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Integral Humanism and the Crisis of Modern Times

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I.—THE CRISIS OF MODERN TIMES

TO AVOID misunderstanding, I should note at once that my point of view is here not that of the mere logic of ideas and doctrines, but that of the *concrete logic of the events of history*.

From the first point of view, that of the mere logic of ideas and doctrines, it is evident that there are many possible positions other than the "pure" positions which I shall examine. One might ask theoretically and in the abstract, what value these various positions have. That is not what I plan to do. In a word, my point of view is that of the philosophy of culture, and not that of metaphysics.

From this point of view, that of the concrete logic of the events of human history, I think that we may be satisfied with a rather general definition of humanism, such as the following:

To leave the discussion quite open, let us say that humanism (and such a definition may itself be developed along quite divergent lines) tends essentially to make man more truly human, and to manifest his original grandeur by enabling him to participate in everything which can enrich him in nature and history (by concentrating the world in man, almost in Max Scheler's words, and by making man as large as the world); it demands that man develop his powers, his creative energies and the life of reason, and at the same time labor to make the forces of the physical world instruments of his freedom. Certainly the pagan's great wisdom, which, according to the author of the Eudemian Ethics, aimed to link itself to "that which is better than reason, being the source of reason," cannot be cut off from the humanistic

tradition; and we are also warned never to *define* humanism by excluding all reference to the superhuman and by forswearing all transcendence.

What is it that I call the concrete logic of the events of history? It is a concrete development determined on the one hand by the internal logic of ideas and doctrines, and on the other hand by the human milieu within which these ideas operate and by the contingencies of history as well as by the acts of liberty produced in history. Necessity and contingency are quite remarkably adjusted in this concrete logic, and to designate this logic we may use the word "dialectic" in the sense I have just expressed, a sense neither Hegelian nor Marxist.

And because in this discussion we are in the practical and existential order of human life, with the exigencies of the universe of desire and of its concrete ends, of passion and action, this dialectic implies a movement much swifter and much more violent than that of abstract logic. Positions theoretically tenable (rightly or not) are swept aside, because practically they appear at once *unlivable*, I do not say for such and such individual, but for the common consciousness.

Here we see the peculiar vice of classical humanism; this vice, in my judgment, concerns not so much what this humanism affirms, as what it negates, denies and divides; it is what we may call an *anthropocentric* conception of man and of culture. I am aware that this word is not too felicitous, but I have used it for want of a better. We might say the error in question is the idea of nature as self-enclosed or self-sufficient.

Instead of an open human nature and an open reason, and this is real nature and real reason, people make out that there exists a nature and a reason isolated by themselves and *shut up* in themselves, and exclusive of everything not themselves.

Instead of a human and rational development in continuity with the Gospel, people demand such a development as replacing the Gospel.

And for human life, for the concrete movement of history, this means real and serious amputations.

Prayer, miracle, supra-rational truths, the idea of sin and of grace, the evangelical beatitudes, the necessity of asceticism, of contemplation, of the means of the Cross—all this is either put in parenthesis or is once for all denied. In the concrete government of human life, reason is isolated from the supra-rational.

It is isolated also from all that is irrational in man, or it denies this—always in virtue of the very sophism that what is "non-rational," in the sense of not reducible to reason itself, would be "non-rational" in the sense of antirational or incompatible with reason. On the one hand, the life proper to the universe of will is ignored. And the non-rational in the very world of knowledge is equally ignored. On the other hand, the whole world of the infra-rational, of instincts, of obscure tendencies, of the unconscious, along with that which it includes of malicious and indeed of demonic, but also of fecund reserves, is put in parentheses and modestly forgotten.

Thus, little by little, will spring up the man conformable to the pattern of *bourgeois pharisaism*, this respectable conventional man in whom the nineteenth century long believed, and in whose unmasking Marx, Nietzsche and Freud will glory; and they really have unmasked him, while in the very act disfiguring man himself.

And at the same time, there have been made to man, ever since the days of Descartes, enormous promises. Automatically the progress of the luminaries will bring about a complete felicity of release and repose, an earthly beatitude.

Very well, but *that will not do*, as the continuation of the story of history has shown. Having given up God so as to be self-sufficient, now man is losing track of his soul, he looks in vain for himself, he turns the universe upside-down, trying to find himself, he finds masks, and behind the masks death.

