official post it was revocable.

This was the *Räte*system as planned a century ago by Baron von Stein. It was a genuinely Prussian idea, based on the principles of selectivity, co-responsibility, and professional loyalty. In the meantime, however, it has been forced in thoroughly Marxian fashion into the miasma of class egoism. Today it is an exact mirror-image of the picture drawn by Marx of the piratical English capitalist class, the Vikings who operated outside the limits of state control. It is a free-trade system, English through and through, but turned upside down: the working classes are now the "society." That is Bentham, not Kant.

Stein and his Kantian advisors wished to organize the occupational groups. In a country where work should be the universal duty and the meaning of life itself, individuals will differ not in wealth but in accomplishment. Thus Stein envisioned local professional guilds, arranged according to the relative importance of each occupation in the society as a whole. He wanted a representative hierarchy, capped by the State Council; mandates at all levels were to be revocable at any time. His plans called for neither organized parties, career politicians, nor periodic elections. To be sure, Stein never expressed these thoughts; he might indeed have rejected them in this form. But they were tacitly present

in the reforms he suggested. And they would have permitted a systematic democratization of the Prussian government in harmony with Prussian and not English or French instincts, guaranteeing at the same time that the appropriate personalities would be selected for work in the new system. Just as a machine needs a trained engineer to maintain it, a true state needs a State Council. The non-state, on the other hand, requires a privy council, composed of the various parties but constituted in similar fashion to the State Council. Each party must, of course, be prepared to have its own apparatus serve as the country's governing body. England in fact possesses *two* "workers' councils" or crown councils instead of one—that is the meaning of parliamentarism. [13] What the Prussian system required was a single council with a stable membership.

(13. The electorate does not have the slightest influence on the composition of either of the councils. It only chooses which of them is to do the governing.)

Instead, under the impression of Napoleonic events the admiration of English institutions became dominant. Hardenberg, Humboldt, and the others were "Englishmen." They listened to Shaftesbury and Hume, and not to Kant. It was imperative that the reforms take place from within the Prussian system, but they were imposed in fact from the outside. All of the political frustration of the nineteenth century, all the boundless sterility of our parliamentary system, all the lack of manpower, ideas, and accomplishments, all the constant conflict between hostile factions and violent pressures, are the direct result of the imposition of a rigorous and humanly profound political system onto a people gifted for a completely different, if equally rigorous and profound, political order. In those areas where the Old Prussian talent for organization was put to the test in a large enough context—as in the creation of the syndicates and cartels, the trade unions, and in the field of social welfare—it more than proved its mettle.

The indifference that has greeted the elections and the debates on suffrage, despite the efforts of parties and press, shows how alien the parliamentary system is to the Prussian and, since 1870, the German people. When a Prussian or German has made use of his voting franchise it has quite often been merely his way of expressing a vague annoyance. In no other country have these election days *à l'anglaise* yielded such a false picture of actual political sentiment. The masses have never gotten used to this exotic technique of "cooperation," and never will. When an Englishman fails to follow the proceedings of Parliament, he does so with the knowledge that that body will look after his best interests. When a German does likewise, he does so with a feeling of complete apathy.

For him the only reality is *die Regierung*. With us, parliamentarism will always be a conglomeration of externals.

In England both parties had long been the sovereign initiators and leaders of policy. But in Prussia there existed a *state*, and the parties, founded for reasons of parliamentary protocol, became merely critics of the state, whereas in England the functions of the parties were a direct outgrowth of the actual configuration of the people as a commercial entity. In Prussia there was from the beginning a false relationship between the system that was intended and the one that already existed, between plan and effect, between the parties in theory and in practice. The opposition is a necessary and integral part of government in England; it performs a complementary function. Our opposition is truly a negation, of the government itself as well as of the other parties. The removal of the monarchy has not changed things a bit.

It is significant and characteristic of the strength of the national instinct that the two parties which can be called specifically Prussian, the Conservatives and the Socialists, have never lost their antiliberal and antiparlamentarian tendencies. They are both socialistic in a higher sense, and therefore they correspond quite closely to the two capitalistic parties in England. Recognizing neither private nor party interests as the leaders of government, they ascribe to the totality the unconditional authority, the leadership of the individual in the general interest. The fact that one of these parties speaks of the monarchic state while the other speaks of the working people proves to be only a verbal distinction when we consider that in our country *everyone* works, and that the will of the individual is subject *at all times* to the will of the totality. Both of these parties were, under the pressure of the English system, states within the state. According to their own convictions they were *the* state, and thus did not recognize the need for any other party to exist besides themselves. But this is quite enough to preclude parliamentary government. They did not deny their military predilections; they organized exclusive, well-disciplined battalions of voters, in which the Conservatives made better officers, the Socialists better troops. They were structured along lines of command and obedience, and that is the way they conceived of *their* state, the Hohenzollern state, and the state of the future. Freedom, in the "English" sense, prevailed neither in the one nor in the other state. Despite their truly parliamentary effectiveness they harbored a profound contempt for the English parliamentary attitude which accorded rank in society by measuring wealth. Both parties despised the Prussian system of suffrage with its frustrating hierarchy of rich and poor—the Conservatives perhaps less so, but they

regarded it only as a tolerably effective means to an end. Yet they scorned any system of suffrage based on the English pattern, for they knew that it necessarily leads to plutocracy. Whoever is willing to pay for such a system can harvest its fruits.

Besides the Conservatives and the Socialists, Prussia also has had its Spanish-style Ultramontane party, the party whose spiritual tradition extends back to the age of Habsburg hegemony and the territorial stipulations of the Peace of Westphalia. This party secretly worships Napoleon as the founder of the Rhenish Confederation. Its tactics are reminiscent of the masterly cabinet diplomacy of Madrid and Vienna. With the mature shrewdness of the Counter-Reformation it has succeeded in harnessing democratic tendencies and parliamentary procedures for its own purposes. It despises nothing—in fact, it is able to gain a little something from every eventuality. And one must not forget the socialist training and discipline of the Spanish spirit, which like the Prussian originated in the knightly orders of the Gothic period and which, even earlier than the Prussians, had epitomized a universal principle in the phrase "Throne and Altar."

Germany's spiritual Englishness eventually constituted itself as a party dedicated to promulgating parliamentarism with the fervor of a *Weltanschauung*, as a *Prinzip*, an *Idée*, as a *Ding an sich*. For these people Napoleon was the emissary of libertarian ideals. They have mustered up "ethical convictions" at times when the English would exercise their talent and experience. Their symbol is the political "standpoint." When three liberals get together they form a new party; that is their idea of individualism. They never join a bowling club without introducing as part of the "agenda" an "amendment of the statutes." Because a stateless order of public affairs prevails in England, they are enraged at every authoritarian act of government. Even the authoritarian aims of socialism make them shudder.

This *bürgerliche* outlook is a specifically German phenomenon. One should not have mistaken it for the French *bourgeoisie* or, even less, for the English middle-class. The grand style of English liberalism fits it poorly. *Quod licet Jovi non licet bovi*. Beneath the *Bratenrock* of the German liberal is a heart that still beats to the languid rhythm of the old *Reich*, and a soul that deplores the realities of modern civilization. These bookish liberals pile up mountains of literature about "transcendancy" and "ideality" (something different in every book) that claims to interpret keenly realistic English ideas. Without the English ideas, of course, these people would be defenseless against truly Prussian ideals, which are just as keen and just as unromantic. They are incapable of organization

and therefore politically innocuous in themselves, but they have been mobilized into a militant party by the other caste of German liberals, the group that has taken over from the English one of their ideals without comprehending the fundamental importance it has in the English scheme of things: the economic dictatorship of private wealth. Our "English" liberals have made of their party a murderous opposition that slowly undermines and enervates wherever and whenever the Prussian socialist idea stands in the way of all-powerful business. And finally, it was this brand of liberalism that mobilized the "inner England" of our majority-worshiping parties to perpetrate the parliamentary revolution of 1917, thus assuring victory for "outer England," the Allied powers, by deposing the state itself.

