

journalists and politicians: and we have yet to see whether he is ultimately a time server, as they are. But, as Dawson points out, it is impossible to identify personal liberty with democracy: and the strong tradition of the liberty of the private man in England is of aristocratic not democratic origins. It is amusing that the objection to military conscription should be based on grounds of democracy, at least from the continental point of view: because the first modern conscript State was France, during the Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, with the ideal of "equal" obligations to the State of all, and a "fraternity" in arms. What is important to-day is that we have the *mass*-state, the state in which the *mob* is becoming more and more emergent with the breakdown of the old religious and social and hierarchical traditions: though in England this process is veiled and slowed down by the absence of violent revolution which breaks with the past.

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## WE'RE ALL MARXISTS NOW!

IN 1930 I spent the summer in Soviet-Russia. I was, as a matter of fact, the first Hungarian journalist who had visited the Grey Realm of the Red Czar. Deeply impressed and depressed by the rampant materialism, the massing of public and private life around economic problems and the hysteria dominating the "economic construction," I came home. The country of Dostoyevski and Berdyaev, "Holy Russia," was possessed by a mad and perverted lust to eliminate all spiritual aspects of life. In Moscow, in the "Park of Culture and Recreation" the young Komssomoltsi danced at late hours around a burning stack, the flickering flames reflected in their dark eyes and sang in a chorus: "Müy vüpolnim pyetilyetku v chetire goda—We'll carry out the Five-year-plan in four years!" But when I came back to Budapest and Vienna, to Prague and Munich the first question put to me invariably was: "Now tell me the most important thing—how are 'they' getting on economically?"

It was in these years after my first travels to Russia that I began slowly to realize how utterly materialistic the mentality of our urban masses, and mainly of our middle classes, is. Certainly most of the average professional men and women (including all black-coated workers, business-people, bank clerks, etc.) would fly into a rage when openly accused of professing Marxian views. There are few socialists left in Europe apart from the extreme North and West. Even parlour-pinkism is losing ground slowly in our white civilization—except in America. But the downfall of socialism did not unfortunately mean the end of the most typical representative of our once so Christian culture—the end of the *Homo oeconomicus*, that human-inhuman monster, who is primarily the economic being, buyer, seller, consumer, saver, money-earner, spender, comfort-craver, reader of advertisements, prospective customer, manufacturer, dealer, compromiser, described and prophesied by Karl Marx.

Generally America (and England) are accused of being predominantly economically minded, but the ravages caused by a century of rampant materialism in Continental Europe are not less impressive. The rise of new political forms, which



give so little liberty to the individual person and such great economic security to the vast majority can indeed only be explained by the preceding century-old domination of materialism, the establishment of a large commercial middle class, and the decline of church-influence on daily life. How many fathers did I not find in Catholic countries, who admonished their sons to make by all means a "success of their lives," i.e. to increase their banking accounts. "Fascism" or "Communism" for these sons of thriving liberal-materialistic businessmen is in individual cases often nothing else but an issue between national and international security of jobs and income. Certainly this is not European tradition: the early Christians were glad to serve as food for lions and crocodiles; heretics and Catholics from the sixteenth and seventeenth century resisting the stake and gallows will never be forgotten by mankind; the aristocrats of France defying the revolutionary leaders certainly knew how to die for the ideals of a Past Age. The Fouchés and Talleyrands were the exception and not the rule. The times of large-scale *voluntary* emigrations have come to an end; "plebiscites" in favour of those in power show usually 99%; oaths of allegiance are given in the rhythm of the running-board. There is very little of the "sainte folie de la croix"—the "holy folly of the Cross" left, practically no manly loyalty to pledged words and ideals; the Jacobites of the twentieth century live up to "practical considerations." They are far more upset by the fear of losing their old-age pension than by the prospect of eternal damnation or by the loss of their proper self-respect (which they probably never possessed).