And then there comes a spectacle which we witness: an *irrational* tidal wave. (It is the awakening of a tragic opposition between life and intelligence.)

This opposition was begun by Luther, and carried on by Rousseau. But certain phenomena of symbiosis, which, I have not time to analyze

here took place later.¹ Today this opposition appears sometimes in servile forms, for example in the form of the philosophy of Klages, or in the form of racism, or in the greatly simplified form of certain military men who shout: "Death to intelligence." I shall return to this point in a moment.

It appears also in noble and very noble forms—I am thinking of Nietzsche, of Kierkegaard, of Karl Barth, of Chestov. But even here, no matter with what intelligence should be developed the theme that intelligence comes from the serpent, and no matter with what generosity they try to salvage human values, this position unmistakably gives way to what one may call a *counter-humanism*. I am not blind to the fact that one might raise objections here and ask whether a humanism defending man against reason is not conceivable. But precisely what I think is that if we set out to defend man, not against a certain use of reason, but against reason itself, and against knowledge, the result—fatally and in spite of everything—will be a counter-humanism.

Here it is evident that reason has been imperilled by rationalism, and humanism by anthropocentric humanism. Terrible voices rise up in man, crying out: We've had enough of lying optimism and illusory moralities, enough of hypocritical justice and hypocritical right, enough of liberty which starves workmen and burns the stacks of grain, enough of idealism which does us to death, which denies evil and unhappiness and robs us of the means of struggling against them; take us back to the great spiritual fruitfulness of the abyss, and the absurd, and the ethics of despair.

The lofty counter-humanism of a Kierkegaard or a Barth may be regarded as a mistaken Christian position. In Barth particularly it is a reactionary and archaic position, in as much as it signifies a will of absolute purification by a reversion to the past—in fact, a return to primitive Lutheranism. In Nietzsche it was rather a thunderstruck Christianity: no longer able to adore, he denied and blasphemed, and nevertheless he still sought and still loved. And all these lofty forms

¹ Notably in France, the Rousseauistic current was swept away by the counter-current, the current of rationalistic humanism, which it has at last reinforced by its strong sentimental dynamism.

of counter-humanism—because in them is a spirit which protests against itself and destroys itself with a kind of Promethean generosity—still preserve admirable values of humanity and spirituality. But they are only of the passing moment, for they give way fatally to the servile forms of which I spoke a moment ago. Poor Nietzsche! The truly terrifying voice, the fatal voice is not the voice of Nietzsche, it is the voice of this mediocre and base multitude whose mediocrity and baseness themselves appear as apocalyptic signs, a voice which scatters to the four winds of humanity the gospel of the hatred of reason, in the form of the cult of the fecundity of war or in that of the cult of race and blood.

When love and holiness do not transform our human condition and change slaves into sons of God, the Law makes many victims. Nietzsche could not bear the sight of the lame and halt of Christianity; more even than Goethe, he rebelled against the cross; he dreamed of a Dionysian superman, who was a fiction. Dionysius—the newspapers and radio give us news of him every morning and inform us as he leads his dance through the concentration camps, and the new ghettos where thousands of Jews are condemned to a slow death, through the cities of China and Spain eviscerated by bombs, through Europe maddened in an armament race and feverishly preparing for suicide. Nietzsche could not see that men can choose only between two ways: the way of Calvary and the way of slaughter. The irrational tidal wave is in reality the tragic wheel of rationalistic humanism; it reacts against a humanism of reason closed up in itself, but it does so by leaving man open to lower powers, shutting off from him higher communications and the spirit which frees, and walling the creature up in the gulf of animal vitality.

This is another spectacle which we attend, a spectacle quite the contrary of a continuation, aggravation, and exasperation of anthropocentric humanism in the direction which it had followed from its origin, in the direction of rationalistic hopes, founded no longer solely on philosophical religion, but on a lived religion.

This returns to take all the consequences of the principle that *man alone and through himself alone, works out his salvation*.

