



PAGAN
IMPERIALISM

AND

METAPHYSICS
OF WAR

JULIUS EVOLA

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PAGAN IMPERIALISM

Translator's Introduction

'We are the generation without ties and without depth. Our depth is the abyss. We are the generation without happiness, without a home, and without valedictions... Thus we are the generation without God, because we are the generation without ties, without a past, without identity.'

~ Wolfgang Borchert

Although Borchert wrote those lines shortly after the end of World War II, its roots go back much further. Already in 1918, Oswald Spengler was publishing the two volumes of *The Decline of the West*. It is in that atmosphere that the *raison d'être* of Julius Evola's *Pagan Imperialism* must be understood. It is the work of a young man looking into the abyss, searching for ties, a past, and an identity. Looking back, the older Evola recognised the limitations of the work. He described it thus:

'Admittedly *Pagan Imperialism* combined a radical impulse, expressed in violent terms, with youthful excess, a lack of political sensibility and a utopian unawareness of present conditions.'

~ *The Path of Cinnabar*

Prior to the publication of *Pagan Imperialism*, Evola was actually more interested in philosophical and spiritual topics. Since philosophical idealism was dominant in Italy at that time - Giovanni Gentile and Benedetto Croce were world class thinkers - Evola learned German in order to study the great German idealist philosophers of the 18th and 19th centuries. He also engaged Oriental philosophy, particularly the

Tao Te Ching of Lao Tze as well as Tantra Yoga as expounded by the British writer John Woodroffe.

Although Evola is perhaps best known today for allegedly extreme political views, they actually formed a small part of his interests. He certainly was no political activist, declining to commit to any political party or movement. Yet, his books on Buddhism, Tantra Yoga, Hermetism, Taoism, Sexuality, and so on, will have lasting importance, more so than his political or social commentary. While Benito Mussolini was trying to find some accommodation with the Catholic Church, Evola, on the other hand, was seeking the identity of Italy in the paganism of the ancient Roman Empire. That was the motivation for this book. In retrospect, the title is misleading, and Evola later suggested a more precise title would have been 'Roman Traditionalism' rather than 'Pagan Imperialism.'

The book was originally published in two editions. In 1928, the Italian edition was published. It had minimal impact on the Fascist movement, so Evola remained a rather marginal figure. Since that edition was quite specific to the situation in Italy at the time, with references to long-forgotten journalists, it has limited interest today.

However, a second, greatly revised, edition was prepared for publication in Germany in 1933 under the title *Heidnischer Imperialismus*. That edition did achieve a small success in Germany, where Evola was mistakenly seen as the leader of a significant current within Fascism. His views were aligned with the 'Conservative Revolution' motivated by Moeller van den Bruck. Since Evola participated in the translation into German, I have resolved any ambiguities in the Italian text by referring to that edition.

The German edition was published before the National Socialists came into power, so it cannot be read as a proto-Nazi text. Quite the contrary, since Evola was opposed to the biological determinism of the National Socialists. Nevertheless, the book was better received in Germany than it was in Italy.

Some notions had to be softened up for a German audience. For example, Evola's harsh criticism of Protestantism would have been out of place. Then, he had to merge the ideal of a return to Romanity with the Nordic-Germanic tradition. Thus, he emphasised the 'two' eagles: the Roman and the German. There are three main themes that would resonate with a German audience: Ghibellism, Nietzsche, and hierarchy. Ghibellism was the idea that the State is supreme, and the Church is subservient to it. Unlike Roman Catholicism, which regards the Church

as supreme, Lutheranism held the opposite. Nietzsche's critique of the West was quite influential at the time. And the ideal of hierarchy found a home in the Prussian mentality.

The Ecumene and the Middle Ages

The Roman Empire represented the Ecumene, or the civilised World. It did not include all of Europe, but it included areas now known as Turkey, the Middle East, and North Africa. Hence, Roman tradition-ally was not co-extensive with Europe. However, Evola was interested in uniting the Nordic and Roman traditions. For that, he had to turn to the Middle Ages, which he called the last of the great Aryan civilisations, following the Vedic, Persian and Roman civilisations. Then he could speak of a European identity, or at least as far as it included Northern and Western Europe.

Evola then distinguished Catholicism from Christianity proper, since, he claimed, the former still retained essentially Roman elements. In an interview in 1967, Evola said:

'Speaking of Christianity, I often used the expression "the religion that came to prevail in the West". In fact the greatest miracle of Christianity was succeeding in asserting itself among the European peoples, even taking into account the decadence into which numerous traditions of these peoples had plunged. Nevertheless, we must not forget the cases in which the Christianisation of the West was only superficial. Besides, if Christianity has, without any doubt, altered certain European values, there are also situations where these values were revived by Christianity, by rectifying and modifying itself. Otherwise, Catholicism would be inconceivable in its various "Roman" aspects. In the same way a part of Medieval civilisation would be inconceivable, without phenomena such as the appearance of the great Knightly orders, Thomism, a certain mysticism of a high level (e.g., Meister Eckhart) the spirit of the Crusades, etc.'

Although that time is considered the 'Age of Faith', those 'Roman' elements have been abandoned, or certainly de-emphasised, in our day. The Crusades are an embarrassment, knightly orders are defanged, Thomism is no longer dominant, and the German mystics are objects of

study rather than personages to follow. The 'et cetera' would include, for example, Dante and the Feudal system. It also includes the Guild system as an alternative to both communism and capitalism.

The Absolute Man and the Ghibellines

Of course, the ultimate 'et cetera' is the Holy Roman Emperor. The Emperor and the Pope were often at odds over political dominance. The Ghibellines supported the former and the Guelphs the latter, so they were frequently at war with each other. Although Rene Guenon and Ananda Coomaraswamy claimed that spiritual authority should have priority over political power, Evola asserted the opposite. This was in conformity with the ideal of the ancient Roman Emperor, who was considered a god. All the nations of the Empire were hierarchically organised with the Emperor at the peak.

For Evola, following the ancient pagans, the Emperor became, or was on the way to becoming, the Absolute man. Unlike Christianity in which God became man, the Absolute man becomes a god. This is done by transcending the human state, being beyond 'good and evil'. As such, he sets the law. The nobility and his subjects recognise this, so they freely obey him.

In *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, Rousas Rushdoony describes the ancient pagan god-king:

'Much more is known of the concept of divine kingship, the king as god and the god as king, as the divine-human link between heaven and earth. The god-king represented man on a higher scale, man ascended, and the worship of such a god ... was the assertion of the continuity of heaven and earth. It was the belief that all being was one being, and the god therefore was an ascended man on that scale of being. The power manifested in the political order was thus a manifestation of apprehension and seizure of divine power. It represented the triumph of a man and of his people. Moloch worship was thus a political religion ... Moloch worship was thus state worship. The state was the true and ultimate order, and religion was a department of the estate. The state claimed total jurisdiction over man; it was therefore entitled to total sacrifice.'

Racial Politics

Evola's position is not racial, as it is understood today. Although race is part of man's being, it does not define him. Evola writes:

'We must not forget that to speak of blood in the case of a man is not the same thing as to speak of it in the case of an animal. If, by blood, one means the biological heredity of a race, then in the animal, race is everything, while, in man, it is only a part. The error of certain race fanatics who think that the reintegration of a race in its ethnic unity signifies *ipso facto* the rebirth of a people, lives exactly here: they regard man as if he could be regarded as horses, cats, or dogs of a "pure breed". The preservation or the restoration of the purity of race in the narrowest sense, can be everything in an animal, but not in man - in the man of superior type: even for man, it can constitute a condition which may be necessary under certain aspects, is not sufficient in any case, since the racial factor is not the only one which defines man.'

Evola was not concerned with the idea of a 'white race'. In Europe, at that time, the Nordic race, the Mediterranean race, Slavic race, and so on, were considered to be separate races. Moreover, a 'race' was ultimately considered to be a spiritual quality, and only the highest representatives could be said to 'have race'. The masses, on the other hand, did not have race, and hence were pretty much indistinguishable from each other.

Hence, Evola's categories need to be reinterpreted in psychological or spiritual terms. For example, he claims to be 'anti-Europe, anti-Semitic, anti-Christianity'. Although only the middle term is offensive, the three terms do not in fact refer to specific historical peoples. In Evola's scheme they are code words, or mythical categories, for certain negative trends he claims to be part of European history. The Introduction of the Italian edition states that those trends actually refer respectively to 'bourgeois and cosmopolitan Europe', 'secularising revolutionism', and 'communism and socialism'. Here we see that Evola is referring to the degeneration of Europe, Judaism and Christianity. Obvious his goal was the spiritual regeneration of Europe, and his views on Medieval Christendom were described above. Similarly, in regards to Judaism, he

saw the idea of the return of the 'Messiah' as an equivalent to the return to a 'Golden Age'.

'As for Judaism, it is not the ancient Hebraic, messianic idea, but to degeneration and materialisation that is the true focal point of the subversive forces turned to the final destruction of our civilisation and to a Satanic dominion over all the forces of the earth. In its original sacred form, prior to the period of the prophets (that indicated the first mystical and democratic fall of Israel's ancient tradition), the idea of the messiah had many traits in common with familiar conceptions and ideals of essentially Aryan civilisations, from which, moreover the Hebrews more than once borrowed many elements.'

~ Julius Evola, *Transformazione del Regnum*

Pagan Imperialism

We Anti-Europeans

European Decadence

The current 'civilisation' of the West is expecting a substantial upheaval, without which it is doomed to collapse sooner or later.

It has realised the most complete perversion of every rational order of things.

There is no longer breath, nor liberty, nor light in the realm of matter, of gold, of the machine, of number.

The West has lost the meaning of command and obedience.

It has lost the meaning of Action and of Contemplation.

It has lost the meaning of hierarchy, of spiritual power, of man-gods.

It no longer knows nature. This is no longer, for Western man, a living bod made up of symbols, gods, and ritual acts - a splendid *cosmos*, in which man moves about freely, like 'a kingdom within a kingdom': he has instead deteriorated into an opaque and fatal exteriority, the mystery of which profane sciences try to ignore with petty laws and petty hypotheses.

The West no longer knows Wisdom: it no longer knows the majestic silence of those who have mastered themselves, the bright calm of the Seers, the superb 'solar' reality of those in whom the idea has become blood, life, and power. Wisdom has been supplanted by the rhetoric of 'philosophy' and 'culture', the realm of professors, journalists, and sportsmen - the scheme, the program, the manifesto. It has been supplanted by sentimental, religious, humanitarian contamination and the race of windbags who flounder and madly rush while exalting 'becoming' and 'practice', because silence and contemplation frighten them.

The West no longer knows the State: the valour-State, the *Imperium*, as synthesis of spirituality and royalty, as a way to the 'super world', as known by the great ancient civilisations - from China to

Egypt, from Persia to Rome and to the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation - has been submerged in the bourgeois misery of a *trust* of slaves and wheeler dealers.

What might war be, war willed in itself, as a value superior both to winning and losing, as that sacred path to spiritual realisation - for whom the celestial home of Odin, Valhalla, is the privilege of the heroes fallen on the battlefield; for whom in Islam, 'holy war', *jihad*, is a synonym of the 'way of God'; for whom in Aryan India, the warrior appears side by side with ascetics and, in classic antiquity, *mors triumphalis* is conceived as victory over death - these formidable European 'activists' no longer know what such a war is. They no longer know warriors but only soldiers, for them a squabble is enough to terrorise and force them back to the rhetoric of humanism, pacifism, and sentimentalism.

Europe has lost its simplicity, it has lost its centrality, it has lost its life. The democratic evil and the Semitic poison corrode it in all its roots - right down to its laws, sciences, and speculative thought. As for leaders - those persons who excel, not through violence, nor through greed for profit, nor through their ability as exploiters of slaves, but instead through unwavering and transcendent qualities of life - there are none. Europe is a big anodyne body, possessed and shattered by an anxiety which no one dares to express, which has gold for blood, machines and factories for flesh, newspapers for brains - a shapeless body which tosses restlessly, driven by obscure and unpredictable forces which implacably crush anyone who tries to oppose it or even just to avoid its mechanism.

The highly extolled 'civilisation' of the West has been able to do all this. This is the vaunted result of the superstition of 'Progress' - beyond Roman imperiality, Doric Greece, and all other exemplary forms of the great Aryan primordial civilisations.

And the noose tightens everyday around those who are still capable of great disgust and great rebellion.

The New Symbol

Are liberation and renewal still possible in this world in its twilight?

Is there still enough strength in Europe to be able to take on the awareness and the will for such a task?

We are not deceived: only after having understood the magnitude of the task, will we be able to act. The menacing reality of a destructive

spiritual process must be recognised. Its roots date back almost to the ground of prehistory, whose culminating phases coincide with those which contemporary men exalt as values essential to civilisation, and whose influences now manifest themselves in all fields of thought and action.

This is not a matter of compromises or adaptations. The power of a new Middle Ages is needed. A change, interior as well as exterior, of barbaric purity is required. Philosophy, 'culture', everyday politics: no more of all that. It is not a matter of shifting to the other side of this bed of agony. It is a matter of finally waking up, and standing on one's feet.

Here and there, men still exist, mindful of ancient nobility, who now, as individuals, notice the intolerable discomfort and feel driven to react, sometimes in one cultural domain, sometimes in another. Before it is too late, the way to the peaks must be brought back into the consciousness of these scattered men, beyond all the limits and private interests which currently wear away their strength. Unrelenting action must ensure that their purest strength manages to disclose itself, as something invisible, ready to shatter the foul crust of rhetoric, sentimentalism, moralism, and hypocritical religiosity with which the West has covered and humanised everything. Whoever penetrates the temple - even if he is a barbarian - has the unquestionable duty to drive out as corrupters all those who in 'civilised' Europe created a monopoly of 'Spirit', Good and Evil, Science, and the Divine, and capitalise on it, declaring themselves their advocates, while, in truth, they only know matter and what the words, the fear, and the superstition of men have superimposed over matter.

To all this, let it be said: 'Enough!', so that some men may return to long-lasting paths, long-lasting risks, long-lasting gazes, and long-lasting silence; so that the wind of the open sea may blow again - the wind of the Nordic primordial tradition - and arouse the sleepers of the West. Anti-philosophy, anti-humanitarianism, anti-literature, anti-'religion', this is the premise. 'Enough!' must be said to aestheticisms and idealisms; 'enough!' to the thirst of the soul which creates for itself a Semitic God to adore and implore; enough of the 'need' which ties beggar-men in common bonds, to give them, in the name of mutual dependence, that substantial character which each of them lacks.

We must pass above and beyond all this, with some pure forces. Then, a task will be put before them, which transcends 'politics', which transcends social prejudice, and which disregards the sensational ges-

ture and superficial wide appeal, and which is such that vigorous physical strength over persons and things can no longer be useful for anything.

In silence, through hard discipline, self-mastery, and self-overcoming, with tenacious and brisk individual effort, we must create an elite in whom 'solar' Wisdom is revived: that *virtus* which cannot be spoken, which rises from the depths of feelings and the soul and is not proved with arguments and books but with creative acts.

We must reawaken to a renewed, spiritualised, and austere sense of the world, not as a philosophic concept, but as something which vibrates in our very blood: to the sensation of the world as power, to the sensation of the world as rhythm, to the sensation of the world as a sacrificial act. This sensation will create strong, hard, and energetic characters, beings made of strength and then only of strength, open to that sense of freedom and nobility, to that cosmic breath which the 'dead' in Europe have babbled a lot about, yet have not even felt its puff.

Against secular, democratic, and material science, always relative and conditioned, slave to phenomena and incomprehensible laws, deaf to the deepest reality of man, we must reawaken - in this elite - the sacred, inner, secret, and creative science, the science of self-realisation and 'self-dignification', the science which leads to the hidden forces which govern our organism and are united with the invisible roots of rate and things themselves, and which creates mastery over these forces; so that, not as a myth, but as the most positive of realities, some men are reborn as beings who no longer belong to 'life', but to 'more-than-life', and are capable of transcendent action.

There will be Leaders, a race of Leaders. Invisible Leaders who do not speak and do not show themselves, but whose action does not experience resistance and who can do everything. Then, a centre will exist again in the West - in the West without a centre.

It is absolutely an error to think that we can achieve renewal if a hierarchy is not re-established, that is to say, if we do not place above the lower forms - tied to earth and matter, to man and humanity - a higher law, a higher right, a higher order, which can find confirmation only in the living reality of the Leaders.

It is absolutely an error to believe that the State can be anything other than a *civitas diaboli* if it does not rise up again as *Imperium*, and it is also a mistake to try to build the *Imperium* on the basis of economic, military, industrial, or even 'ideal' or nationalistic factors. The *Imperium*, according to the primordial conception rooted in Tradition, is

something transcendent, and it can only be attained by those who have the power to transcend the petty lives of petty men with their appetites, their sentimentalists, their narrow national prides, their 'values', 'non-values', and gods.

The Ancients understood this, when, at the peak of their hierarchy, they venerated beings whose royal nature was united with the sacral, in whom temporal power was permeated with the spiritual authority of natures 'no longer human', bearers of a secret and invincible force of 'victory' and 'fortune'; when they experienced a kind of 'holy war' lived in every war, something universal, something devastating, that oriented and ordered everything - with the purity and fate of the great forces of nature.

Will those who still can or desire to put up resistance understand this? Will they understand that no other alternative exists? That there is no other spirit that - even in other forms and shapes - should be reawakened? That this is the condition for which any 'revolution' whatsoever can be not only a trivial contingent event in a single nation, but can become a universal concept, a first ray of light in the thick fog of the 'dark age' of the Western *kali-yuga*? The beginning of the true restoration, of the sole possible recovery?

The Primordial Nordic-Solar Tradition

We alluded to a primordial Nordic tradition. It is not a myth, it is our truth. Indeed, in the most remote prehistory where the positivist superstition postulated right up until recently cave-dwelling ape-men, there existed a primordial, unified, and powerful civilization, an echo of which still resounds in everything that the past has to offer us as an eternal symbol.

The Iranians speak of the *Airyānem Vaejah*, located in the farthest North, and see in it the first creation of 'god of light', the origin of their lineage and also the seat of 'glory' - *hvareno* - that mystical force characteristic of the Aryan race, and especially of their divine kings; they see in it - symbolically - the 'place' where the warrior religion of Zarathustra would have been revealed for the first time.

Correspondingly, the tradition of the Indo-Aryans knows the *Shveta-dvipa*, the 'Island of Glory', also located in the far North where Narayana, the one who 'is the light' and 'who stands above the waters', that is, above the causality of events, has his residence. It speaks also of the *Uttarakuru*, a Nordic primordial race; what is meant by Nordic is

the solar path of the gods - *deva-yana* - and the term *uttara* connotes the concept of all that is sublime, lofty, and superior - of what in the figurative sense can be called *arya*, Aryan - according to the concept of 'Nordic'.

