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REFLECTIONS ON BURKE'S *REFLECTIONS ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION*

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THE subject upon which I am about to speak permits me to ride several of my pet hobbies at once. I have at various times risked three generalizations, by no means uniquely my own, yet persuasively confirmed in my own mind by my own study of history. These are: (1) that a revolution is less likely to result from a conspiracy than from the collapse of an old regime; (2) that the American Revolution was a source and an early phase of a revolutionary epidemic that spread to France and then over the world in the century that followed; and (3) that subsequent events may at times shed as much light upon the past as the past upon what follows. These generalizations receive confirmation again, I believe, in an analysis of Burke's views on revolution.

Everyone doubtless has heard of the gentlewoman who, having made her first acquaintance with Shakespeare at a performance of *Hamlet*, was asked how she had liked it and replied: "It was wonderful, it was so full of quotations!" I hope your reaction to my performance today will be the same. I shall quote Burke rather often, and sometimes, I am afraid, the quotations will appear to you unnecessarily lengthy. Their length seems desirable to me in order to make the point I most want to make. That is that this admirable political philosopher and statesman, who has become, above all the things he stood for, a symbol of opposition to the unrealistic and the doctrinaire in politics, became, in his unswerving insistence upon realism, altogether doctrinaire about the importance of being realistic, and hence failed to get a realistic grasp of the early stages of the French Revolution.

Burke's reputation before 1789 had rested principally on his support of four liberal movements. These were the struggle against the abuse of official power by king and ministers inside the United Kingdom; the effort to secure commercial, religious, and parliamentary freedom for Ireland; the plea to effect conciliation with the American rebels; and the long drawn out quest for punishment of those whom he regarded as guilty of injustice in the government of India. His struggle

against tyranny in England, Ireland, America, and India might well have led contemporary observers like Charles James Fox and Thomas Paine to expect him to be sympathetic in 1789 with those who, like the Marquis de Lafayette, had fought and bled in freedom's cause in America and now claimed to be fighting in the same cause in France. They were destined to be disappointed. The champion of America in revolt denounced France in revolution.

Burke himself, however, always considered his denunciation of revolution in France consistent with his earlier fights against tyranny. In the closing words of his *Reflections* he said:

I have little to recommend my opinions but long observation and much impartiality. They come from one who has been no tool of power, no flatterer of greatness. . . . They come from one, almost the whole of whose public exertion has been a struggle for the liberty of others; from one in whose breast no anger durable or vehement has ever been kindled, but by what he considered as tyranny; . . . they come from one who desires honours, distinctions, and emoluments but little; . . . from one who wishes to preserve consistency, but who would preserve consistency by varying his means to secure the unity of his end; and, when the equipoise of the vessel in which he sails may be endangered by overloading it upon one side, is desirous of carrying the small weight of his reasons to that which may preserve its equipoise.¹

His opposition to the French Revolution, Burke thought, was just such an effort to preserve the

¹ *Reflections on the French Revolution*, 244, London, Dent, 1953 (Everyman's Library). Cf. An appeal from the new to the old Whigs, *Works of the Right Honorable Edmund Burke* 4: 99, Boston, Little, Brown, 1866. The author wishes to express his indebtedness to Hudson, Wilson M., Jr., *An index to the works of Edmund Burke*, typewritten dissertation, University of Chicago, 1947. He wishes also to apologize for the dispersion of his references among several variant editions of Burke's writings; the University of Chicago Library, having been used at various times by Thomas W. Copeland, Robert Maynard Hutchins, Leo Strauss, and other students of Burke, rarely has available a complete set of any one edition.

equipoise of the vessel in which he was sailing and to keep its bearing steady toward the desired goal of just and orderly government. It was consistent with his long and earnest persuasion that the trend in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries toward geometrical, abstract, and metaphysical solutions of social and political problems could lead only to wrong solutions.

Let us hastily re-examine that trend (since we shall find Burke not altogether unaffected by it). Early in the seventeenth century, René Descartes had taught that the way to find truth was to divest oneself of all one's knowledge, prejudices, and ways of thinking, and to proceed through pure reason to seek one's answers. But if a human being were to divest himself of all his thought, he yet could not deny that he was thinking: "Cogito, ergo sum." And Descartes went on to demonstrate, at least to his own satisfaction, that the thinker, starting from the inescapable fact of thought alone, could arrive at a rational understanding of his problems.

The eighteenth century was the heyday of Cartesianism in political thought. Burke, however, felt that positing human awareness of thinking as the prime step toward the solution of human problems was likely to lead to difficulties—to abstractions that had little to do with reality. The thinkers whom he encountered personally in France in 1773 were, he found, proposing exactly the sort of solutions that to his mind had small relation to the ills they were trying to cure.

Burke was, in a sense, an anti-rationalist. As early as his "Speech on American Taxation" in 1774 he had expostulated: "I do not enter into these metaphysical distinctions; I hate the very sound of them."² And he asked in his "Speech on moving his Resolutions for Conciliation with America" in 1775: "Alas! alas! when will this speculating against fact and reason end?"³ In his *Reflections* of 1790, he made still clearer that he had little patience with the handling of social problems in the abstract:

I cannot . . . give praise or blame to anything which relates to human actions, and human concerns, on a simple view of the object, as it stands stripped of every relation, in all the nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstraction.⁴

Burke was convinced that, on the contrary, to get the best solutions of the political problems of a

people one has to take into account, among other things, the history of that people. He might have been called, had he lived in the nineteenth century, a "historicist"—one of that school which holds that historical experience rather than abstract reasoning provides the correct answers to political questions. As several of his biographers point out, he agreed with the philosophy of Montesquieu, who, you will recall, assigned great weight to history as a factor in the problems and the solution of the problems of mankind. "The spirit of the laws," according to Montesquieu was derived from "the various relations which the laws may bear to different objects."⁵ These "objects" were to be found not alone in a people's physical environment but also in their tradition. They determined the institutions, the character, and hence the type of government and customs that a people had and ought to have. This respect for tradition was a far cry from Descartes's indifference to history.