Our liberals demand pure parliamentarism, not because they desire a free state but because they want no state at all, and because they are just as aware as their English counterparts that this foreign cloak can make a socialistically gifted people incapable of action. The "supranational" cosmopolitanism of the German Michel appeals to them. While they may ridicule it as a political goal, they know its value as a political means. They willingly grant the cosmopolitan professors their academic chairs and "cultural" newspaper columns, and encourage parliamentary dilettantes to engage in politics on the editorial pages and in the assembly halls. With this pair in harness they are assiduously driving their political carriage toward perfect Englishness. In the German Revolution socialism suffered its bitterest defeat; its opponents forced it to turn its own weapons on itself.

In spite of all this, the two great universal principles continue to oppose each other: dictatorship of money or of organizational talent, the world as booty or as a true state, wealth or political authority, success or vocation. Both of Germany's socialistic parties must unite against the one enemy of the idea that they share: our inner England, capitalism and parliamentary liberalism.

Socialist monarchy [14]—that is an idea that has slowly matured in the Faustian world and has long since reared its proper human protagonists. Authoritative socialism is by definition monarchistic. The most responsible position in this gigantic organism, in Frederick the Great's words the role of "first servant of the state," must not be abandoned to ambitious privateers. Let us envision a unified nation in which everyone is assigned his place according to his socialistic rank, his talent for voluntary self-discipline based on inner conviction, his organizational abilities, his work potential, consciousness, and

energy, his intelligent willingness to serve the common cause. Let us plan for general work conscription, resulting in occupational guilds that will administrate and at the same time be guided by an administrative council, and not by a parliament. A fitting name for this administrative body, in a state where everyone has a job, be it army officer, civil servant, farmer, or miner, might well be "labor council."

(14. It was Ferdinand Lassalle who, in 1862, in his book *Was nun?*, called for a union of labor and the Prussian monarchy to do battle against liberalism and the English "nightwatchman" theory of the weak state.)

Counter to this idea is the vision of a capitalistic World Republic. For England *is* a "republic," although today the word means government by the successful private individual who can pay for his election and therefore also for his influence. The World Republicans dream of the earth as a hunting ground for those who want to get rich and who demand for themselves the right to engage in hand-to-hand combat. Eventually the Tories and Whigs, the two capitalist parties, will band together against the "inner Prussia" of socialism, which in England cannot even claim the undivided support of the workers—work being, of course, a misfortune in the British Isles. This means that the parliamentary system will undergo a structural change, for it cannot function with three parties. In early England it was rich against rich, one philosophy against another *within* the upper class. Now it will be rich against poor, England against something else.

But that is the same as saying that parliamentarism as a political scheme is worn out; of this there can be no doubt. It was already in decline when German fools brought it over here. Its best era was before Bismarck. It was an old, mature, distinguished, highly refined method, and to master it completely required all the tact of the aristocratic English "gentleman." It required fundamental agreement on a sufficient number of problems to ensure that "politeness" would not be endangered. The protocol of parliamentary debate resembled that of a duel between noblemen. Like the music of the period between Bach and Beethoven, it was based on the perfect mastery of formal principles. As soon as this formalism was abandoned the music became barbaric. Today no one is able to dash off an old-style fugue as could the classical composers. So it is also with the fuguelike form of parliamentary tactics. Coarser people, coarser questions—and it is all over. The duel becomes a brawl. The institutions, the sense of tact and cautious observance of the amenities, are dying out with the old-style people of good breeding. The new parliamentarism will present the struggle for existence with barely civilized

manners and with much poorer success. The relationship between party leaders and party, between party and masses, will be tougher, more transparent, and more brazen. That is the beginning of Caesarism. [15] Hints of its arrival were present in the English elections of 1918. Nor shall we German escape it either. It is our destiny, just as it was the destiny of Rome and China, indeed of all mature cultures. But—billionaires or generals, bankers or civil servants of the highest quality? That is the eternal question. (15. *The Decline of the West*, II, 431 ff.)

IV. Marx

19

The intense final struggle of the two Germanic ideas is now strongly affected by a wholly different factor, the labor problem. On the one side a philosophical dichotomy of the most inward sort is striving toward a resolution that will give Faustian man's existence its final unified pattern. On the other side a physical state of emergency is demanding changes in external living conditions. The former is thus a question of metaphysics, the latter one of political economics. We must bear in mind this qualitative difference between the two phenomena.

The problem of the "fourth estate" makes its appearance in every culture during the transition to civilization. [16] In Germany this began in the nineteenth century; suddenly Rousseau was obsolete. The third estate belonged to the city, which placed itself on even footing with the farmlands; the fourth estate was a product of the megalopolis, which annihilated the farmlands. A very late phenomenon in any given culture, the fourth estate is composed of nomad-like masses which, formless and indeed hostile to all form, surge through the stony labyrinths choking up the remainders of living humanity. It is a homeless and frustrated group, filled with hatred of the strict gradations of the old culture that is unwilling to recognize it, and longing for liberation from its impossible plight.

(16. *The Decline of the West*, II, 102 ff.; 356 f.)

Western European civilization, in all its forms and manifestations, is dominated by machine industry. [17] The industrial worker is not at all the "fourth estate," and yet he

justifiably considers himself a representative of that group. He is a symbol. As a type he originated in this civilization and he deeply feels the anomaly of his existence. If others are slaves of the age of technology, the businessman as well as the engineer, then he is *the* slave.

(17. *The Decline of the West*, II, 499 ff.)

But there is no solution to the labor problem for the worker alone or by him alone. Strictly speaking, the fourth estate is a simple fact, not an idea. And in the face of facts there can be only material compromises—not as the effect or realization of an ideal, but as the strategic result of a pragmatic struggle for advantages over others. In the end, following all the accidents and vagaries of the struggle, one attains and resignedly accepts what amounts to a deadlock that affords a certain measure of passive well-being—a Chinese kind of happiness, the happiness of Imperial Rome: *panem et circenses*. It is difficult to imagine that today, for we stand at the high point of mass excitement in the big cities, and, as a result of all the slogan-barking, close-range observers have tended to overestimate the prospects of class egoism. But in one or two centuries all this will pass, unless the labor movement enters the service of a general idea. What remained of the high passion of the period of the Gracchi during Augustus' reign? The problem had not been solved, it had only dissolved.

This is where Marx comes in. By means of a brilliant intellectual calculation—more overwhelming than correct—he tried to elevate facts to the rank of an idea. Across the powerful antithesis between Viking and knightly principles he stretched out a thin but cohesive theory, thereby inventing a popular view of history that is in fact widely accepted in the present day. He was born in the Prussian atmosphere, and later entered the atmosphere of England, but he remained a foreigner to the spiritual life of both peoples. As a citizen of the scientific nineteenth century he was a good materialist, but a bad psychologist. And therefore he failed ultimately to impart the quality of an idea to the great realities. Instead, he reduced ideas to concepts and single interests. Instead of the English blood which he did not feel within himself, he espied only English things and concepts. And of Hegel, who by and large represented Prussianism at its best, the only thing accessible to Marx was the method.

Thus it happened that, by means of a truly grotesque calculation, he transformed the instinctual dichotomy between the two Germanic races into the material dichotomy between two class levels. To the "proletariat," the fourth estate, he ascribed the Prussian

idea of socialism, while to the "bourgeoisie," the third estate, he assigned the English idea of capitalism. These are the false equations that have given rise to the four concepts whose concrete meaning everyone is familiar with today. With these catchwords, so irresistible in their simplicity, he succeeded in consolidating the labor force of practically all countries into a class possessing a distinct class-consciousness. Today the fourth estate talks in his language and thinks in his concepts. "Proletariat," after Marx, was no longer a name but a challenge. Beginning with Marx the future was seen through a piece of literature. The strength of the system lies in its superficiality. There still exists a Spanish-ecclesiastical, an English-capitalistic, and a Prussian-authoritative socialism, in addition to proletarian movements of anarchic, capitalistic, and genuinely socialistic character; but no one is aware of them. Faith in the unified nature of the goal is stronger than reality, and this faith, as always in the Western world, adheres to a book. To doubt its absolute truth is a crime. It was the printed word that first guaranteed that the Faustian spirit would exert its influence beyond all limits of space and time. In the English Revolution it was the Bible, in the French Revolution, Rousseau's *Contrat social*, in the German Revolution the *Communist Manifesto*.