Again, the Achaean-Dorian stocks are heirs of the legendary Nordic Hyperboreans: the most characteristic god and hero of this race - the solar Apollo, the annihilator of the serpent Python - came from there; Hercules - the ally of the Olympian god against the giants, the annihilator of the Amazons and of elemental beings, the 'fair conqueror', of whom many Greek and Roman kings later considered themselves so to speak, as his avatars - would have carried the olive tree from here with whose branches the victors were crowned (Pindar).

But in Hellas, this Nordic theme is, moreover, mixed up with that of Thule, the mysterious Nordic land, which sometimes becomes the 'Island of the Heroes' and the 'Country of the Immortals', where the blond Rhadamanthus reigns, the 'Island of the Sun' - *Thule ultima a sole nomen habens* - whose memory remained so alive that, convinced that he had recognised it in Britain, Constantius Chlorus marched there with his legions, not so much for military glory as to reach the land 'which is nearest to the sky and more sacred than every other region', in the sense of anticipating in this way his apotheosis as Caesar.

Often, in the Nordic-Germanic traditions, Asgard, the home of the Aesir and departed heroes, is superimposed over another divine residence of the same kind; and the Nordic kings, who were considered to be demigods and Aesir - *semideos id est ansis* - and brought their peoples victory with their mystical power of 'fate', transferred the origin of their dynasty to that 'divine' land.

In the Gaelic traditions, there is Avalon, from which originated the pure divine race of the *Tuatha de Danann*, the heroic conquerors of prehistoric Ireland, among whom the hero Ogma corresponds precisely to the Dorian Hercules - Avalon, which on the other hand, blends into *Tir nam Beo*, the 'Land of the Living', the kingdom of Boadag, the 'Victorious'.

Even the Aztecs have their land of origin in the North - in Aztlán, which is also called the 'White Land' or 'Land of Light', which they left under the leadership of a god-warrior, Huitzilopochtli: hence, the Toltec also claim, as a seat of origin, Tlalocan, Tollan, or Tula, that like the Greek Thule, is also the 'Land of the Sun' and blends into the 'paradise' of the kings and heroes fallen on the battlefield.

These are only some of the harmonious references, traceable in the most diverse traditions as the memory of a primordial Nordic civilisation and fatherland in which, in a more precise way, a transcendent superhuman spirituality is united with the heroic, royal, and triumphal element: towards form victorious over chaos; towards super-humanity triumphant over all that is human and telluric; towards 'solarity' as principal symbol of a transcendent virility, as ideal of a dignity which, in the order of spiritual forces, correspond to the sovereign, the hero, the ruler, on the material plane. And, while the traces of tradition go back to a road from the North to the South, from the West to the East, which the races preserving this spirit have travelled, the largest formations of Aryan peoples, in more recent times, testify, through the quality of their purest values and religions, to their most characteristic deities and institutions, typical of this force and this civilisation, as well as to the struggle against inferior southern races, which are tied to the earth and to the spirit of the earth, to the 'demonic' and irrational part of their being, to the promiscuous, the collective, the totemic, the chaotic, or the 'titanic'.

On the other hand, however - and the preceding references already show it - history became metahistory: while the 'Land of the Living', the 'Fortress of the Heroes', the 'Island of the Sun', contained on one hand the secret of the origin, on the other hand, revealed the secret of the road towards rebirth, towards immortality, and towards superhuman power: the road which can lead in large measure to the traditional royal dignity. The historical factors thus became spiritual factors, the royal tradition became Tradition in the transcendent sense, and therefore something which, above time, is constantly present. Symbols, signs, and sagas tell us in hidden ways of a unique Tradition, in order to show us a unique orthodoxy', where the correspondent pinnacles were always reached, where 'solar' spirituality always towered over inferior forces.

Thus, in subsequent times already bound to the destiny of the darkening of the 'divine' - Ragnarok - among the peoples dispersed in their strengths and their leaders, the 'Nordic' racial element, detaching itself from the 'spiritual' realm to which it originally belonged, became a category, a general type of civilisation and of conduct opposite the superhuman, which can be found even where no memory remains of an ethnic correlation in the strict sense; a type which therefore can reunite their diverse civilisations when they reveal their spiritual formative force, in the same way as, within that primordial tradition, it influenced the lower elements and the multiplicity of matter.

This is why pagan Romanity must be considered as the last great creative act of the Nordic spirit, the last universal attempt, successful to a considerable extent over an entire cycle, to resurrect the forces of the world in the forms of a heroic, solar, and virile civilisation: a civilisation which was closed to mystical escapism; which was true to the aristocratic-Aryan type of the *patres*, the lords of the lance and patriotism; which was mysteriously confirmed by the Nordic insignia of the Wolf, the Eagle, and the Axe; which was alive above all in the Olympian warrior cult of a Zeus and a Hercules, of an Apollo and a Mars in the feeling of owing its greatness and its *aeternitas* to the divine; in action as rite and rite as action, in the crystal-clear and yet potent experience of the supernatural, which was acknowledged in the Empire itself and culminated in the symbol of Caesar as *numen*.

The fall of pagan Rome is the fall of the greatest traditional and solar bastion, and it is not difficult to recognise in the forces which mainly contributed to this fall, the same forces which paved the way for all the subsequent derivations and successive degenerations which have led to the current state of Europe.

In its frenetic crushing of every hierarchy, its exaltation of the weak, of the underprivileged, of those without birth and without tradition, its resentment against all that is strength, conceit, wisdom, and aristocracy, and its intransigent and proselytising fanaticism, the Semitic wave, dark and barbaric, enemy of itself and the world, was, in effect, poison for the greatness of Rome, a galvanising substance for all the other Asiatic-Southern factors of decadence which then penetrated into the structures of Rome, and the greatest cause of the decline of the West.

In the Semitisation of the Greco-Roman and then the Nordic world, attributable to a large extent to Christianity, we have in fact the revolt of the lower strata of those races, by whose domination the Nordic-Aryans had obtained their splendid civilisations. The spirit of Israel, which had already created the collective sense of 'sin' and 'expiation', and which emerged mainly in the so-called 'prophets' after the defeat and enslavement of the 'chosen people', buying the residues of the aristocratic spirit of the Pharisees, re-evoked the lower forces of Aegean-Pelagian tellurism which the Achaean stocks had subdued. These can be equated to the castes of the shudras the so-called 'dark' caste - *krishna* - and the demonic caste - *asurya* - above which the hierarchies of the three higher castes of the reborn - *dvija* - up to the Brahmins and the

king, understood as 'a great deity under human form', had stood in India, as form over chaos. Lastly, the forces which myth hands down to us under the Nordic *Rinthursi* and the military formation of Gog and Magog, whose path Alexander the Great barred with a symbolic iron wall.

These forces worked spiritually, through primitive Christianity, to destroy the European spirit. At first, they concealed themselves within the lunar spirituality which took shape in the Catholic church, that is to say, a spirituality whose type is no longer the sacred king, the solar initiate, or the 'hero', but the saint or the priest who bows before God, whose ideal is no longer the warlike, sacral hierarchy, and 'glory' but fraternal community and *caritas*. Later, in the Reformation and in humanism, there reappears the original, anti-traditional, primitive, anarchist, dissolute nature of these forces. Then, through political revolutions, liberalism, and the emergence of collectivism, one cause produces another, and one fall follows another. In all the forms of modern society - and also in science, in law, in the illusory power of technology and the machine - the same spirit, paradoxical as it may seem, appears; the same levelling will, the will of the greatest number, the hatred for hierarchy, quality and difference prevails; the collective and impersonal bondage born of mutual insufficiency, typical of the organisation of a race of slaves in revolt, grows stronger.

There is more. Semitic-Christian mysticism combined Orphic-dionysian pathos (which, previously for Dorian-Nordic Greece, constituted a deformation of the ancient Olympian cult) with the popular mysticism of Isis, born out of the decline of the solar Egyptian tradition. In the same way, the identical element of 'passion' and excitement produced, by means of messianism and millennialism, the promiscuity of the imperial plebs - in contrast to the calm superiority of the Caesars, the simple greatness of the Homeric heroes, the purified spirituality and the autarchic ideal of the pagan 'philosopher' and initiate. Here is also the root of every modern deviation, in the romantic, irrational sense which craves a bad infinitude. After its secularisation, this mysticism leads us to the myths of 'activism', of 'Faustianism', of the contemporary superstition of progress, the Semitic mysticism of the instincts, and of the '*elan vital*', the evaluation of the 'event' and of 'life'; in short, up to the divinisation of the barbaric, sub-personal, collective element of man, which today seems more unleashed than ever - so as to drive individuals and peoples in a direction that they themselves did not will.

Before the fall, the other force raised itself up once more against the Judeo-Christian tide, almost to present a decisive alternative for the

further course of the Western history of the spirit. It was the tradition of the Aryans of Iran, arose in the form of the warrior cult of Mithra, the avatar of the ancient Aryan god of the luminous heaven, the 'Lord of the Sun', the 'Killer of the Bull', the hero with the torch and the axe, the symbol of men reborn 'through power' which a syncretic myth, no less significant for this, assimilates the Hyperborean god of the golden age. But stronger forces impeded even this 'solar' possibility.

Then the last great reaction: the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. With the so-called 'barbarians', some races were introduced which were in reality closely related to the Achaeans, paleo-Iranians, paleo-Romans, and Nordic-Aryans in general, who maintained themselves, so to speak, in a state of prehistoric purity. And if their emergence, in regard to the material aspect of the already Asianised and Semicised Empire, seemed destructive, it still amounted, from a higher point of view, to as revitalising flow of heroic spirit, a galvanising contact with a force spiritually akin to that to which pagan *Romanitas* had originally owed its solar greatness. This is how the ancient Roman symbol rises again in the world, directly defended by the forces of the North.

The imperial, feudal, and universal civilisation of the Middle Ages, despite its purely nominal profession of Christian faith, must be evaluated above all from this point of view. A Nordic-Roman spirituality is expressed through it. Its militia was the knights of chivalry; its supra-political centre was the Imperial Ghibelline ideal; its rite was the Crusades - much truer as the return to the pagan idea of the '*mors triumphalis*' than in its outward religious impulse. Its secret soul, oppose to Christianity and faithful to an older and higher tradition, was what kept it alive, hidden in legends, myths, and warrior and chivalrous Orders, from the Templars to the Knights of the Grail and the Fedeli d'Amore.

After the fall of this medieval civilisation, after the destruction of this radiant European Spring in its first flowering, after the unleashing of those forces which led to secularisation, particularism, and a disintegrating humanitarianism, the paths to the final downfall were opened. The force of Tradition passed from the visible to the invisible, and became an inheritance which was handed down in a secret chain from the few to the few. Even today some have a presentiment of it, in somewhat confused efforts, still tied to the human and to the material. They are those who, through an obscure instinct, as a mark of reaction, evoke the symbols of the Swastika, the Eagle, and the Axe. They are often unknown men, or men who blaze like tragic meteors such as Nietzsche,

crushed under the weight of a truth too strong for them, which now awaits others who will be able to reassume it and impose it anew so that it rises up hard and cold against their enemies, in the great revolt, the great struggle: whether the West confirms itself in its decline or rises up in a new dawn depends on it.

We Pagan Imperialists

The circle is closing and what an ancient myth - Iranian before becoming Jewish - describes in the apocalyptic tem of 'universal judgement', now imposes this upon us: the separation of the 'chosen people' from those who, at the 'end of the world' - that is, of our world, of our civilisation - will perish.

We call for a decisive, unconditional, integral return to the Nordic pagans' tradition. We are finished with every compromise, with every weakness, and with every indulgence toward everything that, derived from its Semitic-Christian root, has infected our blood and our mind.

Without the return to such a tradition there is no liberation, there is no true restoration, and the conversion to the true values of spirit, power, hierarchy, and Empire is not possible. This is a truth which allows no doubt. Anti-Europe, anti-Semitism, anti-Christianity - this is our rallying cry. The most foolish and absurd fable make paganism a synonym for materialism and corruption, and instead portrays an exotic and anti-Aryan religion created in our decline as the purest and most exclusive resynthesis of all that is spiritual, almost as though the entire history of civilisation had already been predestined And how this superstition is still firmly and deeply rooted in our contemporary 'cultured' outlook!

No! The living and immanent spirit, the spirit in act as extra-human wisdom and power, the glory of Kings and Victors, was not known to the Semitic contamination. Our paganism, our tradition in the middle of the great sea of peoples who brought it from North to South, from West to East, did know it. And whoever today rises up against the European sickness, and against the European religion, is not a denier, but an affirmer - the only one who knows what an affirmation is.

We, therefore, today, bear witness to the Nordic pagan tradition and call for the restoration of its values in a Pagan Imperialism. The person of the speaker and of others who may be joined to him in the spiritual reality - solitary, impassive and uncompromisingly aristocratic in this world of merchants, the caged, and deviants - vanishes the face of

this every reality, which, through them, calls to the unbroken and unvanquished of Europe, to those who still offer resistance, to those who still possess the future.

Will we manage to feel that this is not a matter of words, utopias, or romantic abstraction, but that it is the most positive and most powerful of realities, that it is waiting to be resurrected by beings capable of everything, by means of a work in respect to which everything that for the masses the word 'reaction' means becoming nothing? That a thousand forces are pressing in obscurity, in anticipation only of those who might provide for their liberation.

To exchange our tradition with any of the new pseudo, or special traditions or with any of the new Western forms of faith, all of which are inevitably contaminated by the Semitic spirit, would be the most absurd of errors.

The primordial forces of our race place us today, at this decisive phase for the history of the West, for the last time confronting the dilemma: loyalty or treason. Our restoration is an empty word if it is not, first of all, a 'solar' restoration, a restoration of pagan spirituality. It would be a palpable contradiction to wish to invoke the defence of the Nordic or Roman Tradition and not to remember those forces which primarily contributed to the decline of these traditions; to evoke the ideal of the Empire and not to notice these that Semitic-Christian image of the world, stripped of its mask, signifies the negation of the spiritual base for the Empire.

Beyond every contingent goal, every empirical interest, every passion, and every personal or partisan tie - who, among those who are ready for the revolt on German and Roman soil, will dare to take up again the torch of the Nordic pagan tradition.

We make a plea, we must make it. We wish to neither to hope nor to despair. Nor could that which is be changed by that which is not.

They are the values we hold. That circumstances and men might show themselves, so they may or may not be able to give form and content to a given period in the contingency of temporal and transitory things - this is something that indeed must interest us not as much as those whose truth stops at this contingency.

The Conditions for the Empire

The Decline of the Imperial Idea

Just as a living body maintains itself only insofar as there is a soul to dominate it, so every social organisation not rooted in a spiritual reality is precarious and insubstantial, incapable of keeping its strength and identity under the vicissitudes of the various forces; it is not properly an organism, but rather a composite, an aggregate.

The true cause of the decline of the political idea in the contemporary West resides in the fact that the spiritual values which at one time suffused the social order have gradually vanished, and no one as yet has been able to replace them with anything. The problem has been reduced to the level of economic, industrial, military, administrative, or, at most, sentimental factors, without taking into account that all this is just mere matter, necessary as long as you want, but never sufficient, and as little capable of producing a strong, rational, self-supporting order as the simple meeting of mechanical forces could produce a living being.

Inorganicity, exteriority - these are the dominant characteristics of contemporary social 'organisations'. That the higher should be determined by the lower; that law and order, instead of being justified in an aristocracy, a difference of quality, a spiritual hierarchy, ought to be based on the contingent bond of the balancing of interests and the avidity of an anonymous multitude already stripped of any higher sensibility whatsoever - such is the fundamental error standing at the base of these organisations.

The root of this degeneration goes back to distant times, precisely to those periods in which the processes of decline of the Nordic-solar tradition first appeared. It is linked to the separation of the two powers, the division of the regal and the sacred principles, the dualism through

which, on the one hand, a material virility took shape - the secular State and its sovereign, with purely temporal and, we would almost prefer to say, Luciferian, values - and on the other hand a lunar, anti-Nordic and anti-aristocratic spirituality, a spirituality of the 'priestly' and 'religious' type, which nevertheless claims the right of sovereignty.

The formation of a priestly caste, as a distinct ruling caste, necessarily led to the desecration, secularisation, and materialisation of the political idea: all the rest is only the consequence of this. The first anti-traditional revolution was the one in which the priest replaced the 'divine King', and 'religion' took the place of the elites, who were the bearers of the solar, victorious, and aristocratic spirituality.

Phenomena of this type can already be observed at the threshold of prehistory, in the pre-Christian and non-Christian world: but they almost always butted against reactions, which limited their influence and prevented the possibility of further falls. Even in India, where the caste of the *Brahmans* often became the priestly caste, in spite of all the echo of a spirituality proper to a superior caste, that of the *Kshatriya*, endured, and Buddha - like Zarathustra - was an ascetic of royal blood.

It is only in the West, with the rise of the Semitic religion and the Semitic spirit, that the disruption appears to have become decisive, and irremediable from diverse points of view.

Primitive Christianity, with the transcendentalism of its values leading everyone in the expectation of that 'Kingdom' which 'is not of this world', with the characteristic Semitic will of submission to God and humiliation of the creature, smashed the 'solar' synthesis of spirituality and politics, of royalty and divinity, which the ancient world knew.

Taken in itself, in its deep contempt for all worldly concerns, the Galilean doctrine could only render impossible, not just the State, but society itself. But to the failure of the animating spring of this doctrine - the coming of the 'Kingdom', in which all values would be exchanged and the humble exalted - the spirit and the intransigence of the primitive doctrine manifested; new forces arose in order to leave a space in the world for what 'is not of this world'. A normalisation was reached. A compromise was reached. The Semitic element succeeded in conquering the universal symbol of Romanity. The Catholic Church, a hybrid formation, in which Romanisation, that is to say paganisation, of some aspects of the original doctrine did not prevent the 'lunar', priestly, and feminine idea of spirituality from taking a central position at the same time: the atmosphere of those who 'believe' and 'love', who

are mere sons and servants of 'God', and who transmit the right of sovereignty to their fraternal community (the Mother Church), conceived of, so to speak, gynecocratically.

Let us establish this point without doubt. Christianity is one thing; Catholicism, another. Christianity as such, that is, in its primitive Semitic and revolutionary aspect, is the mystical analogue of the French Revolution of yesterday, and of communism and socialism today. Christianity, as the Catholic Church instead, partially takes on some forms of pagan-Roman organisation: something utterly contradictory because these forms lend themselves to a content, to a system of values and belief, which is the contradiction of the 'solar' spirit of Roman paganism; they stand in opposition to this spirit.

In this intrinsic contradiction lies the cause of the failure of the hegemonic claim of the Church, of its inability to really take on the heritage of what had been destroyed by the Asian-Semitic revolt: Roman imperialism and universality.

The Catholic Church, in fact, is not sufficiently pagan to completely abolish this dualism: thus it distinguishes and separates the spiritual domain from the political, the care of 'souls' from the care of the people. Then it strives, in vain, to rejoin the two parts. It finds itself in a predicament without an exit.