Burke was convinced that tradition, a people's ties with its past, would provide a better answer to its political problems than would abstract reason. Yet his own method resembles somewhat that of Descartes as well as of Montesquieu. In the "Speech on Conciliation with America" he indicated how he set about finding his own answers to political questions:

In framing a plan for this purpose [how to revive the friendliness of the American colonies] I endeavoured to put myself in that frame of mind which was the most natural and the most reasonable, and which was certainly the most probable means of securing me from all error. I set out with a perfect distrust of my own abilities, a total renunciation of every speculation of my own [so far somewhat like Descartes, but now comes a great difference] and with a profound reverence for the wisdom of our ancestors, who have left us the inheritance of so happy a Constitution and so flourishing an empire, and what is a thousand times more valuable, the treasury of the maxims and principles which formed the one and obtained the other.⁶

In other words, Burke first tried in Cartesian fashion to divest himself of his prejudices, but then he proceeded, not by reason alone from some irreducible premise that remained, but from two historical sources of political truth—the "inheritance" of the British constitution and empire, and "the treasury of maxims and principles" upon which that inheritance was based. The mind once

² *Works* 2: 73, 1889.

³ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴ *Loc. cit.*, 6.

⁵ *The spirit of the laws* 1: 7, London, Bell, 1914, trans. by Thomas Nugent.

⁶ *Works* 2: 145, 1889.

rationally cleansed of error, he obviously believed, was thereafter guided better by example and precept than by reason.

Burke's concept of an inherited British constitution and empire contained what scholars of a subsequent generation might call the idea of an "organic society." He did not hold with the abstract notion current in the eighteenth century of a social contract rationally derived. Society came rather from divine inspiration:

He [God] who gave our nature to be perfected by our virtue willed also the necessary means of its perfection—he willed, therefore, the state.⁷

The state was the product of the total experience of a people, the full realization of their destiny:

Society [i.e. the state] is indeed a contract. . . . It is not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular state is but a clause in the great primaevial contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and invisible world [i.e. state and church] according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures, each in their appointed place.⁸

If "temporary possessors and life-renters" in a commonwealth should prove "unmindful of what they have received from their ancestors, or of what is due to their posterity," the state would change "as often, and as much and in as many ways, as there are floating fancies or fashions," and "the whole chain and continuity of the commonwealth would be broken." "No one generation could link with the other. Man would become little better than the flies of a summer."⁹ It was for that reason that Burke had opposed parliamentary reform in England. Restraint of tyrannical behavior? Yes. Reform of constitutional structure? No.

Because a nation is not an idea only of local extent and individual momentary aggregation, but it is an idea of continuity which extends in time as well as in numbers and in space. And this is a choice not of

one day or one set of people, not a tumultuary and giddy choice; it is a deliberate election of ages and of generations; it is a constitution made by what is ten thousand times better than choice: it is made by the peculiar circumstances, occasions, tempers, dispositions, and moral, civil and social habitudes of the people, which disclose themselves only in a long space of time.¹⁰

In short, a constitution is the outcome of a people's history, the product of its *Volksgeist*, past and present, and a component of its future.

But the inherited constitution and empire of a nation were not, Burke thought, its only or its best guide for the solution of its problems. The "maxims and principles" on which the political institutions of a people were based were "a thousand times more valuable."¹¹ They were the essence of its law:

The science of jurisprudence, [which is] the pride of the human intellect, . . . is the collected reason of ages, combining the principles of original justice with the infinite variety of human concerns.

Without "the collected reason of ages," "no principles could be early worked into habits," and there would be "no certain laws, establishing invariable grounds of hope and fear"; men's actions would lose their course, and their ends would become uncertain.¹²

And still another guide was available to a people seeking wisdom. When Burke in 1775 sought a peaceful solution for the American rebellion, he not only used as arguments telling epigrams and quotations from "the collected reason of ages," from the writings of the great thinkers of the past, but he also tried to draw lessons from the earlier history of England. He described "four capital examples," taken from Britain's experience with Ireland, Wales, Chester, and Durham, that he considered analogous to the American experience. Thus, he employed a third way to use history—examining the successful answers to similar problems in the past in the quest for correct answers to the problems of the present.

So far, then, we have found Burke considering four paths to political wisdom. The first, the rationalistic process, he mostly repudiated. The other three are based upon a philosophy of history.

¹⁰ Speech on a motion made in the House of Commons, May 7, 1782 for a committee to inquire into the state of representation of the Commons in Parliament, *Works* 7: 95, 1889.

¹¹ See p. 418 above and n. 6.

¹² *Reflections*, 92.

⁷ *Reflections*, 95.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 93-94.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 91-92.

Of these, he apparently placed (1) the concept of the "organic society" below (2) the science of jurisprudence or "the collected reason of ages," which could be reinforced by (3) parallels in historical experience. But though all three of the good paths had a historical dimension, he had little confidence in the ability of men to profit from their past; it was altogether too easy to choose, from the multitude of the dead, the wrong mentors and to be misled by them. Spanish statesmen, he pointed out, commonly consulted the genius of Philip II, but the issue of their affairs showed that they had not been wisely inspired. A particular affair of state might require for correct resolution something more than the general principles of jurisprudence, the organic order of the society in which it arose, and the lessons derived from comparable affairs in the past. Present realities and the balance of interests in the actual situation also counted heavily with Burke. Hence, in his estimation a studied weighing of immediate and practical advantages ranked high as a source of correct solutions.

To this consideration, which today we call "political realism" or "expedient compromise," Burke gave the name "prudence." "Prudence is not only the first in rank of the virtues political and moral, but she is the director, the regulator, the standard of them all."¹³ In his vocabulary the word *prudence* carried none of the derogatory undertone that we might associate with it. All he meant by it was that quality in politics which leads to careful consideration whether a change be worth what it might cost in tangibles and intangibles—to the taking of "a calculated risk," in the language of our day. The true rights of men, in his philosophy, "are their advantages," and, he contended:

These are often in balances between differences of good; in compromises sometimes between good and evil, and sometimes between evil and evil. Political reason is a computing principle; adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing, morally and not metaphysically, or mathematically, true moral denominations.¹⁴

In his "Speech on Conciliation with the Colonies" (March 22, 1775) he had tried to induce his colleagues in Parliament to apply the principle of prudence:

¹³ An appeal from the new to the old Whigs, *loc. cit.*, 51.

¹⁴ *Reflections*, 59–60.

