

PART V

THE DISINTEGRATIONS OF CIVILIZATIONS

Breakdowns are not inevitable and not irretrievable; but, if the process of disintegration is allowed to continue, I find that it seems to follow a common pattern in most instances. The masses become estranged from their leaders, who then try to cling to their position by using force as a substitute for their lost power of attraction. I trace the fragmentation of society into a dominant minority, an internal proletariat, and an external proletariat consisting of the barbarians on its fringes; and I sketch the social reactions of these diverse groups to the ordeal of disintegration. I also find a corresponding psychological schism in the souls of people who happen to have been born into this unhappy age. Discordant psychic tendencies which are perhaps always latent in human nature now find free play. People lose their bearings, and rush down blind alleys, seeking escape. Greater souls detach themselves from life; still greater souls try to transfigure life into something higher than mere life as we know it on Earth, and sow the seeds of a fresh spiritual advance.

27 The nature and symptoms of social disintegration



IN PASSING FROM the breakdowns of civilizations to their disintegrations, we should not be too ready to assume that this sequence is automatic and unalterable – that once a civilization has broken down, it must inevitably pass straight through disintegration into dissolution. Although this was the pattern of the Hellenic Civilization, we have already seen¹ that it is not applicable to all civilizations, and we found that we had to turn to an alternative model to take account of the instances which did not conform to our provisional Hellenic norm. On the analogy of the communities which have been arrested at the threshold of growth,² a broken-down civilization may itself be ‘arrested’ at some point before disintegration has had time to run its full course. We have an outstanding example of such an arrest in the Egyptiac Society, which, in spite of having effectively broken down before the end of the third millennium BC, passionately refused to pass away and actually succeeded in surviving for another 2500 years – a span of time that was perhaps nearly three times as long as the combined span of its birth, growth, and first breakdown. Its survival was, however, bought at a price, for the life of the Egyptiac Society during this second aeon of existence was a kind of life-in-death; in fact, it survived by becoming petrified.

This fate of the Egyptiac Society should serve to remind us that disintegration, like growth, is not a single act but a process in time, and, as such, susceptible to changes in tempo. Thus, even when disintegration has unmistakably set in, it does not necessarily run straight out into dissolution, and this fact obliges us to look more closely at the nature of the process.

The conclusions that we reached when we analysed the nature of the growths of civilizations³ will give us some clues to the nature of their disintegrations. We found that we could identify the essence of growth as an *élan* which carries a challenged party through the equilibrium of an originally effective response into an overbalance which declares itself in the presentation of a fresh challenge; and it is this element of overbalance which converts the single act of challenge-and-response, which we had already detected in the geneses of civilizations, into the repetitive, recurrent rhythm which the concept of growth implies. This repetitiveness or recurrency is likewise implied in the concept of disintegration, which, as we have just suggested, resembles the concept of growth in signifying a process. In each individual performance of the drama of challenge-and-response we must here, of course, write failure for success and change the plus sign into a minus; but the successive defeats through which the process of disintegration works itself out do nevertheless resemble the successive victories which build up the process of growth inasmuch as they, too, constitute a continuous series in which each performance leads on to the next. For example, in the history of the international politics of the Hellenic World, from the time when Solon’s economic revolution

PETRIFIED HIERARCHIES

161, 162, 163 A rigid system of stratification had brought the Egyptiac Society to the verge of dissolution by 2000 BC; the ruling élites – administrators and priests, above – arrested the process, but only by tightening their hold. The peasant, below, carried the crushing burden of this strangled society for 2500 years more.



first confronted the Hellenic Society with the task of establishing a political world order, we can see that the failure of the Athenian attempt to solve the problem by means of the Delian League led on to Philip of Macedon's attempt to solve it by means of the Corinthian League, and Philip's failure to Augustus's attempt to solve it by means of a *Pax Romana* upheld by a principate. Similarly, in the history of the Egyptian Society's struggle with the problem of social incubuses, we can see that the failure to throw off the incubus of a deified kingship led on to a progressive complication of the unsolved problem as the *litteratus* and the priest and the professional soldier successively mounted, behind the king, upon the peasant-pack-horse's back.

In terms of recurrency and rhythm, then, there is an obvious affinity between the nature of growth and that of disintegration; but, on the other hand, our examples will also have revealed a striking point of diversity between the two. It is self-evident that, during the growth process, the same challenge is never presented more than once, for, *ex hypothesi*, so long as growth is being maintained, each successive challenge is being successfully met, or, in other words, disposed of as a living issue and relegated to the history books. By contrast we can see that, in a series in which the outcome of each successive challenge is not victory but defeat, the unanswered challenge can never be disposed of and is therefore bound to present itself again and again until it either receives some overdue and imperfect answer, or else brings about the destruction of a society which has shown itself inveterately incapable of responding to it effectively. Thus, in the disintegrations of civilizations, the perpetual variety and versatility which are the hallmarks of growth give way to a merciless uniformity and uninventiveness; and intensification, instead of diversification, is the form of change which now relieves the monotony of the series of performances. At each performance, now, the challenge is the same as it has been at every performance since the tragic one which witnessed the original breakdown; but, after each successive failure to respond to it, the old unanswered challenge presents itself ever more insistently and in an ever more formidable shape, until at last it quite dominates and obsesses and overwhelms the unhappy souls that are being progressively defeated by it.

Thus the disintegration of a civilization, like its growth, is a cumulative as well as a continuous process; and, at the same time, we might perhaps be less reluctant to apply to this process the metaphor of 'direction' which we hesitated to use in connexion with the growth process.⁴ Does not the disintegration of a civilization run to a defeat which culminates either in extinction, or else in a petrification which is no true reprieve since it merely condemns the disintegrating society to the temporary limbo of life-in-death before its ultimate and inevitable dissolution? This may in fact be the truth, but we would be wise not to accept this view at face value, before we have applied our usual test of an examination of the evidence. The Solonian *Respice finem*,⁵ if it hits the mark at all, is presumably pertinent to all cases; and, until we have actually seen the end of an individual or society, to pronounce an absolute verdict may be premature. 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth' may prove to be as near the ultimate truth as the dictum

attributed to Solon by Herodotus, that 'to many people God has given a glimpse of happiness in order to destroy them root and branch'. We cannot say our last word about the nature of the disintegrations of civilizations until we have studied the process from beginning to end, and this in its inward experiences as well as in its outward manifestations.

In our analysis of the breakdowns of civilizations, we found that the ultimate criterion and fundamental cause of breakdown could be described as a loss of harmony which leads to the forfeiture by a society of its power of self-determination;⁶ and we then went on to examine at some length the practical ways in which this loss of self-determination is revealed. Let us now pick up this thread of analysis at the point where we left off for our review of the evidence, and bring it a stage further by analysing the loss of harmony itself, as it is disclosed in the process of social disintegration. In essence, the loss of harmony between elements which had formerly coexisted in a society as an integral whole leads inevitably to an outbreak of social discord. The broken-down society is rent in two different dimensions simultaneously by the social schisms in which this discord is expressed. There are 'vertical' schisms between geographically segregated communities, and 'horizontal' schisms between geographically intermingled but socially segregated classes.

In the vertical type of schism, the articulation of society into a number of parochial states gives rise to an internecine warfare on a crescendo note between the unneighbourly members of the same body social. This warfare exhausts the energies of the society, before it brings itself to a violent end through a 'knock-out blow' in which a single surviving state is left staggering among the corpses of its fellow-combatants. We have already seen how frequently the fatal discord takes this vertical form of destructive warfare between states,⁷ but at the same time we may observe that the vertical schism is perhaps not the most characteristic manifestation of the discord which propels a broken-down civilization into disintegration. The articulation of a society into parochial communities is, after all, a phenomenon which is common to the whole genus 'human societies' and is not peculiar to the particular species 'civilizations'. The so-called 'civilized' state is simply an imposing, high-powered version of the primitive tribe; and, while the internecine warfare between states in the bosom of a civilization is vastly more destructive in degree than the clashes of tribes within the bosom of a pre-civilizational society, this method of social suicide is merely an abuse of a potential instrument of self-destruction which is within reach of any society. On the other hand, the horizontal schism of a society along lines of class is not only peculiar to civilizations, but is also a phenomenon which first appears at the moment of breakdown, and which is a distinctive mark of the phases of breakdown and disintegration, by contrast with its absence during the phase of growth. This is not, of course, to say that either in a pre-civilizational society or in a civilization in its growth stage horizontal lines of social articulation are unknown. However, at that stage, even where the gulfs between ranks cannot easily be crossed, this hierarchical cleavage is not apt to produce a destructive moral schism, because the



different ranks which are divided in status are apt to be united morally by a common consciousness of having reciprocal functions to perform which are all indispensable for the welfare, and even perhaps for the preservation, of a society which is one and indivisible.⁸ In a broken-down society, by contrast, the schism between classes is a product of the disintegration of a coherent social ethos.

We have already come across this horizontal type of schism in an earlier chapter when we were constructing and analysing our Hellenic model of civilization,⁹ and we have caught other glimpses of it from time to time in the course of the intervening chapters. So far we have identified the component classes into which a disintegrating civilization breaks – the dominant minority, and the internal and external proletariats. We have also seen something of the nature and origins of these classes: the dominant minority is a perversion of the creative minority whose role of leadership it has inherited, and it embarks on a policy of social repression in order to impose by force the authority which it is no longer accorded in virtue of merit; the internal proletariat comprises that majority within a society which has formerly given its voluntary allegiance to a creative leadership, but which is now increasingly alienated from its own society by the coercive despotism of its corrupted masters; and the external proletariat is formed of the barbarian communities beyond the frontiers of a civilization who have been drawn into its orbit, but who now find themselves similarly alienated. Each of these groups, furthermore, finds an institutional expression of its status: while the dominant minority erects the imposing apparatus of a universal state, the internal proletariat registers its secession from society by adopting a spiritual ethos which is alien in inspiration and which culminates in the creation of a universal church; and the external proletariat shakes off its dependence upon the hitherto dominating civilization and asserts its free existence as a bevy of aggressive barbarian war-bands.

In addition to these preliminary observations on the main features of social breakdown, we have already tried to obtain a clearer view of the nexus of cause and effect between the loss of a leading minority's gift for creation and the loss of its faculty for attracting the allegiance of the majority without having to resort to force.¹⁰ Here we put our finger upon the creative minority's expedient of social drill – a short-cut for bringing the uncreative mass into line – as the weak spot in the relation between minority and majority in the growth stage. On this showing, the estrangement between minority and majority which eventually comes to a head in the secession of the proletariat is a consequence of the breaking of a link which, even in the growth phase, has only been maintained by playing upon a well-drilled faculty of mimesis. The leaders' failure to continue to play upon this faculty in the rank-and-file is a consequence of the same leaders' failure to reply to a particular challenge by making a creative response. It is no longer surprising to find that the link inevitably snaps when the leaders' creativity gives out, considering that, even in the growth stage of the society's history, this link of mimesis has always been precarious by reason of a treacherous duality – the revenge of an unwilling slave – which is part of the nature of any mechanical device.

These are the threads of inquiry into the horizontal schism in a broken-down society that are already in our hands; and perhaps the most promising way of attempting to pursue our inquiry further will be to draw these threads together and then spin out the strands. We will begin by taking a closer look at the pattern of schism, and we will then go on to examine in more detail each of the two fractions – internal and external proletariat – into which the masses in and around a broken-down society split. Our next step will be to turn – as we turned at a certain point in our study of the process of growth¹¹ – from the macrocosm to the microcosm; for, after we have studied the social expression of discord, we shall want to look at it in its complementary form of an internalized distraction in the soul. Finally, we shall devote our attention to the institutions which arise out of the débris of a disintegrating civilization; and in particular we shall pay close regard to the nature of universal churches, for these, as we have already noted in passing,¹² seem to contain within themselves the seeds of a new evolutionary process which transcends the old limits of the civilizations in which they come to birth.

The social mechanisms which are operative in the transition from growth to breakdown were acutely diagnosed by Saint-Simon, working from his own experience of the shattering social strife which culminated in the French Revolution. Saint-Simon suggested that the histories of societies could be divided into two alternating periods, the 'organic' and the 'critical'. In the socially coherent and harmonious 'organic' periods, the members of a society are united by a common agreement on social organization and social goals; individual and political relationships are stable and accepted, and the disposal of power reflects diverse abilities to contribute to the welfare of society. The 'critical' periods, by contrast, are marked by the collapse of the consensus and by the disintegration of society into dissenting and mutually hostile fragments; status is questioned, relationships become fluid, and in the ensuing struggle for power the relative capabilities of the contending classes and individuals are forgotten.¹³ This association of social disintegration and class strife has been made more familiar to modern ears by Marx's more rigorous and substantial analysis of social dynamics in terms of a perpetual class war. Marx's tremendous picture of the proletarian revolution is important to us here, both because it is the classic exposition of the social crisis that accompanies the disintegration of a civilization, and because this formula conforms to the traditional Zoroastrian and Jewish and Christian apocalyptic pattern in unveiling, beyond a violent climax, the vision of a gentle finale. In common with these religions, but perhaps alone of all political dogmas, Marxism offers 'an interpretation of human existence by means of which men may situate themselves in the world and direct their actions to ends that transcend those offered by their immediate situation';¹⁴ and it 'rescue[s] individual lives from the insignificance of finitude . . . by showing the individual that he has or can have some role in a world-historical drama'.¹⁵ In Marxian eschatology, the violent and destructive proletarian revolution, with its temporary sequel of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is to be followed by a New Society in which the disposal of productive forces will be

SOCIAL STABILITY

164–169 'A place and means for every man alive': fifteenth-century engravings of the orders of society, opposite. In a growing civilization – Saint-Simon's 'organic' society – community tells more than class: king, knight, gentleman, merchant, artisan, and servant are held in harmony by mutual interdependence and a common ethos; coherence is the keynote.