Some people will try to argue and say that there has never been such poverty in this world as now, that people in the past lived in comparative wealth thanks to the scarcity of population, whereas poverty to-day rules all over the world. Nothing is less true than that. His Excellency Herr von Goethe, poet and prime-minister of a German principality, lived in quarters which would not even suit a European worker to-day. We are, in spite of unemployment and pauperism, far richer at present than three or four centuries ago, but—and this makes all the difference—though three or four times wealthier, we have ten to twenty times more material *demands* and earthly *ambitions*. The spiritual hunger for sanctity and the intellectual craving for truth, these dominating factors of Europe, besides the moral

demand for honour, have subsided to a base ambition for a naked material and financial security. There are actually few men in many parts of Europe with whom by older standards we should be honoured by shaking hands. The political (and geographical) changes of the last twenty years have shown a simply gigantic amount of immorality and disloyalty. I know government employees and officers in Hungary, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Bohemia who have given their oath of allegiance to three, four or even five governments of often diametrically opposing ideas and of different conquering countries. Of course—you may reply that many of these people were fathers of families with wives, children and other obligations. This is an explanation, but not an excuse; we have no right to suppose that none of the Great Martyrs, who were roasted alive, boiled in oil or quartered, had "obligations" towards a family. But cowardice and hypocrisy are rapidly increasing. In that connection I will never forget a Russian "non-party-man" (Byezpartinnüy) who had warmly defended the Soviet-Government's anti-Christian policy. "You see, I am a Pravoslav myself, but I think that the government is right in confiscating all church-bells. After all, the ringing of these bells offends the feeling of our anti-religious co-citizens." Another man, I have in mind, was a divorced and re-married Britisher, who attacked Hitler's foreign policy heavily. "He's broken all treaties," he said. "He is not a gentleman." Yet Hitler had, after all, never pledged himself to the post-war treaties; his accuser, on the other side, had sworn eternal fidelity to a woman before the altar. This word he had broken and his State had given him all facilities to perpetuate his state of sin by granting him a second "marriage-licence" and so had endorsed the breach of his word. *Society, government and politics in Europe are undoubtedly in a terrible moral crisis.* This moral crisis—and I would go so far to say that there is no other but a *MORAL CRISIS* in Europe—is the result of the victory of materialism in all spheres of life. The words of the Russian writer, Vassili Rozanov, in his "Apokalypsis of Our Time" still hold good: "The innermost cause of the recent events is the fact that gigantic cavities, originating from vanishing Christianity, came into existence in the European humanity; to-day everything tumbles down into these cavities."



What I said of Central-Europe is even more true of Protestant Europe and to a still increased extent even of America. Only these regions of the White culture, which thanks to their proximity to Asia and Africa (like the Iberic and Balkanic peninsulas) have been less exposed to "progress" and industrial civilization, form an exception. There are still some real men left in the Tyrolean mountains, among the Spanish *requetés* and the Macedonian brigands, and of course many of the European peasants have kept their mediaeval decency. From the point of view of character and material disinterestedness the intellectuals rank beside the politicians on the lowest level. This is probably true of most countries. Intellectual materialism is not only prevailing amongst medical authorities, professors of physics and chemistry, engineers and economists—where you would expect it—but even amongst historians. Most historians in this country will agree that economic conditions are the most important factors in history. The large majority of historians will indeed not rest in their research and investigations about a certain period until they find some economic reason (unimportant as it may actually be) for the major events of that time. Their economic mania knows no limits and bounds; for them the Crusades and the Thirty Years War, the rise of Christianity and the victory of National-Socialism are pre-eminently determined by economic reasons. They would denounce the historians who deny the decisive role of economics as "un-scientific," yet they have reached this economic mania only by applying their own conscious-unconscious philosophy of life, their frantic materialism, to their historic outlook.