It is . . . a very great mistake to imagine that mankind follow up practically any speculative principle, either of government or of freedom, as far as it will go in argument and logical illation. We Englishmen stop very short of the principles upon which we support any given part of our Constitution, or even the whole of it together. . . . All government, indeed every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue and every prudent act, is founded on compromise and barter. We balance inconveniences; we give and take; we remit some rights, that we may enjoy others. . . . But in all fair dealings, the thing bought must bear some proportion to the purchase paid. . . . Man acts from adequate motives relative to his interest, and not on metaphysical speculations.¹⁵

When recognition of American independence became opportune, he again urged a prudent calculation of the alternatives:

A wise man always walks with his scale to measure, and his balances to weigh, in his hand. If he cannot have the best, he asks himself if he cannot have the next best. But if he comes to the point of graduation where all positive good ceases, he asks himself next, what is the least evil; and, on a view of the downward comparison, he considers and embraces that least evil as comparative good. Upon this principle . . . I am not called upon to assert that it [absolute independence] would be good for us. I may admit it as a great evil . . . ; but I have no doubt to assert, that this evil to-day, would be far less than the same evil two years hence.¹⁶

Prudence thus sometimes dictated a choice among evils.

Even a revolution, Burke believed, might under certain circumstances be justified (though apparently extremely rarely) by "prudence":

Without attempting . . . to define what never can be defined, the case of a revolution in government, this, I think, may be safely affirmed—that a sore and pressing evil is to be removed, and that a good, great in its amount and unequivocal in its nature, must be probable almost to a certainty, before the inestimable price of our own morals and the well-being of a number of our fellow-citizens is paid for a revolution. If ever we ought to be economists even to parsimony, it is in the voluntary production of evil. Every revolution contains in it something of evil.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Works* 2: 168–169, 1889.

¹⁶ Lord North and the American war, (n.d.), Fitzwilliams, Charles W., and Richard Bourke (eds.), *Correspondence of the Rt. Hon. Edmund Burke* 4: 506–507, London, Rivington, 1844. (Mr. Gaetano L. Vincitorio of St. John's University called this passage to my attention.)

¹⁷ An appeal from the old to the new Whigs, *loc. cit.*, 81.

But if revolution is necessary, "it is the first and supreme necessity only, a necessity that is not chosen, but chooses, a necessity paramount to deliberation, that admits no discussion and demands no evidence, which alone can justify a resort to anarchy."¹⁸ Burke thought England's Glorious Revolution of 1688 thoroughly justified because it called for "a small and a temporary deviation"¹⁹ in response to "a grave and overruling necessity."²⁰ In reflecting on the French Revolution, however, he was afraid that only a small evil would be removed and only at a great cost, and so he doubted that the French Revolution would justify itself.

In 1775, pondering upon the complications arising from revolt in the American colonies, Burke gave an excellent example of his method of political logic. The right answer, he said, was not to be found in "mere general theories of government" or in "abstract ideas of right," but in "the true nature and peculiar circumstances of the object which we have before us."²¹ "The collected reason of the ages," he felt, could not provide an adequate understanding of the "peculiar circumstances of the object before us." For one thing, the great minds did not appear to agree on the problem:

There are deep questions, where great names militate against each other; where reason is perplexed; and an appeal to authorities only thickens the confusion; for high and reverend authorities lift up their heads on both sides; and there is no sure footing in the middle.²²

For another thing, the law itself may provide only an inexpedient answer:

The question with me is, not whether you have a right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not your interest to make them happy. It is not what a lawyer tells me I may do, but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I ought to do. Is a politic act the worse for being a generous one? . . . I am not determining a point of law; I am restoring tranquillity; and the general character and situation of a people must determine what sort of government is fitted for them. That point nothing else can or ought to determine.²³

He concluded that the problem of America must be decided in the end on the basis of prudence or

expediency—upon a calculation whereby the good to be obtained might outweigh the evil that would be eliminated.

To recapitulate, now we have Burke employing five sources of the kind of truth needed for good government: (1) reason, which he either repudiates altogether if it is "metaphysical" or accepts only conditionally if it is coupled with other considerations such as generosity and justice; (2) the organic unity of society, which he appears to accept in the case of the Americans only conditionally ("We Englishmen stop very short of the principles upon which we support . . . our Constitution");²⁴ (3) the science of jurisprudence, which may be on both sides and may be interpreted differently by different lawyers; (4) the examples of history, "a fine body of precedents,"²⁵ which require discriminating choice and may sometimes be badly chosen; and (5) the one without which the faultiness of the others might be disastrous, consideration of "the peculiar circumstances," of "the general character and situation of a people." These five paths to political wisdom were all explicitly or, at least clearly implicitly indicated in Burke's writings before 1789.

The outbreak of France's revolution found Burke among the most perturbed. At first he appears to have tried to apply his carefully reasoned method to a dispassionate understanding of the French crisis, but after a few months' suspension of judgment came hysteria. The French, he quickly decided, have rebelled "against a mild and lawful monarch, with more fury, outrage, and insult than ever any people has been known to rise against the most illegal usurper, or the most sanguinary tyrant."²⁶ This statement, let it be recalled, was written in 1790. The king of France, to be sure, had been placed under constitutional limitations, restricted to a prescribed expense account, and deprived of a great deal of his formerly absolute power and freedom of action. But he had not yet been the victim of outrage upon his person nor was he in any imminent personal danger (although on October 6, 1789, acts of violence had taken place in his presence or close by). As Burke was writing his *Reflections*, the prodigious labors of Lafayette and the loyalty of the National Guard had brought greater order to France than it had enjoyed at any other time since the beginning of the Revolution.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁹ *Reflections*, 15.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.

²¹ *Works 2*: 109, 1889.

²² *Ibid.*, 140.

²³ *Ibid.*, 140-141.

²⁴ See above p. 420 and n. 15.

²⁵ *Works 2*: 149, 1889.

²⁶ *Reflections*, 36.

Therefore, the charge that this was a period of unsurpassed violence is unjust and intemperate. And Burke seems to have altogether forgotten the violence of the English revolutionary experience of the 1640's. The paucity of references in Burke's *Reflections* to the English Civil War is simply amazing. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 is played up again and again, but the Civil War is played down consistently. How could he have forgotten that Charles I had been beheaded while Louis was still safe and still bargaining for a big share of his former power?