The attitude of the Guelphs, who refused to acknowledge the possibility of an autonomous secular State against the Church, and demanded the complete subordination of the Eagle to the Cross, was consistent. However, if that had occurred, what would have remained to the Church which could have allowed it to still call itself Christian - to claim the heritage of the one who taught renunciation, the vanity of worldly concerns, and the natural equality of men as slaves to a God whose kingdom is not of this earth? How could it have been possible to maintain dominion and hierarchy, if not by adopting in reality the pagan value of achievement, immanence, and distinction? This is what happened to the Church in its golden age, the Middle Ages, when, for a moment, galvanised by the partial Romanisation of the Nordic-Germanic spirit, it gave the impression of really wanting to embrace all the peoples of the West in an ecumenical unity. But this was a *Fata Morgana*, something without enduring reality - basically, only a presentation of the problem in the form of a solution, a *de facto* solution to the contradiction, but not *de jure*.

But then the disagreement remains irremediable, in that an Empire which is truly an Empire cannot tolerate a Church above it as a distinct

organisation. An Empire whose dominion is purely material can certainly let a Church co-exist with it, and even into it in matters which concern the care for spiritual things, in which, by hypothesis, it is not interested. However, such an Empire, as we said above, is for us only a semblance of Empire. An Empire is such only when an immanent spirituality permeates it; but it is obvious that a real Empire of this sort cannot recognise any organisation which claims a prerogative regarding the things of the spirit. It will deauthorise and supplant every Church, putting itself in its place purely and simply as true and sole Church: in one way or another, consciously or unconsciously, there will be a return to the pagan and Aryan conception, to the solar synthesis of royalty and priesthood, to the '*Sacrum Imperium*'.

If we consider more attentively, in the Imperial idea which asserted itself in the Middle Ages against the Church, above all thanks to the Hohenstaufen, we can notice precisely this: there is no temporal power in rebellion against spiritual authority, but rather a struggle between two authorities of the same spiritual nature, each one claims a supernatural origin and destiny and a universal and supra-political law. On one hand, in the Empire, even if not without extenuations and compromises, the pagan idea of the divine King returns, the sacred ruler, *lex animata in terris*, living centre for the relations of a transformative war-like *fides*, a personification of the virile and heroic pole of the spirit. On the other hand, what subsists in the Church is the principle of spiritual castration and 'priestly' truth, the lunar pole of the spirit, which seek heedlessly, by any means, to support and bless the slaves and merchants in their revolt against the Empire (the Communes) and to hinder its restoration, in order to be able to preserve its supremacy.

In the struggle between these two great ideas we have, as we said, the last spiritual lightning of the West. Then a phase of loosening and progressive secession followed/ If, finally, the modern State made itself autonomous from the Church, this happened only because it declined from the spiritual and universal principle of the *Imperium* to the pluralistic and plebeian principle of the 'nation'; because it forgot what royalty signified in the traditional sense; because it did not know that the political problem is inseparable from the religious problem, and it took no interest in every question which transcended material interests and the claims of the respective races and nations; abandoning the field to all the encroachments of humanism and so-called 'freedom of thought', it was reduced to a mere temporal power. Thus, we arrive at the present horizons, within which we see, on one hand, an essentially secular and

anti-aristocratic State, exhausting itself in economic, military, and administrative problems, in fact, refusing any authority in affairs of the spirit, and on the other hand a lunar religion, ripped apart by schism, that took no interest in politics, and was reduced, in the form of the Catholic Church, to a sort of great international association of believers, capable only of a insipid paternalism as expressed in the form of an ostentatious and useless concern for the salvation of the people - each of whom goes by his own path, no longer following any religious impulse - or for the salvation of 'souls' - which have all lost the inner, living, concrete, virile sense of spiritual reality.

This state of affairs can no longer endure - or, at least, those who want to speak seriously of reciting, those who do not want to fall back on anything which the ironic saying, '*Plus ça change, plus c'est la meme chose*', is valid, must no longer permit this renunciation, this affliction.

There is only one way out of the crisis of the Western world, through a restoration of the absolute synthesis of the two powers, political and sacred, royal and spiritual, on the basis of an Aryan-pagan vision of the world and of the nucleation of higher forms of benefit, life, and individuality - as the beginning of a new universality.

Let no one rebuke us for anachronism. The same spirit can also be evoked in other forms. That the secular decline of the political idea may be overcome, that the State Might regain a supernatural significance and represent the peak of the victory over chaos - this is the central point.

We are sick to the marrow of abstract 'religiosity' and political realism. This paralysing antithesis must be broken, in the name of our recovery and tradition.

The Protestant Deviation and our Counter-Reformation

We have already alluded to the fact that the messianic-Galilean doctrine, according to its original character, did not aim at all to establish a new form of social life, or even of religion. It had a purely anarchic, anti-social, defeatist character, subversive of every rational order of things. A single concern obsessively pervaded it: the salvation of the soul of the individual in the face of the supposedly imminent coming of the 'Kingdom of God'.

But when the prospect of this 'Kingdom' receded and finally disappeared, the forces focused on this hope fell onto themselves, and form

its individualistic aspect the Semitic religion passed to its socialistic aspect. The *ecclesia*, the community of the faithful, understood as an impersonal and mystic *medium* formed out of mutual need - the need to love, the need to serve, the need to communicate, the need for mutual acknowledgment, and the mutual dependence of lives each insufficient in itself - replaced in each soul the reality of the missing 'Kingdom of God'.

It is necessary to distinguish clearly the *ecclesia*, of which we are now speaking, from what would then become the Catholic ecclesiastic organisation. This organisation arose from a gradual Romanisation of the *ecclesia* in the primitive sense, whose spirit, to a certain extent, it betrayed, and whose Semitic part was choked off by means of a hierarchical principle of authority and a symbolic ritual *corpus*. What is important here, however, is to understand its primordial reality the *ecclesia* of the first Christian communities, which came to the surface when the direct influence of Jesus ceases and the sense of imminence of the 'Kingdom' faded. In those times we find the seed of that force which would lead to the type of modern Euro-American society.

In the Empire the principle was: hierarchy, investiture from above. In the Christian *ecclesia* it was: equality, brotherliness. In the Empire there were personalised relations of dependence: there were personalised relations of dependence: there were masters and there were slaves. In its most complete forms, there was a system of castes. In the *ecclesia*, these relations became depersonalised: there was a bond of equal beings, without leaders, without distinction of class or tradition, held together only by mutual dependence and by the identical need of the soul. In other words, sociality arose, the form of pure social living, of staying together in something collective, in an egalitarian solidarity. And as we said, the spirit proved to be the annihilator of the spirit.

And we now come down to the Reformation. The Reformation is the great fall of Nordic humanity: it is the degeneration, the overturning into the negative and the Semitic, of that force which had animated the struggle for the Empire against the Roman yoke. In the ideal of the Hohenstaufen we find, as a matter of fact, those principles of freedom, independence, and individuality which are characteristic of the original ethos of the Germanic stocks. Except that these values, reconciled with the hierarchical ideal, fought a spiritual battle during the Middle Ages; they raised the claim of a higher hierarchy, more solar, more virile, and more perfect than anything the Church was able to offer as compromise. In the Reformation we have precisely the opposite: here, these

same Nordic forces freed themselves from bondage to Rome, only to buy at the same time those residues of hierarchical authority, Romanity, and universality which the Church still offered; through it, what occurred was a resuscitation of those very forces which had formed the first Christian community and the life of the *ecclesia*. In the Reformation we have the return of primitive Christianity, precisely in its slower, 'socialistic' aspect, in contrast to the Roman aspect characteristic of the Church. Protestant intransigence put an end to the Catholic compromise, though not on behalf of the way back to the Empire, but rather towards the anti-Empire.

In spite of everything, the Germanic peoples still preserved, within the heredity of their blood, too many Nordic factors for the upheaval to be fatal for them. Among the Germanic peoples, more than in any others, despite the schism, an imperial and almost feudal regime was able to maintain itself, as well as a living sensibility for the virile and Nordic values of honour, loyalty, and hierarchy - right up until recent times, until the outbreak of the world war [World War I].

Things take a totally different form among the Anglo-Saxon peoples, especially after religious revolt became a political revolt' after Humanism and the Enlightenment yielded their fruits; after the principle of authority fell, first in the spiritual domain, then in the social domain, and finally in the moral domain, and the substance of ferment and rot from the Jacobin revolution encroached on the world.

In such a context we see in fact how the Reformation - originally a religious revolution - brought about a profound change of the political idea itself. Releasing consciences from Roman authority, it socialised and immanentised the Church; it actualised, in a more or less secularised political reality, the primitive *ecclesia*.

Across the Reformation, the hierarchy form above was replaced by the free association of believers, emancipated from the bonds of authority, each one having become anarchically judge of himself and at the same time the equal of everyone else. It was, in other words, the beginning of the European 'socialistic' decline: in opposition to the imperial ideal, the Protestant religion opened the way to a form of organisation dependent, not on leaders, but on the aggregate of separate individuals; an organisation coming from below and exhausting itself in impersonal relationships; a purely collective, self-governing and self-justifying reality.

This process has rapidly absorbed the Anglo-Saxon peoples and even today tends to a 'catholicity' or universality, antithetical both to

Roman and medieval imperial catholicity and to that which, in the narrower sense, was characteristic of the Church itself. Just as within each individual nation, it removed the difference between individual in a pure social bond by pooling them, so it also tended to remove the differences and the privileges of each individual nation by replacing them all at the same rank in the anonymous universalism of the ideal of a 'League of Nations'. At the same time, religiosity became more and more humanised, tending more and more to identify itself with sociality. The most recent orientations, towards 'religion of work', and the increasing preponderance of personal self-interest and rigid moralism over any other ideal and metaphysical interest in the Protestant countries prove it.

In conclusion: the Reformation favours a consistent position, it separates the Christian aspect (in its moderate form of the idea of a mere associative life) from its Christian-pagan nucleus shown in Catholic countries, and realises a distinct type of State: the democratic state, the anti-Empire, the self-government of the mass, sovereign over itself, along with the simultaneous levelling of individuals in an anarchic, acephalous solidarity, with the appearance of governing servants of servants as mere 'representatives', dependent upon the responsibility to the masses - rather than being responsible to themselves, as superior leaders, to remain the principle of absolute authority.

Naturally, not everything is included here. By underground means, the secularised reconstitution of the *ecclesia* again evokes the Semitic element, and the Protestant countries are those in which capitalism and plutocracy have developed in their most important forms; in which, behind the scenes of democratic 'freedom', the all-powerful Jew reappears, master of forces and men of a world desecrated by stateless finance. While together, they announce the latest fall, the birth of the pure collective, in correspondence to the proletarian myth of the 'Third International' and the prophetic mission of the Soviets.

We are thus confronted with a decisive 'either-or'.

It is vain to fight effects without knowing the remote and secret causes from which they derive. It is vain to think about a political reaction of any efficacy if not rooted in a corresponding spiritual revolution.

The Church is something halfway. The Church for us is too little. We need much more. We need a true counter-Reformation. And this counter-Reformation will consist in the return to the original Aryan *ethos*, to the pure forces of Nordic-Roman tradition, the Imperial symbol of the Eagle.

This is the first restoration. It will be a question of time, but our nations have to make a decision: either they will become in fact victims of the converging forces of Protestantism and Judaism, organising themselves definitively on the republican and democratic type of Anglo-Saxon society, choosing a religion immanent to sociality where the spiritual becomes a means to temporal fulfilments, culminating in the service of the Ahrimanic mysticism of the faceless 'collective man' - or they have to react, and commit themselves to recovery and restoration, that is, for a revolution in the other direction, thus bringing up to completion the ideal of the other State.

As the Protestant revolution surpassed the Catholic compromise, and brought the West back into the forms and to the values of democratic society, we, against the Reformation, must surpass the same compromise, but in order to affirm the other possible alternative: that which was announced in the struggle of the Empire for the Holy Roman Empire. On the basis of an integral Nordic-Roman restoration, we must create a State which is new and ancient at the same time, sustained by the values of hierarchy, of organisation from above, of aristocracy, of domination, and of wisdom - that is, by those imperial values which the Church in its best period possessed to some extent on loan, and which, after the setback of the Church itself - in the course of a bimillennial experiment - must be asserted plainly, clear of any disguise or mitigation, by men who are not ashamed of their primordial nobility, who, in their faithfulness to the original powers of the noble *arya*, their uranic-solar spirituality, and to their heroic symbols, against the whole of socialised and Semiticised Europe in decline, might finally dare, as we do, to declare themselves pagan imperialism.

Will to Hierarchy

Hereinafter, when speaking of the roots of the European evil, we will have the means to recollect the principles by which the necessary counter-Reformation can pragmatically be achieved.

Now we want to briefly dwell on a special point: the meaning of the principle of hierarchy, presupposed for the new idea of the State. Here, proclamations and party programs don't matter; what matters is what is done, not what is said; only the decisive impulse matters, strong enough to sweep away habits which are innate in contemporary men by which they are still dominated, even though their mouths and minds assert the opposite.

Today people speak a great deal about hierarchy - but at the same time they continue to make concessions to a bourgeois and anti-aristocratic outlook which stands in precise contradiction of this concept. Naturally, first of all, we should get rid of all residues of the democratic and 'representative' system, and of all that partakes in any way in the 'socialistic' and collectivist spirit. Every relation should be toughened, revitalised, and virilised, through a warrior attitude, loyalty, rectitude, and a manly zeal for service. That *fides*, which was one of the most ancient deities of pagan Rome, and about which Livy said that the difference between Romans and the barbarians lay in its possession; that *fides*, which was found in the Indian *bhakti*, and in the devotion which the Iranian warriors dedicated not only their actions, but their very thoughts and wills, to their deified chiefs - such *fides* is also found as the spiritual cement in the individual feudal political units, and in the connection of these to the *unum quod non est pars*, at the superpolitical and sacred centre of the medieval Empire.

We still need today, and especially today, such a *fides*.

The pride of subordinates in service to their superiors must be reawakened. Service must be reawakened as freedom and as overcoming, almost as a transfiguring offering, which does not humiliate, but elevates everywhere, in the affairs of war as well as peace, in the particular as in the general.

A structure must emerge on the spiritual base, which runs perpendicular from the higher to the lower, in which the least would be so many rays of a single centre and, in their turn, centres of unity of lower orders, gathered like soldiers around their officers.

Such a system naturally implies the necessity of the creation of elites - elites in fact and not only in name, among whom authority is not based upon position, but position upon authority - and the latter, in its turn, upon actual superiority. Every hierarchy which is based on premises other than these is nothing but the appearance of hierarchy, in fact the opposite of a hierarchy: violent and artificial creation which hides in itself a principle of injustice and therefore anarchy.

On the other hand, we must maintain that hierarchy must not in any way exhaust itself on the plane of what is called 'politics' today. Rather, politics - as that economic, industrial, and administrative part of the State which establishes an equilibrium in the material sense - should subordinate itself to the values of superior character in order to serve as means to the end. The idea of a qualitative differentiation re-

quires the elaboration of a number of supra-political levels, which actually correspond to various forms of life and interests, and precisely for this reason they are suitable to confer on the leaders that true and indisputable authority that could not be put into effect with anything conditioned by the temporal and the contingent.

Naturally, this ideal implies not only the affirmation of the concept and right of the nobility, but also of the monarchy. In this respect there is only an empty space in Europe, whether we speak of republican States, or of States which are nominally still monarchic, or of states built by dictators (who, from the traditional point of view, are nothing but tribunes of the people). Where monarchy still subsists, it has become a survival, a symbol rendered mute, a function which has lost its true sense and is cut off from reality. It is better than nothing - but from those who, not only in name but also in spirit, are of royal blood, it would be to ask for the courage to no longer tolerate compromises and uncertain accommodations; it would be to demand to disdain royal dignities when they now correspond to nothing, or almost nothing - or to return resolutely, as centre and head of the State, to crush the 'legal' usurpations of recent times, and to make themselves again, in an absolute and transcendent sense, leaders of the people.

Wherever monarchy, in hands that were no longer able to hold a sword and a sceptre, was beaten down by the intrigues of the mob of Jews and merchants, it must be restored. Wherever, by force of inertia, it still exists, it must be renewed, strengthened, and made dynamic, as an organic, central, and absolute function embodying simultaneously the power of the force and the light of the spirit in a single being who is truly the actualisation of an entire peoples, and at the same time the point which transcends everything that is conditioned by land and blood. Only then will we have the right to speak of Empire. If monarchy will be reawakened to a glorious, sacred, metaphysical reality, the peak, nevertheless, of the militarily ordered political hierarchy - the monarchy will take up the place and function which it once had, before its usurpation by parts of the priestly caste.

Naturally, before reaching the true traditional ideal along this route, the path is long. Moreover, we expressed rather clearly that one should not think that this identification of the two powers is limited to a rhetorical prosopoeia, or to a superstitious divinisation of some being simply because he happens to occupy the highest level in a purely material organisation - as happened, in past decadent periods, in various cases of theocracy. We insist instead on asserting a real synthesis,

where spirituality is not a word, but the real positive reality of self-transformation, which, when achieved, puts as least as much distance between some beings and the mass of other men, as that which this mass presumes exists between itself and animals. We do not want to use the term 'superman', as discredited and rhetoricised as it is in the present day; and, on the other hand, we can hope to be understood only by the very few, and misunderstood most, when we referred to the sense of the right of initiation, which, in many ancient States - when dynasties 'of already divine blood' were not present - confirmed the investiture of political power. At any rate, we must insist that this distance of the leaders is irreducible to anything 'moral', 'ideal', 'religious', or to any other human or non-human value, but consists, so to speak, of a different quality of being, achieved by a substantial transformation of consciousness.

We therefore assert that this real and concrete superiority will give a meaning to the term 'spirituality', and will have to be posited as the centre from which the dignity, the quality, and the actual function of royalty will proceed. It will, in its turn, be evidenced in the *Imperium* - according to the Aryan-pagan tradition, for which the Kings were Kings by virtue of a 'fire' attracted from the heavens - *hvaerno* - which invested them, made them immortal, and provided them with victory.

In this way, the centre of transcendent stability would be present, 'sovereignty', the principle of every other hierarchy, the core of every loyalty, of every honour in service, and of every heroic action, the most magnificent force of equilibrium from above.

The Democratic Error

True Liberalism

The organic idea must be the principal and sound foundation of the new State.

In the previous chapter we mentioned how the concrete concept of the *organism* is opposed to that of the *compound*, which is the form of an assemblage of atomistically free elements, held together only by an impersonal, abstract bond, that is not located in any higher principle, nor based on a real and substantial difference of the elements themselves. And we added that the opposition between the imperial ideal and the liberal-democratic ideal is just like the one which exists between organisation and composition.

Our imperialism requires universality and unity; but not something abstract, characteristic of an impersonal law or of an unreal 'collective will' and an internationalist and pacifist breakdown, even if that which is concretised in the reality of a superior individual and in which the sense of the transcendent is equivalent to the principle of differentiation and organisation.