From his reinterpretation of racial strife as the strife between classes, and of ancient Germanic instincts as very recent impulses of large-city populations, Marx derived his central concept of "class conflict." The horizontal structuring of historical forces was made vertical; that is the meaning of the materialist view of history. The scientific mentality of the time required that matter and energy be regarded as opposites. The "matter" of political "energy" was peoples and nations; that of economic "energy" was the classes. Marxism reversed the importance of these two "energies," and thus also of the two "matters." And the word "class" thereby took on a completely new meaning.

With the psychological naiveté of a scientifically trained mind of 1850, Marx failed to comprehend the difference between class and estate. [18] An estate is an ethical concept, the expression of an idea. The privileged segment of society in 1789 was distinguished from the bourgeoisie as an estate embodying the formal ideal of *grandeur, courtoisie*, and inward and outward nobility, no matter how much had been eroded by decadent living. It was only after the bourgeoisie had contested the ethical superiority of the older aristocratic modes of behavior that it made an issue of social privileges. The Parisians used their English-schooled intelligence to substitute a new ideal for the old, and their French instinct created out of this substitution the principle of equality in the ethical sense. This was the new meaning of the expression "human society": equality of all men,

and the universal binding force of a moral ideal based not on blood and tradition but on nature and reason.

(18. *The Decline of the West*, II, 327 ff.)

"Class," on the other hand, is a purely economic concept, and in 1850 it took the place of the ethical and political concept of the "bourgeoisie" of 1789. The ideal of estates became class interest. It was only in England that the classes had long since been stratified according to wealth. The middle class was comprised of those who lived by their work without actually being poor. The upper class was rich without working. The lower class worked and was poor. In Prussia, however, it was rank, i.e., a greater or lesser degree of command and obedience, that separated the classes. Besides the peasantry there existed a civil-servant class—that is to say, there was a unity of function rather than economic distinctions. By way of contrast, modern France is distinguished by the absence of real classes. The French nation is a disordered mass in which one can discern rich individuals and poor individuals, yet classes as such have not emerged. The entire nation is one class, not as rigorously stratified as the Germanic nations, but nonetheless single and unified.

Marx was thus an exclusively English thinker. His two-class system derives from the situation of a mercantile people that sacrificed its agriculture to big business, and that never had possessed a national corps of civil servants with a pronounced, i.e., Prussian, estate-consciousness. In England there were only "bourgeoisie" and "proletarians," active and passive agents in business affairs, robbers and robbed—the whole system very Viking-like. Transferred to the realm of Prussian political ideals, these concepts make no sense. Marx would never have been able to distinguish English industrial slavery from the principle that emerges from the "all for all" idea, whereby every individual is a servant of the total state regardless of rank or position. He took a wholly external image of Prussianism—organization, discipline, cooperation, all things that are independent of any single class; a technical pattern, socialism—and handed it over to the laborers in a "society" of the English type as a weapon and a goal, exhorting them to be good Vikings and switch the roles of robbers and robbed, to expropriate the expropriators. And he wrapped it all up in an egoistic program that called for the sharing of the spoils after victory.

The best definition of the two classes is still logical embarrassment. Within the Marxist system, "bourgeois" means something completely different than it did to Rousseau. It is one thing if one uses the term in the context of privileged groups in the Age of

Feudalism, and quite another if it applies to the masses of urban workers. Consequently, with respect to the three estates of 1789 there is no longer any fourth estate, and with respect to today's fourth estate there is no first or second. Sieyès estimated the clergy at 80,000, the aristocracy at 120,000, and the third estate at 25,000,000. Accordingly, the latter group constituted "the people." "Bourgeoisie" means "all together." Even the French peasant is a "bourgeois."

The fourth estate, however, is a minority and difficult to separate from the others. The dividing lines are different, depending on whether one speaks of craftsmen, industrial workers, proletarians, or masses. At times it is defined, and more often still it is felt, as differing hardly at all from the "bourgeoisie." Once again, it is "all together" with the exception of the business employers.

The third estate was in point of fact a negative concept. [19] It was invented to express the idea that there should no longer be any estates at all. But the fourth estate cancels out this calculation. It assigns to a single occupational group the prime importance in the life of society. It reached back beyond 1789 and presents itself as another privileged estate. That is what the notion of dictatorship of the proletariat essentially means: the domination of society by a class that is not at all certain of its numerical superiority. This means, of course, that the Marxist class goal is in reality a caricature of the old estate ideal. The entire Marxist construct is nothing but literature, and has nothing to do with blood or breeding. But the follies of the German Revolution, the "workers' soviets" as a new upper house, the elevation of the workers to the position of English "gentlemen" by means of a strike that guaranteed continued wage payments—all this has demonstrated, as in the days of Cromwell and Robespierre, that literature can engender, temporarily at least, grotesque reality.

(19. *The Decline of the West*, II, 354 ff.)

Marxian morality is likewise of English origin. Marxism reveals in every sentence that the thought processes from which it sprang were theological and not political. Its economic theory is the outgrowth of a fundamental moral attitude, and the materialistic view of history is simply the final chapter of a philosophy with roots in the English Revolution, whose biblical moods have remained dominant in English thought.

That is why Marx's basic concepts are felt to be moral alternatives. The words "socialism" and "capitalism" are terms for the good and evil of this irreligious religion. The "bourgeois" is the devil, the wage earner is the angel of a new mythology, and one need only sample the vulgar paths of the *Communist Manifesto* to recognize behind the literary mask the Christianity of the Independents. Social evolution is "the will of God." The "final goal," in an earlier age, was eternal salvation; the "collapse of bourgeois civilization" used to be called the Last Judgment.

Marx succeeded in preaching contempt for work. Perhaps he did not realize this himself. Work—long, hard, tiring work—is for him a misfortune, and effortless gain a blessing. Behind the typically English disdain for the man who lives by the sweat of his brow we can feel the instinct of the Viking, whose vocation is piracy and not patching sails. For this reason the manual laborer is more a slave in England than anywhere else. And his slavery is moral; he feels that his profession precludes his bearing the title of "gentleman." The concepts "bourgeoisie" and "proletariat" reflect the typically English preference for business rather than manual work. [20] The former is a blessing, the latter a calamity; the one is noble, the other base. But with their hatred the misfortunate ones say, "Business is the evil occupation, manual labor the good."

(20. But of course not over *mental* work. Just as the English intellectual was by choice either a Tory or a Whig, he has had to choose between the two new economic parties. Being a "gentleman," he has naturally opted for big business.)

This is the explanation for the mental attitude which gave rise to Marx's social criticism and which has made him so catastrophic for true socialism. He knew the nature of work only from the English viewpoint, as a means of getting rich, as a means lacking in all moral depth. Only success and money, the visible and tangible signs of God's grace, were of ethical import. The Englishman has no inkling of the dignity of hard work. For him, work is a debasing thing, an ugly necessity. Pity the poor soul who has nothing but work, who owns nothing without more and more work, but who above all will never have wealth in the future! Had Marx understood the meaning of Prussian work, of activity for its own sake, of service in the name of the totality, for "all together" and not for oneself, of duty that ennobles regardless of the kind of work performed—had he been able to comprehend these things, his Manifesto would probably never have been written.

On this matter he was aided by his Jewish instinct, which he himself characterized in his essay on the Jewish question. The curse on physical labor pronounced in the beginning of

Genesis, the prohibition against defiling the Sabbath by work—these things made him receptive to the Old Testament pathos of the English sensibility. Hence his hatred of those who do not need to work. The socialism of a Fichte would accuse such people of sloth, it would brand them as irresponsible, dispensable shirkers and parasites. But Marxian instinct *envies* them. They are too well-off, and therefore they should be revolted against. Marx has inoculated his proletariat with a contempt for work. His fanatical disciples wish to destroy all culture in order to decrease the amount of indispensable work. Martin Luther praised the simplest manual activity as pleasing to God; Goethe wrote of the "demands of the day." Yet Marx dreamed of the proletarian Phaeacian who would own everything without any effort. That is, after all, the meaning of the Expropriation of the Blessed. And as far as English instinct is concerned he was right. What the Englishman calls bliss—business success that saves physical work and makes one a gentleman—is good for all *Englishmen*. For us it is obscene. It smacks of mobs and snobs.