Burke's presumption of unparalleled fury in France may perhaps be explained by the inadequacy of his sources. Yet he was by no means uninformed. He had been editor of the *Annual Register* until recently, and the footnotes to his *Reflections* indicate that he still had at his disposal good current literature and other journalistic sources of information. He was in correspondence with several Frenchmen. A recent biographer is under the impression that he perhaps got some of his information from Tom Paine, who perhaps got it from Thomas Jefferson,²⁷ and both men were in touch with Lafayette, who at this time as commander of the only well-organized military force in France was its most powerful figure. If so, Burke's sources were not all unfriendly to the Revolution, but some were secondhand or thirdhand. I suspect rather that a good deal of his information came from the émigrés who had fled France in the early stages of the Revolution—the ones who were the least likely to see any extenuating circumstances in the events which had compelled them to flee their country. I have no evidence showing what émigrés Burke might have known at the time—the end of 1789—he began to write the *Reflections on the French Revolution*. His persuasion that the revolution was the outcome of an evil conspiracy is reminiscent of the Abbé Barruel's later *Histoire des Jacobins* (1797), and but for the fact that the reproachful cleric did not reach England until after the *Reflections* had been published, one would suspect collaboration. Burke at times was in personal touch with Calonne, who had been one of the more successful ministers of Louis XVI and was now a leading figure and propagandist among the émigrés. Burke cited the works of Calonne several times in the *Reflections*; Calonne came to visit him; and

²⁷ Copeland, Thomas W., *Our eminent friend Edmund Burke, six essays*, 147–172 New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1949.

Burke later sent his son to Coblenz to work with Calonne. Some internal evidence also leads to the inference that his reflection on what was going on in France was based upon the reports of émigrés from that country and disgruntled correspondents who remained there. A later American traveler in France was told that Burke's principal informer was an Irish priest named Summers "who wrote him regularly what happened in Paris and colored every event after his prejudices." But the report, if at all credible, seems to have relevance only to Burke's writings after the *Reflections*.²⁸

Whatever Burke's sources, his evaluation of them seems to have been determined by a sense of panic. He says himself in his *Thoughts on France*, written some time after the *Reflections*: "Most of the topics I have used are drawn from fear and apprehension."²⁹ His fears were for England, not for France. You will recall the fuller title of his work—*Reflections on the revolution in France and on the proceedings in certain societies in London relative to that event*. . . . He was concerned with the subversive elements inside England that might derive inspiration from the revolution abroad. In the peroration of the *Reflections*, he pleaded with his fellow-citizens:

The improvements of the [French] National Assembly are superficial, their errors fundamental. Whatever they are, I wish my countrymen rather to recommend to our neighbors the example of the British constitution, than to take models from them for the improvement of our own. . . . Standing on the firm ground of the British constitution, let us be satisfied to admire, rather than attempt to follow in their desperate flights, the aéronauts of France.³⁰

When Burke completed his *Reflections on the French Revolution*, "the aéronauts of France" seemed to him guilty of flighty judgment bound to result in a hard collision with the ground. Earlier he had been less certain of disaster. He had not regarded the fall of the Bastille with the same elation that greeted it generally among Europe's intellectuals, but neither was he at that time fully committed to apprehension of "Parisian ferocity." He was, rather, inclined to suspend judgment. "It is true that this may be no more

²⁸ Somerville, William C., *Letters from Paris on the causes and consequences of the French Revolution*, 177. Baltimore, Edward J. Coale, 1822.

²⁹ *Thoughts on French affairs, etc., etc.*, written in December 1791, in *Reflections, op. cit.*, 329.

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, 243–244.

than a sudden explosion; if so, no indication may be taken from it; but if it should be *character* rather than accident," he reasoned, "then that people is not fit for liberty."³¹ Outbreaks of mob violence and civil disorder, however, recurred in France. By November, Burke apparently had decided that anarchy was in the French "character" and not an "accident," and that, therefore, "that people" were not fit for liberty; and so he began the *Reflections*. The first thirty-odd pages are on English affairs and addressed to Englishmen. Only after he has got about one-eighth through his work does he revert to French affairs. By 1790, as the writing of his *Reflections* advanced, he became more and more convinced (although general order was now being re-established in France, and a constitutional solution was being found) that the situation was going from bad to worse.

The first constructive acts of the French Revolution were an announcement of noble intentions to end feudalism and a Declaration of the Rights of Man. For Burke, as for Louis XVI, these were abstractions of the kind for which he had little sympathy. The National Assembly then confiscated the property of the Catholic Church, breaking into the wholeness of the "organic society" for which Burke had such high veneration. So he grew more and more hostile to French "metaphysicians," for whom he had long felt an exasperated contempt anyway. Soon he was thoroughly overwhelmed by the spectacle of these "metaphysicians" trying to establish a Utopian society and instead creating only, as he thought, an inorganic desolation. France's evils, he was fully prepared to believe, came from "one source—that of considering certain general maxims, without attending to circumstances, to times, to places, to conjunctures, and to actors," for "if we do not attend scrupulously to all these, the medicine of to-day becomes the poison of to-morrow."³²

Outraged by the sight of misguided Utopians helping to produce ghastly ills out of good intentions, Burke apparently forgot some of his own dicta. He apparently forgot that he had declared on one occasion: "In all disputes between them [the people] and their rulers, the presumption is at least upon a par in favor of the people";³³ and

³¹ Burke to Lord Charlemont, [ca. Aug. 6, 1789], quoted in Copeland, 163, and Magnus, Philip, *Edmund Burke, a life*, 185, London, Murray, 1939.

³² A Letter from Mr. Burke to a member of the National Assembly in answer to some objections to his book on French affairs, 1791, in *Reflections*, 277.