SOCIAL IMBALANCE

170 In a period of disintegration – Saint-Simon's 'critical' phase – the ruthless pursuit of incompatible class interests shatters the social pyramid and creates new structures of oppression. The 'lower orders', as in this French Revolution print, must bend under the weight of a privileged élite, until misery spurs them to challenge the minority's monopoly of power.





172 The apocalyptic revelation: Communist. Exposing its origins in Judaco-Christian tradition, Marxism foretells a pattern of social crisis and rebirth, from an explosion of proletarian destruction to the creation of an ideal commonwealth – the eternal classless society: Soviet revolutionary poster, 1919.

such that class conflict, and the political and social apparatus that this evokes, will be eliminated; the ultimate goal is an age of social cohesion in which men will be finally and permanently free to develop their creative abilities to a hitherto unimaginable degree. This schema does in fact plot out the actual course which the class war, or horizontal schism, in a broken-down society is apt to follow, as a

matter of ascertainable historical fact: the phenomenon of disintegration, as it is revealed in history, does exhibit a movement that runs through war to peace; through an apparently wanton and savage destruction of past achievements to fresh works of creation that seem to owe their special quality to the devouring glow of the very flames in which they have been forged.

The schism in itself is the product of two negative movements. First, the dominant minority attempts to hold by force – against all right and reason – the position of inherited privilege which it has ceased to merit; and then the proletariat repays injustice with resentment, fear with hate, and violence with violence when it executes its act of secession. Yet paradoxically this explosive process of disintegration ends in positive achievements – the creation of a universal state, a universal church, and barbarian war-bands. These three achievements are, no doubt, extremely unequal in terms of their respective worth. We have noticed at an earlier point¹⁶ that the universal church, alone of the three, has a prospect in the future as well as a footing in the past, while the universal state and the barbarian war-bands belong to the past exclusively. And it hardly needs to be pointed out that, of the two backward-looking institutions, the barbarian war-bands are poor affairs indeed compared with the universal state. By creating a universal state the dominant minority performs the valuable act of checking, for a time, the process of disintegration which its own past action has precipitated, and of thus enabling the temporarily reprieved society to enjoy a brief Indian summer before its final dissolution. In creating barbarian war-bands the external proletariat has merely prepared itself for a destructive attack upon the dying civilization. Yet there is a gleam of creativity to be discerned, even here, in the contrast that we can see if we compare, in destructiveness and ethos, the war-bands that were led by Theodoric the Ostrogoth to Rome with the hordes of Cimbri and Teutones that had flooded across the Alps at the turn of the second and the last century BC; or the Muslims ruled by Mu'awiyah the Umayyad at Damascus with the pagan hordes of Ituraeans that had silted up, some seven or eight hundred years earlier, out of the North Arabian desert, against the eastern flanks of Hermon and Antilibanus.

Thus the social schism which is the outward criterion of the disintegration of a broken-down society is not just a schism and nothing more. When we grasp the movement as a whole, from beginning to end, we shall find that we must describe it as a movement of 'schism-and-palingenesia'¹⁷ if we wish to give it a title that does it full justice. Moreover, in this double movement, it is the second 'beat' that is its significant feature. The happiness of the palingenesia is not only a reparation for the foregoing bitterness of the schism; it is also the point of the schism, or, in frankly teleological terms, its purpose. And in fact we find that, when once the schism has occurred, nothing but frustration results from a closing of the breach before the necessary palingenesia has been accomplished. A case in point is the *union sacrée* between the dominant minority of the Egyptian Society and its internal proletariat against the external proletariat as represented by the Hyksos invaders in the eighteenth century BC; for it was this reconciliation at the eleventh hour that prolonged the existence of the Egyptian Society – in a petrified state of life-in-death – for some two thousand years beyond the date at which the process of disintegration would otherwise have culminated in the expected dissolution.

The outcome of this Egyptian *union sacrée* suggests that this exceptional sequel to a social schism is one of those exceptions that prove a rule; and we may take the broken

rule to be that a new birth, rather than a healing of the breach, is not only the normal ending to a schism, but is also the one possible happy ending. If this is the truth, then it is clear that even during the painful process of disintegration the spirit of creativity – or the ability to respond to challenges – is not utterly overwhelmed; but, in order to carry forward the work of creation in a disintegrating society, some alternative channel must be found. The dominant minority, of course, has condemned itself in advance to have no share in this work, for, by degenerating into a close corporation whose ideas and ideals are fixed and unchanging, it has *de facto* lost that flexible power of response that characterizes a creative minority's action in the growth phase. Even though the personnel of the dominant minority may be radically recast through the admission of *novi homines*, this brings no relief, for they are allowed into its ranks only on condition of accepting the old tradition of the body into which they are being initiated. In this rigid posture, the dominant minority impotently faces a recurring challenge which, as we have seen, is always the same. Its discomfiture, at each successive defeat, is a foregone conclusion. The defensiveness which it substitutes for creativity may be either indolent or recalcitrant; but, whether it is insanely defying the lightning or inertly resting on its oars, in either posture the dominant minority is refusing to hand over to other aspirants the protagonist's role which it has already proved itself incompetent to play.

In making its 'great refusal', however, the dominant minority impoverishes no one but itself. By disqualifying itself from serving as an instrument of creation, it does not thereby bring the work to an end; for, while this civilization is falling and that is rising, the work of creation does still go on. When the growth of a civilization is cut short by breakdown, and the would-be creative minority that has stiffened into a dominant minority begins to repeat an ineffective gesture that never varies at each onset of an unanswered challenge which never ceases to recur, this monotonous celebration of the tragedy of defeat is not the only drama that is played upon the broken-down civilization's social stage. During the disintegration of a civilization two separate plays with different plots are being performed simultaneously side by side. While an unchanging dominant minority is perpetually rehearsing its own defeat, fresh challenges are perpetually evoking fresh creative responses from newly recruited minorities, which proclaim their own creative power by rising, each time, to the occasion. The drama of challenge-and-response continues to be performed, but in new circumstances and with new actors. In this changed constellation of social forces, it is among the mass of erstwhile followers – now deprived of leadership – that creative spirits are born and perform their work. What we are seeing in the secession of the proletariat is thus the familiar process of creative action; but the rise of a creative minority and the process of mimesis are now confined within the limits of a single social class instead of being realized through the society as a whole. The substance of the plot remains the same; but the roles have been reallocated, and the outcome of the drama is unfamiliar – it is a palingenesia. Let us now see how this new act of creation is performed in practice.



173, 174 THE SLAVE, left, archetypal victim of the class war, and his identity token, in case of flight: 'hold me lest I flee, and restore me to my master. . . .'

28 Internal proletariats

WE CANNOT BEGIN our study of internal proletariats better than by quoting a passage from Thucydides in which the historian of the breakdown of the Hellenic Society describes the origins of the social schism that shattered this society after 431 BC.

Such was the savagery of the class war [*stasis*] at Corcyra as it developed, and it made the deeper impression through being the first of its kind – though eventually the upheaval spread through almost the whole of the Hellenic World. In every country there were struggles between the leaders of the proletariat and the reactionaries in their efforts to procure the intervention of the Athenians and the Lacedaemonians respectively. In peacetime they would have had neither the opportunity nor the desire to call in the foreigner; but now there was the war; and it was easy for any revolutionary spirits in either camp to procure an alliance entailing the discomfiture of their opponents and a corresponding reinforcement of their own faction. This access of class war brought one calamity after another upon the countries of Hellas – calamities that occur and will continue to occur so long as human nature remains what it is, though they may be aggravated or mitigated and modified by successive changes of circumstance. Under the favourable conditions of peacetime both countries and individuals display a sweeter reasonableness, because their hands are not forced by the logic of events; but war eats away the margins of ordinary life and, in most characters, adjusts the temperament to the new environment by brutal training. So the countries of Hellas became infected with the class war, and the sensation made by each successive outbreak had a cumulative effect upon the next.¹

Having thus put his finger on the war-spirit as the demoralizing spiritual force which shattered the Hellenic

Society's moral solidarity, Thucydides goes on to make a brilliant analysis, which is at the same time an overwhelming indictment, of the demonic evil impulses which were thereby let loose in men's souls.

It was a competition of ingenuity in the elaboration of intrigue and in the refinement of reprisals. The customary meaning of words was arbitrarily distorted to cover the conduct of those who employed them. Reckless irresponsibility was treated as courageous loyalty, cautious reserve as cowardice masked under a high-sounding name, restraint as a cloak for poor-spiritedness, and the policy of reason as a policy of *laissez faire*. A frenzied fanaticism was the popular ideal of conduct, while intrigue that took no risks was regarded as a legitimate method of self-defence. Violence of feeling was a warrant of honesty, deprecation of violence a signal for suspicion. Success in intrigue was the test of intelligence and the detection of intrigue a testimonial to superior cleverness, while anyone who so shaped his policy as to dispense with such methods was pilloried as a nihilist towards his own group and a weakling in face of their opponents. In short, approbation was reserved for those who forestalled their enemies in striking a blow or who implanted that suggestion in minds which had not previously conceived of it. The ties of party actually became closer than those of kinship,² because partisans were readier than kinsmen to throw themselves into an adventure at a moment's notice, and the associations in question were formed, not to secure the benefits of established institutions, but to gain illegitimate advantages by violating them. Complicity in crime was a more effective sanction for loyalty to engagements than a solemn oath. A fair offer from opponents was received as a signal for practical precautions by the dominant party of the moment, instead of evoking any generous response. The exaction of reprisals was valued more

highly than an immunity from wrongs demanding them. The rare covenants of reconciliation were only entered into on either side as a momentary last resort and only observed so long as no alternative resource presented itself. Any one who spied a weak spot in his adversary's armour and had the nerve to seize his opportunity took more satisfaction in obtaining his revenge by treachery than in obtaining it in fair fight, the dominating considerations being the elimination of risk and the added halo of intellectual brilliance investing the triumphs of perfidy. . . .

The cause of this whole phenomenon was the thirst for power arising from the predatory and competitive impulses – impulses which engender conflict, from which passion is engendered in its turn. In all the countries of Hellas the party leaders invented high-sounding catchwords and posed as the champions of political equality for the masses or of moderate conservatism, in order to make spoils out of the public interest which they served with their lips. In their unscrupulous struggle to gain the upper hand over one another they hesitated at nothing and surpassed themselves in the prosecution of their vendettas. So far from attempting to act within the bounds of moral right and national interest, they recognized no limitations on either side except the caprice of the moment. They did not shrink from bringing themselves into power by verdicts immorally obtained against their opponents, if not by naked force, in order to satiate their momentary rancour. In fact, religion had lost its hold upon either party, and they relied upon their powers of misrepresentation to retrieve their good name whenever they had occasion to perpetrate an invidious action. Meanwhile, the moderate elements in every country were preyed upon by the extremists of both camps, partly for their refusal to take sides and partly out of resentment at the prospect of their survival.

Thus the class war plunged the Hellenic Society into every kind of moral evil.³

This spiritual débâcle which followed the outbreak of the Atheno-Peloponnesian War in 431 BC continued unchecked during the century of warfare and revolution which was the aftermath of that great catastrophe, and its first social effect was to produce a large and growing floating population of 'stateless' exiles – a phenomenon that had been dreaded but rare during the growth phase of the Hellenic Civilization. By the middle of the fourth century BC the Hellenic World was swarming with these rootless wanderers. This evil was not overcome by Alexander's attempt to induce the reigning faction in each city-state to allow its ejected opponents to return in peace; and the fire made fresh fuel for itself, for the one thing that the exiles found for their hands to do was to enlist as mercenary soldiers; and this glut of military manpower put fresh drive into the wars by which new exiles – and thereby more mercenaries – were being created. This vicious circle of evil cause-and-effect first inflamed the fratricidal warfare in the bosom of Hellas itself, and then discharged the men of war who had been trained in this Hellenic school of arms to wreck the *Pax Achaemenia* through the long-drawn-out wars of Alexander and his Macedonian successors.