This unadulterated instance which we now face is that of Marxism. No matter how strong some of the pessimistic aspects of Marxism may be, it remains attached to this postulate. Marx brought back Hegelianism; he remained nevertheless rationalistic, so much so that for him the movement proper to matter is a *dialectical* movement. (In Marxist materialism, it is not irrational instinct or biological mysticism, but reason which decapitates reason.)

Man alone and through himself alone works out his salvation. Hence this salvation is purely and exclusively temporal; this salvation is accomplished naturally *without God*, since man is truly alone and acts truly alone only if God does not exist; and even *against God*, I mean against whatever in man and the human milieu is the image of God, that is to say, from this point of view, the image of heteronomy; this salvation demands the organization of humanity into one body whose supreme destiny is not to see God but to gain supreme dominion in history. It is a position which still declares itself humanistic, but it is radically atheistic and it thereby destroys in reality the humanism which it professes in theory. It is well known that dialectical materialism claims to be heir to classical humanism, and Engels used to write that the revolutionary proletariat was the heir to classical German philosophy. If it is true that this is the most pure and therefore the most active form of the spiritual impulse which appeared earlier in the quite different form of rationalistic humanism, we understand that the god of rationalism does not count in the presence of this atheism, and that what remained of disaffected Christianity in classical rationalism is like a cake of starch in alcohol. As for the humanism to which it invites us, the way in which revolutionary materialistic dialectic, as lived for twenty years in the country it conquered, has devoured its leaders, reduced their morality to that of the end justifies the means, and put to death or persecuted thousands of suspected men—this is sufficient to edify us on that subject.

There is finally a position removed as far from anthropocentric humanism as from anti-humanist irrationalism. This is the Christian humanistic position, according to which the misfortune of classical humanism was not to have been humanism but to have been anthropo-

centric; not to have hoped in reason, but to have isolated reason and to have left it to dry out; not to have sought liberty, but to have orientated itself toward the myth of the democracy of the individual, instead of toward the historical ideal of the democracy of the person.

In short, in this view the modern world has sought good things by bad ways; it has thus compromised the search for authentic human values, which men must save now by an intellectual grasp of a profounder truth, by a substantial recasting of humanism. In my opinion, we have today to make a considerable liquidation—a liquidation of four centuries of classical culture—the culture in question being a brilliant dissolution (in which new creative forces appear) of mediaeval civilization. It is the merit of Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More to have called attention to the historical necessity of a new humanism, and to the responsibilities of Rousseau in the tragedy of modern humanism. What I wanted to indicate in the preceding analysis is the breadth of this tragedy, the double responsibility of the rationalistic current and the irrationalistic current (the latter nevertheless depending on the former, as reaction on action), and the breadth with which we have as a consequence to conceive a new humanism. A new humanism ought then to be new in a singularly profound sense: it ought to evolve within the movement of history and create something new in relation to these four centuries that are behind us; if it has not such power to renew, it is nothing.

The new humanism must re-assume in a purified climate all the work of the classical age; it must re-make anthropology, find the rehabilitation and the "dignification" of the creature not in isolation, in a closed-inness of the creature on itself, but in its openness to the world of the divine and super-rational; and this implies in practice a work of sanctification of the profane and temporal; this means, in the spiritual order, the discovery of the *ways of childhood* whereby the "humanity of God our Saviour," as Saint Paul says, finds, with fewer human trappings, a readier way into man, and causes more souls to enter into this hidden task of suffering and vivifying; it implies, in the moral and social order, the discovery of a deeper and fuller sense of the dignity of the human person, so that man would re-find himself in God refund, and would direct social work toward an heroic ideal

of brotherly love, itself conceived not as a spontaneous return of emotions to some illusory primitive condition, but as a difficult and painful conquest of the spirit, a work of grace and virtue.

Such a humanism, which considers man in the wholeness of his natural and supernatural being, and which sets no a priori limit to the descent of the divine into man, we may call the *humanism of the Incarnation*. It is an "integral" and "progressive" Christian position which I believe conforms to representative principles of the genuine spirit of Thomism. And I am happy to find in agreement with it, not all theologians (that would be too much, and is never the case) but some theologians such as Père Chenu, l'Abbé Journet, and many others.