This kind of ethics informs his economic thinking. It is the Manchester school all over again. It is exactly like the thinking of Cobden, who at the very same time was leading the Whig free-trade theory to victory. Marx opposed the form of capitalism that derived its justification from Bentham and Shaftesbury and was formulated by Adam Smith. But since he was a critic only, negative and uncreative, he took over his principles from the very thing he was fighting.

Work was for him a commodity, not an obligation. That is the core of his political economics. His ethics were the ethics of big business. Not that business is unethical; but we can read between the lines his opinion that the laborer is a fool not to engage in it. And laborers have understood him. The battle for higher wages became a kind of investment speculation: the worker was now a merchant selling his product, work. The trick about Marx's famous "surplus value" thesis is that it was considered as spoils to be carried off by the successful merchant from the opponent's stores. It was not to be presented to him for nothing. Class egoism thus became a universal principle. The laborers not only wanted to do business, he wanted the corner the whole market. The true Marxist is hostile to the state, and for the very same reason as the Whig: it hinders him in the ruthless exercise of his private business interests. Marxism is the capitalism of the working class. Consider Darwin, who was just as important to Marx as Malthus and Cobden. Business is conceived of throughout as a struggle for existence. In industry the employer engages in commerce with the commodity "money," while the worker does

likewise with the commodity "work." Marx wished to deprive capital of the right to private profit, but the only thing he could think of as a substitute was the worker's right to private profit. That is unsocialistic, but it is typically English.

Marx became an Englishman on one other score as well: in his mind the state does not exist. He thought statelessly, in terms of "society." Like parliamentary practice in England, his economic world functions as a two-party system with nothing above the parties. Within his scheme there can be only combat and no arbitration, only victory or defeat, only the dictatorship of one of the two parties. The *Communist Manifesto* calls for a dictatorship of the "good" proletarian party over the "evil" capitalist party. Marx saw no alternatives.

The Prussian socialist state exists beyond this "good" and "evil." It is the whole people, and in the face of its absolute authority the two Marxian parties are simply parties—minorities that serve the general weal. From a strictly technical viewpoint, socialism is the principle of public service. In the final analysis every worker has the status not of a businessman, but of a public servant, as does every employer. There are public servants of industry, commerce, traffic, and the military. This system was realized in the grandest style in Egyptian culture and again, though quite differently, in China. It represents the inner form of Western political civilization, and it already became manifest in the Gothic cities with their professional guilds and corporations. A symbolic expression of the system was the Gothic cathedral, in which every element was a necessary part of the dynamic whole. Marx was unable to comprehend this. His imagination and creative talent extended only so far as to convert a "society" of private businessmen into a "society" of private workers. As a critic he was first-rate; as a creator he was impotent. This is proved by his constant retreat from the question of how he imagined the form government would take in his gigantic universal mechanism, and by his dilettantish praise of the Parisian "council system" of 1871, which originated under the extraordinary conditions of a besieged city but was powerless anyway. One cannot learn how to be creative by reading Marx. Either one is creative or one is not. The Social Democracy of the nineteenth century produced but one grand-style creative personality, a politician who didn't write but who knew how to govern: August Bebel. He was definitely not the most intellectual member of his party, but he was its one and only organizer. A true ruler needs talents other than intellect in the literary sense. Napoleon did not tolerate any "book writers" in his entourage.

The economic Darwinism of the Englishman, together with the Marxian two-class system, led to the adoption of the natural weapon to be used in the war between the real merchants and the merchandizing laborers: the strike. By means of the strike, the commodity "work" is withheld from the buyer. By means of the opponent's strike, the lockout, the commodity "money" is withheld from the buyer. A reserve army of workers secures the market for the buyers of money, while a reserve army of employers (labor shortage) does the same for the buyers of work. The strike is the most unsocialistic aspect of Marxism. It is the classical sign of its origins in a businessman's philosophy that Marx adhered to by instinct and habit.

In the *true* state, work is not a commodity but a duty toward the common interest, and there is no gradation—this is Prussian-style democratization—of ethical values among the various kinds of work. The judge and the scholar perform "work" just as the miner and the lathe operator. In our German Revolution it was English thinking that planned for the worker to expropriate the rest of the people by squeezing as much money as possible out of the least amount of work, and by lauding his "commodity" above all others. One of the preconditions of a strike is that the people exist only as parties, not as a state. Another Marxist, that is to say English, idea is the open negotiation for wage increases, and the unilateral determination of wage scales following the success of the proletarian party.

The Prussian way of doing things is for the state to determine wages impartially for each kind of work, planning the scales carefully according to the total economic situation at any given time, in the interest of all the people and not of any one profession. That is the principle of salary scales for civil servants, made to apply to all occupations. It includes the prohibition of the strike, for it regards this as a private commercial device inimical to state interests. The power to set wage scales is removed from both employer and employee and becomes the privilege of a general economic council, thus ensuring that each party will operate within the same firm boundaries as they have had to in other areas of management and work practice. [21]

(21. One can imagine a system in which every worker, the military officer and administrative official as well as the "laborer," maintains an account with a state savings bank which receives standardized accounts from the institutions obligated to pay wages. The individual would then have at his disposal a certain sum to be determined by a standard scale of distribution based on years of service and number of dependents.)

With reference to Prussian-socialist man's inborn political patterns, Marxism is

senseless. Marxism can deny and perhaps weaken these patterns, but like everything that is vital and natural they will prove stronger than all theory. Marx's scheme is most at home in England. There it is better understood than true socialism, and the actual commencement of hostilities between the economic parties has brought old-style parliamentarism to an end. The two parties of wealth formed by the upper class were politically constituted, and were in basic agreement on economic questions. Even when in mid-century, during the final stages of classical parliamentarism, the battle was fought over the free-trade system and the Whigs emerged victorious, the combatants at all times adhered to the traditional proprieties. Tories and Whigs differed only in that they favored either war and conquest or commercial infiltration, courage or piratical cunning. Now, however, an economic antithesis has caused the appearance of two new parties, a money party and a work party, and this battle can no longer be fought with parliamentary methods. The point at issue is no longer a formality; it is now a matter of concrete things. And as long as the English are unwilling to yield to the foreign principle of the state as an impartial authority, the only possible outcome is the complete suppression of one economic party by the other.

Marx took his particular image of industrial England, an image that was very schematic indeed and seen from a very questionable perspective, and by a quick change of focus made it extend over all of history. He claimed that his economic calculations were valid for all of "human society," adding that they were in fact the only important element in the entire course of history. In doing this he resembled Darwin, who likewise proceeded from Malthus and asserted that his theories were valid for "all organisms," whereas in reality they hold only for the highly developed anthropoids. His system becomes absurd when one tries to make such details as selection, mimicry, and heredity conform to the life history of bacteria or corals.

The materialist view of history, which postulates economic conditions as "cause" (in the physical sense) and religion, laws, customs, art, and science as "effect," doubtless has its persuasive aspects in this late period of Western culture, for it appeals to the mentality of irreligious and traditionless urban people. Not because economic conditions are in fact a "cause," but because art and religion have become empty, lifeless, and external, and because they now linger on as the pale shadow of the only strongly developed form that

identifies our age. Precisely this state of affairs is symptomatically English; the notion of religion as "cant," of art as "comfort" for the upper class and as alms for the lower ("art for the masses") has accompanied the English style of living during its infiltration of other countries.

Hegel stands above, Marx below the level of historical actuality. Take away Hegel's metaphysics and you will discover a political thinker with a sense of reality unequalled in modern philosophy. As a "Prussian" by intellectual choice he placed the state at the center of his extraordinarily profound, well-nigh Goethean vision of historical development, whereas Marx, the Englishman by choice, assigned to the economic life the central role in his Darwinian and mechanistic theory of historical "evolution" (he would call it "progress"). According to Hegel the state is the creative force of history, and history means politics. He never used the term "human society." The higher state officials of Bismarck's generation were mostly Hegelians. Marx, on the other hand, conceived of history without the state as an arena for jousting parties, as a conflict of private economic interests. The materialist concept is the English concept of history; it reflects the countenance of that independent nation of Vikings and businessmen.