³³ Thoughts on the cause of the present discontents (1770), *Works* 1: 440, 1866.

on another: "I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people."³⁴ And yet he did not wholly forget. Burke shared with Rousseau, whom he despised, a certain confidence in the general will. "For," said he, "a man is a most unwise and a most wise being. The individual is foolish; the multitude, for the moment, is foolish, when they act without deliberation, but the species is wise, and when time is given to it, as a species, it almost always acts right."³⁵ And (in a sentiment strongly reminiscent of Rousseau's often mistranslated pronouncement that the general will, though it may be deceived "is always right-minded"³⁶) Burke had once said also: "Wherever the people have a feeling, they commonly are in the right: they sometimes mistake the physician."³⁷ Burke did not in 1790 indict the whole French people. His opinion was now only that they had chosen the wrong physicians. They had looked for a cure of their ills to theorists, philosophers, "men of letters." "Men of letters" and "literary men" were not complimentary epithets in Burke's language. It was easy for him to think cynically of them. French "men of letters," he believed, were involved in a subversive plot. And they were being assisted by a set of lawyers in the National Assembly who were ambitious for political power, by money-lenders who were trying to take over church property, and by a group of atheists who were seeking to curb the influence of religion upon the French people.

Thus Burke's explanation of the origin of the French Revolution was that it began as a conspiracy of an intellectual and professional elite. Compare this view with his explanation of the American Revolution in his "Speech on Conciliation with America." In the northern colonies of America he had considered widespread religious dissent to be a source of devotion to liberty (and he had found it good); and in the southern colonies the institution of slavery paradoxically played the same role—the freeman upon beholding slavery was strengthened in his desire for freedom. In France, however, religious dissent seemed to him akin to atheism; and serfdom in France did not play the same role as slavery in

³⁴ Speech on conciliation with America, *loc. cit.*, 136.

³⁵ Speech on representation of the Commons, *loc. cit.*, 95.

³⁶ *Contrat social*, Book 2, ch. 3. The French is "La volonté générale est toujours droite" (not "la volonté générale a toujours droit").

³⁷ Quoted in Morley, Viscount John, *Burke*, 64, London, Macmillan, 1923.

America. Another of the main reasons he had discovered in America for the intense quest for liberty was that lawyers were to be found all over the country; but in France, lawyers were undependable, ambitious men who were conspiring to lead the people astray. And the French people had revolted not because they had suffered great provocation, not because the French government had exhibited too late too little of that "magnanimity in politics" which Burke in pleading for conciliation with America had described as "not seldom the truest wisdom."³⁸ No, he declared, revolution had come to France because the ferocious character of "a swinish multitude"³⁹ had prepared them to be misled by "the literary cabal"⁴⁰ and to take unprecedented action against a truly commendable government. Shortly after publishing the *Reflections*, he classed together as "chiefs of the regicide faction" "the Barnaves, Lameths, Fayette, Perigord, Duport, Robespierres, Camus's, &c. &c. &c."⁴¹ Mind you, this was in 1791. So far no king has been tried and executed (except Charles I of England). Nevertheless, Burke gives the name of "regicide" indiscriminately to people who have, to be sure, varying and sometimes startling views of the degree of constitutional power to be left to the king but none of whom is as yet wholly anti-monarchical; and, for good measure, he throws in three *et ceteras*.

This is perhaps not the place to re-engage in the classic debate whether the French Revolution was the result of conspiracy or of circumstances. In that debate some respectable scholars have come to a decision that does not satisfy others. My own conclusion on this controversy, presented in more than one place, is that the conspiracy theory does not satisfactorily explain why the Revolution developed as it did. First, the available evidence does not convince me that the several stages of the Revolution were plotted step by step. But even if conspiracy were continuous, it must have been disorganized, feeble, and incoherent, since it was painfully characteristic of the Revolution that its principal leaders should continually disagree and split to form new factions. Even the Jacobins, who were the most abiding followers of "the literary cabal," were constantly changing their membership. If enough evidence

could be gathered to reveal a continuous conspiracy, it would still be hard to prove that the conspirators had sufficient coherence and a strong enough following for success by virtue of their effectiveness as conspirators alone. And even if the evidence were to show that a particular group of conspirators had continuity as well as coherence and strength—under a man like Robespierre, for instance (or in a later revolution, Lenin)—it would still probably be inadequate to explain why that group rather than some rival group like the court, the clergy, the dominant social class or the incumbent political faction (any one of which might easily be more coherent and more practiced in collusion than an aspirant intelligentsia) failed where a doctrinaire cabal succeeded. The origin and the course of a profound revolution, I am satisfied, must be sought in "the general character and situation of a people" and "the true nature and the peculiar circumstances of the object which we have before us" (to quote considerations that Burke underlined in his analysis of the American Revolution⁴² but in his examination of the French Revolution chose to minimize).

Revolutions, in short, come only partly because revolutionary forces are strong; they come also because conservative forces are either too short-sighted to make timely concessions or too weak to prevent their own collapse. In France in 1789 both short-sightedness and weakness were obvious. Louis XVI made concessions but never in time, and the court, clergy, aristocracy, and army were divided. These groups, which should have supported Louis, disagreed among themselves and with each other, and so other groups, classes, or forces succeeded in displacing them. The initial stages of the French Revolution (and I think that this is true of later stages and of other revolutions as well) are not to be explained so much by the fact (if it was a fact) that revolutionaries were conspiring as by the fact (and it certainly was a fact) that the established order was not strong enough to keep them from putting their program over. The conspiracy or, more probably, the several competing conspiracies on one side in the potentially revolutionary situation were less significant than feebleness on the other in the ultimate collapse of the old regime.

Burke, who had attributed the American Revolution to "circumstances," attributed the French Revolution to "cabal." The inconsistency is all the more glaring in contrast with Burke's apology

³⁸ *Op. cit.*, 181.

³⁹ *Reflections*, 76.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁴¹ *Thoughts on French affairs*, *loc. cit.*, 323.

⁴² See above, p. 421 and nn. 21 and 23.

for the behavior of the English people at the time of the disorders centering around the stormy career of John Wilkes. In his "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents" (1770), he quoted approvingly a passage from the *Mémoires* of the famous minister of King Henry IV of France, the Duc de Sully: "Revolutions that arise in great states are not a result of chance or of people's caprice. Nothing alienates the powerful in a realm so much as *feeble and unstable government*. As for the *populace*, it is never out of a desire to attack that it rises up but out of unwillingness to continue to suffer."⁴³ Burke then went on to state that what Sully had said of revolutions "is equally true of all great disturbances."⁴⁴ Burke found it hard to believe that "this unnatural ferment" of England in 1770 could have been "the wicked industry of some libellers, joined to the intrigues of a few disappointed politicians."⁴⁵ That, however, was pretty nearly exactly what he thought in 1789–1790 had happened in France.