The effect of these moral ravages was powerfully reinforced by the operation of disruptive economic forces which the wars let loose. For example, the wars of Alexander and his successors in South-Western Asia gave military employment to one swarm of homeless Greeks at the cost of uprooting another. The mercenaries were paid by putting into circulation the bullion which had been accumulating for two centuries in the Achaemenian

treasuries, and this sudden vast increase in the volume of currency in circulation caused a disastrous inflation in those Greek city-states which had so far been spared the flail of political strife. Prices soared without any immediate corresponding rise in wages, and this financial revolution reduced to pauperism the class of peasants and artisans who had hitherto enjoyed a reasonable security. The same effect of pauperization was produced again, a hundred years later, by the economic consequences of the Hannibalic War in Italy, where the peasantry were uprooted from the land, first by the direct devastation that was wrought by Hannibal's troops, and then by the ever-longer terms of military service which the Italian peasantry had to endure, both in the main Italian war-zone and beyond the Apennines and overseas. These distant campaigns in the Po basin, in the Iberian peninsula, in Greece, and in the East did not come to an end when Hannibal evacuated Italy or when Carthage sued for peace, but remorselessly continued to increase in range and scale and to demand ever larger drafts of Italian peasant-soldiers. Under this tribulation the pauperized descendants of the original peasant-conscripts had no choice but to make a profession out of the career which had been imposed upon their ancestors as a *corvée*. During the century of revolution and civil war which began in 133 BC with the tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus and which ended only in 31 BC with the battle of Actium, the 'new poor' derived what little profit they could from their situation by taking mercenary service under the rival war-lords who were now contending for the mastery of the new Roman Empire.

In this cruel process of 'deracination' we cannot doubt that we are watching the genesis of the Hellenic internal proletariat, in the sense – as we have previously defined the term⁴ – of a social element which is 'in' but not 'of' its society. The true hallmark of the proletarian is neither poverty nor humble birth, but a consciousness – and the resentment that this consciousness inspires – of being disinherited from his traditional place in the established structure of a society, and of being unwanted in a community which is his rightful home. The Hellenic internal proletariat were actually recruited first of all from the free citizenry, and even from the aristocracy, of the disintegrating Hellenic bodies politic, though of course their spiritual impoverishment was often accompanied, and almost always followed, by a material pauperization; and they were soon reinforced by recruits from other sources who were material as well as spiritual proletarians from the start. The numbers of the Hellenic internal proletariat were vastly swollen by the aggression of Hellenic arms at the expense of both contemporary civilizations and pre-civilizational communities. The conquests of Alexander and his successors swept the whole of the Syriac and Egyptian and Sumero-Akkadian and Iranian Societies, and a considerable part of the Indic Society, into the Hellenic dominant minority's net, while later conquests swept in half the barbarians of Europe and North-West Africa.

The fate of these aliens was, at first, less wretched than that of the native-born Hellenic proletarians in one respect; though they were morally disinherited and mentally despoiled, they were not, to begin with, physically uprooted. In time the lure of new markets and profits, as well as the need to maintain the level of agricultural

production in war-depopulated regions, led to the enslavement of the native inhabitants of conquered lands, and their deportation to the distant plantations of the victorious Power. The use of imported slave-labour – a social evil of which we first catch sight in Greek Sicily in 480 BC – was extended, on a vaster scale, to the devastated areas of Roman Italy after the Hannibalic War. During the last two centuries BC the uprooted Italian peasant-proprietors were progressively supplanted by rootless slave-hoemen and slave-herdsmen. The wastage of this servile economic manpower on the Italian plantations and ranches was perhaps as heavy as the wastage of the nominally free military manpower of the Italian peasantry in its distant theatres of war, but the profits of the wholesale wine, oil, meat, wool, and leather production which was carried on at this human – or inhuman – cost were great enough to bear the capital charge of perpetually having to replace the human raw material. In consequence this age saw all the populations within range of the Mediterranean coast – both Western barbarians and cultivated Orientals – being lawlessly laid under contribution in order to supply the demands of an insatiable Italian slave-labour market.

There were, then, three distinct elements in the internal proletariat of the disintegrating Hellenic Society: disinherited and uprooted members of the Hellenic Society's own native body social; partially disinherited members of alien civilizations or pre-civilizational communities who were conquered and exploited without being torn up by the roots; and doubly disinherited conscripts from these subject populations who were not only uprooted but were also enslaved and deported and worked to death. The sufferings of these three sets of victims were as various as their origins were diverse, but these differences were transcended by their overwhelming common experience of being robbed of their social heritage and being turned into exploited outcasts. Their reactions to a wanton and intolerable oppression were commensurate with the misery of their fate, and a uniform note of desperate passion rings through the pandemonium of bitter proletarian outbreaks in this age.

We catch this note in a series of Egyptian insurrections against the Ptolemaic régime of exploitation – an outbreak which began at the turn of the third and second centuries BC, as soon as the Egyptian fellahin had acquired a stock of arms and *esprit de corps* and self-confidence as a result of the government's blunder of conscripting the natives into their army in order to beat off a Seleucid invasion. We hear the same note again in the more celebrated and more momentous series of Jewish insurrections against the Seleucid and Roman policy of Hellenization in Palestine. The outbreak began when Judas Maccabeus took up arms against Antiochus Epiphanes in 166 BC, and it was not quelled by the destruction of Jerusalem in the great Romano-Jewish War of AD 66–70, but burst out again among the Jewish diaspora in Cyrene and Egypt and Cyprus in 115–17, and among the Palestinian Jews in a last forlorn effort under the leadership of Bar Kochba in 132–35. The same reckless fury which inspired the Jews to initiate and maintain their desperate campaign against far more powerful oppressors also moved the semi-Hellenized natives of western Asia Minor to expose themselves to Roman vengeance twice

over: first in 132 BC, when they joined the Attalid Prince Aristonicus upon hearing the appalling news that the last Attalus had bequeathed his kingdom to Rome; and for the second time in 88 BC, when the cities of Asia Minor opened their gates to Rome's rebel client-king Mithridates of Pontus and the citizens took the opportunity to massacre the whole of the Italian business community in their midst.

The rising of Aristonicus is the connecting link between the outbreaks of the subjected Oriental peoples in the conquered provinces and the outbreaks of the imported slaves and pauperized freemen in the homelands of the Hellenic Society. Slaves and 'poor freemen'⁵ fought side by side in Aristonicus's rebel band, and his rising was itself perhaps inspired by the news of the slave-revolt which had let loose the first of the two great slave-wars in Sicily (*gerebantur* c. 135–131 BC *et* c. 104–100 BC).⁶ These two Sicilian outbreaks were perhaps the largest in scale and the longest-drawn-out of the slave-revolts on the western plantations in the post-Hannibalic Age, but they were neither the first nor the last of their kind, nor perhaps even the most savage. The series began, in the first decade after the temporary restoration of peace between Rome and Carthage in 201 BC, with an abortive conspiracy of the slaves and the Carthaginian hostages at Setia in 198 BC, and a rapidly suppressed rising in Etruria in 196 BC. It was continued in a formidable insurrection in Apulia in 185; and, after a temporary shifting of the scene to Sicily, the climax was reached in the desperate exploit of the runaway Thracian gladiator Spartacus, who ranged up and down the length of the Italian peninsula from 73 to 71 BC. The rancorous resentment against an Hellenic dominant minority was not confined to the revolts of slaves against their masters, but was felt equally by the pauperized free citizens of Rome. The savagery with which the Roman citizen-proletariat turned and rent the Roman plutocracy in the civil wars, and particularly in the paroxysm of 91–82 BC, was quite equal to the savagery of Judas Maccabeus and Spartacus; and the most satanic of all the dark figures that stand out in sinister silhouette against the glare of a world in flames are the Roman revolutionary leaders who had been flung headlong out of the *Ordo Senatorius* itself: Marius and Sertorius and Catiline and Sextus Pompeius.

In these orgies of violence the Hellenic proletariat was repaying the savagery of its oppressors in the Hellenic dominant minority in the same coin, and the ferocity of the outbreaks is hardly surprising when we bear in mind the provocation to which it was a retort. It is, however, both astonishing and admirable to find that this violence was not the only response that was evoked from the Hellenic internal proletariat by the tremendous challenge to which it was subjected. There was also an antiphonal response which was at the opposite extreme of the spiritual gamut, and at this other extremity the internal proletariat not merely attained, but rose far above, the level of achievement which was reached by the lingering residue of the creative spirit in the dominant minority. We find, in fact, that the outbreaks of violence which we have been recording were seldom the only reactions of the victims to their ordeals. While some of the victims were usually moved to answer violence with violence and nothing more, there were usually others who, on each occasion, met force not



175 *Judaea armata*: coin minted during the great Romano-Jewish War of AD 66-70.



176 *Judaea capta*: even the fall of Jerusalem, celebrated here on a Roman coin, failed to crush Jewish militancy.

177 *Judaea resurgens*: coin of the Jews' final forlorn revolt, led by Bar Kochba, in AD 132-35.



by counter-force but by gentleness. Even the frenzied slaves who rebelled against their monstrous master Damophilus had the humanity not to return evil for good, as they showed when they spared Damophilus's tender-hearted daughter while they were dragging to their deaths the tormentor himself and his equally inhuman wife.⁷ In the semi-legendary Jewish recollections of Palestinian Jewry's resistance to Antiochus Epiphanes's policy of forcible Hellenization, the passive resistance of the old scribe Eleazar and of the seven brethren and their mother precedes, in the narrative, the militant resistance of the hero Judas Maccabeus.⁸ In the story of the passion of Jesus the leader's injunction to his companions – 'he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one'⁹ – is immediately followed by his 'it is enough' when two swords only are forthcoming among all the Twelve;¹⁰ and this perfunctory call to arms is finally stultified by the leader's own deliberate refusal to fight when he is on the point of being arrested.¹¹ In the next chapter of the story, the famous doctor Gamaliel is profoundly impressed by the striking contrast between the powerful moral resistance to persecution of Jesus's Apostles, and the sterile conventional militancy of the contemporary epigoni of Judas Maccabeus.¹² Here, then, are two responses to an identical challenge which are not only different but are actually contradictory and incompatible. The gentle response is as genuine an expression of the proletariat's will to secede as the violent response is; and in the history of the Oriental proletariat of the Hellenic World from the second century BC onwards we see violence and gentleness striving for the mastery of souls, until violence annihilates itself and leaves gentleness alone in the field.

The issue was raised at the outset, for the gentle way which was taken by the protomartyrs of 167 BC was swiftly abandoned by the impetuous Maccabeus, and his example so dazzled posterity that Jesus's most intimate companions were scandalized by their master's acquiescence in his physical fate.¹³ They 'forsook him, and fled'.¹⁴ Yet a few months after the crucifixion Gamaliel was already taking note of the executed leader's miraculously rallied disciples as men who might prove to have God on their side; and a few years later Gamaliel's own disciple Paul was preaching a crucified Christ. This vastly painful but infinitely fruitful conversion of the first generation of Christians from the way of violence to the way of gentleness had to be purchased at the price of a shattering blow to their material hopes; and what was done for Jesus's followers by the crucifixion was done for Orthodox Jewry by the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Before the final catastrophe, one Jewish doctor had spontaneously and unwittingly obeyed Jesus's warning that the Christians in Judaea should flee into the mountains when they saw the 'abomination of desolation'¹⁵ – Hellenic paganism in arms – reappearing on the Palestinian horizon. The rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai independently took the momentous decision to break with the tradition of militancy which Judas Maccabeus had inaugurated; eluding the vigilance of the Jewish Zealots, he slipped out of the embattled city and prevailed upon the Roman High Command to let him through in order that he might quietly continue his teaching out of earshot of the battle. By thus renouncing the path of military resistance

he was enabled to re-establish his school and resume his teaching; and he thereby became the founder of a new Jewry whose voluntary abstention from the pursuit of political power has allowed it to survive in all manner of alien and inclement environments, outside its original homeland, down to the present day.

If this change of heart in Orthodox Jewry after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 enabled Jewry to survive as a diasporá, the corresponding change of heart in the companions of Jesus after the crucifixion has opened the way to greater triumphs for the Christian Church. When it faced its first great challenge in the widespread persecutions of the third century, the Christian Church responded in the gentle way of Eleazar and the Seven Brethren, and not in the violent way of Judas the Hammer. In the next ordeal, at the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries, when the converted Roman Empire was breaking up, the Church responded again in this fashion to the invading barbarians (though not to its non-Christian fellow-citizens), and this time its reward was the conversion of the barbarian warbands with whom it found itself face to face in the fallen Empire's derelict western provinces.