But the intellectual and spiritual preconditions for this mode of thought no longer exist. The nineteenth century was the century of natural science; the twentieth century belongs to psychology. We no longer believe in the power of reason over life. We feel that life controls reason. Familiarity with the ways of human beings is more important to us than general and abstract ideals. We have lost our optimism and become skeptics. What concerns us is not what *ought* to be, but what *shall* be. Rather than be slaves of ideals, we want to be able to control reality. The logic of natural science, the concatenation of cause and effect, seems to us superficial; the only thing that can testify to the profundity of historical change is the logic of organic existence: Destiny and an Instinct that can be felt and seen as an all-powerful agent in the historical process.

Marxism is an ideology. That this is so is evident from the way it divides up history, a technique adopted by the materialists after the strength of Christian faith had waned. The evolutionary path leads, for them, from antiquity via the Middle Ages to modern times, and at the end we are to descry the perfect Marxist ideal, the earthy Paradise. It is senseless to try to contradict this image. Our task is to give modern man a new perspective that will necessarily produce a new image. Life has no "goal." Mankind has no "goal." The existence of this universe, in which we humans play off a tiny episode on

our little planet, is much too majestic a thing to be explained by such puny slogans as "happiness for the largest number." The greatness of the universal drama lies in its aimlessness. Goethe was aware of this. What we are called upon to do is to render the greatest possible meaning to the life that has been granted us, to the reality that surrounds us and into which Destiny has placed us. We must live in such a way that we can be proud of ourselves. We must act in such a way that some part of us will live on in the process of reality that is heading toward eventual completion. We are not "human beings *an sich*." That was a factor in yesterday's ideology. "Cosmopolitanism" is a wretched word. We are persons of a particular century, a particular nation, a particular circle, a particular type. These are the necessary conditions under which we can give meaning and depth to existence, by being *doers*, even if we *do* with words. The more we fill out the area within these given boundaries, the greater will be our effect. Plato was an Athenian, Caesar a Roman, Goethe a German. That they were so *first and foremost* is the reason for their universal and timeless importance.

It is with this knowledge that today, in the midst of the German Revolution, we can point to Marxism and socialism as opposing forces. Socialism, i.e., Prussianism as it is not yet understood, is a real entity of the highest order. Marxism is literature. Literature can become obsolete; reality either conquers or dies. We need only compare socialist criticism as it is heard at international conventions with but one socialist fact, the party of August Bebel. The popular phrase about ideas making history, when understood as it should be, is nothing but the special pleading of literary gossips. Ideas cannot be expressed. An artist can see them, a thinker can feel them, a statesman or soldier can make them real. Ideas become conscious only through the blood—instinctively, not by means of abstract contemplation. They make their existence known by the life style of peoples, the symbolism of deeds and accomplishments. And whether or not people are aware of them, either correctly or falsely, is a trifling matter. *Life* is of first and last importance, and life has no system, no program, and no reason. It exists for and by itself, and the profound orderliness with which it manifests itself can only be felt or envisioned—and then perhaps described, but not analyzed in terms of good and evil, right and wrong, desirable and undesirable.

For this reason Marxism is not a true idea. It combines in rational, i.e., arbitrary fashion the visible symbols and patterns of two ideas. The entire method of Marxist thinking is a thing of the moment. It is effective because every people has employed its concepts as weapons. Whether or not they have been correctly understood is unimportant. They are

effective because the sound of words and the force of oratory have made people believe in *something*. What they have believed in is, once again, the immutable idea of their own lives, their own blood.

Today Marxism is collapsing amid the clamorous orgy of its attempt to become reality. With the year 1918 the *Communist Manifesto* has entered upon a career as a literary curiosity like that of the *Contrat social* after 1793. True instinctive socialism, the expression of the Old Prussian mode of life, once was carried off on a literary sojourn to England to be diluted into an anti-English theory; it is now on its way back to an awareness of its origins and its full meaning.

V. The International

22

In days to come people will look back with amusement at the thing called "international socialism" that dominates the political image of the world at present. What we are really witnessing is an International of catchwords, Marxism as a set of vapid slogans. It will be able to arouse feelings of solidarity among the workers of all nations for only a few decades, and with much less intensity than the noisy Socialist conventions and the overconfident public appeals might lead one to believe. Actually this solidarity is limited simply to the belief that it exists, and to the fact that a movement in one country often calls forth a movement in another country. But it is characteristic of a civilization so completely saturated with literature as our own that leaders of the masses, who live in a perpetual cloud of theory, can nonetheless become the instruments of powerful realities. Representatives of English, French, German, and Russian modes of life foregather at pseudo-political conventions without ever comprehending each other's basic feelings and desires, and strive to agree on a certain minimal set of principles that they think of as supporting some common cause.

Just how thinly overlaid our other national instinct is by these intellectual realities became clear in August, 1914, when they suddenly vaporized in the course of a single day under the heat of natural and nonintellectual passions. Socialism is something different in every country. There are just as many labor movements as there are vital

races in the spiritual sense, and as soon as they have finished their search for things that they hate in common, these movements find that they hate each other just as pitilessly as they hate the peoples they represent. There are Red Jacobins and Red Puritans; there is a Red Versailles and a Red Potsdam. The same gap separates Shaw and Bebel as separates Rhodes and Bismarck. All of them have tailored their garments from the same old theoretical cloth.

In the World War it was not only the Allies who fought against Germany, but also the pseudo-socialism of the Allied nations that opposed the true Prussian socialism of Germany. By betraying the person of the Kaiser true socialism betrayed itself, its origins, its meaning, and its position in the socialist world. August Bebel would certainly have anticipated and prevented this; his weaker descendants simply did not understand. Now they travel to the sham conventions and virtually sign the Versailles Treaty all over again in their speeches. The most dangerous enemy of Prussian-German socialism is not German capitalism, which at one time bore pronounced socialistic features and which socialism itself has forced into the English camp since 1917. This anglicization was perhaps most generously abetted by the slackening of our masterfully organized trade unions, and by the introduction of local management councils, which are actually a front for the liberal parliamentary leanings of our majority-worshiping Socialists.

No, Prussian socialism's worst enemy is not German capitalism; it is what is being done in the name of socialism in the homeland of capitalism. The clear vision of Friedrich Engels detected that the only true socialism is German socialism. Today's spokesmen for socialism have forgotten this, and are trying to prove it to the Allied Socialists by means of Michel-like obsequiousness.

The socialism of French insurrectionists and saboteurs is in reality merely an emotion of social *revanche* which found its Clemenceaus as early as the Paris Commune uprising. The socialism of England is a revised edition of capitalism. Only in Germany has socialism been a *Weltanschauung*. The Frenchman remains an anarchist, the Englishman a liberal. French and English workers regard themselves above all as Frenchmen and Englishmen, and only as an afterthought as supporters of the International. The Prussian worker, the only born socialist, [22] has always played fool to the others. He alone has taken the pseudo-socialist language seriously, just as the German professors believed in the *Paulskirche* speeches. The Prussian worker, the only one who could point to his party as a magnificent creation, became the reverent listener to other men's verbiage and

helped pay for their strikes.

(22. There is profound meaning in August Bebel's remark that Munich is the Capua of the German Social Democratic movement. He would have found this thought confirmed, had he lived to see the carnival of the "workers' and soldiers' soviets" in 1918.)

A true International is only possible as the victory of the idea of a single race over all the others, and not as the mixture of all separate opinions into one colorless mass. Let us have the courage of our skepticism and throw away the old ideology. In history as it really is, there can be no conciliations. Whoever believes that there can must suffer from a chronic terror at the absurd ways in which events do occur, and he is only deceiving himself if he thinks that he can control them by means of treaties. There is but one end to all the conflict, and that is death—the death of individuals, of peoples, of cultures. Our own death still lies far ahead of us in the murky darkness of the next thousand years. We Germans, situated as we are in this century, bound by our inborn instincts to the destiny of Faustian civilization, have within ourselves rich and untapped resources, but immense obligations as well. To the new International that is now in the irreversible process of preparation we can contribute the ideas of worldwide organization and the world state; the English can suggest the idea of worldwide exploitation and trusts; the French can offer nothing. We can vouch for our ideas, not with speeches but with our whole existence. The knightly idea of true socialism stands or falls with Prussianism. Only the Church still embodies the old Spanish idea of universality, the care and succor of all nations under the wing of Catholicism. From the days of the Hohenstaufen emperors we can hear the threatening echoes of an immense conflict between a political and a religious universal idea. But at the present moment we are witnessing the triumph of a third idea, the Viking idea: the world not as a state and not as a Church, but as booty for pirates.