Our imperialism transcends nationalism, of course: but, while democratic supranationalism is a wakening and subordination of national affirmation, promiscuously associated with many other national assertions, the imperial and Roman super-nationality is that of a national affirmation which, by means of a group of rulers, is reaffirmed beyond itself in a synthesis superior both to it and to the other nations, which it takes back under itself.

Strange as it may seem, at the basis of our imperialism, there are values which appear moreover as assumptions for the liberal forms of democracy. The values of freedom and independence stand in fact at the centre of the best Aryan traditions. A nobleman, according to the primordial Germanic tradition and alter in the organisation of the same medieval civilisations, was equivalent to a free man. The first Roman

constitution is based on the idea of the *patres*, priests, leaders, and supreme judges of their peoples, who are free as so many worlds within one world. Frederick II will say: 'I am king insofar as I am free.' - Identical in word, radical opposition in spirit.

The difference lies in the fact that, in liberalism, these values are asserted by a race of slaves, which dares not think and will them to their foundation, for and in individuals, but instead shifts them, illegitimately and egalitarianistically, onto 'society' and 'humanity', where they lose their primeval meaning and are transformed into errors.

To hear it said - according to the first of its 'immortal principles' - this race had established the age of freedom. In reality, there is nothing of it. They do not know what freedom means. If they did, they would moreover know that to desire freedom, is the same as desiring the Empire.

Let us observe more precisely. Freedom does not tolerate compromises: either it is asserted or not. But if it is asserted, it is necessary to assert it all the way, without fear - that is, it is necessary to assert it as unconditioned freedom.

That includes completely whoever asserted that the free man can call himself a single individual. Several free beings can only limit and deny each other - unless one supposes that, in the depths of each of them, there is a law that regulates their actions according to a sort of pre-established harmony.

Now, since a law does not cease to be a law merely because it is an interior law, and moreover, since this law is, by hypothesis, something which will transcend the conscious power of each individual, in this case, also, there is only the appearance of true freedom.

We are therefore faced with this alternative: either to fail in the demand, altering its value, that is, denying freedom in order to make the many, individual, atomistic freedoms remained tamed, mechanised, in mutual self-limitation (liberal democratism); that is, to stay intransigently firm to create the ideal of a being who - through an inner superiority ceasing to represent one force among many others in that dynamic system which is social reality - realises himself in that which, as determiner of the law of this same reality, is free from the law; who, therefore, will be law and authority only for the others. This means that as much reality as freedom has, so has the Empire.

This Empire must be conceived using the analogy of a body which has become a unity under the dominating synthesis of a soul. The unity to which such a body converges - unlike one without a soul - is a higher

principle, which has its beginning and end within itself; which does not live for the needs of the body, but instead, the body serving as its tool; and which is not produced by the body, but vice versa, in the sense that the soul is the ultimate aim, the deep organising principle of the body itself, without which the latter would disintegrate (Aristotle).

Analogously, we will say that the Leader, that bearer of the value of freedom, will not be the mere representative of the masses (the democratic thesis), the impersonal symbol of a mythical self-organisation, of which these masses are already capable, but just the opposite: the masses would receive order and form only thanks to this superior force qualitatively distinct from the others they tend to express with difficulty. And this force, far from living through them, would subordinate the interests of the masses to those wider horizons which it alone can determine; without recognising the right of anyone to give sanction to his law, which is not law because it is just, but which is just because it is law, and his law (in striking contrast to the democratic principles of popular sanction and of dedication of the governors to abstract 'principles' or to what is supposed to be there common interest). Otherwise the top leader would not be a free being, but rather the foremost of the servants, not a spirit, but the voice of the body.

Unfortunately, today, no one knows any longer what freedom is, no one dares to think it to its foundations. Unfortunately, today, almost no one knows anymore how to command, or how to obey. The risk of absolute responsibility and absolute dedication, have both totally disappeared, in the face of the mediocrity of the mechanised collectivity.

And people dare to sing the praises of an age of freedom and liberalism, boasting of the abolition of slavery, without understanding that, instead, freedom can only exist when there are masters opposed to slaves, when there are proud leaders and masses that boldly and generously put their lives and their destinies in their hands; without understanding that only a race of slaves could have willed the abolition of slavery, a race of slaves which remained such even when the chains had been smashed and the hierarchies broken down - insofar as their need for servitude and dependence created new and much more terrible tyrants: on one hand, the Semitic judge-God of providence and grace, and on the other, gold and 'public opinion' - tools of the Jewish conspiracy, the fetish of socialised, impersonal law, and the moralistic intolerance of the Protestant nations; the omnipotent man of the masses of Bolshevism.

Hierarchy Based on Power. The Conquest of the State

The fundamental concept of the pagan and 'solar' view of the world is that spirit is power and power is spirit, in conformance with an insoluble synthesis.

Therefore, returning to our first considerations, we will state without hesitation that the measure of freedom is power.

As the soul - in which, according to the analogy used previously, the various parts and functions have their purposes, but the soul has its purpose in itself - considers the conditions and limitations coming from the body as imperfections, and it must not tolerate them but try to overcome them with perfect mastery in an organism wholly malleable to the spirit, so the Ruler will behave with respect to the various conditions typical of the masses, or the superior race with respect to the other races, which it must organise into a universal unity.

The freedoms of the Ruler will therefore extend as far as he has the power to carry out what he wills; 'responsibility' - under any regard - making sense only when action is unsuccessful or a higher power is present. Failing such a power, he will lose, moreover, the right which will pass to the one who knows how to reassert his own law over and against any other. So that hierarchy will not be something given, but rather a task: it will not arise through its conformity to the abstraction of a transcendent law of good and evil, of justice and injustice, of humanity, nationality, or tradition in the more narrow and empirical sense but, instead, will be a precise putting-oneself-in-relationship, balancing, subordinating, or being subordinated to specified forces, to convey who is more or less worthy of a certain level of the hierarchy. We insist therefore on the fact that, without power, the Imperium - and with it the summit of the free being - has no foundation; and, when it even exists, it would exist in a contingent and precarious manner, based not on its own strength, but on someone else's weakness and cowardice.

But these assertions must be followed immediately by an explanation of precisely what we mean by power, without which, there would certainly arise ambiguities that, in this context, would not have any *raison d'être*.

First of all, we want to emphasise that, to us, power does not at all mean purely physical force, and that dominium and Imperium are not at all identified with violence and the abuse which can be exerted by means of it. It is all the more necessary to make this clear, since many

make this confusion artfully, in order to be able subsequently to drag out the most forbidden *ad hominem* rhetoric against the 'human beast', the '*homo hominis lupus*', 'inhuman rulers', 'tyrants', and so on. Violence is too little. Power is not violence, insofar as it expresses a mere 'standing-against' (and, therefore, on the same plane) and not a 'standing-above'. Presupposing, and deriving its sense and justification from a resistance - that is, presupposing that another will can resist it - it blames an extrinsic, polemical, contingent, and thus, not truly hierarchic and dominating relationship. A free body is not moved by violence, nor shook by a *bon mot*; he who is truly able does not know violence. He has no need of it, insofar as he has no antithesis and he imposes his authority directly, invisibly, and irresistibly in virtue of his inner, individual superiority with respect to those he commands.

All this, from an absolute point of view. However, we do not mean to deny every utility to violence, but only to say that it is still not truly power; it may be necessary in the face of lifeless rigidities which cannot be overcome except by being broken; it may again be necessary in the action of a first direct organisational mark in the chaos of various overwhelming material forces; nevertheless, it remains a rudimental and provisional phase.

We can be convinced this is so, also by considering also that, supported by an unleashed and sufficiently lively forces, one can come to the head of many, if not everyone; but nevertheless, it is certainly necessary that we know first how to unleash, and then to direct, these forces, something which cannot be achieved by purely physical force, but rather by the force of persuasion or suggestion.

This brings us, therefore, to a more subtle plane, where action and control are exerted by means of ideas. Ideas - be mindful - are understood not as abstract notions, but rather as power-ideas, as myths in the Sorelian sense that is, principles applied to the task of awakening energies, movements, and social currents through various moral or emotional suggestions, plus those of belief, tradition, etc., which they are capable of exerting on the masses. But here two basic points must be borne firmly in mind. In the first place, the Ruler must remain master of the various ideas or myths; he must not, by believing them, then fall under their suggestion, becoming an obsessive, a slave of the spirits which he evoked; he must not accord to them any absolute value whatsoever, but instead must regard them coldly as means, as fascinating

tools with which - in conformance to a precise science of crowd psychology - he will exert those influences which he wants, awakening and directing the blind forces of the associated communities.

The second point is connected to the first one, and consists in embracing the absolutely positive aspect of our attitude, which goes beyond both the ideology of pure force and the idealism of 'values', 'immortal principles', and so on. That purely physical force is not sufficient in itself, that will always be the tool of ideas - this is simply an act to ascertain. From a positive point of view, one cannot and must not give another value beyond what results precisely from that ascertained fact, that suggestive value of principle, measured by its practical consequences. The idea, in other words, has value insofar as it works, and as long as it works: not because it is 'good', 'just', 'true', etc., all that is only fog with respect to its reality of power-idea. To control the 'suggestive potentials' with which the various ideas are loaded, to examine them, evaluate them, apportion them, exploit them, discard them, or stop them - this is a superior, invisible, and frightful art of control which, when rendered conscious, as will be said, can convey 'magic' in the highest sense.

Therefore, we can label as truly naive all those currents which maintain that only action (in the limited sense mentioned above) is worthwhile, and that every conflict, or use of ideas is a waste of time. We cannot agree with this, not because of an 'idealism' from which we are quite far removed, but because this is an attitude which shows itself abstract and incomplete from the point of view of action itself. An impassable Ruler and promoter of power-ideas will overpower at the first attack those who exalt pure action, tearing them apart and turning precisely the same force against them on which they base themselves.

Nevertheless, this stage, also, is again transitional and must be transcended. It does not lead beyond the level of a tribune of the people. It remains within an order for which even psychoanalytic theories of the collective unconscious or of the 'primal horde' could have value. It entails a compromise. The various 'myths' and power-ideas should not serve as support or condition of the Ruler, since he alone should be the condition. Now such ideas - especially those of 'nation' and 'fatherland', which culminated in the area with which we are concerned - necessarily contain something transcendent and impersonal, from which there is a margin of contingency, which limits their instrumental value as explained above. Because to the one who bases his own rule only in the name of a certain group of ideas, can always happened to find himself

confronting others who invoke the same ideas and who - demonstrating situations, moreover, that correspond to them more than those given by the ruling group - can undermine it precisely by attracting itself the forces on which the former based himself.

Thus a further realisation necessarily is called for, a turn to make what counts not so much the idea in itself, but rather the one who asserts it. It will no longer be the idea which gives value and power to the individual, but rather the individual who will give value, power, and justification to the idea. This is what Voltaire meant, if we remember court, when he said, referring to a French king, that, if certain acts acquire value, this happened essentially because it was he who accomplished them.

So now, one big final step remains to be accomplished: to get rid of the superstition of the 'fatherland' and the 'nation', understood in a democratic and impersonal sense. The Ruler shifting the centre gradually from the abstract to the concrete, will abolish in the end the very idea of the fatherland, and will cease to support himself on it; he will immanentise it, and will leave only himself, as the sufficient centre for every responsibility and every value, so that finally he will be able to say: 'I am the nation, the State'.

This level, however, can only be maintained by one in whom - in accordance with the expression just used - superiority is not based upon power, but power upon superiority. To need 'power' is impotence, and the one who understands this will perhaps mean it in the sense that the path of a certain renunciation (a virile renunciation, based entirely upon an 'Ability-to-do-without', a 'being-sufficient') can be a condition for the path to the supreme power, and will also understand the hidden logic through which striking and extrasensory powers, stronger than any power of men and things, spring unexpectedly and naturally from the ascetics, saints, and initiates (according to traditions that most people regard as myths, but which we cannot by any means deem as such).

As every need, every desire, and every passion expresses deficiency of being, saying no to all that, integrates, increases, exalts being and pushes it to a higher, central, solar life.

Thus any trace whatsoever of Titanism which could remain in the assumption of power by a single person, completely centralised and deliberated from every conditioning, vanishes. Here the individual and the super-individual, in fact based on each other, and particularistic tendencies could as little be isolated and deasserted the one against the other as a small stream could at the moment of its flowing into the sea.

Here the ruler is not so much a specific mortal being, but rather a universal element, a cosmic force. Thus it becomes comprehensible how, in certain Eastern traditions, kings, at the time of their coronation, abandoned their old human names. One will understand, behind the mythological symbols, the extent to which the ancient Nordic countries could consider their rulers as incarnations of the blood of Odin, Freyr, and Tyr, the Egyptians and the Iranians, almost earthly images of solar divinities, their incarnations: the Greeks and the Romans, as revelations of constant 'heroic' influences borne out of figures such as Heracles and Apollo. 'To reside constantly in the great dwelling of the world; to sit constantly in the upright seat of the world; to move forward constantly on the great road of the world, and, when this has been achieved, to make people participants in the goods which are possessed.' 'Through the vastness and depth of one's own *virtus*, to make themselves similar to the earth; through their loftiness and brilliance, to make themselves like heaven, through their extension and duration to make oneself similar to space and eternity: to form a third power between heaven and earth' - thus speaks Tradition.

The true Ruler, the imperial nature, is exactly the one who arranges this higher quantity of being, which immediately signifies a different quality of being: *virtus*, by which the others - without, in a certain sense, his willing it - are inflamed, attracted, overwhelmed. He imposes himself, so to speak, by his simple presence: like an extensive and dreadful gaze which the others cannot resist; like that calmest greatness which magically stops both armed arms and the onrush of wild unleashed beasts, and directly arouses respect and the drive to obey, to sacrifice oneself, to seek in his greater life the sense of one's own truest life. In him, a whole race, a whole tradition, a whole history burn, as in their deed: they cease to be abstractions, they cease to be bloodless idealities, they make themselves reality, individual, concreteness, life- absolute life, because an end in itself and pure freedom - spirit, light.

So there is, at the top, the one who can really say: 'I alone am the way, the truth, and the life', and who gives to a multitude of beings, to the entire system of the lower determinations of life, a unity, a meaning, a justification which they did not have before. For the interior never lives his own free life so perfectly as when he knows that he has his centre and his end in something higher; the part, that when he knows that he is a member of an organism which has its own *raison d'être* not in itself, but in a soul (in a soul that is a reality and no less an ideal or abstract law).

These would be in outline the principal stages of the conquest of the State and the way of power. The naivety of brute force, the rhetoric of ideality and of 'immortal principles', and the relativity and the ambiguity of the dynamic play of power-ideas, the myth of the fatherland and of the nation, the support of the same power - are the various limits which, as the rising sun disperses the fog and the ghosts of the night - must be smashed by the powerful reality of the superior and surly more-than-human individual, who finally becomes one with the powers of the 'supraworld'.

The Impossibility of Democratic Self-Government

Let us return to liberalism.

We pointed out the compromise that controls it in its pretension to assert the 'immortal principle' of freedom from the individual to society, alongside 'freedom' another 'immortal principle' is asserted, that of equality. How can anyone fail to notice that if there is equality there cannot be freedom? That the levelling of possibilities, the identity of duties and rights, and the despotism of one law based exclusively on quantity, make freedom impossible? We repeat: there is true freedom only in hierarchy, difference, and the irreducibility of individual possibilities, on the basis of an ideal of articulation, and therefore of inequality, whose most perfect model is the ancient system of castes - but, apart from this, there is true freedom only when the meaning of loyalty, heroism, and sacrifice can sweep away the petty values of material, economic, and political life.

But let us go beyond this into an analysis of the nature of the superficiality and absurdity characteristic of the anti-imperial standpoint.

Democracy, it is said, is the self-government of the people. The sovereign will is that of the majority, which they express freely through the vote, in the symbol of representatives, who must yield to the common interest.

However, no matter how much they insist upon 'self-government', a distinction will always arise between the governors and the governed, insofar as a civic organisation is not yet constituted if the will of the majority is not concretised in individual personalities to whom the government is entrusted. These persons obviously will not be chosen at random: they will be those in whom the people believe they recognise greater capacities, and therefore, for better or worse, superiority over everyone else, so that they will not be considered as simple spokesmen,

but one will suppose a principle of autonomy and legislative initiative in them.

Thus an anti-democratic factor appears in the bosom of democratism, which it vainly seeks to suppress by the principles of election and popular sanction. We say 'vainly', because the superiority of superior men is expressed, among other things, in the fact that they are capable of discerning what truly is of value, and of arranging the various values hierarchically, that is, as subordinating or superordinating them in relation to each other. Now, the stated democratic principles completely overturn the thing, insofar as they restore the judgement (in respect to election as well as sanction) of the highest value to the mass to decide, that is to say, to the body of those who, by hypothesis, are the least capable of judging, and whose judgement is restricted by necessity to the lower values of the most immediate life. Therefore, in the democratic regime, one can remain certain that those who are able to point out the best futures (even if chimerical), for the purpose of practical utility, will have a disastrous preeminence over the others. In such an error - similar to that of someone who, after having conceded that the blind should be guided by those who see, demands that the blind decide who can see and who cannot - there is found the main cause of the modern degradation of political reality into a purely empirical, utilitarian, and material reality.

It is true that there still remains one possible objection: that the material welfare controllable by the people could be a propitiatory partner in the development of a higher order. But this thesis is doubtful. The fact is that higher values and regenerating forces have arisen from moments of social crisis, whereas the 'geese of Capua', the periods of economic prosperity have led to stagnation and torpor in the life of the spirit. This is a reflection of what happens in the life of individuals, in which certain values arise from the ground of suffering, renunciation, and injustice, and in which a certain degree of tension, of 'living dangerously' from every point of view, is the best leaven to awaken the meaning of the relevance of spirit. But, without wanting to insist on this, we limit ourselves to asking: by what criteria should the masses be expected to recognise those who must direct them because they are capable of also caring much about superior values, although based on material values.

The truth is that democratisation depends upon an optimistic but totally gratuitous presupposition. It does not at all take into account the absolutely irrational character of the psychology of the masses. As we

have already indicated above, in our discussion of 'power ideas', the mass is influenced not by reason, but by enthusiasm, emotion, and suggestion. Like a little girl, it follows anyone who best knows how to fascinate it, by scaring it, or alluring it, using means which are void of logic. Like a woman, it is inconsistent, and passes from one thing to the next, without such a transition explicable by a rational law or progressive process. Particularly, that idea of 'progress', referring not to the simple realisation that things become better or worse from the material point of view, but referring instead to the transition from a material standard to a higher standard, is a Western superstition which has arisen from the Jacobin ideology, against which we can never react energetically enough. Instead, to the extent it is possible to speak of self-government of the masses, and to the extent that the right of election and sanction can be left to the general public, then all that may or may not be true; instead, the 'people' can be considered as a single intelligence, as a single great being, living a single, actual, conscious and rational life. But this is a pure optimistic myth, which no social or historical consideration confirms, and which was invented only by a race of servants, impatient with true leaders, who sought a mask for their anarchic pretension to be able to do everything by themselves and for their rebellious will.