In the perspectives of this integral humanism, there is no occasion to choose, so as to sacrifice one or the other, between the vertical movement toward eternal life (present and actually begun here below) and the horizontal movement whereby the substance and creative forces of man are progressively revealed in history. These two movements should be pursued at the same time. To claim to sacrifice the second to the first is a sin of Manicheism. But to claim to sacrifice the first to the second is materialistic nonsense. And the second, unless it is to turn to the destruction of man, is effected only when vitally joined to the first, because this second movement, having its own proper and properly temporal finalities, and tending to better man's condition here below, prepares in history the Kingdom of God, which, for each individual person and for the whole of humanity, is something meta-historical.

II.—SOME PROBLEMS

To examine all the problems raised by the preceding considerations would try the patience of the reader; these problems are in fact infinite. Let us eliminate first of all the problem of the *chances of realization*, near or remote, of an integral humanism such as I have tried to characterize. It is clear that the barbarism of the world which passes before our eyes at an accelerated speed seems singularly unfavorable to such an occurrence. But the essential thing, if not for our dearest human

interest, at least for our philosophy, is to know whether this true humanism answers to the tendencies of the creative forces which act in history simultaneously with the forces of degradation and disintegration, and which act more or less masked by them. If so, it will be necessary that the true humanism have its day, even though it be after a night of several centuries comparable to the night of the later middle ages.

Next, it is proper to remark that the crisis of civilization, as it appears today in the concrete, is very far from being reduced to an opposition between the "pure" forms and tendencies of which I spoke in the first part of my exposé.

Moreover, if we consider that complex ensemble of forces which we may call, in a general sense, totalitarian, we used to make a very neat distinction between their principle in the pure state and the realizations which it has or will produce in this or that place, and in which the contingency, resistance and germination of life occasion all sorts of mixtures and sometimes of attenuations.

Then, finally, it is just to say that in many aspects communist totalitarianism on the one hand (totalitarianism of the social community), and on the other hand, fascist totalitarianism (of the political State) or national socialism (of the racial community), these two opposed species of totalitarianism present profound analogies and even phenomena of osmosis: not only in the order of political techniques, but in the order of principles themselves. Yet between these principles and these philosophical roots there are profound differences.

In spite of the combative pessimism imprinted on it by Marxism, communism has as metaphysical root an absolutely optimistic philosophy of man, that great optimistic mysticism which began with rationalism and was continued by the Encyclopedics, then by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, then by utopian socialism on the one hand and Hegelian philosophy on the other. Practically, it denies that man is a creature of God, because it is unwilling to recognize in man that which comes from nothingness. Because of this optimistic basis, it does not profess to be totalitarian; the totalitarian principle is immanent in it as a vice and fatality, which one does not profess.

Fascism, on the contrary, has a metaphysical root an absolute pessimism of a rather voluntaristic and Machiavellian sort. Practically, it denies that man comes from the hand of God, and that he maintains within him in spite of everything, the grandeur and dignity of such an origin. This pessimism, which invokes incontestable empiric truths, turns these truths into ontological lies, because the fact that man comes from God does not matter to it. Then it despairs of man—I mean of the human person, the individual person—in favor of the State. Not God but the State will create man; the State by its constraints will oblige man to come forth from the nothingness of the anarchy of the passions, and lead an upright and even an heroic life.

As for national socialism, it also makes the most fundamental mistake about the nature of man: in this sense, that in practice it basically refuses to see in man the creature and image of God, and it uses man as zoological material: man must become the apotheosis of the telluric, primitive and divine (demonic) element which is developed in him and by him, that is to say in the blood and by the predestinated blood, in such a way that a quite apparently combative optimism, which is trust in force, is added to a fundamentally pessimistic conception of human nature.

Because of this pessimism, national socialism and fascism proclaim themselves totalitarian, and the totalitarian principle is raised up by them as a shield and standard.

In a word, looking at these two opposed totalitarian species, we might say that practically, existentially, we have here an atheism which declares that God does not exist and yet makes its own god of an idol; an atheism which declares indeed that God does exist, but makes of God himself an idol, because it denies in act if not in word the nature and transcendence of God; it invokes God, but as a spirit-protector attached to the glory of a people or a State, or as the demon of the race.