The true International is imperialism, domination of Faustian civilization, i.e., of the whole earth, by a single formative principle, not by appeasement and compromise but by conquest and annihilation. Socialism has beside and against it capitalism and ultramontanism, and thus there are three different forms of the socialist will to power: through the state, through money, and through the Church. Their influence extends throughout the political, economic, and religious consciousness of the Western world, and each seeks to subject the others to its will. They represent the creative instincts of Prussian, English, and Spanish man, which reach back from the frigid heights of our own

time to the primitive, impulsive men of the Gothic age who conquered the swamps of the Eastlands with sword and plow, crossed the North Sea in their fragile skiffs, and led the crusade against the Moors south of the Pyrenees. The Gothic manifestations of the East Prussian borderlands, of England, and of Spain have a wholly different spirit from those of France. These instincts are more powerful than anything else, and can even outlive the peoples that have been their visible symbols. A Roman spirit still prevailed at a time when Romans no longer existed. As a people, the spirit of Spain is powerless, but as a Church it still stands with unbroken strength.

These are the realities which the convention-hopping International thinks it can push aside with the slogans of Karl Marx.

23

The worst of these slogans is communism. Its critique touched on a problem of the utmost importance: property. This is not the place to discuss, even in outline, the immense symbolic significance of such difficult matters as the relationship between property and marriage, property and political ideal, or property and world view. On these topics, also, each of these great cultures has spoken its own language. The Western concept of property is far removed from that of antiquity, India, and China. Property is power. Faustian man has little regard for inert, undynamic possessions, for "credit" per se. He emphasizes, rather, the importance of "productive" property. The ancient world's sensual delight in the mere accumulation of treasures is rare among us. The pride of the modern conqueror, the merchant and gambler, even of the collector of art works, is based on the idea that by taking his booty he has gained power. The Spaniards' thirst for gold and the Englishmen's hunger for new territories are directed toward property that creates more property.

In contrast to this dynamic concept of property, another view prevailed in the Renaissance and in Paris: the pensioner ideal. The goal of this form of cupidity was not dynamic potential but simple pleasure; not "everything" but "enough"; not deeds but "life." The *condottieri* [23] desired their principalities and court treasuries in order to enjoy to the fullest the leisure culture of their century. The Medici banking house, one of the first in Europe, was far from wanting to control the world market. Louis XIV sent out his generals and tax collectors with the intent of securing material support for his Olympic existence as the "Sun King." The French aristocrats at Versailles were quite

thoroughly imbued with the Renaissance outlook. Their culture was anything but dynamic. Traveling Englishmen like Young were amazed to find, just prior to the Revolution, how badly they had managed their wealth. They were happy if they simply "had" it, and if the *intendant* saw to the collection of the sums necessary for Parisian life. (23. The Borgia, it will be remembered, were Spaniards.)

This eighteenth-century aristocracy represented the sharpest contrast to the active, acquisitive, and belligerent aristocracy of England and Prussia. The wealth class in France was motivated solely by the desire for self-preservation, and even at the great moments of French history it was unable to gain control of the world market or to engage in authentic colonization. But the *grandseigneur* of 1750, as a type, is very much the predecessor of the *bourgeois* of 1850, the harmless pensioner who was a threat only when inspired by national conceit, and whose name Marx never should have chosen to designate capitalistic society.

"Capital" is the grand expression that describes the *English* view of property. "Capital" means economic energy; it is the armor one puts on before joining the battle for success. Instead of the French cavalier and pensioner, what we see here is the magnate of the stock market, of petroleum or steel, whose pleasure consists in the feeling of economic omnipotence. He understands property to mean exclusively *private* property. As he sees it, one man's snuffle can cause the market to plunge all over the world; a telegram of three words can unleash catastrophes on the far side of the planet; and the trade and industry of entire nations are a function of his personal credit. "Private" property—it is important to grasp the term in its full dramatic sense. The billionaire demands absolute freedom to arrange world affairs by his private decisions, with no other ethical standard in mind than success. He beats down his opponents with credit and speculation as his weapons. His state and his army are his trust, and the political state is little more than his agent whom he commissions with wars such as those in Spain or South Africa, or with treaties and peace negotiations. The final goal of these genuine mastertypes is to turn the whole world into one huge trust. As far as he is concerned the average citizen's nominal right to property can remain inviolate; he can enjoy complete freedom to give away, sell, or bequeath his possessions as he sees fit. But the economic value of his possessions as commercial capital is made to move in certain directions by a remote central agency that is utterly beyond his control. Thus the money magnate is a property owner in a very special sense. Whole peoples and nations can be forced to work according to his tacit

command and his omnipresent will.

This concept of property, a disguise for the businessman's liberalism, is diametrically opposed to the Prussian view. The Prussian sees property not as private booty but as part of the common weal; not as a means or expression of personal power but as goods placed in trust, for the administration of which he, as a property owner, is responsible to the state. He does not regard national wealth as the sum of individual private fortunes; instead, he considers private fortunes as functions of the total economic potential of his nation. We must repeat again and again the magnificent words of Frederick the Great: "I am the first servant of my state." As soon as every individual makes this attitude his own, socialism becomes a fact. There is no sharper contrast to this idea than Louis XIV with his *factual* statement, "I am the state." Whether on the throne or in the streets, the Western world can conceive of no more blatant contrast than that between Prussianism and Jacobinism, between socialist and anarchist instinct. It is the basis for the ineradicable enmity between our two peoples. Napoleon remarked on St. Helena, "Prussia has been an obstacle to France since the days of Frederick, and will always remain so. It was the greatest obstacle to the plans I had for France."

For truly, the manner in which the French laborer turns his desire for revenge on the moneyed class is the very opposite of socialism; it is communism in the real sense. Even the French laborer wants to be a pensioner. He despises the leisure of the others which cannot obtain for himself. His goal is an equality of pleasure, equal opportunity for life as a pensioner. This is the idea behind the famous and typically French equation coined by Proudhon: "Property is theft." In France property does not mean power, it means the acquired opportunity for pleasure. Common possession of goods rather than separation of the means of production into corporations, distribution of wealth ("All belongs to all") rather than the use of value-shaping forces to create trusts—that is the French ideal as opposed to the English. It is embodied in the socialist utopia of Fourier: disbandment of the state into small communal units or "phalansteries" whose aim is the greatest possible pleasure with the least amount of work.

Robert Owen attempted to formulate as a kind of reform of capital the desire of the English lower class to adopt for itself the upper-class ideal of property. But it would be a gross underestimation of the Viking instinct to think that English-American capital will retreat one step on the path toward absolute economic domination of the world.

Unlimited personal freedom and the natural inequality of man, based on relative degrees

of individual talent, are the fundamental articles of the Anglo-Saxon creed. Instead of authoritarian socialism, the English or American billionaire adheres to an impressive form of private socialism, a welfare program on a grand scale which turns his own personal power into pleasure and morally vanquishes the recipient of welfare funds. The flashy techniques for distributing these millions are an effective cover-up for the methods used to obtain them in the first place. It is the same attitude as that of the old corsairs who, while banqueting in the castle just conquered, threw their table scraps to the prisoners: the voluntary surrender of property increases the value of what remains. The question whether or not such voluntary acts should become a legal duty is the chief point of contention among the economic parties of the future in England and America. Today some people are prepared to transfer broad economic areas that are less amenable to speculation, such as the mining and railroad industries, to the case of a pseudo-state. But of course they intend to retain the behind-the-scenes prerogative of making this "state" an executive organ of their own business interests by utilizing the democratic forms of parliamentarism, i.e., by paying for election campaigns and newspapers and thus controlling the opinions of voters and readers.

Therein lies the frightful danger of an enslavement of the world by big business. Today its tool is the League of Nations, ostensibly a system of nations that have "self-government" on the English model, but in reality a system of provinces and protectorates whose populations are being exploited by a business oligarchy with the aid of bribed parliaments and purchased laws, just as the Roman world was exploited by the bribery of senators, proconsuls, and popular tribunes. Marx saw through this nascent system, and it became the target of his caustic social criticism. He wished to depose the English idea of omnipotent private property, but once again he was able to formulate only a negation: expropriation of the expropriators, robbery of the robbers.