A few weeks after my first arrival in America I sat at a dinner-table next to a young teacher of a well-known fashionable girls' school. She had her degree from one of the great Colleges in the East and discussed with me the historic approach at length. It didn't take me a long time to realize that my fair neighbour belonged to the vast ranks of unconscious Marxists. "Are you really convinced that the Crusades were fought for material reasons?" I asked her. "Are you entirely sure that the foreign policy of Philip II was not determined by religious reasons?" There she hesitated. She did not try to convince me that Venetian bankers had invested so many thousand dollars in ship-building or that Philip had designs on English coal-mines, but she brought forward the War of Succession and the World

War, which had far fewer economic causes than one supposes over here. "I agree with you," she said, "that people actually fought wars for religious or similar reasons. But since then we have *progressed* a good deal, and *now* certainly all politics are based on economic reasons." The italics are mine. My answer was very simple. "We differ radically on the issue of progress," I replied. "First of all I don't believe in progress, and secondly in a war I rather prefer to cut somebody's throat because he is a heretic than because he has a larger banking account. You might call me a bigot or a fanatic but I would decidedly resent being called a burglar or robber!" It is needless to say that everybody overhearing my remark was deeply shocked.

Some time has elapsed since, but I can't help remembering this conversation very frequently. This young educator had expressed the belief that it is progressive (i.e. superior and more "commonsensical") to evaluate life by its material aspects. She shares this belief with millions of other people who are fully convinced that a humanity pre-eminently occupied with personal or collective economic problems is on a "more advanced" stage than human beings with their foremost interest in the spiritual realm. This boils down to the general belief that engineers, steelworkers, automobile designers and doctors (the latter the new priests and saviours of a comfortistic and humanitarian society!) are far more "useful" than let us say a Carmelite friar, that the last one hundred years, which decidedly are the nadir in the history of the White Race, are far superior to the Middle Ages which lacked efficient banking and women like Dr. Stopes or Mrs. Sanger.

Yet, it ought to be obvious that the truth is diametrically opposed to that wrong aspect; what seems to be "progress" is nothing but decay, and decay is so very often extremely similar to the primitive origins. Old people in extreme ages take up sometimes a childlike attitude, over-intellectualized nations return to the tactics of cavemen. The excessive materialism so typical of super-industrialized countries is nothing but an attitude of animals; animals do not fight for religion, for political philosophies or other cultural issues, they just fight for food or sex, for meat, grazing fields, bones or the possession of a female. I will admit that a few animals will even fight for comfort; I knew a cat who chased any other cat who tried to take possession of her place on a stove. That's all. Yet we will find, if we make



a close survey of modern literature, that many of the "heroes" of present-day fiction are mere animalistic beings, animalistic because they are materialistic like cats, dogs, ants or bees. This NEW MAN—the fulfilment of Karl Marx's prophecies—is therefore the negation of the *Homo sapiens*, created as the image of God. The fact that his "ideals" are glorified by writers, propagated in schools and upheld in non-Christian and Christian homes alike is most depressing. Certainly the *Homo oeconomicus* has different "editions." The very crude and obvious one is reserved for a few super-virile writers, the more subtle one lingers even in the Catholic home. "Sensible" and "practical" parents usually add a good dose of slightly diluted materialism to their education. "Decent business dealing" is extolled and the SAINT is no longer the "ideal" man; income, health, success in all the earthly and anthropocentric domains are the goal of present-day Christians in the industrial-comfortistic civilization. The SAINT has been replaced by the "ordinary decent chap" in England and the "regular fellow" in America. I think it is quite unnecessary to point out that this religiously lukewarm type, with his earthly ambitions, spiritual shortcomings and humanitarian tendencies is a crude materialist; his unconscious Marxism is not less strong than that of the younger generations in Eastern and Central Europe. Even his "rugged individualism" does not prevent him becoming a mass-man, an individual instead of a person. There should be no illusion that our great Saints were anything like "regular fellows." They were good and kind, but also austere, uncompromising, deeply moved by their Great Passion, and full of contempt for "the world." To-day most people (here I include even the "average Catholic") would consider men and women like St. Ignatius, St. Francis or St. Teresa as "high-strung," lacking "common-sense" and "moderation." I could imagine "modern and practical" people describing St. Francis Borgia as "morbid" and St. Anthony as "an introvert." Yet the essence of Christianity is the fact that this belief alone accepts the great value of suffering, and therefore also the great intrinsic value of earthly failure. Victory to true Christianity is only essential as an eschatological aspect—beyond the grave. Not the successful business man, the "heroes" of the stage, the aerodromes, the sports-fields, the stock-exchanges and the screen should be our ideals, but Our Lord, who died like a criminal on the Cross

freezing, spat upon, reeking with blood, as the last outcast of Palestine.