Only a few of Burke's biographers, who have argued his consistency pro and con, have grasped this point at all, and none, so far as I know, has assigned to it the significance that I think it has. The difference in his attitude toward the American Revolution and his attitude toward the French Revolution is not to be explained away altogether by the argument that Burke himself advanced in his *Appeal . . . to the Old Whigs*. Burke claimed to have been consistent because he had "always firmly believed that they [the Americans] were purely on the defensive . . . standing . . . in the same relation to England as England did to King James the Second in 1688" against encroachments upon their established rights, while in France "not the people, but the monarch was wholly on the defensive . . . to preserve *some fragments* of the royal authority against a determined and desperate body of conspirators, whose object it was . . . to annihilate the *whole* of that authority [among other things]."⁴⁶ Burke, in other words, consistently meant to support the constitutional status quo in both revolutions—in the first instance from violation by crown and Parliament, in the second from violation by the National Assembly. His behavior would perhaps have been still more consistent if he had in fact rebuked the

Americans when they did upset the constitutional status quo by declaring their independence. But, although he hoped that independence could be averted and was disappointed when it proved irreparable, the evidence that Burke ever changed his friendly and sympathetic attitude toward the Americans before the French Revolution is very small,⁴⁷ while the evidence to the contrary is abundant. In 1777, though by that time he must have known of the Declaration of Independence, he thought Franklin, then in Paris, might yet be induced to negotiate a reconciliation of the colonies, and that the crown might make the necessary concessions to that end.⁴⁸ In 1778 he speculated still on a pacification whereby the Americans would recognize the sovereignty of the British crown in return for certain concessions.⁴⁹ When the United States instead made an alliance with France, and Spain joined France, he persisted in believing that, in return for a recall of the British troops from America, the Americans would withdraw from the war.⁵⁰ When peace was at length contemplated and signed on the basis of independence, he congratulated Franklin on the outcome.⁵¹ Invited to "eat venison in honor of Old England" with John Wilkes in 1788, he promised to attend in his "Blue and Buff" (the colors of the American Continental Army); and to a dinner with the Duke of Portland he proposed to take "the great American Paine."⁵² In short, up to the very eve of the French Revolution, Burke may have regretted the loss of the old colonies but he had not yet begun to think of the American Revolution as something in need of apology.

⁴⁷ Somerville, Thomas, *My own life and times, 1741–1814*, 222–223, Edinburgh, Edmonston and Douglas [1861].

⁴⁸ A letter to the Marquis of Rockingham, with the addresses to the king, and the British colonists in North America, in relation to the measures of government in the American contest . . . , January 1777, *Works* 6, 1867; see especially pp. 151–154, 160, and 176–177. Cf. his speech in the House of Commons, December 14, 1778, in the *Parliamentary history of England* 20: 82, London, Hansard, 1814.

⁴⁹ Hints for a treaty with America (probably 1778), *Correspondence* 4: 512–513; Wecter, Dixon, Burke, Franklin, and Samuel Petrie, *Huntington Lib. Quart.* 3: 319 and 326–328.

⁵⁰ Speech of May 31, 1779, *Parliamentary history* 20: 826–827; speech of Dec. 12, 1781, *ibid.* 22: 803.

⁵¹ Letter of Feb. 28, 1782, Prior, James, *Memoir of the life and character of the Rt. Hon. Edmund Burke* 1: 398, London, Baldwin Cradock and Joy, 1826; letter of Aug. 10, 1782, Wecter, 337–338.

⁵² Burke to Wilkes, Aug. 18, 1788, in Anon., *The great conservative*, *Univ. of Chicago Mag.* 46: 4 and 6, 1953; Copeland, 156.

⁴³ *Works* 1: 441, 1866. Burke quotes the French words; the translation is mine; the italics are his.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 438–439.

⁴⁶ *Works* 4: 101–104, 1866. The italics are Burke's.

The conclusion seems inescapable that in 1790 Burke liked the French Revolution less than he had liked the American Revolution in its time because in the interval he had come to be fearful of the current theory of revolution. The French Revolution was in his eyes not merely an unwarranted violation of the French monarchical constitution by literary men, lawyers, and money-lenders. If that had been all, he would doubtless not have liked it but he probably would have considered it little of his business. The trouble was that the French Revolution would not stay at home, that its missionary creed of the Rights of Man was for export. It had already infected "certain societies in London" whose "proceedings" were part of the subject of Burke's *Reflections*. Still, if the danger of infection was the point of departure and the focus of the *Reflections*, it received little space among the two hundred and more pages that were devoted to berating the alleged reforms of France's institutions by the National Assembly.

After the publication of the *Reflections*, Burke became more alarmed regarding the dangers of international contagion. In a letter to the Tsarina Catherine of Russia in 1791 he congratulated her because her sagacity had made her perceive "that in the case of the sovereign of France the cause of all sovereigns is tried,—that in the case of its church, the cause of all churches,—and that in the case of its nobility is tried the cause of all the respectable orders of all society, and even of society itself."⁵³ After the Revolution gave birth to wars against the "tyrants" and to counterrevolutionary wars, Jacobinism became for Burke "this epidemical distemper"⁵⁴ and "the dreadful pestilence which, beginning in France, threatens to lay waste the whole moral and in a degree the whole physical world."⁵⁵ By 1796 he labeled the French Revolution the first total revolution: "Before this of France, the annals of all time have not furnished an instance of a *complete* revolution."⁵⁶ "Never before this time was a set of literary men converted into a gang of robbers and assassins; never before did a den of bravoes and banditti assume the garb and tone of an academy of philosophers."⁵⁷ In one of his last diatribes he called the Jacobins "a sect of fanatical and ambitious atheists . . .

⁵³ Nov. 1, 1791, *Works* 6: 116, 1867.

⁵⁴ Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe. May 26, 1795, *ibid.*, 379–380.