Thus this optimism, presupposed by democratism, is also, and eminently, presupposed by anarchist doctrines. And, brought to a rationalised and theologised form, it reappears again at the basis of historical currents and the theory of the 'Absolute State'.

Anti-Hegelianism

In our description of the modern world, we often use the term 'the many' in preference to more fashionable terms such as 'people' or 'humanity', which were handed down from the French Revolution. The reason for this is that these terms in themselves already reflect the democratic and collectivist mindset. We cannot and will not endorse in any way that tenacious residue of the scholastic mentality by which the so-called 'universals' are reified or substantialised.

Let us explain it this way. We are still waiting for someone to make us understand what 'Man' might be, over and above individual men. In reality we know of men, but of 'Man' in general we know nothing or, to put it better, we know that it is nothing, in as much as we know that it is a simple concept obtained by omitting the specific marks of concrete

individuals, which disperse in an empty uniformity through the abstraction characteristic of a classificatory pragmatism. 'Man', as such, is something, that has existence, if at all, in our mind, but which corresponds to nothing in reality.

Analogously, we hold that the 'nation', the 'people', 'humanity', etc., are simple metaphors, rather than real beings, and that their 'unity', on one hand, is simply verbal, and on the other, not that of an organism constituted by an immanent rationality, but that of a system of many individual forces bumping into and balancing each other, and therefore essentially dynamic and unstable. Let us bear this well in mind when we use the term 'the many', adding to its already mentioned character of the irrationality of the 'mass', that of its multiple nature.

From such a point of view, even the democratic base-concept of the so-called 'will of the people' is shown to be insubstantial, and needs to be substituted with that of the momentary equilibrium of many wills, those of many more or less related individuals, like the jet of a waterfall which, from a distance, may seem motionless and unitary, but, at close range, is seen to come from an indefinite number of different elements in incessant motion. Therefore any democratism is, after all, only disguised liberalism and atomism.

We could never insist too much on these considerations, concluding in their reality of the entity 'people', the entity 'nation', etc., and the illogicality of the pluriform reality to which these are concretely reduced - before a force from above appears and the power of loyalty is restored. In this, it is decisive that, if they reveal that in which the democratic doctrine of organisation from below they can be justified as self-government of the 'people' or the 'nation', they reveal moreover a more outworn pretence, about which a lot of conceptions which are said to be, and are believed to be, undemocratic, are anything but free. We refer to the neo-Hegelian¹ concept of the 'Absolute State', or Superstate,

¹ We say 'neo-Hegelian' because we intend to combat above all certain political deductions of recent times, of which only in part is justified their claim to the complete doctrine of Hegel. In what Hegel has written (*Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, 539): 'As a living spirit, the state only is as an organised whole, differentiated into particular agencies, which, proceeding from the one notion (though not known as notion) of the reasonable will, continually produce it as their result.', and added (542): 'In the perfect form of the state, in which each and every element of the notion has reached free existence, this subjectivity is not a so-called "moral person", or a decree issuing from a majority (forms in which the unity of the decreeing will has not an **actual** existence), but an actual individual - the will of a decreeing individual, - **monarchy**.' - since Hegel expressed this thought, our critic could not turn totally against him. Here it is

which asserts that what is real is the State, not the individuals which - whoever they are, starting with the leaders - must vanish behind the State.

Few obsessive phenomena appear to us of such an aberrant character as this one, whose abstractionism is certainly much worse than democratic abstractionism. We have already seen that, in democracy, the 'people' is basically a mask, which, through the more concrete notion of 'common interest', reveals to us, especially in its liberalistic forms, the acknowledged reality of the individuals upon which the centre is displaced, also in an egalitarian and anti-hierarchical manner. In the doctrine of the 'Absolute State', this reality disappears, devoured by a mere idea; no centre, either above or below, remains, insofar, as the leaders themselves are the obsessed of the obsessed, instruments of this impersonality to which everything must be subordinated.

We expressed ourselves quite clearly with respect to the pragmatic value which certain power-ideas or 'myths' can have, and we could even grant, with due reservations, that the 'Absolute State' is one of these. It is necessary however that the thing not become a bad bargain (*marche des dupes*). Every true imperialism must be intensely positive, however it must recognise a sole reality: that of the individual. The empire will exist for an individual, a superior individual, that individual capable of saying: 'I am the State' - the individual will not exist for the State. There will be a hierarchy because there are leaders, not leaders because there is a hierarchy. The deep tracks, the organising rule, left by a group of conquerors, will give meaning to so-called 'national unity', the so-called 'nation', and not the myth of this to the deep life of those who have no need of it. The State, the nation - and 'tradition', also - are abstractions (at most, tasks), which find their reality only in certain individuals, who impose themselves, create paths where there were no paths, and restore unity to what was only multiplicity, chaos, confusion, the rule of sub-personal forces.

Lacking this reality, this higher level of strength, life, and light (whose transmission through elites or dynasties, across generations, beyond the limits of time, constitutes precisely that which can be said

above all about some recent Italian interpretations of Hegelian thought in the statolatry sense, in which the idea of an absolute State is associated with tendencies of de-personalised centralisation, of an absolute 'socialisation' of every activity, of an intolerance in the face of every traditional concept of caste and aristocracy: so much that, in the field of fascism, some have reached the point of holding possible a conciliation of this conception of the State not only Marxism, but with Sovietism.

to be Tradition in an eminent and positive sense) with a purpose that survives through inertia, with the empty form of an imperial or national organisation without anything which could still justify it, with the centre of a monarchy whose throne is empty - this obsessive survival, which then had become autonomous and reacts against that of which it is nothing but a shadow, with this claim that there is no individual to rule it and that it remains the supreme reality: with this degeneration coincides the genesis of the idea of 'Absolute State', of 'Nation', and of the whole analogous rhetoric of recent times.

This superstition, the political heresy deriving from Hegel, has led it onto the summits of a philosophical system. We must decisively rid ourselves of it and its every reflex, in order to return to the Nordic-Aryan vision of free and living beings, who do not know of the voice of the levelled multitudes, who knockdown and mock these clay idols of modern ideologies, and organise themselves freely, on the only possible basis of irreducible differences, which are defined in the natural and dynamic relationship of their intensity. Men, leaders of men, and men, servants of men, as pure forces, not men turned into shadows by shadows.

Against the collectivist, centralising, and homogenising concept of State and nation, we insist therefore on the pluralistic, individualistic, and realistic concept as a base for a restoration, in a hierarchical, virile, and entire anti-democratic sense.

Do not forget that the 'nation' is a modern invention - a French invention. The Birth of the idea of the 'nation' coincides with the fall of our feudal, aristocratic, and imperial ideal. For the primordial Germanic races, the 'nation' coincides with the whole of a race commanded by free masters, linked by blood, joined formation in a single front, ready to submit themselves with pride to the discipline of a warrior Order, where immediately with their retinue they became 'vassals' of the *dux* or *hereigo* - yet always preserving their independence and their feeling of themselves as differentiated principles, not radiations of the collective. The same thing could be said, more or less, of the ancient aristocratic constitution of Rome. The same, *mutatis mutandis*, of the Aryans of India: they did not have the 'nation', they knew only their caste, and, in them, the caste expressed itself spiritually as supreme and inviolable principle of order and hierarchy. The same of the Aryans of Ira: the divine fire - *hvareno* or *farr* - carried by their race, converges in three fires, which correspond to the articulation of the three higher castes - the

masters of the sacrifice, the warriors, and the heads of families, but without any collective and 'public' bond.

The principle characteristic of the formations of the Nordic-Aryan peoples is this sense of individualisation, of anti-collectivism, which then coincides with civilisation, with 'form' - opposite to the sense of promiscuity characteristic of the Southern communities and races and of the lower form of society.

When the kings in the West made themselves hostile to feudal aristocracy, when they aimed systematically at centralisation in the sense of the 'nation' - and really France started this process in a decisive way - they began to dig their own graves. The 'public authorities', instituted by the kings with absolute levelling, eliminating the privileges and differentiated laws proper to each caste, established that from which, undermining royalty, would consequently have had to take form and exercise its tyranny typical of the 'people', the mass. Every absolutistic State is an anti-aristocratic State. Every centralisation paves the way to demagogy, and therefore to the fall from the personal to the collective.

Individuality, differentiation, articulation - an Order established solely by individuals and by clear, pure, and virile relationships between individuals - this is our ideal.

Nationalism: return to totemism.

Superstate as incarnation of the 'absolute spirit': mask of the Leviathan idea - anteroom to the Soviets.

Anti-Historicism

Let us consider the democratic diversion in relation to its historicist disguises. For our critique, we shall examine the ideology of an Italian, Giuseppe Mazzini: that is, only as a point of connection. The same considerations could certainly be extended to other conceptions which have the same spirit, and which today are not at all rare. But Mazzini's ideology is especially interesting for its attempt to mix different themes, not excluding the Roman idea itself.

The democratic will to this tendency has devised a 'philosophy of history' which our previous arguments already suffice to undermine. It only 'reifies' but even theologises the 'people': the people-entity becomes a mystical body in which same divinity, pulled down from the heavens and in due course socialised, would live and reveal itself as in its interpreter - according to a progressive law of development which is

the evolution of humanity itself through great cycles, each of which reflects an idea or 'revelation' of the divine mind.

This is a wretched modern mythology, which no serious person can possibly believe any longer, and whose Semitic-Protestant character is immediately obvious. We repeat that the people-entity, if not a mere abstraction, is an inferior, irrational, and 'demonic' entity, which in itself, without the dominating action of superior beings, could not have any relation with the divine. We regard the idea that the divine should reveal itself, to anyone equally in confusion or in the element of the masses, and not in those who are themselves almost divine natures, as a perversion. We refer here to the Doran-Olympian idea of the superiority of the 'gods' over all that is becoming; we consider the anti-aristocratic myths of *parvenus*, such as the idea of 'progress' or the 'evolution of humanity' as superstitious origination from below; we regard as a fantasy of weak souls the idea of a providential or rational plan of history, the idea that everything that happens must be regarded as rational and justified, and superimposes itself over the realization of a transcendent goal, which the private opinion of some philosopher or other takes place of. As free beings, we see freedom in history, and we dispute, in particular, the legitimacy of the idea of a 'philosophy of history', because it only expresses a disguised form of determinism, and an inability to see and value the living, individual, unique reality of historical facts. As aristocratic spirits, we oppose the modern myth of evolution and development with the traditional ideal of permanence and the traditional myth of involution, the decline which was unitarily given as the 'direction of history', through doctrines such as that of the 'four ages', from Hesiod to the Persians, from the Chaldeans to the Indians, from the Egyptians to the Nordic conceptions of the Ragnarok.

What, in any case, does the Mazzinian philosophy of history demand? One thing only: to show that what must be, because it incorporates the 'goal' of historical progress itself, and that the 'third Rome' should take on as its prophetic mission, is the anti-empire, that is, the ideal of single-humanity-reality, realised through the brotherhood of equal peoples, through the impersonal associationism in an anti-monarchical federation, enemy of every hierarchy from above, deluding itself that it expresses the superstition of a 'will of God' in the mythical 'will of the people'. If this ideology is stripped of all its mystical aspects and we focus on it coldly penetrating down to the hidden and unacknowledged impulses which give them life, we will find the same sophism of democracy and anarchy, with the same optimistic illusions

about the rationality of the masses and of history; we will find the same distinct, unequivocal expression of that which, as the ideal of the *ecclesia*, arose from the Semitic-Plebeian revolt against the ideal of Rome; and, therefore, we will find, essentially, the spirit of the Reformation, the same sprit from which modern organisation is derived: anti-imperial, anti-aristocratic, anti-religious - because it reduces religion to mere sociality - and anti-qualitative, characteristic of Anglo-Saxon and American society.

The Mazzinian ideal is in reality identical to that essentially democratic and Lutheran product, foretold by the so-called 'League of Nations'. In fact, as an international confederation, presided over, not by power and the individual, the shining reality of a single superior being - the emperor of the Dantesque universal-Ghibelline conception, which 'upon considering the different conditions in the world, should have, in order to direct the different and necessary offices, the universal and indisputable office of complete command' (Convivio, IV, 4) - although by a people, or rather by the people, by 'humanity'. Since the 'chosen people' (chosen people! - another Jewish superstition: we do not know 'chosen peoples', but only peoples which are superior, or which, through struggle, make themselves superior) would uniquely have, according to Mazzini, the mission to reject itself and to impose this new gospel: that all peoples are free and are brothers. The nationalistic Mazzinian velleity, to preserve a function and a particular mission for every people, vanishes before the assertion that this mission must then be resolved without residue in the general interest of humanity. If so, a sort of universal confederation, to be constituted on the base of a system of anti-monarchical and anti-catholic revolutions, is the centre of Mazzini's entire politico-religious gospel. We see how this gospel, basically, is a precursor of the various modern anti-aristocratic, pacifistic, and democratic tendencies up to the so-called 'Paneuropa'.

Nor do the Mazzinians hesitate to secretly understand in true Rome, in Rome as Rome, as something surpassed by 'progress'. Their blind, evolutionistic apriorism makes them subject to the rather deplorable superstition which reduces Roman paganism to the concept of purely juridical and material reality and makes the values of the spirit as prerogatives of Christianity. The 'mission' of pagan Rome, according to them, would have been exhausted in the creation of a juridical unity and a material Empire based on force; the second Rome, the Catholic Rome, would have established a spiritual Empire instead; and the synthesis would be the third Rome, which is supposed to affirm social

unity, establishing the pallid fraternalism and federalism which we mentioned above. Roman law would have contributed the factor 'freedom', and would have prepared on the material plane an equality which then was realised in the spiritual field in Christianity: a new era would be prophesied in which the two terms, freedom and equality, would be joined in a synthesis derived from the concept of a related humanity.

As uncompromising defenders of the values of the pagan tradition, we reject all these historicist sophisms. No, whether or not anyone accepts it, Rome was simultaneously a material and spiritual reality, a complete and shining ideal, which rebels against any attempt to deform it in the game of some arbitrary progressivistic dialectic. It was the Augustan power, arisen 'to rule the nations, to establish the laws of peace, to spare the vanquished, and to subdue the proud' (Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI, 852-854), and, at one time, it was something sacred, a cultural formation in which there was no gesture of life, public or private, in war or in peace, which was not accompanied by rite or symbol - a cultural formation of mysterious origin, that had its own demigods and divine kings, the Aryan cult of fire and victory, the culmination in a '*pax augusta et profunda*', in which a universal reflection of the '*aeternitas*' was, almost physically, realised which was acknowledged with dismay in the same imperial function.

No, the new Asian faith was not the 'continuation' of Rome, it deformed Rome - it did not often hesitate to identify the city of Caesar with the beast of the Jewish Apocalypse and the whore of Babylon. Rome did not know 'equality', as conceived by the modern mob. The *aequitas* of Roman law is an aristocratic concept: it answers only to the classic idea of justice, which was undermined by the Christian concepts of mercy, forgiveness, repentance, grace, compassion, and love. Only the levelling down of every terrestrial value to an identical non-value, in the equality of all beings in regard to 'God', in regard to the 'original sin' of the Jewish faith and in regard to the arbitrariness of grace, produced in the West an egalitarian principle which was totally unknown to the higher forms of pagan civilisation; a heresy for them, who even on the material plane were held up by an hierarchical organisation, by military relations, by relations of domination and servitude, and by the pre-eminence of the elites.

Romanity did not need any Semitic contribution in order to be able to recognise its universal ideal and to realise it. Whatever greatness there still is, in subsequent times, belongs to it. As we already said, the grandeur of Rome, having risen from the forces of the Nordic Aryans,

created the last, great, universal period in the West, the feudal-imperial civilisation of the middle Ages. What would perhaps otherwise have remained the legacy of an obscure Palestinian sect was able, through us, as Church, to participate for a moment in a universal value.

But our universality is not the mazzinian universality: the latter is only an internationalism, only the unfolding of that levelling, fraternising, socialistic, and democratic tendency which has nothing Roman, whose freedom is not our freedom, whose last word is not organism but aggregate, not universality but collectivity.

And the two terms of the Mazzinian pseudo-synthesis, Romanity and sociality, represent two irreconcilable concepts. Between them there is a choice, but there is no compromise or composition.

Let the mob, too, seek its justification in the 'direction of history', that, with all its chains broken, has overflowed all the embankments, and now, in a world that no longer knows either emperors or shepherds it exhibits its excuses, poisoning every well, soiling all the crossroads of science, politics, religion, and culture with its absence of spirituality. It asks only that the rhythm of history, of evolution, be accelerated, that it become pandemic, that the glorious aim of its 'progress' - the 'sun of the future' - draws nearer, because it eventually reaches the final fall, beneath which it will be miserably buried.

We belong to a different world, which remains immobile in accordance with the stability of circumstances. We possess truth, not rhetoric.

We possess a tradition; Rome for us remain that immutable, realised, and super-historic symbol, which said to the Galileans: 'As long as Rome exists, we need not fear the convulsions of the final age - but if Rome falls, humanity will be near its end'.

The Individual and Humanity

Another form of justification, more evolutionistic than historicist, which democratism can adopt, can be inferred from the claims of Duke G. Colonna di Cesarò. This form has the advantage of being able to be considered in itself, not just on the basis of a hypothetical verification *ad usum delphini* ['for the use of the Dauphin'], but as a possible conception of the world in general. It is certainly more coherent, and precisely for this reason it is so much simpler to notice how furiously the application tends to be overturned by that which animates the values of the hierarchical ideal.

According to this point of view, it is claimed that there is a sociality which, far from representing the point of arrival of an ideal development, is instead its point of departure. Such a stage is comparable in some primitive peoples, where it seems that individuals do not have a true consciousness of themselves as autonomous beings, but live as parts of an indistinct collective being, which is their tribe or their people.

Di Cesarò sees progress in passing beyond this primitive 'social' stage: beyond humanity, it is necessary that men reassert themselves as distinct, self-conscious centres. Then, in a third period, men are called to the restoration of the universal bond of humanity, which will then no longer be a given, almost a nature in which individuals are instantly connected to each other, but instead will be something which men themselves will create: spontaneously, by a free act. Democratism would correspond to this third phase, insofar as it would aim precisely at the ideal of a sociality on the basis of a collection of equal autonomous, and free beings.

The principal point of criticism of such a view is this: to determine the precise difference between that sociality, which would be the point of arrival, and the other, which would only be the point of departure of a similar development.