Nevertheless, this Old English principle contains something of the Prussian imperative: Maintain full Germanic respect for property, but award the power inherent in it to the state, the totality, and not to the individual. That is the meaning of socialization. It was systematically pursued by Prussian governments that functioned on instinct untrammelled by theory, from the civil and war chambers of Frederick William I to the social welfare institutions of Bismarck. But the orthodox and heterodox Marxists of the German Revolution have tried to outdo each other in spoiling it all. Socialization does *not* mean nationalization by expropriation or theft. It is not all concerned with nominal property, but rather with the techniques of administration. Buying up industries right and left for

the sake of some slogan, and handing them over to administrative bodies incognizant of the ways of large enterprises instead of leaving them to the responsibility and initiative of their owners, is the surest way to pervert true socialism. The Old Prussian method was to legislate the formal structure of the total productive potential while guarding carefully the right to property and inheritance, and to allow so much freedom to personal talent, energy, initiative, and intellect as one might allow a skilled chess player who had mastered all the rules of the game. This is largely how it was done with the old cartels and syndicates, and there is no reason why it could not be systematically extended to work habits, work evaluation, profit distribution, and the internal relationship between planners and executive personnel. Socialization means the slow, decades-long transformation of the worker into an economic civil servant, of the employer into a responsible administrative official with extensive powers of authority, and of property into a kind of old-style hereditary fief to which a certain number of rights and privileges are attached. In socialism the economic will remains as free as that of the chess player; only the end effect follows a regulated course.

The Hohenzollern created the Prussian civil-servant type, the first of its kind in the world. By reason of his inherited socialistic abilities this type vouches for the possibility of a new socialization. For two hundred years he has symbolized in his methods what socialism symbolizes to us today as a task to be done. If the German worker can give up Marxism and begin to think as a socialist, he will easily become the Prussian type just described. The "state of the future" is the state made up of civil servants. That is one of the inevitable final conditions toward which our civilization is steadily moving. Even a billionaire's socialism could imperceptibly transform a nation into an army of private "officials." The big trusts have already virtually become private states exercising a protectorate over the official state. Prussian socialism, however, implies the incorporation of these professional-interest "states" into the state as a totality. The point at issue between conservatives and proletarians is in truth not at all the necessity of the authoritarian socialist system, which could be avoided by adopting the American system (that is the hope of the German liberals), but the question of supreme command. It may look as though two socialist alternatives exist today, one from above and another from below, and both of a dictatorial cast. Yet in reality either would gradually merge into the same final form.

At the moment people are unaware of this fact, so much so that both parties regard the Constitution as the decisive factor. But it is not a question of laws, it is a question of

personalities. If the labor leaders are not able to demonstrate very soon the superior statesman-like skills required of them, others will take their place. In a political system that intentionally blurs the distinctions between workers and administrators, assuring each qualified individual, from menial laborer to foreman and corporation head, a secure career—in such a system a born statesman can see to it that the goals of conservatives and proletarians alike, the complete nationalization of economic life by legislation rather than expropriation, are finally combined into one.

The leadership of such a system cannot be "republican." Putting aside all illusions, "republic" means today the corruptibility of executive power by means of private capital. A prince will obey the tradition of his house and the philosophy of his calling. No matter what our opinion of this may be, it removes him from the special political interest of parties as we have them now. He acts as their arbitrator. And if, in a socialistically structured state, membership in the professional councils including the State Council itself is determined in view of practical talents, the prince can narrow the selection by the use of ethical and moral criteria. A president, prime minister, or popular representative is the pawn of a party, and a party is in turn the pawn of those who pay for it. The prince is today a government's only protection against big business. The power of private capital is forcing a unification of socialist and monarchist principles. The individualistic ideal of private property means subjugation of the state by free economic powers, i.e., democracy, i.e., corruptibility of the government by private wealth. In a modern democracy the leaders of the masses find themselves in opposition, not to the capitalists but to money and the anonymous power it exerts. The question is how many of these leaders can resist such power. If anyone would like to know the difference between an abstract theoretical democracy and one that has existed for some time and is therefore convinced of its own excellence, let him read Sallust on Catilina and Jugurtha. There can be no doubt that Roman conditions are in store for us, but a monarchist-socialist order can neutralize them.

These are the three ideals of property that are today locked in conflict: the communist ideal of equal distribution of the world's goods, the individualistic ideal of using them to create business trusts, and the socialistic ideal of administering them in the name of the totality.

Up to now I have refrained from mentioning Russia [24]—intentionally, for with Russia it is not a question of different peoples but of different *worlds*. The Russians are by no means a people like the Germans and the English. Like the Germanic tribes of the Carolingian age they contain within themselves the potentialities of many future peoples. "Russianism" is the promise of a future culture as the evening shadows grows longer and longer over the Western world. The distinctions between Russian and Western spirit cannot be drawn too sharply. As deep a cleavage as there is between the spirit, religion, politics, and economics of England, Germany, America, and France, when compared with Russia these nations suddenly appear as a unified world. It is easy to be deceived by some inhabitants of Russia who reflect strong Western influence. The true Russian is just as inwardly alien to us as a Roman in the Age of Kings or a Chinese long before Confucius would be if they were suddenly to appear among us. The Russians have been aware of this every time they have drawn a line of demarcation between "Mother Russia" and "Europe."

(24. *The Decline of the West*, II, especially 192 ff., 278, 295 f., 495.)

For us, the primitive soul of Russia is an inscrutable something that lies behind dirt, music, vodka, meekness, and a strange melancholy. We naturally form our judgments subjectively, i.e., as the late, urban, and intellectually mature members of a wholly different culture. What we "see" in Russia is therefore not a soul just now awakening, which even Dostoyevsky was helpless to describe, but our own mental picture of it, which is formed by our superficial image of Russian life and Russian history and is further falsified by the use of such very "European" words as will, reason, and *Gemut*. Yet perhaps some of us are able to convey a virtually indescribable impression of that country that will leave no doubt as to the immense gap that separates us.

This childlike, inarticulate, fearsome people has been confused, wounded, tortured, and poisoned by having forced upon it the patterns of a foreign, imperious, masculine, and mature "European" culture. Its flesh has been pierced by European-style urban centers with European ambitions, and its undeveloped consciousness infected by overripe attitudes, philosophies, political ideas, and scientific principles. In 1700, Peter the Great forced upon his people the Baroque style of politics, complete with cabinet diplomacy, dynastic influence, administration, and a Western-style navy. In 1800, English ideas, basically incomprehensible to these people, made their entrance in the guise of French writers who succeeded in confusing the minds of a small intellectual minority. Even

before 1900 the bookish Russian intelligentsia introduced Marxism to their country, a complex product of Western European dialectics of whose origin they were completely ignorant. Peter the Great transformed the tsarist state into a major power within the Western system, thus perverting its natural development. And the "intelligentsia," themselves the product of the Russian spirit after it was corrupted by foreign-style cities, then entered the scene with their somber longing for indigenous institutions that must arise in some far-distant future, thereby distorting the primitive thought of their country into a kind of barren, childish theorizing after the manner of professional French revolutionaries. Owing to the Russians' boundless humility and willingness to sacrifice, Petrinism and bolshevism have accomplished some very real things in senseless and disastrous imitation of such Western creations as the Court of Versailles and the Paris Commune. But these institutions have affected only the surface of Russian existence; each of them can disappear and reappear with unpredictable swiftness.

As yet Russia has had only religious experiences, no social or political ones.

Dostoyevsky, in reality a saint who has been made to appear in the nonsensical and ridiculous Western guise of a *romancier*, is misunderstood if his social "problems" are considered apart from his novelistic form. His true essence is sooner to be found between than in the lines, and in *The Brothers Karamazov* he reaches a religious intensity comparable only to that of Dante. His revolutionary politics, on the other hand, originated within an insignificantly small metropolitan coterie which no longer possessed definite Russian sensibilities and, as far as family extraction is concerned, can indeed hardly be called Russian at all. As a consequence Dostoyevsky's political thought was caught between the extremes of forced dogmatism and instinctive rejection.