Thus in the spiritual history of the Hellenic internal proletariat we see the two incompatible spirits of gentleness and violence perpetually struggling with one another, and gentleness, with the aid of experience, gradually and painfully gaining the upper hand. At the same time, this struggle is not confined exclusively to the proletarian section of society, for there are at any rate hints of it in the spiritual history of the Hellenic dominant minority as well. The contrast between Eleazar the Scribe and Judas the Hammer, or between Jesus and his contemporary Jewish militant Theudas, has its analogue in the contrast between the gentle King Agis and the violent King Cleomenes in the third century BC at Sparta, or between the gentle tribune Tiberius Gracchus and the violent tribune Gaius Gracchus in the second century BC at Rome. Peter's recalcitrance against Jesus's superhuman resignation to the prospect of being wrongfully put to death is anticipated at Athens in Crito's attempt to persuade Socrates to let himself be smuggled out of the prison where he is lying under a death-sentence that he has not deserved. Again, the victory of gentleness over violence in the souls of Peter and Paul and Johanan ben Zakkai has its parallels in the vision of Alexander the Great and in the clemency of Caesar and in the penitence of Augustus.

These famous representatives of the Hellenic dominant minority include, in the Athenian Socrates, the father of all the schools of Hellenic ethical philosophy, and, in the Roman Augustus, the founder of the Hellenic universal state. The two great creative works of the Hellenic dominant minority are at the opposite extreme of the gamut from the deeds of the impenitent conquerors and oppressors. The philosophers and the emperors made it possible for their moribund society to bask for a moment in the pale sunshine of an Indian summer. In the far more lasting spiritual achievement of the internal proletariat, the counterparts to these flashes of a dying power of creation are the higher religion of Christianity and its institutional embodiment in the Christian Church. Each of these achievements will come under our scrutiny at a later stage.¹⁶



178, 179 THE TRIUMPH OF PEACE 'Like a lion's whelp roaring for his prey': Judas Maccabeus, above, inaugurated the fatal spiral of Jewish militancy. 'They that take the sword shall perish by the sword': below, Christ, in renouncing violent resistance, showed a way out of that spiral.



29 External proletariats

THE EXTERNAL, like the internal, proletariat brings itself into existence by an act of secession from the dominant minority of a civilization that has broken down and gone into disintegration. In this case, the schism in which the secession results is palpable; for, in contrast to the internal proletariat, which continues to live intermingled geographically with the dominant minority from which it has come to be divided by a moral gulf, the external proletariat is not only alienated from the dominant minority in feeling but is also actually divided from it by a frontier which can be traced on the map.

The crystallization of such a frontier is indeed the sure sign that the secession of the external proletariat has taken place. As long as a civilization is still in growth, it has no hard and fast boundaries, except on fronts where it happens to have collided with a member of its own species,¹ for the light with which a creative minority illuminates its own society radiates beyond its frontiers to the pre-civilizational communities round about. There is nothing to limit the beam's range except the inherent limitations of its own carrying-power: the light travels out until it has gradually dimmed to vanishing-point. In a growing civilization, therefore, the creative minority of the day can exercise the same power of attraction upon its pre-civilizational neighbours as it does upon the community in whose midst it has arisen; and it may make its influence felt in places which may be astonishingly remote from the centre of radiation, as witness the adoption of the Syriac alphabet in Manchuria, or the reflexion of Hellenic aesthetic styles in the coins of Celtic Britain and in the statuary of Northern India.

Once a civilization has broken down, however, it ceases to exercise this attraction over adjacent communities, for, if it has lost its own power of self-determination, then, *a fortiori*, it has also lost the power both of exercising any creative influence upon outsiders and of presenting an harmonious whole which can serve as a model for other communities. Moreover, the policy of violence and repression, which a dominant minority in a disintegrating society has to adopt in place of the moral influence exercised by a creative minority, has precisely the same alienating effect upon the external mimics of a society as it has upon the uncreative mass within it. In their own way the pre-civilizational societies round about a disintegrating civilization register their estrangement from it by their own act of secession: they withdraw themselves from the moral orbit of the disintegrating civilization, and thus begin to present a potential menace to it; and, when the dominant minority attempts to secure by military means an allegiance which has hitherto been won by example, the alienated external proletariat reacts by meeting force with force. While the external proletariat performs the negative act of rejecting the once attractive culture of its neighbour, it also performs the positive – albeit destructive – act of continuing to learn from it by borrowing from its superior adversary those military techniques by which it may save itself from the tyranny of the dominant minority. The result

is the onset of prolonged and bitter warfare between the two estranged communities, each of which now threatens the life of the other; and, as the hostilities intensify, so the once fluid frontier between the two crystallizes into an abrupt and impassable barrier. To use the appropriate and expressive Latin terms, which bring out both the kinship and the contrast between the two kinds of contact, the *limen* or threshold, which was a zone, is replaced by the *limes* or military frontier, which is a line that has length without breadth.

The growth phase of Hellenic history offers a classic illustration of the *limen* or buffer-zone with which the home territory of a healthy civilization surrounds itself. Towards continental Europe the quintessence of Hellenism shaded off into a semi-Hellenic Thessaly to the north, and into a semi-Hellenic Aetolia to the west; and Aetolia and Thessaly were themselves insulated by the demi-semi-Hellenism of Epirus and Macedonia from the undiluted barbarism of Illyria and Thrace. Towards Asia Minor, Hellas shaded off, in the hinterland of the coastal city-states, into the semi-Hellenism of Caria and the demi-semi-Hellenism of Lydia, before passing over into the barbarism of the Phrygian interlopers who had settled among the ruins of the Hittite Civilization on the Anatolian plateau. Even in the hinterlands of the Greek colonies in North Africa and Italy, where the cultural gulf between Hellenism and the indigenous communities might have been expected to be far wider, and the political relations between the two worlds proportionately more hostile, there are examples of peaceful contacts and gradual transitions to set against the empire-building of Syracuse and the extermination of the Itali and the Chones. Even more striking than the political reconciliation between Greek and barbarian was the peaceful penetration by Hellenism on the cultural plane. In Sicily in the last century BC, less than five hundred years after the foundation of the latest Greek colony there, it would have been impossible any longer to distinguish the descendants of the native Sicels from those of Greek Sicelioti in a population which had long been unified by its common Hellenic culture, its common Greek language, and its common sufferings under Roman misrule. In the continental Italian hinterland of Tarentum, Hellenism spread so rapidly and 'took' so strongly that, as early as the fourth century BC, Apulia was advertising her conversion to Hellenism by becoming the busiest workshop for the production of red-figure vases. Still further afield, the population of Latium took so enthusiastically to the exotic Hellenic institution of the city-state that Greek observers accepted the Latins as Hellenes by adoption, and the earliest extant mention of Rome in Greek literature describes this Latin commonwealth as 'an Hellenic city'.²

This picture of voluntary adaptation to the prevailing Hellenic way of life vanishes, however, as soon as the model itself is shattered. The symptom of breakdown in the Hellenic Civilization was the civil war of 431–404 BC; and the first move in a thousand years' war between barbarians

and Hellenes was made in the third year of this catastrophic conflict, when Macedonia was invaded and laid waste by a Thracian horde. Although this raid was not followed up, it marked the end of the voluntary self-Hellenization of Thrace, and effectively erected a rigid barrier between civilization and barbarism for the first time. While this Thracian front then remained stable for four hundred years, the militant reaction of the external proletariat to the breakdown of the Hellenic Civilization was more violent and more sensational in *Magna Graecia*, where, within a hundred years of the outbreak of the Atheno-Peloponnesian War, the Hellenic colonists had almost been pushed into the sea by the surrounding Oscan tribes. The inflowing barbarians had already crossed the straits of Messina and acquired, in that city itself, a base of operations for the conquest of Sicily before the whole movement was brought to an abrupt end by the intervention of Roman arms. Thereafter, the Romans undertook the massive task of restoring the integrity of the Hellenic World by means of large-scale military campaigns against both the barbarians and the rival Italian contenders for the mantle of the Hellenic Civilization. These successive feats of Roman arms extended the dominion of the Hellenic dominant minority almost as far afield in continental Europe and the Iberian peninsula and North-West Africa as it had already been extended in Asia by the conquests of Alexander of Macedonia. But these impressive Macedonian and Roman conquests could not, and did not, relieve a disintegrating Hellenic Society from a social malady that was one of the inescapable penalties of its breakdown. The effect of this morbid military expansion of the Hellenic World was not to eliminate its anti-barbarian fronts but rather to add to their length as it pushed them further afield from the Hellenic dominant minority's base of operations; and this progressive lengthening of the lines of communication, as well as of the front itself, diminished the dominant minority's striking power while increasing its commitments. Indeed, Rome's very success in stepping into the breach and taking over the Etruscans' commitments against the Celts and the Tarentines' commitments against the Oscans and the Macedonians' commitments against the Thracians and Dardanians led her on inexorably, step by step, into assuming the sole responsibility for the maintenance of an anti-barbarian front that ran across the whole length of the European continent from the North Sea to the Black Sea coast. Moreover, this vast extension and aggravation of the anti-barbarian front which the disintegrating Hellenic Civilization had inherited from its own past was only part of the additional burden which the ailing society was wantonly taking upon its shoulders. Simultaneously, the Hellenic dominant minority was taking over anti-barbarian fronts in North Africa and the Iberian peninsula and South-Western Asia from the Syriac Society, which had been forcibly incorporated in the Hellenic World by the Macedonian and Roman wars of conquest.

At the turn of the third and second centuries BC Rome had succeeded in 'knocking out' all the other Great Powers of the contemporary Hellenic World, and thus had acquired a monopoly not only of the assets but also of the liabilities of the Hellenic dominant minority. From the date of the first delineation of the Hellenic universal state's frontiers in the

last century BC, down to the transitional period (c. AD 375–675) which followed the break-up of the Roman Empire, the Hellenic Society was menaced by barbarian fronts on all sides – in Northern Europe, on the Danube, in Syria, and in North-West Africa. In the course of this prolonged confrontation, bouts of intense military activity alternated with periods of relatively peaceful stagnation on each front: twice the barbarians tried in vain to break through, but at the third attempt they were successful.

At the height of the Hellenic time of troubles during the last two centuries BC we find the Sarmatian barbarians advancing from the east bank of the Don to the Lower and Middle Danube basin, where they hovered menacingly on the north-eastern flank of the Hellenic World from that time onwards. Contemporaneously, at the turn of the second and the last century BC, the Arabs drifted into the derelict domain of the moribund Seleucid Monarchy in Mesopotamia and Syria. On the North-West African front the Numidians took advantage of the overthrow of Carthage in the Hannibalic War and her annihilation in 146 BC in order to encroach upon the derelict Carthaginian province on the African mainland. Lastly, on the North European front, the first extension of Roman rule into Transalpine Europe in the second century BC was answered by the formidable counter-attack of the Cimbri and the Teutones, who bore down on Italy itself along war-paths that were now no longer blocked by the semi-barbarian buffer-Powers which had just been crippled or shattered by Roman arms. On three fronts out of the four the Romans found themselves compelled to intervene in order to bring the barbarian offensives to a standstill; and on the North European front they had to fight for their lives – even in this first of the three historic paroxysms of barbarian aggression. In Europe and in Africa the situation was saved by Marius, who snatched victory out of defeat in the war against the Numidian aggressor Jugurtha (*gerebatur* 112–106 BC) and in the war against the Cimbri (*gerebatur* 105–101 BC). In Asia the last remnant of the Seleucid heritage was salvaged from the depredations of Arab war-bands by Pompey when he organized the Roman province of Syria in 63–62 BC. Thereafter, when a band of Suevi – undeterred by the recent fate of the Cimbri – set their feet upon the same European war-path, Caesar seized the opportunity of improving the Transalpine frontier of the Roman dominions by carrying it (*bellum gerebat* 58–51 BC) up to the line of the Rhine, on which it continued to stand, with a few brief fluctuations, for the next four centuries.

The second abortive attempt, on the barbarian side, at a breakthrough on all four fronts was made in the middle of the third century of the Christian Era. This time it was the Danubian front that was subjected to the heaviest pressure. Here the Goths not only thrust their way overland into the heart of the Balkan peninsula, but also took to the water and harried the coasts of the Black Sea and the Aegean. On the Arabian front the Palmyrene forerunners of the Muslim Arabs momentarily overran not only Syria but Egypt as well. In North-West Africa in the same age the Berbers once more went on the war-path for the first time since Jugurtha's day. On the North European front the Franks and Alemanni now crossed the Rhine and raided Gaul. In this second paroxysm of simultaneous concentric



THE BARBARIAN HYDRA

On all sides, Rome faced a remorseless barbarian reaction to her aggressive search for imperial security; by AD 200 the tide of war had turned against her.

barbarian attacks the Roman Power succeeded in saving the situation once again. The invaders were cleared out of almost all the provinces they had overrun, and all the broken fronts were again restored. This time, however, the victory had been preceded by heavier reverses and deeper humiliations; it had been purchased at a higher price, and had only superficially restored the *status quo ante*; for, while the old frontiers had been re-established almost everywhere, the relative strength of the Roman and barbarian forces had been permanently changed in the barbarians' favour.