Di Cesarò joins the concept of a law of progressive individuation to the view just expounded, but this presents things in a much different light. Such a law means that the lower levels of reality differentiate themselves from the higher, through the fact that in the former, the individual can be separated into parts that conserve the same quality (the parts of a mineral, for example - and something similar happens in certain species of plants and in the parthenogenesis of lower animals), while, in the latter, this is no longer possible, since the individual is a higher organic unity, which cannot be divided without its destruction, and without its parts entirely losing their specific and living significance the quality that they had within it. Nature would show us an impetus of progressive individuation that goes from physical mineral systems to the supreme individuation, given by the unbreakable simplicity characteristic of human self-consciousness.

According to di Cesarò, however, a further phase of this process is conceivable, in which the law of progressive individuation tends to go beyond the human individual into a wider form of association, which would be the social individual, the social and spiritual unity of humanity. A unity that would hence be differentiated from that other point of

departure typical of primitive sociality, by being the culmination of a process of individuation.

In all this, there is enough to overturn the democratic position. What does individual being, in fact, consist of? It has already been said: the state of the simple, aggregate of separable parts (the crudest form of mineral individuation) ends, and a higher principle arises which re-asserts itself over them; it subordinates them to itself and makes them obey a determined law. And the more perfect the subordination and the dominance of this higher principle, the higher is the individuation. And then: just as we see that the unity of chemical compounds is control over various elements and purely physical forces (lower level), and vegetal unity is control over various unities and chemical laws by a higher law which transcends them, and so on - in the same way, admitting the development, which we mentioned above, beyond the single individual, in the unity of the 'social individual' we will have to intend control over single individuals - not the democratic unity of the representation of the many, but rather the imperial unity of the ruler of the many, the *Imperium*, which corresponds to the superiority which shines irrefutably in the life of the soul, master of itself and of the body.

Even admitting the law of progressive individuation, we thus find that, if there must be a difference between the point of departure and the point of arrival of the process, if this process is to be something more than a huge *circulus vitiosus*, the difference can consist only in this: that, in the beginning, every 'I' in itself was nothing, and identical to all the others, as a sort of *medium* within which the collective life of the community circulated; but, in the end, after greater and greater distances are created between 'I' and 'I', differentiating higher levels from lower levels of self-consciousness and human power, and creating thereby a hierarchy, those who can no longer be called humanity, but Lords of humanity, will arise.

This is the only way to understand the law coherently, or, better said, the will to progressive individuation with respect to a possible development beyond the form typical of normal human consciousness; and let us add that the idea of the 'Lord of humanity' is by no means one invented by us: it corresponds precisely to the primordial Aryan concept of the *cakravarti* [Lord of the World], which, in the symbolic terms of sagas and myths, was constantly connected with the real or legendary figures of great rulers, from Alexander the Great to King Arthur and Emperor Frederick II.

From a one-sided point of view, this may perhaps have a certain coloration of abnormality, almost as in the idea of one part of the body assuming the right to subordinate all the remaining parts to itself. But this coloration completely vanishes once one distrusts in continuing to refer the one who, as ruler of men, would no longer be a man, but a being of higher level, as a 'man' - even if, on the exterior, he maintains, more or less, a common human appearance - through the fact that the hierarchy, whose members are at this point consciousnesses, is immaterial and cannot be distinguished by any physically visible feature. As such, the ruler would no longer be compared, for instance, to a hand which wants to make itself master over the whole body, but should rather be compared to the organic unity of the body which, in a higher, incorporeal synthesis, includes the hand and everything else.

Just as we can conceive that the unifying and organising function of nature to which a mineral compound corresponds, transforms itself and passes (in the ideal, not the historical, sense) into its higher potential, in which the elements and mineral laws become the means subordinated to the vegetal individual, and son - analogously, we can think of a transition from the power which rules that bundle of beings and elements that constitutes the personality of a common man, to a higher power, in which the elements which must be dominated according to the same relation are the laws and the wills of the individual consciousness of men or of races.

With that, keep in mind that we do not want to abolish 'man', that is, that consciousness of freedom, individuality, and autonomy of individuals gained against the primitive, indistinct, mediumistic sociality. A true King never desires shadows, puppets, and automatons as subjects, but rather he desires individuals, warriors, living and strong beings; and in fact, his pride would be to feel himself to be a King of kings.

On the other hand, we have already stated, is we are intransigent affirmers of the necessity of hierarchy, we maintain that this hierarchy must be built dynamically and freely, through natural relationships of individual intensity. Primitive aristocracies formed like this - even where a supernatural principle did to impose them directly - not by election and recognition from below, but by the direct self-assertion of individuals capable of a degree of resistance, of responsibility, of a heroic, generous, full, and dangerous life, which the others were not capable of. It is the 'trial by fire': which terrorises and breaks some, makes those who resist it Leaders, to whom the masses naturally and freely subject themselves and obey - until others, even stronger, appear

whose right and dignity the former leaders will be the first to recognise, without resentment or envy, but loyally, militarily. In no other conception than this is the value of the individual better preserved. Instead, it is in the democratic solution that it tends to vanish through the advent of an impersonal reality which equalises all individuals under the same law, which is not identified in anyone and is not justified in anyone, and serves as reciprocal support, as reciprocal defence, and as reciprocal slavery, of beings each of whom is insufficient in himself.

The Irrationality of Equality

Turning back to what was said at the beginning of this chapter: behind the 'people' that democrats speak about, we accordingly find the 'many' - which are understood in an egalitarian way (and here lies the difference), insofar as recognition of their leaders is claimed to be made not by quality, but by quantity (the greater number, the majority of the electoral system). But quantity can be a criterion only on the presupposition of the equality of all individuals, which equalises the value of each of their votes.

Now the 'immortal principle' of equality can be the most questionable. The inequality of men is something too obvious to need to waste words on it: it sufficient just to open one's eyes. But our opponents, who will grant this, will make it a matter of principle, and will say: men may very well be unequal, but they are so *de facto*, and not *de jure*; they are unequal, but they should not be. Inequality is unjust, and not to take into account, but instead to seek to go beyond it, is precisely the merit and the superiority of the democratic ideal.

Nevertheless, these are only words: the fact remains that the concept of the 'many' is logically contradictory with the concept of the 'equal many'.

In the first place, there is the Leibnizian principle of the identity of indiscernibles, which is expressed as follows: a being which was absolutely identical to another would be one and the same thing as it. Kant sought to refute this by reference to space in which there can be equal yet distinct things: but, even prescinding from the inconsistency of transferring to the spiritual ground and observation characteristic only of the physical world, the modern notion of space refutes the objection, since, for it, any point entails the ascription of a different value used in Minkowski's four-dimensional continuum function. In the concept of 'many', their fundamental diversity is therefore implicit: an equal

'many', absolutely equal, would not be many, but one. To expect the equality of the many is a contradiction in terms.

In the second place, there is the principle of sufficient reason, which is expressed as follows: for everything there must be some reason for it to be one thing and not something else. Now a being absolutely equal to another would lack 'sufficient reason': it would be a duplication completely deprived of significance.

From both of these points, then, the idea that the 'many' not only are unequal, but must be so, and that inequality is true *de facto* only because it is true *de jure*, that it is real only because it is necessary, turns out to be rationally founded.

But to posit inequality means transcending quantity, it means passing into quality; and so it is that the possibility, and the necessity, of hierarchy is justified; it is that the criterion of the 'majority' is proved absurd, and that every law and every morality, which starts from egalitarian presuppositions, is unnatural and extreme.

We repeat that it is the superior which must justify the inferior, and not vice versa. Just as the nature of error is not to know itself as error, whereas the nature of truth is to posit itself as consciousness of truth, while knowing at the same time error as error - so the nature of what is superior is to be posit itself directly as superior to the inferior, which is made inferior completely by the self-posting of the superior. Superiority must not be submitted to any sanction or recognition, but it must be based only on the direct awareness of superiority of those who are superior and prove themselves as superiors by every test.

For this reason, the so-called criterion of the 'useful' cannot offer any support. In fact we would have to begin by asking what is useful, in relation to what, and to whom. For example, a margin for violence exists even in the democratic regime - violence proper to the constituted authority, which requires a tax authority, civil and criminal laws, etc. This violence is not called such because it is considered convenient to be useful to the greatest number. But who defines and justifies it as useful, and thus determine the famous boundaries between 'legality' and 'illegality'? We have already shown that, in a rational order of things, it cannot be the mass, because of the inability and inferiority of its power of discrimination. However, if one does not intend to shift the centre of equality, the whole thing will turn into the worst of tyrannies: that exercised by the numerous upon the qualitatively superior few, who are over-

whelmed inexorably by the mechanism, established by law, of the determinisms of lower life and organised 'society', just as is happening in the modern West.

But the 'useful' is itself something far less absolute than many would like to believe, in relation to the same mass. Because of the irrational character of the psychology of the masses, what the majority does has very seldom been this 'useful' pure and simple, and even less often the autonomous will of the many; instead, infinitely more often, it has been the power, the attractive force of particular persons, whose power the greatest number of followers was only a consequence and an echo. Powerful individuals have known how to drag the crowds where they wanted, throwing into the sea all the mediocre, bourgeois, precisely calculated standards of 'utility', suitability, and general welfare. History show this to us everywhere: fired by enthusiasm for a man, a symbol, or an idea, millions of beings have overwhelmed the barriers of prudent normality, and sacrificed, immolated, or destroyed themselves.

Democratism knows that and for this reason, slowly, subtly, widening throughout the whole of Europe, it seeks to extinguish the race of the leaders, guiding spirits, enchanter, and to create a levelling such that everything can be reduced to the autonomy characteristic of the parts of an economic mechanism left to itself. And the game is succeeding terrifyingly in recent times. Bolshevised Russia and democratic and mechanised America are opposed as two symbols, as two poles of the same danger.

But this will to degeneration, this darkness, on which Western 'civilisation' is being shipwrecked, finds us against it. We, once again following Nietzsche, raise the alarm and issue the call. May our nations oppose a 'do not pass beyond this point!' to the Bolshevik-American tide. But not with words, threats, and empty proclamations, but silently, isolating themselves and creating an aristocracy, an elite that firmly maintains, in the living reality of superior individuals, the values of our tradition.

After this, all the rest will come as a natural consequence.

From Clan to Empire. Our Doctrine of Race

We mentioned, while considering the ideas of Duke di Cesarò, the 'social' form characteristic of primitive communities. In passing, we also touched upon a relation - which may appear paradoxical to many - between totemism and nationalism. It is necessary to clarify this point,

by posing the problem of the relation between the concept of clan and the concept of Empire, between the concept of race and the concept of civilisation in the higher sense.

Against certain abstract and rationalistic forms of universalism, to recognise the right of blood, to require truths and values which again become that vibrant expression of our very life, and which, therefore, are joined with blood and race, instead of being weak generalities 'valid for everyone': this is certainly a justified request. But, under this aspect, racial theory is a general introduction, which needs to be further identified.

We must not forget that to speak of blood in the case of a man is not the same thing as to speak of it in the case of an animal. If, by blood, one means the biological heredity of a race, then in the animal, race is everything, while, in man, it is only a part. The error of certain race fanatics who think that the reintegration of a race in its ethnic unity signifies *ipso facto* the rebirth of a people, lies exactly here: they regard man as if he could be regarded as horses, cats, or dogs, of a 'pure breed'. The preservation or the restoration of the purity of race, in the narrowest sense, can be everything in an animal, but not in man - in the man of superior type: even for man, it can constitute a condition which may be necessary under certain aspects, is not sufficient in any case, since the racial factor is not the only one which defines man.

To reach a higher level and to refute the accusation of biological materialism, it is still not sufficient to attribute to every race a mystical soul, its characteristic 'spirit'. In fact, we already find this, and in a more meaningful way, in the primitive forms of totemic society. As was pointed out, in these forms of society, the totem is the mystical soul of the group, the clan, or the race: the individual members do not feel themselves, in their blood and in their life, as anything other than incarnations of this collective spiritual force, and possessing in themselves almost no trace of personality.

If the totemic force remains at this diffuse and faceless level, so to speak, and if, consequently, there are neither leaders nor subjects, and the individual members of the group are nothing more than 'placed together' (*com-posti*) - then we find ourselves at the lowest level of human society, at the level which borders on the subhuman, that is, the animal kingdom: something confirmed by the fact that the totems - the mystical souls of the clan - are often regarded at the same time as the 'spirits' of particular animal species. In addition, it is interesting that, even as

the totems represent masculine figures, the composition of these societies reflects above all the telluric-matriarchal type, characteristic of the non-Aryan, and, particularly the southern races. The communistic principle plays a decisive role here. This type corresponds spiritually to the 'father's path' - *pitr-yana* - which the Indian traditions speak about, also called the earth path or mother's path, according to which individuals are dissolved entirely after death into the original stocks, into the forces of the race and forefathers blood, with which true existence alone rests. But, opposed to this path, there is the solar path or path of the gods - *deva-yana* - also, called the Nordic path (while the first path, the path of the totem, is called the path of the South); a path which we can also call Olympic, travelled by those who make themselves immortal, who become gods, who 'go out in order not to return'.

This contrast constitutes the key to our problem. A civilisation, in the true and higher sense with reference both to individuals and peoples - arises only where the totemic level is surpassed, and where the race element, also understood mystically, is not the last resort; where, beyond blood, a force of higher, meta-biological, spiritual, and 'solar' type manifests itself, which does not lead outside of life, but determines life, transforming it, refining it, giving it a form which it initially did not have, freeing it entirely from every mixture with animal life, and opening the various paths for the realisation of the various personality types. When this occurs, the ethnic tradition is not destroyed: it remains exclusively a base that possess a spiritual tradition as inseparable verification - and here, in the order of the relationship between the biological factor and the spiritual factor, it is the latter which should be used as support for the former, and not vice versa.

This is valid, we said, as much in reference to individuals as to peoples. As far as the first point is concerned, sociology shows us, already in the primitive forms of society, the frequent self-enucleation of groups characterised by initiation, which obey a law of their own and enjoy a higher authority; and the most noticeable characteristic of these groups is their purely virile nature, the principle of the exclusion of women. But even among the great traditional peoples, the situation is not different: from China to Greece, from Rome to the primordial Nordic groups, then up to the Aztecs and the Incas, nobility was not characterised by the simple fact of having ancestors, but by the fact that the ancestors of the nobility were divine, unlike those of the plebeians, and to which it can remain faithful, also through the integrity of blood (in the caste system, the principle of heredity was valid not only for the higher castes, but

even for the lower ones). The nobles originated from 'demigods', that is to say, from beings who had actually followed a transcendent form of life, forming the origin of a tradition in the higher sense, transmitting to their lineage a blood made divine, and, along with it, rites, that is, determinate operations, whose secret every noble family preserved, which allowed their descendants to continue the spiritual conquest form where it had previously reached, and to lead it gradually from the virtual to the actual.

Thus, from the traditional point of view, not-having-ancestors distinguishes the plebeian from the patrician less than not-having-rites. In Aryan hierarchies, a single characteristic differentiated the higher castes from the lower: rebirth. The *arya*, as opposed to the *shudra* (the one who serves), was the *dvija*, the born again. The assertion of the Manavadharmashastra (II, 172), that the *brahman* himself, if he left out initiation, would no longer be differentiated from the one who serves, the *shudra*, is indicative. Analogously, what characterised the three higher castes of the Iranians was that each of them corresponded to a determinate celestial 'fire'. The Nordic nobles were noble because, in their blood, they carried the blood of the Asen, of the 'celestial' forces in continuous struggle with the elemental beings. The nobility of the great medieval orders of chivalry - among which the most significant were the Templars - was also tied to initiation. One of the weakest points in Nietzsche's conception is precisely this biological naturalism, which, in most cases, diminishes and secularises his aristocratic idea, carrying it to the level of the 'blond beast'.

This would be the essential issue. Moving from castes to races, we must consequently say that the true difference between race and race is not something naturalistic and ideologically conditioned, but precisely something much deeper, which exists among the races preserving in the depth of their blood and the heritage and the presence of a principle which transcends blood, inoculated by the action of the dominant and 'solar' elites; and the other races, which have nothing of this, and in which something promiscuous and tied for the forces of the earth, of animality, and of biologic-collective heredity, prevails. Among these races, totemism dominates, and there is neither true difference nor true personality; worship is resolved in an ecstatic-pantheistic nostalgia or, at most, in a 'religiosity' in the lunar and communist sense.

For us, there is no other difference between the noble races of the North and the races of the South: and more than a difference between

race and super-race. However scandalous this may appear to the profane and plebeian mentality of today, we decisively hold firm to the divine character - in the literal meaning of the word - which some races can have in comparison to others, in which lead the heredity of a suprabiological and, we can say, suprahuman factor is not transmitted with the blood.

Thus, it seems to us, the doctrine of Comte de Gobineau has a glimmer of truth, but not more. The decadence of the qualities and factors which constitute the greatness of a race is not - as she held - the effect of mixing this race with others, nor the effect of its ethnical, biological, and demographical decay: instead, the truth is that a race decays when its spirit decays, when that inner tension, to which it owed its original form and its spiritual type, fails. Then a race mutates, or is corrupted, because it is damaged in its most hidden root; then it loses that invisible, indomitable, and transforming virtue, at which contact, other races, far from contaminating it, take on little by little the form of its civilisation, and are pulled by it as if by a vaster current.

This is the reason why the return to race cannot entail for us just a return to blood - particularly in these crepuscular items, in which almost irreparable mixings have occurred. It must entail a return to the spirit of race, not in the totemic sense, but in the aristocratic sense, that is to say, in connection with the original seed of our 'form', of our civilisation.

So, if we affirm the return to race and the return to tradition, the idea of the Leader lies at the centre of this idea. In their solar individuality, the Leaders represent for us the concrete and active expression of spirit as race and of race as spirit; they are reanimations of the same formative primordial idea, sleeping in the depths of blood as the foundations of 'form', victorious over chaos and animality, and carried, consciously or not, in potency or in act, by all the non-degenerate members of a group. The Leaders establish that inner tension; they reawaken the 'divine' elements of a transformed blood. Hence the magic of an authority that has nothing violent and tyrannical about it, but rather something regal; the magic of an action 'through presence', of an indomitable 'action-without-action' - according to the expression of the Far East (*wei wu wei*). Here is the path toward rebirth. The numerous forces of a lineage, which are fatally under way towards deterioration and disintegration when they are deprived of this inner support and abandoned to the ensemble of material, ethnic, and even political conditions in the narrow sense, then find again a steady and living point of unity, and

participate in a higher reality: in the same way as an animal body if the power of a soul is infused into it.

Every defence of race and blood that leaves this higher aspect out of consideration, and, through the symbols of the 'nation', the 'people', or the 'collective', evokes in any way the mixture, the pure law of blood and soil, signifies nothing but a return to totemism and an inclination to fall back into the social forms characteristic of an inferior humanity. Basically, the yearning of the socialist, democratic, and communist ideologies leads toward no other condition - the phenomenon of the Soviets illustrates exactly the effect of this ideology, which, following a Jew (Marx), reviving the old, barbaric, Slavic collectivism and bringing it to a new, rationalised, form, created an ominous breeding ground of contagion for the wastes of a traditional Europe.