Hence Russia's deep, formidable, atavistic hatred of the West, of the poison in its own body. It can be felt in the inner suffering of Dostoyevsky, in the violent outbursts of Tolstoy, and in the silent brooding of the common man. It is an irrepressible hatred, often unconscious and often concealed beneath a sincere inclination to love and understand, a basic hatred of all symbols of the Faustian will: the cities (Petersburg in particular) which intruded as vanguards of this will on the rural calm of the endless steppes; the arts and sciences, Western thought and emotion, the state, jurisprudence, administrative structure, money, industry, education, "society"—in fact, everything. It is the primeval apocalyptic hatred that distinguishes the culture of antiquity. All bolshevism contains something of the dismal bitterness of the Maccabees, as well as of the much later insurrection that led to the destruction of Jerusalem. Its rigid dogmatism alone could never have supplied the

impetus that sustains the movement even to the present day. The subliminal anti-Western instincts of Russia, at first directed against Petrinism, have lent strength to bolshevism. But since bolshevism is itself an outgrowth of Petrinism it will in time be destroyed in order to complete Russia's liberation from "Europe."

The proletarian of the West wishes to reshape Western civilization to meet his special desires; the Russian intelligentsia wishes, by instinct if not always consciously, to destroy it. That is the meaning of Eastern nihilism. Our Western civilization has long since become purely urban; in Russia there is no such thing as "the masses," but only "the people." Every true Russian, whether his occupation is that of scholar or civil official, is basically a peasant. He is not really interested in the second-hand cities with their second-hand masses and mass ideologies. Despite Marxism, the only economic problems in that country are rural problems. The Russian "worker" is a misunderstanding. The only reality is the untouched, unharmed land, just as in Carolingian Europe. We went through this phase a thousand years ago, and thus we do not understand each other. We Western Europeans are no longer capable of living in communion with the virgin land. Whenever we go "to the country" we take with us the city with all its spiritual aspects; and we take it there in our blood, not just in our head like the Russian *intelligent*. The Russian mentally transports his village with him to the Russian cities.

If we wish to understand this irreparable cleavage between Eastern and Western "socialism" we must at all times distinguish the Russian soul from the Russian political system, and the mentality of the leaders from the instincts of those they lead. For what else is Pan-Slavism but a Western-type political mask covering a strong sense of religious mission? Despite all the industrial catchwords like "surplus value" and "expropriation," the Russian worker is not an urban worker, not a man of the masses as in Manchester, Essen, and Pittsburgh. He is actually a ploughman and reaper who has left home, with a hatred for the foreign power that has spoiled the true calling that his soul still clings to. The ideological elements that make bolshevism work are quite insignificant. Even if its program were turned on its head, its unconscious mission for awakening Russia would remain the same: nihilism.

Even so, bolshevism has an immense appeal for the fomenting intellectuals of *our* cities. It has become a hobby for tired and addled brains, a weapon for decaying megalopolitan souls, an expression for rotting blood. The Spartacism of the salons belongs in the same category as theosophy and occultism; it is for us the same thing as the cult of Isis was,

not for the Oriental slaves in Rome but for the decadent Romans themselves. The fact that it made its entrance in Berlin has to do with the monstrous sham of this Revolution. It is relatively unimportant that empty-headed fools started founding "peasant councils" in Berlin in imitation of the Soviet model, or that no one noticed that rural affairs are the cardinal problem in Russia while our headaches are strictly urban. In the face of socialism, Spartacism has no future in Germany. But bolshevism is certain to conquer Paris, for when mingled with anarchic syndicalism it can satisfy the tired, sensation-hungry French soul. It will be the proper form of expression for the *taedium vitae* of that giant city that is so satiated with life. As a dangerous poison for refined Western intellects it has a greater future than in the East.

In Russia it will be replaced by some new form of tsarism, the only possible system for a people living under such conditions. Most probably this tsarism will resemble the Prussian socialistic system more closely than capitalist parliamentarism. Yet the future of the unconscious forces of Russia lies not in the solution of political and social quandaries but in the imminent birth of a new religion, the third to emerge from the matrix of Christianity, just as Germanic-Western culture unconsciously conceived the second form of Christianity around 100 A.D. Dostoyevsky is one of the prophets of this new faith; it is as yet nameless, but it has already begun to enter with quiet, infinitely tender power.

For us citizens of the Western world, religion is finished. In our urban souls what was once true religiosity has long since been intellectualized to "problematics." The Church reached its fulfillment at the Council of Trent. Puritanism has turned into capitalism, and Pietism is now socialism. The Anglo-American sects represent merely the nervous businessman's need for theological pastimes. There is no more repulsive spectacle than the attempted of certain Protestant groups to revivify the cadaver of religion by smearing it with bolshevist offal. The same thing has been tried with occultism and theosophy. And nothing is more deceptive than the hope that the future religion of Russian can stimulate a revival of religion in the West. There should no longer be any misunderstanding: with its hatred of state, science, and art, Russian nihilism is also directed against Rome and Wittenberg, whose spirit is present in all forms of Western culture and thus an integral part of what this nihilism aims to destroy. Russia will push this development aside and link up once again, by way of Byzantium, directly with Jerusalem.

Bolshevism is a bloody caricature of Western problems that originated in Western

religious sensibilities. By now it ought to have become clear how meaningless and superficial for this Russian movement the great universal problem is that now confronts the West: the choice between the Prussian and English ideas, between socialism and capitalism, state and parliament.

Let me summarize. It is my wish that this brief exposition will give those of our people who by reason of their initiative, self-discipline, and mental superiority are called upon to lead the next generation, a clear picture of the times in which we live and the direction in which we are destined to move.

We now know what is at stake: not just German destiny, but the destiny of all of civilization. The critical question not only for Germany but for all of the world—but it must be answered for all of the world in Germany—is this: In the future, shall business rule the state, or the state rule business?

As far as this momentous question is concerned, Prussianism and socialism are one and the same. Up to now we have not realized this, and even today it is not yet clear. The teachings of Marx, together with class egoism, are guilty of causing both the socialist labor force and the conservative element to misunderstand each other, and thus also to misunderstand socialism.

But now it is unmistakable that they both have identical goals. Prussianism and socialism stand together in opposition to our "inner England," against a set of attitudes that has crippled and spiritually debilitated our entire people. The danger is very great. Woe to those who hold back at this hour because of selfishness or ignorance! They will ruin others and themselves. Solidarity will mean the fulfillment of the Hohenzollern idea and at the same time the redemption of labor. There is salvation either for conservatives and workers together, or for neither.

Labor must rid itself of its Marxist illusions. Marx is dead. As a form of existence socialism is just beginning; as a special movement within the German proletariat socialism is finished. For the worker there is either Prussian socialism or nothing.

The conservatives must rid themselves of the egoism that once, during the reign of the Great Elector, cost Captain von Kalckstein his head. No matter what one may think of democracy, it is the political form of this century that will survive. For the state there can only be democratization or nothing. For the conservatives there can be only conscious socialization or annihilation. But we must be freed of the English and French forms of democracy. We have our own.

The meaning of socialism is that life is dominated not by the contrast of rich and poor but by rank as determined by achievement and ability. That is *our* kind of freedom: freedom from the economic capriciousness of the individual.

My fervent hope is that no one will remain hidden who was born with the ability to command, and that no one is given the responsibility for commanding who lacks the inborn talent for doing so. Socialism means ability, not desire. Not the quality of intentions but the quality of accomplishments is decisive. I turn to our youth. I call upon all who have marrow in their bones and blood in their veins. Train yourselves! Become men! We need no more ideologists, no more chatter about *Bildung* and cosmopolitanism and Germany's intellectual mission. We need hardness, we need a courageous skepticism, we need a class of socialistic mastertypes. Once again: Socialism means power, power, and more power. Thoughts and schemes are nothing without power. The path to power has already been mapped: the valuable elements of German labor in union with the best representatives of the Old Prussian state idea, both groups determined to build a strictly socialist state to democratize our nation in the Prussian manner; both forged into a unit by the same sense of duty, by the awareness of a great obligation, by the will to obey in order to rule, to die in order to win, by the strength to make immense sacrifices in order to accomplish what we were born for, what we are, what could not be without us.

We are socialists. Let us hope that it will not have been in vain.

[The Oswald Spengler Collection](#)