⁵⁵ A letter to a noble lord on the attacks made upon Mr. Burke and his pension . . . , 1796, *ibid.* 5: 205.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 213.

aiming at universal empire" by means of a "*civil war*" against "the partisans of the ancient civil, moral, and political order of Europe." Not since the Reformation had a similar ideological conflict threatened to split Christendom so cruelly.⁵⁸

Now at last Burke began to regret the American Revolution. He had come to realize that it had not been a mere domestic dispute between Britons but had been the first wave of a revolutionary surge that would eventually inundate all of the nations of European culture. He first publicly admitted that he had misunderstood the import of the revolt in America when he undertook to reply to the charges of inconsistency in attacking the French Revolution after he had supported the American Revolution. He had never believed, he said, that from the beginning the Americans had "meant wholly to throw off the authority of the crown, and to break their connexion with the parent country." If he had felt that the Americans had rebelled "merely in order to enlarge [rather than to preserve] their liberty," he "would have thought very differently of the American cause." But he had been led by Dr. Franklin to believe that the Americans also wished reconciliation:

It was, I think, the very day before he set out for America, that a very long conversation passed between them [i.e., Franklin and Burke], and with a greater air of openness on the Doctor's side than Mr. Burke had observed in him before. In this discourse Dr. Franklin lamented, and with apparent sincerity, the separation which he feared was inevitable between Great Britain and her colonies. . . . America, he said, would never again see such happy days as she had passed under the protection of England. . . . Mr. Burke had several other conversations with him about that time, in none of which, soured and exasperated as his mind certainly was, did he discover any other wish in favor of America than for a security of its *ancient* condition.⁵⁹

The impressions Franklin gave Burke were corroborated by conversations with other Americans and by "the reiterated, solemn declarations of their assemblies." So Burke "always firmly believed that they were purely on the defensive in that rebellion." Hence he had advocated appeasement at every step. But others who had favored force

⁵⁸ Three letters . . . on the proposals for peace with the regicide Directory of France, 1796–7, Letter II, *ibid.*, 345–346. The italics are Burke's. On the Reformation see *Thoughts on French affairs*, *loc. cit.*, 318–322.

⁵⁹ Appeal from the new to the old Whigs, *loc. cit.*, 100–101. The italics are Burke's.

and repression had prevailed—with the results that Burke had warned against: loss of the colonies and foreign war.⁶⁰

So far Burke has made a good case for his consistency. He has said that he was in favor of appeasement of revolution in America and against appeasement of revolution in France because they were different kinds of revolution. But in so doing he has begun to admit that he had not fully evaluated the ultimate international significance of the American Revolution. Further recognition of his error came when England, having in 1793 gone to war against regicide France, was being urged in 1796 to make peace. In his flaming tirades against the contemplated “regicide peace,” Burke spoke of the French Revolution as having derived, at least in part, from the American Revolution:

When Louis the Sixteenth, under the influence of the enemies to monarchy, meant to found but one republic, he set up two; when he meant to take away half the crown of his neighbor, he lost the whole of his own. Louis the Sixteenth could not with impunity countenance a new republic. Yet between his throne and that dangerous lodgment for an enemy, which he had created, he had the whole Atlantic for a ditch. He had for an outwork the English nation itself, friendly to liberty, adverse to that mode of it. He was surrounded by a rampart of monarchies, most of them allied to him, and generally under his influence. Yet even thus secured, a republic erected under his auspices, and dependent on his power, became fatal to his throne.⁶¹

In short, before he died, Burke had formulated a very different view of the American Revolution from that which he had held before 1789. To be sure, that revolution had begun, he still thought, as an attempt to defend the hereditary rights of Americans as subjects of the British crown, but he now complained that he had been misled by Franklin and others, perhaps themselves laboring under a delusion, into thinking it would not become aggressive. Because of the errors of the repression party, it had developed into an international war for the creation of an independent republic, and had provided an example that eventually helped to undermine the French monarchy and threatened the whole Christian order. In fact, at the time of the American Revolution, he now maintained, England was so ripe for revolution that “had the portentous comet of the Rights of Man . . . crossed

upon us . . . , nothing human could have prevented our being irresistibly hurried out of the highway of heaven into all the vices, crimes, horrors, and miseries of the French Revolution.” But “happily France was not then Jacobinized” and “her hostility was at a good distance,” and so “we had a limb cut off, but we kept our Constitution.” Nevertheless, had certain so-called parliamentary reforms taken place at that juncture, “not France, but England, would have had the honor of leading up the death-dance of democratic revolution.”⁶²

In a collapsing Europe, Burke grew more and more disillusioned; even for one so gifted, hindsight was superior to foresight—and in his case more distasteful. His disillusionment is not unlike that which many intellectuals in our own day underwent between 1917 and 1947. He easily blamed ruthless conspirators for the frustration of his earlier hopes. He was entrapped in a perfect syllogism of his own devising, though he himself was probably unaware of either the trap or the syllogism. The major premise of his syllogism was his long-standing conviction that doctrinaires are abominable and that their works are an abomination. The minor premise: The French Revolution is the work of doctrinaires. Hence his conclusion: the French Revolution is an abomination. This reasoning obliged him to hope for the ultimate failure of the French Revolution even before it became clear either that it was a violent departure from the French constitution or that it would fail. The months in which he wrote his *Reflections* were in some ways the most successful of the Revolution. They witnessed the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, of a restricted electorate, of a centralized, departmental regime, and of the *fédérations* of a fairly united and hopeful people—all developments that Burke might well have welcomed under other circumstances. Instead, he saw a dishonored king and queen; a clergy victimized by atheists, moneylenders, and Jews; “a swinish multitude” led by a selfish and ambitious oligarchy of lawyers and men of letters; a “kingdom being hackled and torn to pieces,” and held from falling asunder only by financial speculation and “the power of Paris, now become the center and focus of jobbing.”⁶³ He saw a people who had no good reason to overthrow their

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 101–102; speech of Nov. 16, 1775, *Parliamentary history* 18: 966.

⁶¹ Letter II, *loc. cit.*, 380–381. Cf. *ibid.*, 372.

⁶² A letter to a noble lord on . . . his pension, *loc. cit.*, 180–181. Burke here still ignores the Declaration of Independence, which others would have considered a “portentous comet of the Rights of Man.”

⁶³ *Reflections*, 192–193.

old constitution delivered over to anarchy and the tyranny of the multitude, which must eventually end in a ruthless dictatorship.