These remarks were made to avoid confusion. I would return now to the purely anti-Christian position of which I spoke at the outset, and which it would be better to call "anti-Christ," because it is less a question of doctrinal opposition to Christianity than of an existential opposition to the presence and action of Christ at the center of human

history. To be brief, it is on the problems of the religious significance of racism and communism that I would say a few words. In this section I shall not speak of fascism, because, for various reasons on which I have not space to insist, the religious or mystical dynamism of fascism is feeble (on the one hand the resistance of the Catholic Church puts a considerable check on the pagan mysticism of Empire, on the other the idea of the State lends itself less readily to serve as substitute for the religious bond than does the idea of racial community); however, because of that, it is difficult for it not to submit, in this domain, to forms that are more virulent.

Let us consider first the racial principle in the pure state. From the point of view of the nexus of ideas, it appears that racism is, as we said, above all an irrational reaction. Think of the actual status of scholars in the country which seemed to have vowed to them forever its veneration: racism is a protest of the man in the street against the scholar! More profoundly, it is a pathological protest, nourishing itself on the most absurd pedantry (but in such case, the more absurd the pedantry, the more efficacious it is), a pathological protest of nature with all its forces of vitality and ferocity rising out of the depths of mother-earth, with its needs of euphoria and power and physical beauty, with the implacable rage which can exalt instinct when the spirit betrays itself and becomes engulfed in animality, a protest against the messengers of the absolute and transcendent who had not sufficiently shared the miseries of human kind.

For we should recognize the chastisement exercised here against this primacy of the ideal unfaithful to itself, and, so far, artificial and hypocritical, which was the great vice of the Kantian nineteenth century and which we may call a clericalism of the reason. The world of elementary values in nature, of physical courage, of simplicity, no matter if brutal and gross; of that sort of natural, if cynical, candor by which the animal is not ashamed to exist nor has need to justify existence; the world of primitive feelings, of pacts such as exist even in the horde, of the instinct of physical solidarity such as exists among robbers, of the need of being together and feeling together such as exists even in the great herds on the prairies, this world can indeed be disciplined by true wisdom, which does not despise it and which turns

it toward transformations of the spirit. But against false wisdom which humiliates and deceives it, some day or other it takes terrible revenge.

A mystic hatred of all intellectual or moral subtlety, of wisdom and all asceticism is thus developed; and at the same time a powerful religiosity, the natural religiosity inherent in the human substance down to its elementary physical fibers. God is invoked, but only in virtue of the testimony, if I may say so, of these elementary fibers and of the desire of nature written in the biological elements of the human being; and (because of the basic reactionary process which I indicated) He is invoked *against* the god of the spirit, of intelligence and love, excluding and hating this God. For an extraordinary spiritual phenomenon, then, here you are: people believe in God, and yet do not know God. The idea of God is affirmed, and at the same time disfigured and perverted. A God who will end by being identified with an invincible force at work in the blood is set up against the God of Sinai and against the God of Calvary, against transcendent Being, *He who is* and who dwells in inaccessible glory, against the Word who was at the beginning, against the God of whom it is said that He is Love. We are facing, not a pseudo-scientific atheism, but, if I may speak thus, a demonic para-theism which while declining wisdom, is open to every kind of occultism, and which is not less anti-Christian than is atheism.

Of course, if it were not perverted thus, the testimony I just spoke of, that of the natural desire of God inherent in the elementary physical fibers of the human being, is in itself authentic and valid. Will it some day be able to free itself from the unregulated affective forces which set it against the testimony of the spirit? If so, on what conditions? And by what processes? Well, in any case, racism as it exists and acts in reality today and in the minds of today will have been evacuated.

This is because, if we take the point of view not only of the nexus of ideas but of society in the concrete, we see that racism is existentially bound to this demonic para-theism. Because in its reaction against individualism and its thirst for a communion, it seeks this communion in human animality, which, separated from the spirit, is no more than a biological inferno. In the metaphysics of society in the concrete, the god of the community of the blood can only be the demon of the

blood. Racial neo-paganism is thus lower than the paganism of classical antiquity, which was faithful to eternal laws and to the supreme Divinity. It brings into existence again the lowest elements of paganism.