A Rome thus weakened faced the third paroxysm of barbarian aggression which lasted for some three hundred years (c. AD 375-675) and ended with the final extinction of the Hellenic universal state. From the fourth to the sixth century the northern front was under continual and intensifying pressure from successive waves of Huns and Avars and Teutons and Slavs, piling up against each other and eventually overrunning the whole of Rome's Empire in the West. In the seventh century the scene of action shifted to Asia Minor and Africa as the Arab Muslims began their organized and purposeful military campaigns. In Asia Minor the Constantinopolitan government succeeded - at

the price of abandoning its commitments and cutting its losses on all other fronts - in pushing the Muslims back from the Straits to the Taurus mountains, and in holding them there, though at the cost of grievously overstraining the nascent body social of Orthodox Christendom. In Africa, however, the Arabs swept on in an impetuous advance from the Nile to the Atlantic, meeting and overpowering the Berbers and the Visigoths and pressing on across the Straits of Gibraltar and through Spain and over the Pyrenees, before their tide was stemmed by the Franks at the line of the Loire and the Rhône in 732. But the outstanding historical event to which the battle near Tours bore witness was not the discomfiture of the Arabs by the Franks; it was the collapse of the resistance of the Roman Power which had been the arch-adversary of the Arabs and the Franks and all the other rival barbarian war-bands alike. By the time when, in the heart of the *Orbis Romanus*, the Frankish war-band encountered and defeated - on derelict Roman ground - the war-bands from beyond the southern frontier, it was manifest that the third attempt by the external proletariat to take the Hellenic universal state by storm had been completely and triumphantly successful.

This cursory review of the impact of the barbarians on the Hellenic Society would suggest that violence was the sole response of the external proletariat to the pressure of the disintegrating civilization, and that it lacked any ability to develop that gentle alternative which, as we have seen, enabled the internal proletariat to achieve an act of positive creation. A ferocious violence was indeed the hallmark of the Hellenic external proletariat, and it is no accident that the Huns should have bequeathed their name to posterity as a synonym for the uttermost in barbarity, or that their most famous leader should have been feared by his contemporaries as 'the Scourge of God'. Yet at the same time we can discern some faint and rudimentary parallels in the behaviour of the external proletariat and of its internal counterpart, and we would be convicting ourselves of historical prejudice if we failed to notice the resemblances and credit them with such value as they deserve. To begin with, there was a distinct difference of degree in the violence of the various war-bands. The Visigothic sack of Rome in AD 410 was without a doubt less savage than the Vandal and Berber sack forty-five years later. Indeed, the impression made upon contemporaries, when they heard the whole story, by the Visigoth Alaric's grant of asylum in the churches of Rome to the inhabitants of the captured city is commemorated in one of the most celebrated passages of Latin literature.

All the devastation, massacre, depredation, arson, and assault of every kind that has been perpetrated in the catastrophe by which Rome has just been overtaken has been done according to the custom of war; but in this catastrophe there has also been a new departure, an unprecedented spectacle. The dreaded atrocity of the barbarians has shown itself so mild in the event that churches providing ample room for asylum were designated by the conqueror, and orders were given that in these sanctuaries nobody should be smitten with the sword and nobody carried away captive. Indeed, many prisoners were brought to these churches by soft-hearted enemies to receive their liberty, while none were dragged out of them by merciless enemies in order to be enslaved.³

In another passage⁴ Augustine upbraided his pagan Roman contemporaries for their ingratitude towards a God who had shown them an unmerited mercy in allowing the divinely ordained capture of Rome by barbarian hands to be executed in 410 by the relatively enlightened Alaric rather than in 406 by the unmitigatedly cruel Radagaisus. Subsequently, Alaric's successor Atawulf, and the Ostrogoth leader Theodoric, showed that the barbarian yoke could be even lighter than this. The same contrast between an unequivocal and a mitigated barbarism was recognized in Aquitaine, where the inhabitants had resisted the Visigoth invaders in 412, yet found themselves fighting on the same side as their conquerors a century later against a common and more barbarous Frankish enemy. In Spain, on the other hand, the Visigoths were far less preferable as masters than the Muslim Arabs who supplanted them in the eighth century, for the Umayyads treated their Christian and Jewish subjects in both East and West with a toleration that had already made them famous.

These contrasts illustrate the extent to which the external proletariat was susceptible to gentler influences; and we find a similar diversity when we turn to the plane of

spiritual creativity. The North European barbarians who had been encamped on a still standing Roman *limes* in the middle of the fourth century of the Christian Era had been converted to the Arianism which at that time was the official form of Christianity in the Roman Empire, and the effect of their conversion was to bring them closer to the spiritual culture of the civilization on whose borders they stood. By the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries, however, when Arianism had been vanquished by Nicene Christianity in the Roman Empire itself, the Arianized barbarians who were now pouring across the breached barriers of the Empire chose to wear their religion as a badge of their social distinction from a conquered population with which they were now determined not to identify themselves; and, the more truculent an Arian war-band was in its treatment of its provincial victims, the more fanatical it was apt to be in its hostility to Catholic Christianity. For instance, the Vandals in North Africa capped economic exploitation and political oppression with religious persecution. But while an Arianism, which its converts had simply taken as they found it, thus eventually became the distinctive mark of particular war-bands in their conquered territories, there were other barbarian groups on other frontiers who showed in their religious life a certain originality, if not true creativity. In the British Isles, for example, the Celts were converted to Catholic Christianity, but, instead of just adopting the alien religion as it stood, they went on to mould it to fit their own native heritage. Beyond the Roman Empire's Arabian frontier the barbarians showed an even greater religious independence. They transmuted into a new higher religion of their own the Judaism and Christianity that had radiated into Arabia. When we turn to the related field of aesthetic creativity, we can see that the barbarians of the external proletariat were not entirely sterile, even if their achievements were not on a par with the creative works which have been an outstanding accompaniment to the higher religions of the internal proletariat. The characteristic mode of cultural expression of the external proletariat has been epic poetry and saga, but the Arabs on the eve of their career of conquest showed the same originality in poetry as in religion. They created a lyric poetry with a personal note that was the forerunner of the rhymed prose of the Qur'an.

We can now summarize our findings so far about the nature of the external proletariat. We have seen that it originates in a reaction to the disintegration of a previously healthy civilization which had once drawn its pre-civilizational neighbours into its orbit, but which has now lost its attractiveness as a model and has ceased to exert any influence upon these outlying barbarian societies. We have also traced the pattern of barbarian assaults on the disintegrating Hellenic Civilization, and we have observed that, although violence is the primary and instinctive response of the external proletariat, traces of an alternative gentler response, comparable with that of the internal proletariat, are also detectable. We have seen that the external proletariat is potentially open to the vision of ultimate spiritual reality embodied in the higher religions, and that it is capable of absorbing or adapting the religious insights of the internal proletariat and thereby displaying a limited but unmistakable power of creation.

30 Schism in the soul

THE SOCIAL SCHISM which we have been examining in the foregoing chapters is an experience which is collective and therefore superficial. Its significance lies in its being the outward sign of a spiritual rift which scars the souls of the individuals who 'belong' to a disintegrating society. Beyond the social expressions of disintegration lie the personal crises of behaviour and feeling and life which are the true essence and origin of the visible manifestations of social collapse. Individual souls which have lost the opportunity (though not of course the personal capacity) for initiating the creative actions by which the growth of a society is sustained are apt to take refuge in a series of alternative reactions to the pressures of disintegration, and these reactions are as it were pathological inversions of some of the growth processes which we tried to identify earlier in this Study.¹ However, if we now attempt a corresponding analysis of these spiritual symptoms of *malaise*, we shall see that, while most of the feelings and actions that they evoke are negative and even destructive endeavours to deny or to arrest the process of disintegration, there are other reactions which may lead on to a genuine attempt to construct an alternative to the disintegrating society; and it is through some of these, in turn, that we shall observe the second part of our movement of 'schism-and-palingenesia' beginning to take shape. In practical life, the distinction between one type of reaction and another may not be hard and fast: the self-mastery of the Stoic may lead on to self-knowledge, and knowledge of self to perception of the divine; an apparently negative act of self-sacrifice may become a positive inspiration to more disciplined souls; the essentially self-indulgent search for a wholly personal salvation may transmute itself into creative social action. Positive and negative are opposite poles of the same magnetized lodestone, and the futile posture may be transfigured into a creative resolve. In other words, we shall find that, once again, we are dealing not with a static situation, but with a dynamic process; and, while we shall see some souls embarking in their despair upon a journey that has no destination in life, we shall also be able to trace the route that leads through torment and tribulation to life's ultimate goal.

We can begin by looking at those forms of behaviour and feeling that seem to betray a loss of the creative faculty, and that involve the actors either in a passive acquiescence in the ruin of their broken-down society, or else in an active but futile endeavour to stem the tide of disintegration by the substitution of an *ad hoc* stratagem for the true creative process. There are two types of personal behaviour which seem to represent alternatives to the exercise of the general faculty of creativeness, in the sense that both of them are attempts at self-expression. The passive attempt consists in an *abandon* in which the soul lets itself go utterly, believing that creativeness comes as the reward of a natural and wholly undisciplined spontaneity – a state of mind in which antinomianism is accepted as a substitute for creativity. The

active counterpart to this attempt to 'live according to Nature' is an effort at stringent self-discipline, based on the inverse belief that Nature is the bane of creativity and not its source, and that a rigorous restraint of the natural passions is the only way to recover the lost faculty. In the Hellenic Society's time of troubles the vulgar hedonists who mis-called themselves followers of Epicurus sought an authoritative sanction for their mood of *abandon* by claiming that it was a life directed by Nature's laws; and, on the other side, the sanction of a 'naturalness' differently interpreted was claimed for the ascetic life of self-denial in the crudely literal practice of the Cynics and, with a greater refinement, by the Stoic practitioners of a kindred philosophy. In all things that were 'indifferent' – and for a Stoic nothing was either good or evil in itself except the wrongness or rightness of his own will – it was the whole duty of the sage to mortify those human desires which were accepted by the hedonist as the promptings of Nature; and to carry this mortification to a degree at which the sage became able to accept as natural, not the impulses of the hedonist's 'natural man', but the trials that were put upon him by the chances and changes of this mortal life. The course of Nature, thus imagined, must be borne by the Stoic sage with cheerfulness if he was capable of rising to this counsel of perfection, and at all events with calmness and tranquillity if he was to be accounted worthy of being numbered at all among the disciples of Zeno.

The melancholy vein of Stoic self-control is reflected in the *Meditations* of the philosopher-emperor Marcus Aurelius, whose philosophy could never quite brace him to bear on his lonely shoulders the Atlantean load of a collapsing world.

The power that rules within, when it is in tune with Nature, has an attitude towards events which enables it to adapt itself easily to anything – within the limits of possibility – that is presented to it. . . .²

Be like the headland against which the waves continually break; but the headland stands firm while the tormented waters sink to rest around it. . . .³

This infinitesimally short span of time is something to be passed through in tune with Nature and passed out of with a good grace – like an olive that falls when it is ripe with a blessing for Nature who has brought it forth and a gratitude to the tree which has borne it.⁴

The temper to which the careworn Stoic Emperor wistfully aspires in the last of the three sentences above quoted had been duly attained by the lame Stoic slave who had been the most conspicuous wearer of Zeno's mantle in the preceding generation.

What else should we be doing, in public and in private, but singing the praises of the Godhead and speaking good of His name and attempting to express our thanks to Him? Digging or ploughing or eating, should we not ever be singing our hymn to God? . . . And, since most of you have gone blind, was it not meet that there should be somebody occupying this place and



189, 190 THE WINGS OF FORTUNE Fate, fortune, destiny, chance – belief in these uncontrollable forces is attractive to souls adrift in a dying social universe. In Rome the cult of fortune was officially established; its influence permeated life and thought, sapping the creative will. Above, Fortune shown with the wings of Victory, the wheel of change beside her; opposite, Fortuna–Nemesis, holding the rudder that symbolized her control of destiny, and mounted on a rolling sphere.