Far from being a direction towards the future, all this is - from an ideal point of view - nothing but a direction towards the past, towards what was surpassed at the time of the formation of every true traditional civilisation and every Empire. Through the 'socialist' and democratic-nationalist ideal may still be surrounded with a halo, the fact still remains that - *mutatis mutandis* - it finds its perfect reflection in the social forms of a lower, anti-Aryan, and anti-Nordic type; and if the currents which aim at these ideals require the subordination of the individual, and of every higher spiritual possibility, to the law of blood and soil, they basically teach a 'morality' which is not different from what an animal breed, if it became conscious, could claim for itself.

Opposed to our truth - let us repeat it one more time - similar tendencies express the direction of involution and abdication over against achievement. It is that which is awakened in moments of exhaustion and weakness, moments in which the *chaos* hidden in the *cosmos* increases; it is a phenomenon that appears when an epoch is no longer able to produce superior beings in whom the entire tension and tradition of a superior race is located, concentrated, and liberated in transcendent and solar forms.

The aristocratic idea of a tradition of Leaders - not the democratic or 'nationalist' idea, which depends upon the mere community of blood, soil, and birth - must be the foundation and axis of every doctrine of race rightly understood - of our restoration.

The Roots of European Evil

We said that the modern world has now reached a point where it is useless to delude ourselves about the efficacy of any reaction not originating from a deep spiritual change. We can only free ourselves from the evil which corrodes us by a total negation, by a spiritual impulse which truly makes us into new beings, reopening for us the possibility of grasping a new world, of breathing a new freedom: even if everything in which the West vainly prides itself should also collapse.

In the awareness that our world is a world of ruins, we must push ourselves again toward those values which allow us to recognise unequivocally the cause of such a ruin.

The first root of European decadence is 'socialism', the anti-hierarchy.

The fundamental forms which have developed from this root are:

- The regression of the castes.
- The development of sciences and positive philosophy.
- Technology and the illusion of mechanical power.
- The new romantic and activist myth.

These are the four principal roots of European decline, which we shall now consider one by one and then oppose them with our hierarchical values.

In this way we will exhibit the fundamental features of another vision of the world and of life, which must have value for us as a secret force and as the soul of our battle.

The Regression of the Castes. Gold and Labour

We already alluded to the fact that if we could formulate a law in a very general way which gives us the 'direction of history' for modern times, we could not speak of progress, but, if anything, of involution.

In this respect, there is a process which imposes itself upon everyone's consideration in the most objective and evident way: the process of the regression of the castes. As the 'direction of history' since the pre-historic era, we see precisely the progressive decline from one to the other of the four great castes - the 'solar' (royal-sacred) caste, the warrior nobility, the bourgeoisie (merchants), and the serfs - in which, in traditional civilisations, and particularly in Aryan Indian, the qualitative differentiation of human possibilities found its reflection.

In the first place, we witness, in fact, the twilight of the age of royal divinity. The leaders, who are 'divine' beings, who completely unite in themselves the two powers, the royal and the pontifical authorities, belong to a remote, almost mythical, past. This first fall occurred through a progressive deterioration of the Nordic-Aryan force, the creator of civilisation. In the German ideal of the Holy Roman Empire we recently recognised the last echo of this tradition, of this 'solar' level.

Once this peak passed, authority passes to the next lower level: the caste of warriors. It is about monarchs who are now simply military leaders, lords of temporal justice, absolute political sovereigns. The formula of 'divine right' subsists at times, but as a mere memory lacking content. Behind the institutions that only formally preserved the traits of the ancient aristocratic-sacred constitution, there were often only sovereigns of this type left in antiquity. After the fall of the universal medieval unity, this phenomenon is manifested in a definitive and decisive way.

The second fall: aristocracy declines, chivalry is extinguished, the great European monarchies are 'nationalised' and fall into decline. Through revolutions and 'constitutions', when they are not simply supplanted by regimes of a different type (republic, federation), they are transformed into the aforementioned empty survival, subject to the 'will' of the 'nation'. In parliamentary, republican, or national democracies, the establishing of capitalist oligarchies conveys the fatal passage of authority and power from the second to the modern equivalent of the third caste: from the warrior to the merchant. In place of the virile principles of loyalty and honour, the doctrine of the 'social contract' now

takes over. The social bond is now utilitarian and economic: it is a contract based upon the convenience and the interest of individuals. In such a way, the bond necessarily passes from the personal to the impersonal. Gold acts as an intermediary, and those who take possession of it and know how to multiply it (capitalism, industrialism) also virtually reach the taking of power. Aristocracy gives way to plutocracy, the warrior to the banker, the Jew, and the industrialist. The trade in money and interest, previously confined to the ghetto, becomes glory and pinnacle of the latest age. The hidden force of socialism, of anti-hierarchy, begins to reveal its power visibly at this point.

The crisis of bourgeois society, the proletarian revolt against capitalism, the manifesto of the 'Third International', and the correlative slow rise and organisation of groups and of the masses in purely collective and mechanised forms - in the context of a new 'civilisation of labour' - indicate to us the third fall, through which authority passes to the last of the traditional castes, that of the slave labourer and mass-man, with the consequent reduction of every horizon and value to the level of matter and number.

If super-human spirituality and 'glory' characterise the 'solar' period; heroism, loyalty, and honour, that of the warriors; and gold, that of traders and Jews; so the coming of the slaves must correspond exactly to the exaltation of the principle of the slaves: labour is raised up to a religion. And the slave's hatred comes to proclaim sadistically: 'Whoever doesn't work, doesn't eat', and its idiocy, glorifying itself, forms sacred incense from the emissions of human sweat: 'Work ennobles man', 'Work is greatness', 'Work is an ethical duty'. Thus, the sepulchral stone covers the cadaver of Man, and the cycle of involution seems to be conclusively completed.

No other ideal offers the future to the priests of 'Progress'. For the moment, the struggle continues between the Jew, omnipotent master of gold, and the revolt of the slave; and that 'civilisation', which our contemporaries are so proud of, hangs over a monstrous mechanism moved by the brute and impersonal forces of gold, capital and the machine.

The bonds of dependence, far from loosening, have tightened again. But alongside force there is no longer authority, alongside obedience, no longer recognition, alongside rank, no longer superiority. The master is no longer such because he is master, but because he is the one who has more money, because he is the one who, even though he does

not see at all beyond the small horizon of ordinary human life, dominates the material conditions of life; by means of which it is even possible for him to subdue or to oppress those whose breadth of thought is immeasurably more powerful than his own: the possibility of the most despicable fraud and the most awful slavery. The power and the tie of dependence depersonalised and mechanised, have become capital and machine. Thus, it is no paradox: only today can we speak seriously of true slavery, if we can speak of it only in the Western economic and mechanical organisation, along the direction of brutalisation, of which 'free America' gives us the best example.

Perhaps, after a short cycle of generations, duly and scientifically educated to the standards of 'social service', the sense of individuality will be completely removed, and, with it, the last remnants of awareness necessary to realise, at least, that they are slaves. Perhaps, what will remain will be that state of renewed innocence, which will differ from the mythical Eden by the fact that 'Labour' will reign in it as universal and sole purpose of existence, which Kirilov speaks about in Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed*: this is the ideal of the Soviets.

A dependency without leaders, an organisation indifferent toward every qualitative requirement - this 'social' ideal, impersonal, brute force, made of mere quantitateness and money, creates it.

We said: without more leaders. Let us not be deceived by this indeed. Let us repeat that the race of Masters, if it has not already disappeared, is close to doing so; and everyone proceeds in a crescendo of levelling, rushing toward a life that is more material and faceless. The so-called 'upper' or 'ruling' classes of today are such only ironically: the great leaders of the world financial organisation - such as the technicians, industrialists, functionaries, and so on - represent nothing more than those freedmen to whom the masters once delegated control of the slaves and administration of their goods. The same yoke subjects them to the immense, blind, automatised mob of workers and employees, and above it, neither slaves, nor freedman supervising slaves, having any respite - and, above them: no one - this is the terrible truth of 'civilised men'!

And inwardly how much narrower, more dependent, and poorer is the day of the masters of gold and machine, without break, feverish, saturated with responsibilities, than the day of a humble artisan, so likewise is the day of the 'upper' classes, for whom gold serves only to multiply morbidly their thirst for 'distraction', luxury, sensual pleasure, and further profits.

There is no trace of Masters in all this, and in their absence there is no meaning in this pseudo-organisation. If one asks the millions of prisoners, among their machines and offices, for a reason, a justification, beyond the ephemeral thrill with which they seek to ape the 'refinement' of the 'upper classes', they will have no answer. But if one goes up and asks the 'leaders of the economy', the investors, the masters of steel, coal, oil, gold, and peoples (have we not seen that the political problem today tends to be reduced to the economic one?) - again, no answer. This means for life have controlled life; rather, they have reduced it to their means. And thus the great darkness of burst into the light of the pompous illusions of Western pride, a darkness which expresses itself in a very new and monstrous myth: that of work for work, of work as end-in-itself, as intrinsic value and universal duty.

The masses of men on earth are devoid of light, reduced to pure quantity - only to quantity - made equal in the material identity of a parts dependent on an unstoppable mechanism left to itself, which can no longer do anything - this is the perspective that lies at the base of the economic-industrial direction which matches the entire West.

Those who feel that this is the death of life, and the coming of the brute law of matter, the triumph of a fate so much more frightening since it is no longer personal, also feel that there is only one remedy: to break the Semitic yoke of gold, to go beyond the fetish of sociality and the law of interdependence, to restore aristocratic values, values of quality, of difference, and of heroism, to restore that sense of metaphysical reality which everyone today opposes, and which we, furthermore, affirm against everyone.

And so, if understood as a revolt against economic tyranny, against the state of affairs in which the quantity of gold, and not the individual, rules; in which the concern for the material conditions of existence corrodes the whole of existence; if understood as the pursuit of economic equilibrium, on the basis of which diverse forms of life, no longer reducible to the material plane, are able to free themselves and to develop - if understood exactly in this way, but only in this way, we could recognise a necessary function and a future even in some extremist currents.

The major cause of the lack of a qualitative differentiation in modern life consists precisely in the fact that it no longer leaves room for a type of activity that is not valued in terms of practical utility and sociality. The economic bias creates a levelling; imposing itself upon all alike, since differences based on gold and the mechanical-economic hierarchy

are not differences. They return in a single level, a single quality; beyond this level, taken in the totality of all its possible differentiations, it would be necessary that other levels exist, yet do not exist today: independent of the first and to which the first should be subordinated, and not the other way around, as is the condition of things in contemporary society.

This is why, when the hypertrophy of such evil in monstrous banking-industrial trusts arrogates to itself the right to 'imperialism', we, unable to cry, can only laugh. And to calmly counter with the idea that a radical revolution against gold and capital is the inescapable premise of the true *Imperium*. Passing through to the aspiration that spreads at the base of all revolutionary ideologies as symptom of revolt against modern slavery, we nevertheless transcend it, ascertaining that it is itself pervaded by the same evil: it likewise sees only economic and social problems, it does not demand liberation from the economic yoke in the name of differentiated, meta-economic, and metaphysical values - not because forces, free from economic concerns, can work in the depths - but rather only for an egalitarian and an even 'more socialistic' arrangement, considered better, of the same economic problem determined by the purely material and utilitarian needs of the masses. Whence, in such tendencies, arises a mistrust, an intolerance and an almost concealed resentment, let us not say for what is spiritual, but even for what is 'intellectual', deemed a 'luxury': beyond economic equilibrium, they do not have an eye for non-economic differences - neither seeing them nor desiring them: with the same spirit of plebeian and egalitarian intolerance of slaves in rebellion that was already revealed in the fall of ancient Romanity.

In conclusion, it is necessary to fight the main root of the European evil with two weapons. We need not insist upon and stop at the first: it consists in creating an elite, in bringing out, conscientiously and tenaciously, new differences, interests, and new qualities from the undifferentiated substance of the individuals of today, so that an aristocracy, a race of masters, of rulers, may return. This, first and foremost.

In the second place, what is necessary is a movement, a revolt from the depths, which frees us from the machine, from extrinsic, inorganic, automatic, violent dependence; which breaks the Jewish, capitalist, economic yoke; which mocks the duty of labour imposed as universal law and end-in-itself; which, in short, frees us, and opens a passageway for air and light - for hierarchy cannot be restored by violence, the control of needs, or the interplay of passions, interests and ambitions, but only

by the free and spontaneous recognition which springs from the sense of values and of transcendent forces, from faithfulness toward one's own way of being, whatever it might be, from consciousness of nature, dignity and quality. An organic, direct, real, hierarchy: freer and stronger than any other.

How not to recognise, then, that the reality of the past is also a prophetic myth for a better future? The return to the system of castes is the return to a system of truth, justice, and 'form' in the higher sense.

In the caste there is the ideal of a community of activity, profession, blood, heredity, laws, and rights, which correspond more precisely to pre-established, typical modes of being, to organic manifestations of nature's suitably refined; in it, there is, as a presupposition, the will to be what one is, the will to realise one's own nature and destiny as quality, silencing the individualistic and opportunistic velleities which are the cause of every disorder and disorganisation; in it, there is the overcoming of quantitative uniformity, of centralisation, and of standardisation; in it there is the basis for a social hierarchy which immediately reflects a hierarchy of modes of being, of values, and of qualities, and which rises up from the material to the spiritual ordered by levels, from the formless to the deformed, from the collective to the universal and the supra-individual.

In the most perfect way, ancient India shows us this ideal, which, however, is found in different forms in other civilisations as well, up to our Nordic-Roman Middle Ages.

Our point of reference cannot be anything else.

As substratum, the healthy activity of the lowest class (*shudra*), no longer anarchised by demagogic ideologies, led by experts in trading, commerce, and economic-industrial organisation, simplified through simplified needs (*Vaishya*); beyond the *Vaishya*, the *Kshatriya*, the warrior nobility who recognise the value and purpose of war, and in whose heroism, pride, and victory, the higher vindication of a whole people can burn; beyond the *Kshatriya*, the *Brahmana*, the solar race of spirit and Wisdom, of those who 'see' (*rishi*), who 'can', and who testify by their life that we are on top of this dark earth, but our vital roots are lost at the top in the brightness of the 'heavens'. At the apex of everything, as myth and limit, the ideal of the *Chakravartin*, 'the King of the World', the invisible emperor, whose strength is hidden, powerful, and unconditioned.

Science versus Wisdom

As power, depersonalised and socialised, has become gold, capital, so likewise has wisdom, depersonalised and socialised, become 'concept', 'Rationality'. And this is the second root of the European evil.

Philosophy as well as Western positive science are, in their essence, fundamentally socialistic, democratic, and anti-hierarchical. They propose as 'true' only what can be universally recognised, which anyone can assent to, whatever life he allows himself to live, provided only that he has a certain education. And so, as in the criterion of the 'majority' of political democratism, they presuppose equality, and, under the criterion of quantity, they dominate everything in this field that could be equality, the irreducibility of quality, or the prerogative of quality.

And it is useless to promulgate individualistic, or even relativistic, doctrines, since in the manner of promulgating them, which is the conceptual manner of secular philosophy, it shows that one has adhered to the democratic, impersonal, and collectivist presuppositions which lie at the base of that very philosophy. The way is totally different - it would be necessary to begin by disputing, in the first place, those very presuppositions, if we do not want to fall again into the foolishness of an imperialism which, instead of imposing itself through that hierarchy from above, which was mentioned, appeals to popular recognition for its own justification. And here one will begin to realise the enemy we have to fight with, and how frighteningly the 'culture' itself, not only the 'society' of our contemporaries, in a democratism in action - and one begins to see what renunciation they must demand of themselves in order to regain health.

Just as gold is a reality which has become indifferent to the quality of the individuals who own it, so is the 'knowledge' of contemporary men. Let us put it better: following a will to equality, an anti-hierarchical intolerance, and, therefore, a socialistic prejudice, the knowledge of Europeans had necessarily to come to something on which the effect of individual differences and of the condition - through knowledge - of an active individual differentiation, is reduced to a minimum; thus, it referred either to physical experience, more or less equal for all men insofar as they are animals (positive science), or to the world of abstraction and of verbal conventions (philosophy and rationalism).

The need for the socialisation of knowledge has led fatally to its abstraction, and therefore created an insuperable hiatus between

knowledge itself and life, between knowledge and being, as well as what can be the quality of phenomena and 'metaphysical reality'. Thus, in the West, thought, when it is not reduced to a tool for the more or less conventional transcription of the most exterior, fully quantitative, and uniform aspect of material things, is the creator only of unreality, 'reified' words, and empty logical schematics, or becomes an intellectual sport, all the more ridiculous for the good faith in which it is practiced.

From this comes the whole unreality of the modern spirit: split off from life, man today is almost a shadow that bustles among schemes and programs and intellectual superstructures, powerless to dominate reality and life itself, while making himself more and more dependent upon a science which piles abstractions onto abstractions, slave as it is to phenomenal law ascertained but not understood by it, and exhausting himself in mechanical and exteriority, without any possibilities for the inner being of man.

We certainly cannot get to the heart of this question here, due to the limits of the present exposition. It should not be thought, however, that it is unrelated to the problem of the Empire: for us the problem of Empire is the problem *par excellence*, with respect to which more specialised problems cannot be separated and made into domains of their own. Particularism, the common indifference of the various forms of human activity - here politics, there science, here practice, there religion, and so on - is, as we have already stated, itself as an aspect of European decline, and an unequivocal symptom of Europe's inorganicity.

The foundation of the imperial hierarchy must be based on knowledge: 'The wise should govern', Plato already said - and this is a central, absolute, definitive point in every rational order of things. But nothing would be more ridiculous than to associate this knowledge with some technical competence, positive science, or philosophising speculation: instead, it coincides with what, from the outset, we have called Wisdom, a traditional expression used by both the classical West and the East. Wisdom is as much aristocratic, individual, real, substantial, organic, and qualitative, as the knowledge of the 'civilised' is democratic, social, universalistic, abstract, levelling, and quantitative. Here again, there are two worlds, two eyes, two different visions, opposed against each other without any abatement.

To know, according to Wisdom, does not mean 'to think', but to be the thing known: to live it, to realise it inwardly. One does not really know a thing unless one can actively transform one's consciousness into it. Therefore, only what ensues from direct individual experience

will count as knowledge. And, this is just the opposite of the modern mentality, for which, whatever appears immediately to the individual is called 'phenomenon', or 'subjective', and so it posits some other thing behind it as 'true reality', which is simply imagined or presumed (the 'thing in itself' of the philosophers, the 'Absolute' of vulgar religion, 'matter', 'ether', or 'energy' of science). Wisdom is an absolute positivism which regards only what can be grasped by direct experience as real, and everything else as unreal, abstract, and illusory.