The account of atheism and communism calls for a like discussion. From the point of view of the connection of ideas, one sees that the genesis of communism in Marx is of the philosophical order; it proceeds from impulses got from Hegelian left and from Feuerbach; in Marx the theory of the alienation of work by private property presupposes *de facto*, before becoming first *de jure*, the Feuerbachian theory of the alienation of conscience by the idea of God.

And more profoundly, the discovery of historical materialism as Marx conceived it, implies an absolutely atheistic position; because it implies a universal process of substitution of the dialectic of history for all transcendent causality, and for the universe of Christianity in general; it implies consequently an absolute realistic and naturalistic immanentism, by hypothesis exclusive of all divine transcendence.

For Marx, then, the historical and sociological action of religion works *necessarily* against the emancipation of the proletariat, because it is the action of a factor of the super-structure which is originally determined only by the need of justifying the economic exploitation of man by man.

If the master-idea of historical materialism can be purified, so as to designate henceforth only the essential (but not principal) importance of material causality in history, it is on condition that it break with Marxism, and replace the outlook of Hegelian dialectic by that of the fourfold causality of Aristotle.

This basic atheistic principle explains why the *existence* of class struggle (resulting from the capitalistic structure of economics) gave rise in Marx to a theoretic and practical *conceptualization* turning the class-struggle into a gesture of atheism, I mean a moral secession fully accepted by the dispossessed class, by the accursed of the earth, from the political community, which, no matter how oppressive and inhuman its economic structure might be, holds its natural value from God. This same basic atheistic principle explains also why, as the Webbs report, one of the deepest features of the new civilization worked out in the

Soviet Republics is anti-godism; and why, as they also report, a formal pledge of atheism and of repudiation of every form of the supernatural is required in Russia of every adherent to the communist party, and even of every candidate for that party.

Are there yet other potentialities in Marxism? Because in Marx—as I have just tried to explain, by reason of a presupposed atheism—the social problem of the emancipation of the proletariat has in fact the priority over the metaphysical and religious problem, the class war over the anti-religious war, can we conceive within Marxism a development allowing a clearly affirmed dissociation between social theory and a materialistic conception of the world, and, on the other hand, a revision of the naive atheism which Marx held in the nineteenth century? If so, on what conditions? And by what processes? Well, in any case, communism as it exists and acts in reality today and in the minds of today would have to be evacuated.

This is because, if we take the point of view not only of the connection of ideas but of society in the concrete, we see that communism is existentially bound to atheism. For if it reacts against individualism, if it thirsts for communion, it does so without finding a principle superior to anthropocentric humanism; quite on the contrary it aggravates the latter and seeks this communion in economic activity, in pure productivity, which considered as the proper place and homeland of human activity, is only a world of a beheaded reason, of reason without God. In the metaphysics of concrete social fact, the god of the industrial community can only be human reason as demiurgic manufacturer, the titanism of industry. Communism thus transforms Christian communion into another, a quite temporal communion, which is achieved by the abolition of private property.

Under this heading of communism and racism, we may make a concluding remark. If it is true that in the dialectic of culture, communism is the final state of anthropocentric rationalism, we see that in virtue of the universality inherent in reason, even in reason gone mad, communism is all-embracing, and sets itself against Christianity by pretending to substitute for the universalism of the Mystic Body of Christ its own earthly universalism. Whereas racism, on its irrational

and biological basis, sets itself against Christianity by rejecting all universalism, and by breaking even the natural unity of the human family, so as to impose the hegemony of a so-called higher racial essence.

We see also that communism tends, quite in the line of industrialistic rationalism and of capitalistic materialism, toward a transformation of economics by annihilating the ultimate cadres of bourgeois society, and that its directive elements are furnished to communism especially by a working population whose thought a century of socialistic tradition has disciplined in a revolutionary direction. Racism on the contrary and fascism, do indeed exert on the energies of bourgeois society a high revolutionary pressure, and they do detest capitalism, but—being above all reactionary processes—they do not go on to a social transformation destructive of the ultimate machinery of capitalistic society. By another road, preferably by war, do they threaten its destruction. The masses on whom they depend belong especially to the middle classes on the path to proletarianism, classes whose affective mobility is very great; the personal magnetism of the leaders plays a main part; but the leaders could not make their enterprise succeed without the aid given them by strong privileged interests anxious to safeguard their own position.