191 THE TOUCH OF DEATH Wheel, butterfly, skull and level – symbols of fate, the soul, and inexorable judgment – combined into a melancholy image of overwhelming fatalism: opposite below, mosaic from Pompeii.

singing the hymn to God on behalf of us all? And what else can I, a lame old man, do but sing the praises of God? Were I a nightingale, I would sing like a nightingale; or, were I a swan, I would sing like a swan. But I happen to be a being endowed with reason, and so I must sing the praises of God. This is my work, so I am doing it, and I will never desert this post so long as it continues to be assigned to me. And I call upon the rest of you to sing the same song. . . .⁵

And, when Death overtakes me, I hope to be found by Him practising what I preach, in order that I may be able to say to God: Did I ever transgress Thy commandments? Did I ever use, for any other purposes than Thine, the talents or the senses or the innate ideas [*tais prolepsisin*] that Thou gavest me? Did I ever reproach Thee? Did I ever blame Thy governance? I was sick, when that was Thy will (my fellows were sick likewise, but when I was sick, I did not rebel). By Thy will I knew poverty, but I rejoiced in it. I never bore rule, because it was never Thy will that I should; but I never desired it. Didst Thou ever see me turn sullen on that account? Was there ever an occasion on which I presented myself before Thee with other than a cheerful countenance, or without being ready for any command or signal that Thou mightest choose to give? And now it is Thy will that I should leave the festival, so I am taking my leave – with my heart full of gratitude to Thee, because Thou hast deigned to allow me to celebrate the festival with Thee and to behold Thy works and to watch the course of Thy governance. When Death overtakes me, may these thoughts be in my mind and these words on my pen or on the page that my eyes are reading.⁶

Such was the ascetic mastery over Nature that was attained, in the course of the disintegration of the Hellenic Society, by the noblest adepts of the Stoic school of philosophy. And in the final chapter of Hellenic history we can see the ascetic tradition of an expiring dominant minority blending with the less negative asceticism of the proletariat when the Hellenic philosophy, in its Neoplatonic close and climax, rises to a pitch of mystical feeling at which its dying song of praise to God comes almost into unison with the younger and stronger voice of Christianity.

Passing to the Syriac World in a comparable time of troubles, we can see the same unreconciled opposition between *abandon* and self-control in the contrast between the sedately sceptical theory of the Book of Ecclesiastes and the piously ascetic practice of the monastic community of the Essenes. And in another field again, in the philosophic practice of the Sinic time of troubles, we can find Yang Chu suffering Epicurus's fate of being exploited by hedonists and at the same time castigated by moral disciplinarians of the Confucian and Mencian school. In a latter-day time of troubles in Japan which preceded the enforcement of the peace of the Tokugawa Shogunate, a similar antithesis reveals itself in the clash between the abandoned immorality of the Japanese high politics of the age and the almost inhumanly perfect self-dedication of the contemporary samurai to his feudal lord.

Can we see any signs of these conflicting ways of behaviour in the Western Society of our own day? Certainly, the invitation to 'return to Nature' has been clearly audible since it was first uttered by Jean-Jacques Rousseau two centuries ago; and the clamour has reached an unprecedented volume in the claims by initiates of a contemporary 'drug culture' that they have recovered the lost faculty of spontaneous and uninhibited creativity and have found the true model for a society of human perfection. To some

extent the progress of the recent science of psychology has also reinforced this modern tendency towards *abandon*, in consequence of its attempt to probe through the layers of acquired social and personal experience which are alleged to mask an inner core of true selfhood and to inhibit its expression. This erosion of the corner-stones of personal discipline may manifest itself in the relatively innocuous form of an individual rejection of the traditional Judaeo-Christian code of sexual morality which, in one shape or another, has been embedded in the Western Society throughout the course of its history. More seriously, it may compose itself into a dangerous reduction *ad absurdum* of the principle of relativity on the social and political plane, undermining the apparently valid concept that an irreducible minimum of fixed poles of orientation is a necessary element in the psychological health of both individuals and societies. On the other hand, the counter-movement of asceticism does not seem to have made much headway in the present-day Western World, though perhaps the first faint stirrings of self-denial, albeit in a somewhat shallow and debased form, can be detected in what is fashionably described as the 'backlash' against 'moral pollution'.

When individual creativity has been replaced by spurious modes of self-expression in this way, we should also expect that the mechanism of mimesis, by which the mass of society is induced to follow its leaders in an age of growth, will be equally unable to operate satisfactorily. The effect of a sudden collapse of social drill is to deprive the individual of his sense of social identity and mutual obligation, and to encourage wholly individualistic reactions to the crisis. In this frame of mind the truant will attempt to escape the consequences of a social breakdown by repudiating his duty to his fellows and deserting the disordered majority in the selfish hope of securing his personal safety at any price. A classic case of truancy, which has come to our notice already,⁷ is Athens' desertion of the cause of Hellenic federalism in 228 BC, even though the championship of this cause offered the only hope of saving the independence of both Athens and her sister-states at the heart of the Hellenic World from domination by the giants looming on the periphery of the disintegrating society. The weakness of this reaction is the implicit assumption that individual salvation can be successfully achieved when it is selfishly divorced from its wider social context. However, there is an altruistic form of desertion in which social ends are served precisely by means of an individual act of stepping out of the ranks: the martyr's act of self-sacrifice is equivalent in one sense to a desertion of a disintegrating 'society'; but it differs from truancy in that potentially it has the positive effect of serving as an example to others.⁸

The loss of creative opportunity means also that the Promethean *élan*, which is the active essence of growth, no longer finds vent in action; and in this situation the soul is apt to surrender itself to a hopeless feeling of being adrift in an uncontrollable, if not evil, Universe. In fact, we have already noticed in another context⁹ that a common reaction of men who live out their lives in an age of social breakdown is to ascribe their tribulations to the operation of an inexorable law of necessity or fate; and to this we can add the inverse feeling that Man's life and works are rendered equally nugatory by the play of blind and unpredictable



chance. The two notions of necessity and chance are correlative by reason of their very antithesis; for this antithesis does not lie between two alternative and incompatible conceptions of the nature of things, but merely between the human being who feels that he is adrift and the mighty waters that seem to him to be tossing him about as callously as if he were an inanimate piece of flotsam. In a self-regarding mood the castaway views the force that is defeating him in a negative light, as a sheer chaotic disorder, and it is in this mood that he gives the name of chance to his irresistible adversary and mistress. But the notion of disorder, as Bergson has pointed out,¹⁰ is essentially relative, like the notion of order itself. Neither order nor disorder can be imagined except in contrast to its opposite. We make a subjective judgment when we call a thing or a state 'disorder'; and what we mean is that we are being disappointed of some form of order which we have chosen, here and now, to impose in thought and act upon the face of the Universe. The intractable state of the facts upon which we are taking a verbal revenge by giving it the bad name of 'disorder' may – and indeed must – at the same time be an exemplification of the principle of order when the situation is viewed from another of the infinitely numerous possible alternative standpoints to that single arbitrary one which happens to be ours at the moment. For instance, the giddy spinning of the potter's wheel, which stands for the acme of disorder in the eyes of an Egyptian poet¹¹ whose imagination animates the clay that is whirling helplessly on the wheel's surface, is at the same time an example, on the mathematical plane of existence, of an orderly cyclic motion, while on the teleological plane it is an obedient mechanism for impressing upon the clay the spiritual order that is represented by the potter's will. In a similar way the disorderly motion of a rudderless ship, which stands in Plato's eyes for a Universe abandoned by God,¹² can be recognized, by a mind equipped with the necessary knowledge of dynamics and physics for 'programming' a computer, as a perfect illustration of the orderly behaviour of waves and currents in the media of wind and water. When the human soul adrift apprehends this truth, then the unknown force by which it is controlled loses the subjective aspect of chance and becomes objectified as necessity – but this without any change in the essence of this inhuman power's nature.

The failure to come to terms with the notion of fortune wrought havoc in the Hellenic intellectual world in the age of its decline, for

the ideal of intelligibility thus betrayed took speedy vengeance upon its betrayers as [*tyche*] or *fortuna* assumed the character of a 'principle', to be invoked as the 'explanation' of otherwise unaccountable developments according to the merely subjective whim of the observer. As such, it illustrates in a most sinister form the artistic and philosophic vice of *fantastica fornicatio*.

At Rome the idea of fortune first manifests itself in the *Fors Fortuna* of Servius Tullius. And, though 'she does not appear in the calendar, has no flamen and must have been introduced from outside', her presence in the city at this early stage [in the sixth century B.C.] marks a recognition by the Romans of a quite illusory belief in luck. But, whatever the significance of the primitive conception, it was overlaid in the later republic by notions which, while perhaps owing their origin to Polybius, assumed ever-increasing prominence until, in the early empire,

they found expression in a regular cult of Fortune. In this connexion we may observe that nothing so clearly exposes the breakdown of classical *scientia* as the deification of chance itself. To make the course of history turn upon such a principle is fatal to intellectual integrity and moral responsibility alike.¹³

The fatalistic passivity which is the common mood of believers in chance and fate alike is also revealed in the Islamic theory of predestination, in the classic form given to it by the theologian Abu'l-Hasan al-Ash'ari (*vivebat* c. AD 873–935). Al-Ash'ari attempts to resolve the apparent contradiction between God's predestination and Man's free will by propounding the doctrine of *Iktisab*, according to which the human will accepts for itself the destiny which God has already assigned to it. On this showing, 'Man is still an automaton although part of his machinery is that he believes himself free.'¹⁴ This tension between human freedom and divine necessity in a God-created Universe has persistently exercised religious minds, and makes its appearance in the higher religions of Christianity and Hinduism, as well as in the vulgarized Taoism of the Sinic World in the second century B.C. The Christian doctrine of original sin affirms that the character and conduct of human beings whom we can see alive on Earth today have been causally conditioned by the past action by which Adam fell from grace; though at the same time Christian dogma emphasizes that Adam's sin was of his own willing, and thus by inference Man's free will is not impugned. According to the comparable Indic doctrine of *karma* the spiritual characteristics of all individuals are accumulated as parts of a continuum which appears and reappears in the world of sense through a series of reincarnations, the separateness of these phenomenal existences from one another being merely an hallucination. Thus the word *karma*, which literally means 'action' in Sanskrit, has come to bear the special meaning, in the terminology of philosophy and religion, of moral action flowing from deliberate acts of will, which produces an abiding effect upon the character of the agent, and which mounts up cumulatively, in an ever-open credit-and-debit account, from one incarnation to another.

The personal sense of drift has a social counterpart in the feeling of cultural anomie – a total loss of all sense of particularized form and style which is the inverse of the process of the differentiation of civilizations through growth. The soul surrenders itself to the melting-pot, and a negative sense of cultural promiscuity then comes to pervade every sphere of social activity. In the sphere of social intercourse it results in a blending of incongruous traditions and in a compounding of incompatible values (*pammixia*); in the media of language and literature and visual art it declares itself in the currency of a *lingua franca* or *koine*, and of a similarly standardized composite style of literature and painting and sculpture and architecture; in the realm of philosophy and religion it produces ritual and theological syncretisms. Of the three factions into which a disintegrating society is apt to split, it is the dominant minority that succumbs most readily to the sense of promiscuity. The mentally or physically uprooted expatriates who form the internal proletariat tend not only to keep a firm hold upon the remnants of their native heritage, but even manage to impart some of this to their masters;

and the external proletariat, insulated from the radiation of a dying civilization by the erection of an impassable military frontier, tends on the whole to sustain its vigorous barbarian culture until the moment at which it finally overruns the ruined civilization. This receptivity of dominant minorities is perhaps hardly surprising, since they are the empire-builders, the founders of universal states which are themselves visible manifestations of the need for the securing of secular unity in a disintegrating world.

Common to all these various expressions of spiritual uncertainty is a sense of moral defeat which is liable to divorce the actors from the realities of their social and individual existence, and to encourage them to pursue a utopian chimera as a substitute for an intolerable present. In the twin movements of archaism and futurism we can see two alternative attempts to substitute a mere transfer in the time-dimension for that transfer of the field of action from one spiritual plane to another which is a characteristic movement of growth.¹⁵ In both these utopian movements the effort to live in the microcosm instead of in the macrocosm is abandoned for the pursuit of an ideal world which would be reached – supposing that this were in fact possible – without any challenge to face an arduous change of spiritual climate. This utopian substitute for the true movement of transference declares itself in an attempt either to return to some past 'Golden Age' of the society in question, or else to take a flying leap into the future. The external utopia thus attained is intended to do duty, in place of the inward spiritual cosmos, as an 'other world' of transcendent value; but it is an 'other world' only in the shallow and unsatisfying and ultimately meaningless sense of being a negation of the macrocosm in the momentary present state of the macrocosm's existence here and now. It is a perfunctory fulfilment of the law of life in letter but not in spirit; and, while it may save the soul from spiritual suicide, this attempt to defy the laws of time and motion must ultimately bring disaster upon its practitioners and their society.

The archaistic version may be defined as a reversion from the mimesis of contemporary creative personalities to a mimesis of ancestors, and in this sense it comes near to being a lapse from the dynamic movement of civilization to the virtually static situation of pre-civilizational Mankind. Alternatively, it may be defined as an attempt to arrest a society at a given stage, or forestall a threatening change, by immobilizing the dynamic factors of social growth – and this, as we have seen,¹⁶ is an invariably catastrophic reaction to social challenges. One of the principal impulses towards the archaistic form of utopianism is the virus of nationalism, which we can see at work in the contemporary world. A community which has succumbed to this grave spiritual malady is apt to resent its cultural debt to the civilization of which it is itself merely a fragment, and in this frame of mind it will devote a great part of its energies to creating a parochially national culture, which can be declared free from foreign influence. In its social and political institutions, its aesthetic culture, and its religion, it will try to recapture the ostensible purity of an age of national independence prior to the one in which it finds itself incorporated in the larger society of a supranational civilization.