The admiration of material wealth and material success is not Christian but a heritage of Calvin. Only recently we see a sad disillusionment in the Literature and Art of the countries with a strong calvinistic tradition. Even Hollywood starts to drop its customary "happy-end"; yet the alternative to the blind belief that God will give to the righteous man a generous reward expressed in dollars and cents is not a re-evaluation of suffering but a bleak and pagan pessimism full of bitterness and despair. This new revelation has nevertheless not become universally accepted in the Western World; it is an affair of a few intellectuals. This knowledge was on the other hand general in the Catholic World and a healthy sceptical attitude towards our earthly well-being has always prevailed in Southern and Eastern Europe. Claudel in his play *L'Otage* gives an ending to that drama which must be truly revolting to a materialist, i.e. to a man who thinks that the Great Human Trial will be concluded in this world; Claudel rewards all the villains and punishes his heroes. Yet there is no pessimism in that play, which merely embodies the genuine Catholic contempt for worldly success in the shadow of the immensity of an Eternal Life.

This difference of attitude towards the various aspects of life makes it sometimes extremely difficult to offer a comprehensible explanation of political events in Europe to Anglo-Saxons. I never feel at a loss describing Communism to English, American or Scandinavian audiences; Communism is, after all, a materialistic and commercial political philosophy which has purely social and financial aims. The "vocabulary" used by Communists is the same as that of Wall-Street and every average Middle-Class family. Communists want to guarantee jobs and raise salaries; they want to improve sanitation and to fight "superstition"; they nevertheless want people to believe in the superstition of "progress" and a Utopia of perfect comfort and happiness A.D. 2500. Communists are practical and common-sensible. They want more education, more hospitals, kindness to animals, cancer-campaigns, bigger and better roads, faster communications, automobiles for every citizen and larger production. Communism will therefore have an appeal even



to "rugged individualists" when it promises them security; it will have a terrific appeal to materialists of the more collectivistic brand. Communism is explainable to every "average man" of the Industrialized World, explainable and therefore acceptable.

It is less easy to make Germany understood, though it is not a hopeless task. Southerners resent the idea of sharing their social life with negroes; hotels in the Adirondacks sometimes display a sign "For Gentiles only" and it was a privilege of American legislation to have issued the first racial laws by barring the Asiatic immigration at the end of the nineteenth century.

Spain, on the other side, is only comprehensible to people with an inner understanding for the essence of Catholicism. The Spanish mind, the Spanish culture are so utterly un-materialistic that our unconscious Marxians are at a complete loss to understand the country which defended Europe from the Three Great Attacks of Mohammedanism, Protestantism and Bolshevism. No honest effort on the part of "neutral observers" has ever been made in this country to understand the underlying philosophy of the movements backing up Franco. Certainly Catholicism is something you can only understand if it becomes a part of your life-experience; it cannot be understood from the outside. The "regular fellow" originating from a non-Catholic culture will not now or ever be in the position to understand, for instance, an institution of the sort of the Royal Academy of Science Knowledge in Franco-Spain which was recently re-constituted. The members rendered their oath on the Bible and a copy of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. Secretary-General of the Academy became Eugenio d'Ors, famous lay-interpreter of the Theology of Angels! The "average-man" unable to see any sense in truly Spanish culture and civilization will therefore dismiss the idea that Franco and his followers are fighters for a Spanish and Christian-European tradition against the invasion of barbaric twentieth century ideas—in his abysmal ignorance he will style Franco merely a puppet of "the dictators" and leave it at that.

The headway which Communist propaganda has made amongst the "higher" classes of the predominantly Protestant countries and the complete failure to make the cause of Catholic Spain understood by our fellow-Christians is a sign that Marxism and

Materialism are already deeply inrooted in our civilization which once used to be Christian. When the craving for comfort and security are stronger than the love for liberty—and we can see that in a not too distant future—Integral Marxism in the form of Communism will have won the full battle. The "regular fellows" of the whole world will then unite in a great rugged collectivism to wipe out true Christianity from the face of this Earth!

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