Certainly the outcome of the French Revolution justified much of Burke's fear and forecast, and he is therefore entitled to most of the credit for profound prophecy and understanding that he is generally given. Nevertheless, his correct guesses would appear due perhaps as much to panic, bias, and cynicism as to foresight. I doubt whether the French Constitution of 1791, which was being drawn up while he was writing, can be shown to have been intrinsically weak and bound to fail. Who can say whether a better constitution could have been found for France in the circumstances in which she then stood? If, however, Burke had not been stopped by his syllogistic block from considering "the true nature and peculiar circumstances" of the French social structure and "the general character and situation" of the French people, he would, at the time he wrote his *Reflections*, have had to measure and balance several calculations: whether the French legislators could possibly retain undiminished a monarchical power that could be expected in advance to be directed against the very constitution the king was sworn to uphold; whether they could possibly avoid abolishing the privileges of influential nobles who could be expected to use whatever influence was left to them to win back their privileges; and whether they could possibly create a Gallican church without alienating that part of the clergy that would resist church reform to the point of counterrevolutionary activity. If he had striven without passion to understand the circumstances France faced as he had striven to understand the circumstances America faced, if he had applied his own principles and methods of weighing good against evil and bad against worse, he would have said something like this perhaps:

France is a country that, no matter how unjustifiably, is already undergoing a profound revolution that it may someday regret. We do not wish to interfere in the internal affairs of France. But unfortunately revolutions do not always stay at home. Émigrés and refugees flock into neighboring countries. Sympathy grows for the victims of revolution, and fear that revolution may spread arises among the people who give the refugees asylum. Soon the revolutionary leaders, becoming fearful, in their turn, of their neighbors' sympathy for émigrés and fear of revolution, begin to think of ensuring their own safety. They try to build satellite states and to spread abroad what they call "the blessings of the revolution."

Let us, then, beware of getting mixed up in these self-feeding waves of revolution and counterrevolution. Let us so conduct ourselves that, no matter how much we share the émigrés' dislike of their revolutionary regime, we give no reason to that regime to fear harm by our intervention in their domestic affairs.

Burke, unfortunately, did not take a detached tone of this nature. Instead, he preached a personal crusade against what he considered ugly. A year after the *Reflections* he reluctantly admitted that the leaders of the French Revolution had destroyed some evils which cried for destruction, but to his mind they were still in 1791 "cruel and inexorable masters . . . of a description hitherto not known in the world," who had succeeded only "by the practices of incendiaries, assassins, house-breakers, robbers, spreaders of false news, forgers of false orders from authority, and other delinquencies, of which ordinary justice takes cognizance."⁶⁴ He became the intellectual anchor of the émigrés' hopes. He gave an eloquent though extravagant literary articulation to the fears and the arguments of the counterrevolutionaries, who until his *Reflections* had had no outstanding philosophical champion abroad. The success of the *Reflections* was both a result and a cause of counterrevolutionary shock. It had one edition a month in England the first twelve months; 30,000 copies are estimated to have been sold before the author's death in 1797;⁶⁵ more than 16,000 copies of a "bad [French] translation" were sold within less than a year;⁶⁶ and numerous translations and replies (including Paine's *Rights of Man*) and Burke's counterreplies spread its fame. The *Reflections* became the Bible of the counterrevolutionaries of its day, and Paine's *Rights of Man* perhaps crystallized English conservative apprehension still more by its outspoken radicalism.⁶⁷

By December, 1791, Burke for a moment was ready to concede that he was probably trying to stem an irresistible tide. In his *Thoughts on French Affairs* he indicated that the Revolution seemed to him to be over, and he was ready, though reluctantly, to adjust to it:

⁶⁴ Letter to a member of the National Assembly, *loc. cit.*, 282.

⁶⁵ Morley, John, Burke, Edmund, *Enc. Brit.* 4: 418c, 1948.

⁶⁶ Schmitt, Hans A., and John C. Weston, Jr. (eds.), Ten letters to Edmund Burke, *Jour. Modern History* 25: 56, 1953.

⁶⁷ Winkler, Henry R., The pamphlet campaign against political reform in Great Britain, 1790-1795, *Historian* 15: 24-25, 1952.

I have done with this subject, I believe, for ever. It has given me many anxious moments for the last two years. If a great change is to be made in human affairs, the minds of man will be fitted for it; the general opinions and feelings will draw that way. Every fear, every hope will forward it; and then they, who persist in opposing this mighty current in human affairs, will appear rather to resist the decrees of Providence itself, than the mere designs of men. They will not be resolute and firm, but perverse and obstinate.⁶⁸

Then the French Revolutionary leaders made not their only mistake but perhaps their gravest one. Largely out of a fear of émigrés and a desire to spread (and in spreading to protect) their revolutionary creed, they engaged in a war with Austria and Prussia that they might perhaps have avoided. The war made impossible a preservation of the new status quo in France to which Burke had momentarily seemed willing to resign himself. Soon came the execution of Louis XVI and England's entry into a coalition against France; and Burke became again indignant and remained to his death bitterly opposed to a "regicide peace."

Burke is not without responsibility for the misfortune he had foreseen—to an extent that no one can estimate accurately but that must have been

considerable. He had become a metaphysical doctrinaire in his persuasion that only evil could come from doctrinaire principles and, in so doing, he had helped to create the very evil against which he lifted up his voice. In his unrelenting insistence that the ideal was probably the enemy of the feasible, he had given a philosopher's endorsement to an atmosphere in which neither the ideal nor the feasible could easily prevail. He thus contributed to bringing about the disaster he had predicted. He would have deserved still greater credit for foresight if disaster had come despite his efforts to forestall it, as in the American war, or at least without his having contributed to the passions that made it inevitable. If he was "a great and good man, led into extravagance by a tempestuous sensibility which dominated over all his faculties,"⁶⁹ if he ended his days trying to sweep back the great revolutionary wave of his day, which he had at first, mistaking its direction and potential, abetted, the reason was a genuine change of heart regarding it. He had persuaded himself that the revolutions of his day were not a historical sequel to the Glorious Revolution of 1688 but a monstrous conspiracy heading toward a new form of tyranny.

⁶⁸ Thoughts on French affairs, *loc. cit.*, 330.

⁶⁹ Macaulay, Lord, *Historical essays*, 354, New York, Scribner's, 1921.