192 THE CULT OF THE PAST – archaism – offers escape from a deadly present to the myth-memory of an idealized past. In a nationalist variant of this vicious folly, Kaiser William I is shown aping his country's ancestral hero, the Teutonic knight.



193 The American black glancing at a socialist tract beneath a romanticizing poster epitomizes the tension between revolutionary futurism and nostalgic archaism in Black Power movements today.

The most striking recent example of this backward-looking nationalism in our Western Society has been the National Socialist attempt in Germany to recreate a primitive Teutonic society which would allegedly have corresponded to an ancient 'essence' of Germanism, stripped of all the accretions of the intervening ages. The catastrophic dénouement of this futile and horrific attempt to recover a wholly spurious past illustrates in classic form the nemesis which follows upon the combination of the two spiritual aberrations of archaism and nationalism; and yet it seems that no example, however forceful, carries sufficient conviction to teach later generations the moral, for the same vicious malady is still afflicting communities in the present-day world. The militant nationalism of sectional groups in the modern Western Civilization must be regarded as a clear indication of the spiritual crisis which leads to the idolatrous worship of an allegedly worthy part in place of a no longer accepted whole. As an example of the corrupting effects of such a par-blind pursuit of a utopian past we can cite the black peoples' minority movements within a number of Western nations. In seeking to deny the incontestable and ineradicable links by which recent history has bound an uprooted black community to a white Western Society, and in looking backwards to an African past which is, as a matter of historical fact, lost and buried for these expatriates, the Black Power movements have been guilty of mistaking the part for the whole. They have been in danger of perverting a wholly justifiable search for a dignified identity after centuries of savage white oppression – which has been cultural as well as political – into a violent and ultimately fruitless attempt to detach themselves from their only possible present and future spiritual environment.

Side by side with this type of potentially violent archaism we can set the gentler, but no less corrupting, archaism of those who seek to combine Rousseau's call to 'return to Nature' with their own vision of an older and allegedly more uncomplicated era of Western history. The secessionist tendencies of those who are demoralized by the threatening discrepancy between Mankind's material progress and its spiritual incapacity to cope with the problems that this is creating may perhaps arouse more sympathy at first sight than the naked ferocity of nationalism; yet we ought to recognize quite clearly that this attempt at an archaistic reversion is just as disastrous. Those who fall into either pose are equally guilty of performing a mental manoeuvre in the delusion that life may be engineered without first being mastered.

The vain hope that, if reality is denied with sufficient force, then it will cease to be actual, is also at the root of the futurist form of utopianism. The millennialist vision has been one of the commonest manifestations of futurism at periodic times of local crisis in the history of the Western Civilization, but the aberration can also express itself in less spectacularly religious terms. We are most familiar with futurism today in its current guise of political revolution – a concept that, in its very essence and irrespective of its arbitrary ideological label, denies the necessity of undergoing all the pain of experience (*pathei mathos*)¹⁷ by claiming that the intermediate stages between present misery and potential happiness may be leap-frogged with one massive



194 BETRAYING THE FUTURE *Demonstration* by Bruno Caruso. The revolutionary cry for immediate release from oppression becomes a meaningless slogan: a cathartic outburst is no substitute for hard-won wisdom.

stride far into the future. The history to date of such revolutionary attempts to recast the structure of local societies has revealed not only the folly of ignoring the limitations imposed on Man by the time-dimension, but also the hazards of abusing a leadership's obligation to carry the mass of society with it;¹⁸ and the combination of these two faults has led in our own time to the erection of tyrannical régimes whose subjects have had to bear the inescapable penalty for their masters' moral and intellectual errors.

We have now perhaps given sufficient attention to the range of spiritual aberrations to which the soul is subject when, under the stress of social collapse, it has abrogated its duty of creativeness. The substitution of stratagem for creation may arguably bring in gains on the short-term

account – if this were not possible, no disintegrating society would be safe from immediate and irreversible collapse into anarchy – but on the long-term view we can only make a cumulative entry on the debit side. There is, however, as we have already suggested, a dialectic of disintegration as well as of growth, and the supreme crisis of social collapse, which proves an insuperable challenge to most, has also the power of evoking a supreme response in others. Those who neither acquiesce in the disintegration of their society nor seek to hold back the tide with artificial substitutes for creativity, but who have the vision and the spiritual courage to confront the challenge, have it within their reach to participate in a greater act of creation than is witnessed in even the most vigorous stages of social growth.

31 The challenge of disintegration

THE PATH OF GROWTH which is closed by those whose capacity for life and feeling exhausts itself on the mundane level may be reopened by a soul that can see beyond the veil of mundane appearance to the distant view of an 'other world' of a supra-mundane spiritual order. The social catastrophe of disintegration thus reveals itself finally as a crisis of perception in the individual soul. In their very limited way, the modes of life which we have called 'archaism' and 'futurism' are both attempts to escape from a crushing present, which has become manifestly unserviceable as a medium for growth, by pointing to an alternative goal. Yet both these attempts are vitiated by the fundamental error of believing that the soul can be saved from that spiritual sickness which the breakdown of a civilization brings to light without any change of spiritual clime or dimension; and this is as much as to say that the life of Man on Earth is a mere temporal mechanism, a chronological sequence which fulfils itself in the macrocosm of the material world. The bankruptcy of the archaic and futuristic experiments derives from a stubborn refusal to acknowledge the necessity of that shift from macrocosm to microcosm which we have already recognized¹ as the *sine qua non* of growth in a healthy civilization; yet the illusion that this can be avoided may be shattered at last by the reality of a spiritual defeat which, if it is not accepted as irretrievable, can lead to a new departure in life.

What route must the individual take to arrive at his destination of self-realization in his inner world? He experiences, after all, the same crisis as his fellows in their common ordeal of life in a disintegrating society; yet what is a stumbling-block to them becomes for him a supreme challenge. When the *élan* of growth in a healthy society seems to have given out, the passive individual loses his bearings upon the uncharted seas of the Universe; but the alternative reaction to this sense of a loss of control is, not to look outwards upon a macrocosm engulfed by evil, but to look inwards to the soul's own self and to recognize the moral defeat as a failure of self-mastery. Such a sense of personal sin presents the sharpest contrast imaginable to the passive sense of drift; for, while the sense of drift has the effect of an opiate in instilling into the soul an insidious acquiescence in an evil that is assumed to reside in external circumstances beyond the victim's control, the sense of sin has the effect of a stimulus because it tells the sinner that the evil is not external after all, but is within him, and hence subject to his will.

There is here the whole difference between the Slough of Despond and the faith that moves mountains; at the same time, though, we can see that there may be a margin of common ground between the mountains and the slough in practical life – an intermediate zone of feeling and conduct across which the tormented soul in an age of social disintegration may make, if it will, the arduous passage from resignation to endeavour.

The existence of this no-man's-land in which the two moods overlap is implicit in the Indic concept of *karma*; for

although *karma* can be regarded in one aspect as a burden forcibly imposed by the inexorable working of the law of causation, there is an alternative light in which it can be viewed as a burden that is deliberately increased or diminished, assumed or thrown off, by acts which are all within the scope of the agent's own volition. When viewed in this way, *karma* presents itself as the work of the soul that is its subject, and no longer as the work of a destiny that is external to the subject and unamenable to his control; and under this aspect *karma* resolves itself into sin instead of fate. It turns out, that is, to be an evil of which the subject is himself the author, but which, by the same token, he has the power to diminish and perhaps even in the end to extinguish. The same passage to a conquerable sin from an unconquerable fate can be made along a Christian road. In virtue of Christ's death on the cross, the Christian soul is offered a possibility of purifying itself from the taint of original sin, which is its heritage from Adam, by seeking and finding God's grace; and grace comes not as a wholly external transcendent force, but as a divine response to a human effort. The classic case of an awakening to the sense of sin is the spiritual experience of the Prophets of Israel and Judah in the Syriac time of troubles. When these Prophets were discovering their truths and revealing their message, the society out of which they had arisen and to whose members they were addressing themselves had been torn up and half-dismembered by a remorseless Assyrian aggressor. For souls whose society was in such a fearful plight it was an heroic spiritual feat to reject the obvious and specious explanation of their misery as the work of an irresistible external force, and to divine that, in spite of all outward appearances, it was their own sin that was the ultimate cause of their tribulations and that it therefore lay in their own hands to win release.

If thus the passive sense of drift may be turned in the life of an individual soul to an active and potentially creative sense of sin, so also the social feeling of helpless *pammixia* may rise to a positive sense of cultural unity. When it can attain to this perception, a soul will react to the loss of a distinctive cultural style in a disintegrating civilization, not by shrinking from a chaos void of any form at all, but by embracing a cosmos which partakes of what is eternal and universal. The effacement of cultural differentiation brings into view a spiritual edifice whose architecture was previously hidden by Man's local and transitory defences against such an overwhelming vision of eternity and infinity. This awakening to a sense of unity broadens and deepens as the vision expands from the unity of Mankind, through the unity of the cosmos, to the unity of a spiritual presence within and beyond both Man and the whole of the Universe.

The dawn of a sense of unity on the mundane political plane of life is commemorated in the titles by which some universal states have proclaimed their rulers' own conception of their nature and function. For example, the sovereign of the Achaemenian Empire, which served as a



196 Hindu sage in meditation bond; South India.



197 Saint Simeon Stylites; gold plaque from Syria.

universal state for the Syriac World, asserted the ecumenical range of his rule by styling himself 'King of the Lands' or 'King of Kings' – a title which was laconically translated into Greek in the one word *Basileus* without even an introductory definite article. The same claim to exercise an ecumenical authority over a united world is embodied, with complete explicitness, in the phrase *T'ien Hsia* – 'All that is under Heaven' – which was the official title of the Sinic universal state of the Han. The Roman Empire which served the Hellenic World as a universal state came to be equated in the Latin language with the *Orbis Terrarum* and in Greek with the *Oikoumene* in the sense of the whole of the inhabited world. The vision of a unity of the cosmos – foreshadowed in the pedestrian and limited unification of human society in the universal states – has presented itself to men in a series of variations on the theme of a Universe governed by law. The Babylonian astrologer – and the modern Western scientist – has been captivated by a mathematical law; the Buddhist ascetic by a psychological law; the Hellenic philosopher by a social law. Such beliefs have at least the merit of acknowledging the existence of a common principle behind the multiple appearances of the mundane world, but the identification of the unifying principle with law ignores the role of love, and love, as well as law, is an aspect of reality that we encounter in our human experience. We know law as the imposition of unity by the fiat of a sovereign legislator. We know love as the quest for unity by a living being whose divisive self-centredness – another name for life itself – has been overcome by an irresistible impulse to give instead of taking. Our acquaintance with both love and law is in the tiny field of human affairs. The belief that love and law are also aspects of an ultimate spiritual reality is an act of faith. But unverifiable hypotheses are practical necessities of life, and the limitations of human thought make it difficult to think of a hypothetical supra-human reality in non-anthropomorphic terms. In our human vision of a supra-human spiritual reality, the multiplicity of the phenomenal world is reflected in a pantheon of human-like gods, and the awakening to a sense of the unity underlying the multiplicity is reflected in a transition from polytheism to monotheism. In the anthropomorphic religious imagery of all three religions of the Judaic school, the conception of God's ethos and action has changed in an identical direction. God the sovereign legislator has been seen to be God the merciful and compassionate synonym for love.

The soul that has caught the vision of unity, and has seen the unifying spirit as love, is spiritually prepared to perceive, and to respond to, the challenge of an 'other world' that is not just the mundane world translated into an imaginary past or future, but is a world of a different order of reality. Through this revealing vision, the soul may at last discover the truth that the everyday world offers no final answer to the besetting miseries of life in an age of disintegration; and it will be impelled to rise above the mundane level of existence and seek a point of departure in the life of the spirit.

One way of rising above the mundane level is to adopt a stance of detachment from the world and its ills, and this is a philosophy that can be practised in successive degrees from the initiatory act of still-reluctant Stoic resignation to

a climax at which the adept deliberately aims at self-annihilation. One may play at detachment in the game of a sophisticated 'return to Nature' that was played by Marie-Antoinette in her Parisian dairy or by Theocritus in his Coan harvest-field. One may carry this game to the length of a pose, as it was carried by Diogenes in his tub and by Thoreau in his tent. One may genuinely stake one's life – as an anchorite in the desert or as a yogi in the jungle – upon the efficacy of this would-be solution to the problem which life presents. But a traveller along the path of detachment who is to reach the goal and win the reward must do more than stake his life upon the quest: he must detach himself from life to the point of being in love with nothing but its negation. To do this, of course, means flying in the face of human nature.