III.—THE WORLD AND CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE

A characteristic of the humanism which I call integral would be that, far from being limited to the élite, it would care for the masses, for their right to work and to a spiritual life, and for the movement which historically brings them, we may say, to an historically full age. On the social significance of such a humanism, I will simply say that in my opinion it should assume the task of radically transforming the temporal order, a task which would tend to substitute for bourgeois civilization, and for an economic system based on the fecundity of money—not a collectivistic economy—but a “personalistic” civilization and a “personalistic” economy, through which would stream a temporal refraction of the truths of the Gospel.

This task is joined to a thorough awakening of the religious conscience, and I wish to insist on this point. One of the worst vices of

the modern world is the dualism, the dissociation between the things of God and the things of the world. The latter, the things of the social, economic and political life, have been abandoned to their own carnal law, removed from the exigencies of the Gospel. The result is that they have become more and more unlivable; at the same time, Christian ethics, not really carried out in the social life of peoples, became in this connection, I do not say in itself or in the Church, I say in the world, in the general cultural behavior, a universe of formulas and words; and this universe of formulas and words was in effect, vassalized, in practical cultural behavior, by the real energies of this same temporal world existentially detached from Christ. Such a disorder can be remedied only by a renewal of the profoundest energies of the religious conscience arising into the temporal existence.

On the other hand, modern civilization, which pays dearly today for the past, seems as if it were pushed by the very contradictions and fatalities suffered by it, toward contrasting forms of misery and intensified materialism. To rise above these fatalities we need an awakening of liberty and of its creative forces, we need the energies of spiritual and social resurrection of which man does not become capable by favor of the State or any partisan pedagogy, but by a love which fixes the center of his life infinitely above the world and temporal history. In particular, the general paganization of our civilization has resulted in man's placing his hope in force alone and in the efficacy of hate, whereas in the eyes of an integral humanism, a political ideal of brotherly love alone can direct the work of authentic social regeneration: and it follows that to prepare a new age of the world, martyrs of love of neighbor may first be necessary. And this also shows how all depends here on a profound renewal of the interior energies of conscience.

Granted what I said just now about the pathological process of vassalization, in the behavior of contemporary civilization, of religious formulas by worldly energies, we see that the renewal we speak of should be a kind of Copernican revolution, which would in no way affect doctrine, not even an iota of it, but would make a great change in the relative importance of the elements in the universe of action. It would consist in a general and bold acknowledgment of the primacy

of the vital and the real (even the implicitly or virtually real) over matters of appearance and external formulation—let us say—for I am primarily their King of the Christian conscience—of the primacy of the practically or vitally Christian over the nominally or decoratively Christian. Such a Copernican revolution would have notable consequences for the question of the ways and means of political action.

Truly speaking, it is the idea of the primacy of the spiritual which here dominates the debate. To say that Christianity will remake itself through Christian means or that it will unmake itself completely; to say that no good is to be expected from the enterprises of violence and constraint—with no compunction of heart and no interior reform or inner creative principle—enterprises animated by the same spirit which is at the elemental source of the evils actually suffered by civilization; to say that the witness and the patient and persevering action of the Christian spirit in the world is more important than the outer apparel of a Christian order, especially when those who pretend to save this order bind themselves, and also the order, either to established injustice or even to the immense pagan energies sweeping away one part of the actual world—this is simply to affirm that the principle of the primacy of the spiritual demands respect in the very mode in which men work to give it reality; it is simply to affirm that the primacy of the spiritual cannot be realized while denying itself.

I add that if it is true that the leaven of the Pharisees, against which Christ put us on our guard, represents—as Père Fessard, a Jesuit well known in Paris has said in one of his books—a standing temptation for the religious conscience, and if it is true that this leaven will not be totally expelled from the world till the end of time, then we must say that the renewal of the religious conscience of which I speak would be a step in the right direction, and a signal victory in the never-ending struggle of the religious conscience against Pharisaism.

At the same time, it seems clear to me that, in the temporal order an attitude corresponding to what has always been called the liberty of the Christian before the world and the powers of the flesh, is the only one to safeguard—tomorrow and the day after, either as a favorable solution of the present crisis or as a dawn after a long night—the hope of men in the terrestrial efficacy of the Gospel, and of reason.