Ethical prowess can and will produce felicity and invulnerability and well-being . . . and there is one way only by which well-being can be reached: the way of detachment from all morally neutral values. You must not allow yourself to have a sense of property in anything; you must surrender everything to God and to Chance . . . and must concentrate upon one thing only – the thing that is truly your own, and in which no outside power can interfere.²

Spiritual exercises in the practice of detachment are commended at many other points in this manual of Stoic philosophy; but if we want to follow the path of detachment far enough we shall find ourselves sooner or later turning from an Hellenic to an Indic guide; for, far though the disciples of Zeno go, it is the disciples of the Indic philosopher Siddhartha Gautama that have had the courage to pursue detachment all the way to its logical goal of self-annihilation. The Indic candidate for arhatship knows that the Hellenic expedient of a conducted tour to *nirvana* is a snare and a delusion. If one takes an anaesthetic, one cannot commit *bara-kiri*; and in order to achieve the greater *tour de force* of spiritual self-annihilation one must be alertly aware, from first to last, of what one is about. The key that unlocks the gate of *nirvana* is not an aesthetically agreeable hypnosis but an arduous and painful mental struggle of the kind that is prescribed in the following passage from a work of the Hinayanian Buddhist philosophy:

In one who abides surveying the enjoyment in things that make for grasping craving [*tanha*] increases. Grasping is caused by craving, coming into existence by grasping, birth by coming into existence, and old age and death by birth. . . . Just as if a great mass of fire were burning of ten, twenty, thirty, or forty loads of faggots, and a man from time to time were to throw on it dry grasses, dry cow-dung, and dry faggots; even so a great mass of fire with that feeding and that fuel would burn for a long time. . . .

In one who abides surveying the misery in things that make for grasping, craving ceases. With the ceasing of craving grasping ceases, with the ceasing of grasping coming into existence ceases, with the ceasing of coming into existence, birth ceases, and with the ceasing of birth old age and death cease. Grief, lamentation, pain, dejection, and despair cease. Even so is the cessation of all this mass of pain.³

The goal that is the reward of this search is *nirvana*, and *nirvana* is

a condition where there is neither 'earth', nor 'water', nor 'fire', nor 'air', nor the sphere of infinite space, nor the sphere of infinite consciousness, nor the sphere of the void, nor the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception . . . that condition,

SUPERHUMAN INDIFFERENCE By reaching out for perfect detachment from a corrupt world, the ascetic loses hold of the divine passion of pity for Mankind. The yogi, the stylite, and the sage stand coldly aloof from a suffering world, rapt in contemplation of a perfect void.



198 The priest Myo-e meditating: Japan, thirteenth century A.D.

Brethren, do I call neither a coming nor a going nor a standing still, nor a falling away nor a rising up; but it is without fixity, without mobility, without basis. It is the end of woe.⁴

This absolute detachment has perhaps never been attained, or at least never as a permanent state, outside the school of Gautama. As an intellectual achievement it is imposing; as a moral achievement it is overwhelming; and yet it has a disconcerting moral corollary, for perfect detachment casts out pity, and therefore also love, as inexorably as it purges away all the evil passions.

Love cometh from companionship;
In wake of love upsurges ill;
Seeing the bane that comes of love
Fare lonely as rhinoceros.⁵

To the Indic sage's mind this heartlessness is the adamant core of philosophy; for to give primacy to any of the heart's sensations, however virtuous, is to admit the duality of selfhood into the perfect unity of consciousness. The Buddhist conclusion that all sensation ultimately coincides in reinforcing the fetters of self was reached independently by the Hellenic philosophers as a result of following likewise to the bitter end a parallel line of escape from life (though the Hellenic sage who had struggled out into the sunshine of enlightenment would perhaps feel a greater sense of social obligation to return to the darkness where the vast majority of his former fellow-prisoners were still languishing).

The sage will not feel pity, because he cannot feel it without himself being in a pitiful state of mind. . . . Pity is a mental illness induced by the spectacle of other people's miseries, or alternatively it may be defined as an infection of low spirits caught from other people's troubles when the patient believes that those troubles are undeserved. The sage does not succumb to such-like mental diseases. The sage's mind is serene and is immune from being upset by the incidence of any external force.⁶

In pressing its way to a conclusion that is logically inevitable and at the same time morally intolerable, the philosophy of detachment ultimately defeats itself. In the very act of admiring the fortitude of its exponents we are moved to revolt against their denial of man himself. By consulting only Man's reason and not his heart, the philosophy of detachment is arbitrarily putting asunder what God has chosen to join together. This philosophy falls short of the truth by refusing to take account of the soul's duality in unity, and by shutting its ears to the poet's plea 'Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also';⁷ and so the philosophy of detachment has to be eclipsed by the mystery of transfiguration. The Hinayana must make way for the Mahayana, Stoicism for Christianity, the arhat for the Bodhisattva, the sage for the saint.

The exponents of detachment seek an illusory form of unity by denying the dualism that Man's own existence implies – the distinction between being and consciousness – and their path of withdrawal from the world of being is for this reason a spiritual blind-alley. The soul must find a route back into the world, if it is not to negate itself in a stultifying philosophy of nihilism; and this route is opened by the religious mystery of transfiguration. At the core of this ideal is the concept of a Kingdom of God which, in so far as it enters into the time-dimension, is not a dream of

the future but a spiritual reality which is at all times present in this world, besides existing – and, indeed, just because it exists – as well in an eternity and infinity that are in a supra-mundane spiritual reality. While the 'other world' of the philosopher is in essence a world that is exclusive of ours on Earth, and an asylum of refuge from it, the divine 'other world' transcends the earthly life of Man without ceasing to embrace it.

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the Kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said: 'The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say Lo here! or Lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you.'⁸

But how can the Kingdom of God be authentically in ourselves in this world and yet also be essentially not of it? This is a question that transcends the limitations of logical solutions; but, if we are willing to acknowledge the hard truth that the nature of transfiguration is a mystery beyond the reach of purely rational thought, we may perhaps be rewarded for a sober recognition of the limits of our intellectual power by finding ourselves able to peer into the mystery through the imagery that conveys the intuition of poets.

To see a world in a grain of sand
And heaven in a wild flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.⁹

In the words of a poet of the Buddhist Ch'an (Zen) school,

Infinitely small things are as large as large things can be,
For here no external conditions obtain;
Infinitely large things are as small as small things can be,
For objective limits are here of no consideration. . . .

One in All,
All in One –
If only this is realized,
No more worry about your not being perfect.¹⁰

The resolution of duality in unity can be achieved in the language of mysticism, but how in practice can God's will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven? In the technical language of theology – whether Mahayanian or Christian – the omnipresence of God involves His immanence in this world and in every living soul in it, as well as His transcendent existence on the supra-mundane plane of being. In the Christian conception of the Godhead His transcendent aspect is displayed in God the Father and His immanent aspect in God the Holy Ghost; but the distinctive and also the crucial feature of the Christian canon is the doctrine that the Godhead is not just a duality but a trinity in unity, and that in His aspect as God the Son the other two aspects are unified in a person who, in virtue of this mystery, is as accessible to the human heart as he is incomprehensible to the human understanding. In the person of Christ the divine society and the mundane society have a common member who in the order of 'this world' is born into the ranks of the proletariat and dies the death of a malefactor, while in the order of the 'other world' he is the King of God's Kingdom. We are bound to ask ourselves how two natures – one human and the other divine – can in any real sense be present both at once in a

single person. Answers to this question, cast in the form of creeds, have been worked out by Christian Fathers in terms of the technical vocabulary of the Hellenic philosophers; but this line of approach, which risks reducing the central mystery to a meaningless formula of words, is perhaps not the only one available to us. There is an alternative starting-point in the postulate that the divine nature, in so far as it is accessible to us, must have something in common with our own; and, if we look for one particular spiritual faculty which we are conscious of possessing in our own souls and which we can also attribute with absolute confidence to God – because God would be spiritually inferior to Man (*quod est absurdum*) if this faculty were not in Him but were nevertheless in us – then the faculty which we must think of first as being common to Man and to God will be one which the philosophers wish to mortify, and that is the faculty of love.

Love, rejected by the Buddhist sages of the Hinayana, had to be readmitted to the Indic religion.

'This is myself and this is another.'
Be free of this bond which encompasses you about,
And your own self is thereby released.

Do not err in this matter of self and other.
Everything is Buddha without exception.
Here is that immaculate and final stage,
Where thought is pure in its true nature.

The fair tree of thought that knows no duality,
Spreads through the triple world.
It bears the flower and fruit of compassion,
And its name is service of others.¹¹

Compassion – the love that fulfils itself in service to others – is the motive that inspires the martyrs and that makes their self-sacrifice creative. The example of Socrates' self-sacrifice has been noted already.¹² In the Syriac World in its time of troubles we can see the dissenters offering themselves as martyrs – first the Prophets of Israel and Judah; and then, at a later stage, the opponents of a paganizing faction that was trying, under the Seleucid régime, to escape from the onus of its precious Judaic heritage at the cost of merging its peculiar identity in the standardized form of Hellenism that was being accepted by the Palestinian Jews' non-Jewish fellow-subjects. In the Hellenic World, the two generations which elapsed between the death of the Emperor Alexander Severus in AD 235 and the death of the Emperor Galerius in 311 were signaled by a classic exhibition of martyrdom in the ranks of the Christian Church. The Church was the principal target for the parting strokes of an Hellenic dominant minority which turned savage in its death agony, convinced that it was the victim of a treacherous attack on the part of the proletariat. Under the test of this ordeal the sheep in the Christian fold were divided unequivocally from the goats in being called upon to choose between renouncing their faith and sacrificing their lives. The renegades were legion, but the tiny band of martyrs was spiritually potent out of all proportion to its numerical strength.

Love is, indeed, the core of the New Testament. In the instruction given to Nicodemus, love is revealed as being



199 PASSIONATE PITY Chinese Bodhisattva of the T'ang dynasty. The compassionate saint loves God more by loving His creatures. In reaction against the stern detachment of the early Buddhists, the Mahayana school reconsecrated compassionate love as the crowning ideal of the faith.

both the motive that moves God to redeem Man at the price of incarnation and crucifixion¹³ and the means that enable Man to win access to God.¹⁴ The working of love in God's heart – in moving God to suffer death on the cross – is brought out in the Synoptic Gospels in their account of the circumstances in which Jesus announces to his disciples that his destiny is the Passion instead of being to serve as a worldly Messiah for the Jewish futurists. He forbears to reveal this appalling truth until his divinity has been guessed by Peter and has been manifested in the Transfiguration; but, as soon as he has made his epiphany as God, he at once breaks silence about his Passion. The meaning of these revelations in this sequence is surely that a love which loves to the death is the essence of God's nature. And as for the working of love in human hearts as a means of access for Man to God, it is extolled as the sovereign – and sole indispensable – means to this supreme end of Man in the thirteenth chapter of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. The love of Man for God flows on Earth, through all the members of the *Civitas Dei*, along the channel of Man's love for his human brother.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and His love is perfected in us.¹⁵

In virtue of this love which is equally human and divine, the Kingdom of God has a peace of its own which is not the philosophic peace of detachment, but the peace of life lived by men in and for God. The member of a disintegrating mundane society who has learned that self-fulfilment is won by self-surrender in God has a surer hope, and therefore a deeper happiness, than the merely 'once-born' member of a society that is still in growth; for he will know that by the suffering of a second birth he may gain entry into the Kingdom of God.

Nothing is more acceptable to God, and nothing more salutary for yourself, than to suffer gladly for Christ's sake. And if it lies in your choice, you should choose rather to suffer hardships for Christ's sake, than to be refreshed by many consolations; for thus you will more closely resemble Christ and all His Saints. For our merit and spiritual progress does not consist in enjoying much sweetness and consolation, but rather in the bearing of great burdens and troubles.

Had there been a better way, more profitable to the salvation of mankind than suffering, then Christ would have revealed it in His word and life. But he clearly urges both His own disciples and all who wish to follow Him to carry the cross, saying, 'If any will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.' Therefore, when we have read and studied all things, let this be our final resolve: 'that through much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom of God'.¹⁶

It is not, then, by seeking to escape suffering, but by embracing and responding to it, that the soul born into a disintegrating society can win release and regain, on a higher plane, the path of growth from which his society has strayed; and this movement of return is the second 'beat' of that rhythm of schism-and-palingenesia, in the realm of the soul, which we postulated at the outset of this part of our Study¹⁷ as the characteristic movement of disintegration. Our attempt to analyse the processes by which the power of growth may be recovered from the seemingly fatal catastrophe of social collapse will have shown that the 'recurrence of birth' which we have identified at last is not a mere rebirth of society on any mundane level, but the attainment of a supra-mundane state; and the simile of birth can be applied to it illuminatingly because this other state is a positive state of life – a life shot through with the image of God. That is the palingenesia which Jesus proclaimed as the sovereign aim of his own birth in the flesh.

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.¹⁸