It will be objected that, from this point of view, all knowledge would be reduced to the finite and contingent things presented by the physical senses - and, indeed, this is the way things are, and how they must remain, for the great mass of men, who can only truly claim to know this finiteness and contingency, which remains such even after all the scientific pseudo-explanations. However, beyond this, we maintain the possibility of forms of experience different from the sensory forms of the common man, not 'given', not 'normal', which can be reached by means of certain active processes of inner transformation. The peculiarity of such transcendent experiences (of which the 'supraworld', the 'field of beings', the seven heavens, the spheres of fire, and so on, were only different representations of humanity linked to Tradition) is to be direct, concrete, and individual, as much as sensory experience itself, and yet to see reality, beyond the contingent, spatio-temporal aspect characteristic of everything that is sensory. Aspects that science also tries to transcend, on condition of even transcending everything which is truly knowledge - vision, individual and living evidence - in favour of mere probabilities, incomprehensible 'uniformities', and abstract explanatory principles.

This would be the sense in which we speak of 'metaphysical' reality. It must be borne in mind, however, that we speak of experience, and only of experience; from the traditional point of view, there is not a finite reality and an absolute reality, but a finite manner and an absolute manner of experiencing reality, a finite manner and an absolute manner of experiencing reality, a finite eye and an absolute eye; the whole so-called 'problem of knowledge' is enclosed within the interiority of every being, and does not depend on 'culture', but on his capacity for freeing himself from the human, i.e., from the sensory, the rational, and the emotional, and of identifying himself with one or another form of 'metaphysical' experience', along with a hierarchy which, at its limit, culminates in a state of perfect identity, spiritual vision, full suprasensual and suprarational accomplishment of the thing in the I and of the I in the

thing, which realises a state of power and, simultaneously, a state of absolute obviousness with respect to the thing itself, in which no longer asks oneself anything, and one discovers that it is just a successor to reason as it is to speak.

This, in broad outline, is the meaning of the Wisdom which constitutes the foundation of 'metaphysical' teaching and of spiritual science, whose rite of initiation originally produced the transformation of consciousness necessary for 'knowledge' and metaphysical 'vision', and whose tradition has maintained itself in the West, in clandestine form, even after the Semiticisation and decline of its ancient civilisation.

The point to be borne in mind is that sacred and sapiential science, since, unlike secular science, is not a 'knowing', but a being, and cannot be taught by books or universities or transmitted by words: to gain it, it is necessary to be transformed, to transcend common life for a superior life. It measures exactly the quality and reality of individual life, of which it becomes an inviolable privilege and an organic part, rather than being a concept, or a notion, which can be put into one's head like something into a sack, without at the same time having to be transformed or to budge in the slightest in regard to what one is.

Hence the natural aristocracy of Wisdom; hence its resolute non-popularisation, non-communicability. Another taboo of European is precisely communicability: they think, more or less, that intelligible being and speakable being are the same thing. They do not realise that, although this may make sense with respect to intellectual abstractions and conventions at the basis of experiences - those characteristic of the physical senses - presumed to be roughly the same for everybody, nevertheless, where this uniformity ceases, where a qualitative differentiation is reasserted, discursive communicativity can no longer be a criterion.

Since it is based precisely on the evidence of actual experiences beyond the experience of common men, Wisdom leaves open just one road: to try and bring oneself to the same level, by means of a free and creative act, as the one who sets out the teaching, so as by knowing from experience what the other knows, or say with one word, what otherwise will remain only words. To the socialisation, depersonalisation, and conceptualisation of knowledge, to the democratic inclination to 'popularise', to weaken the superior for the purposes of the inferior, so that the majority can participate in knowledge without a change of mind or ceasing to be inferior - we oppose, without compromise, the opposite aristocratic attitude. There must exist hierarchies in

knowledge itself; there must exist many truths separated from each other by deep, immense, impassable gulfs, corresponding exactly to the many qualities of life and power, to the many distinct individualities: there must exist an aristocracy of knowledge, and 'universality', understood in a communicative, democratic, and uniform manner must cease to be a criterion. We must not descend to them; they are obliged to raise themselves to us, by dignifying themselves, by ascending for real - according to their possibilities, along the hierarchy of beings - if they want to partake of higher and metaphysical forms, which are the points of reference to themselves and to the lower and physical forms.

From this, freedom also ensues, the open field, the breath that gives Wisdom. In socialised knowledge there is always instead a hidden 'you must', a hidden, intolerant, moralistic constraint: 'scientific' or 'philosophical' truth demands to be recognised by everyone as 'the truth'; in the face of it, one is not allowed to take a different stand. The expression of a collective despotism, it aims to reign despotically over all, making all equal with respect to it - and it is precisely on the basis of this will that it has organised, built its arms, its ordeals, its method, its violence. In Wisdom, on the contrary, the individual is dissolved, restored, returned to himself: he has his truth, which expresses his life exactly and profoundly, which is a special way of experiencing and expressing reality, which does not contradict or exclude other, different ways, which are equally possible in the differentiation on which the hierarchy of Wisdom is based.

This discussion will suffice as far as the second root of the European evil and its corrective are concerned; already, in this brief outline, the principle that 'the wise must govern' is justified. In the order of Wisdom, the hierarchy of knowledge is coextensive with the hierarchy of strength and superiority of individuals. Knowledge is being, and being ability and power, so that it attracts spontaneously to itself the dignity of *Imperium*. The true foundation of the primordial concept, rooted in the Tradition of 'divine royalty', was nothing other than this.

Opposed to this, let us repeat, there is the whole of Europe, with its age-old inheritance and organisation: there is, as we said, the reign of professors, 'intellectuals', glasses without eyes, the 'cultured', academic, university world, which, in claiming for itself the privilege of knowledge and spirit, testifies only to the extent which they have been able to push the decline and abstraction of modern man.

Those who know and those who believe

But there is an even greater usurpation: that which religion - in the narrowest and newest sense of the term - accomplishes by securing for itself control and expertise in matters of the 'sacred' and of the 'divine'.

The sacred and the divine are matters of faith. This is the truth which has been imposed on Europe of late. Our truth is otherwise: it is better to know to know that we don't know rather than to believe.

In the contemporary mentality, there is a central point at which the attitudes of materialistic science and religion meet: in an identical renunciation, in an identical pessimism, in an identical agnosticism about the spiritual, declared and methodical in one case, veiled in the other.

The premise of materialistic science is basically that science - in the sense of real, positive and empirical knowledge - can only subsist in what is physical; and that in the non-physical there can be no science, so that the scientific method neglects it and abandons it, by lack of authority, to belief, to the dull and arbitrary abstractions of philosophy, or to the 'exigencies' of sentiment and morality.

In addition, religion, insofar as it is focused exclusively on faith and does not admit an esoteric initiatory teaching beyond the profane religion imposed on the masses, or a gnosis beyond pious superstition, ends up with the same renunciation. In fact, one believes only when one does not know and thinks one cannot know. Hence, there is again the same agnosticism of the 'positivists' with respect to whatever is not material and gross reality.

We, on the contrary, - basing ourselves on a tradition much more ancient and real than the one which can be claimed by the 'faith' of Western man, on a tradition which is not proved by doctrines, but by deeds and acts of power and clairvoyance - affirm instead the possibility and the concrete reality of what we have called 'Wisdom'. We thus assert the possibility of a positive, direct, methodical, empirical knowledge in the 'metaphysical' field, just as science strives to gain in the physical field, and, just like science, it remains above any moral or philosophical belief of men.

Therefore, in the name of this Wisdom and of those who can attest to this Wisdom, we assert that all those who, within the scope of religious superstitions, by mere aspirations of the 'soul', by dogmas, traditions in the narrowest and most sectarian sense, hallucinations, and acts of blind faith, making themselves custodians of the sacred and of the divine, must be divested of authority and ousted. Those who know

and who, insofar as they know and are able - just as those god-men known and venerated by all great ancient traditions - must replace those who 'believe' - the blind leading the blind.

And it appears, therefore, that dwelling on that which is anti-Europe and anti-democracy in the cognitive field - on what is Wisdom, in the order of this very work - represents nothing but a superfluous deviation: regardless, the identification, which we can claim, of the two powers - the sacred and the temporal - in a unique intensely personalised hierarchy, could neither be justified nor understood, and instead the most sinister misunderstandings become possible.

But, inclusive of what has been examined, our declaration that we intransigent imperialists do not know what to do with a religious hierarchy (as opposed to the Gnostic and initiationary one), is confirmed and justified. In truth, it would add nothing to a material organisation to which perhaps it would be added: it would only add an empty outline of empty forms, the fantasies of faith and sentiment, the degradation into contradictory dogmas and into symbols and rites which are not its own and whose meaning it has lost. In sum, it would not produce the higher, solar, reality, testifying to it in potency, that we as pagans mean by spirit, but instead an absolute unreality, an anti-Aryan and anti-Roman rhetoric which is expressed in the same ethical field, favouring everything feminine, 'romantic', and escapist that is lurking in the Western soul.

It is necessarily a surpassing of both religious unrealism and materialised realism by a transcendent, virile, Olympian positivism.

Mechanical Force and Individual Power

The third of the European illusions is mechanical power which comes from the technical applications of profane science: in which, in a unanimous voice, they instead believe they see the legitimate pride, the triumph of Western civilisation.

Regarding the democratism which abides in the idea of the 'universality' of Western science, if the general spirit of the new Semitic doctrine is reflected in its socialist and egalitarian requirements, we should recognise also some antecedents in the Socratic method and in some aspects of later Greek intellectualism. Nevertheless, sharing in this kind of idea with Nietzsche, we may consider this an anticipation of and a prelude to the Judeo-Christian spirit, insofar as it is precisely in that

Judeo-Christian spirit that we see the universalistic and egalitarian application manifest itself in the most overwhelming, concrete and unequivocal manner. Greek culture reflects more an aristocratic concept of knowledge and the principal motifs of its speculation were drawn from the Wisdom traditions. The doctrine according to which actual knowledge is conditioned by a real process of 'purification' and self-transformation, directed by an active individual initiative or by the traditional power of a 'rite', and such knowledge is not a purely mental fact and even less - passing to another aspect - a matter of faith and of sentiment, remains a fundamental theme of the classical world, up until Neoplatonism. Instead, in the passive attitude of the followers of the new doctrine, in their intolerance towards every method and autonomous discipline of the individual as a path to a 'gnosis', to an actual spiritual experience - a concealed intolerance, still present in the various beliefs on 'revelation', 'grace', and the sinful aspect which any direct and precise initiative relying on the sole forces of man assumes - in all this there are enough themes of renunciation which, joined with the democratic and egalitarian *pathos*, can sufficiently account for the efficiency of Christianity itself regarding the social, popularised, inorganic, impersonal, character of modern knowledge.

But, beyond pernicious universalism, in modern science particularly, there is another fundamental point which comes from Christianity - we mean its dualistic presupposition. In modern science, nature, in fact, is thought as something 'different' - as inanimate, external, completely separated from man; it is assumed - or it is thought to be assumed - to be a reality in itself, wholly independent of those who know it and, even more, of the spiritual world of those who know it.

Now, what is revealed through and through is the theme characteristic of the unrealistic religious attitude in sharp contrast with the pagan-Aryan image of the world. The theme of the opposition of spirit to reality; the dualistic theme: the subjectivity of spirit against the objectivity of nature; the theme of the loss of the sense of what spiritual objectivity means. Reaching this point, natural reality was made extraneous, mute, inanimate, external, material - and it is precisely as such that it constituted the object a new science, of Western profane science.

Far from exhausting itself in naturalism - as today only the ignorance or the tendentious falsification of some people are able to present it - beyond knowing the ideals of manly overcoming and of absolute liberation, in the pagan conception, the world was a living body, suffused

with secret, divine, and demonic forces, with meanings and with symbols, as illustrated by that saying of Olympiodorus: 'the sensible expression of the invisible'. Man lived in an organic and essential connection with the forces of the world and of the supraworld, so that it could be said, with the hermetic expression, to be 'a whole within the whole, composed of all the powers': the sense which is revealed by the Aryan-aristocratic doctrine of the Atman is no different. And that conception was the basis on which, as a whole in its perfect way, the *corpus* of the sacred traditional sciences developed.

Christianity smashed this synthesis, creating a tragic gulf. Thus, on the one hand, spirit became 'what is beyond', the unreal, the subjective - hence the primary root of European abstractionism; on the other hand, nature became matter, outward appearance closed in itself, enigmatic phenomenon - hence the attitude which was to give rise to modern science.¹ And just as interior, direct, integral knowledge given by Wisdom was replaced by external, intellectual, discursive-scientific, profane knowledge, so the organic and essential connection of man with the deep forces of nature, which constituted the base of traditional rite, of the power of sacrifice, and of magic, was replaced by an extrinsic, indirect, brute relation; the relation peculiar to technology and machine. Thus, in that way, the Semitic revolution contains the seeds of the mechanisation of life.

In the machine we find reflected the impersonal and egalitarian side of the science which produces it. In the same way that gold is dependency reduced to the impersonal; in the same way modern culture has as ideal a universalistic knowledge, good for all, inorganic and transmittable as one thing - we find ourselves on a level with the world of the machine facing an equally impersonal, inorganic power, based on

¹ Do not accuse us of one-sidedness or bias by indicating the various dualisms known also by the ancient pagan and oriental world. These dualisms have a different character from the Christian. Even Plato knew the 'other' - but this 'other' was considered as a non-being, as something unintelligible and illusory, not as a reality in itself - and the Greek spirit knew the idea of matter only with late Stoicism. Oriental *maya* indicates a sense of the presence of the spirit in things more than dualism, to make one feel the sensible aspect of these as a veil of deceptive appearance. The Iranian doctrine knew two cosmic forces in battle, but that precisely for this reason they were on the same plane and approached a synthesis given by the final predominance of one over the other. Pure nature, disanimated, purely material and opposed to the I, arose only when the spirit was exiled in absolute 'afterworld', and that is only from the Judeo-Christian mentality.

automatisms which produce the same effects with an absolute indifference with respect to the one who acts. The whole immortality of such a power, which belongs to all and to no one, which is not value, which is not justice, which, by means of force, can make one powerful, without first making one superior, becomes clear. Just as, however, it is clear that it is possible only because not a shadow of true action is found in that order either: no effect, in the world of technology and the machine, is directly dependent upon the 'I' as its cause, but, between the one and the other, there is, as condition of efficacy, a system of determinisms and of laws which are known but not understood and which, by a pure act of faith, are deemed to be constant and uniform. For what the individual is and for direct individual power, scientific technology says nothing, or rather: in the midst of his knowledge of phenomena and of his innumerable diabolical machines, the individual today is extremely wretched and powerless, more and more conditioned rather than conditioning, moving more and more on a path on which the necessity of will is reduced to a minimum, the sense of oneself, the indomitable fire of the individual entity is gradually dying in weariness, in desolation, in degeneration.

With the 'laws' discovered by his science, which for us are mere statistical-mathematical abstractions, he will also be able to succeed in destroying or in creating a world - but that does not mean that his real relation with the various events would be changed in any way: fire will continue to burn him; organic change to trouble his conscience; time, passion, and death to dominate him with their law. In general: he will be absolutely the same being as before, in the same situation as before relative to that level in the hierarchy of beings, which man with all that is human represents.

To surpass that level - to integrate oneself - to accomplish the action, feeling it, leading it to work not below but above natural determinisms, not among phenomena but among causes of phenomena, directly, with the irresistibility and the right proper to what is superior - this, instead, is the path to true power, which is identified with the path of Wisdom itself: for where knowing entails being, certainty also entails power.

But that task demands first of all the overcoming of dualism, the restoration of the pagan vision of nature, of that living conception, a sapiential imagery, which all great ancient civilisations had.

When man, starting as a phantom, becomes once again a 'being who is' and restores contact and conformity with the deep forces of nature, rite, symbol and magic itself will no longer be 'fantasies', as the superstition of those who today would have it. Knowing nothing about it, they speak of it as a superstition surpassed by their science. And that power which is justice, which is the sanction of dignity, natural attribute of an integrated life into which he belongs as something living, individual, inalienable, will be known.

We repeat what we said at the beginning: Europe has created a world which in all its parts constitutes an irremediable and complete antithesis to what the traditional world was. There are no possible compromises and reconciliations, the two conceptions are opposed to each other, separated by an abyss over which any bridge is illusory. Moreover, semitic civilisation is proceeding with a dizzying velocity toward its logical consequences, and its ultimate conclusion, without intending to be prophets, will not be a long time coming. Those who foresee this conclusion and manage to feel all its absurdity and all its tragedy must therefore ask of themselves the courage to say no to everything.

It is all one world. These considerations about science and machine show quite clearly how far renunciation must go and yet how necessary and unavoidable it is. This renunciation, however, is not a leap into the void. The same considerations show how a different system of values, possibilities, and knowledge, just as complete and total, is possible - a completely different man and world; which can be recalled out of the shadows and revived as soon as that wave of fever and madness starts to recede from the West.

Activism and the Humanised World

The so-called activist, evolutionistic, 'Faustian' conception of life is closely connected with the coming of the machine in the West. The romantic exaltation of everything which is stress, quest, tragedy; religion, or, better said, drawing on Guenon's expression, the superstition of life understood as an irrepressible tension, as a concern that never finds satisfaction and, in a perpetual thirst and in a perpetual disgust, moves without pause from form to form, from sensation to sensation, from invention to invention; the obsession with 'doing' and with 'gaining', with what is new, with setting the 'record', with the unusual - all this consti-

tutes the fourth aspect of the European evil: an aspect which characterises unquestionably the physiognomy of Western civilisation and which, these days, has really reached a feverish crisis.

We already indicated how the root for his perversion also can be traced back to the Semitic lineage. The spirit of messianism is its spirit, its original matter. The hallucination of another world and of a messianic solution which flees from the present is the need for escape of the failures, of the pariahs, of the accursed, of those who are powerless to assume and to will the reality which is their; it is the inadequacy of the persons who suffer, whose being is desire, passion, and despair. Gradually, persistently hatched within the Semitic race and rendered still bolder and more necessary all the more of the political fortune of the 'chosen people' stumbled, this obscure reality developed from the dregs of the Empire and was the myth for the great revolt of the slaves, for the frenzied wave which pagan Rome was overwhelmed.

And then, going beyond the Catholic order, pushing it aside, there was the spread of the millennial madness; and when the promise and the wait proved to be deceptive, and the goal receded to infinity, while need and desperation persisted and increased, what remained was a becoming without end, a pure tension, a gravitation to emptiness.

The flight from this world and the never-ending withdrawing of the other - this anxiety towards the world which is the secret of modern life, and which shouts desperately that it is of value to escape the consciousness of oneself - is likewise the deeper secret of Christianity after the failure of its eschatology; it is the immanent curse which it carries within itself and which spread to the peoples who converted to it, betraying the Olympian, classical, and Aryan ideal.

Combining the first theme which we saw rising from the messianic figure - the theme of the *ecclesia* which has become the law of social interdependence - with that second theme which has the same origin - combining those two themes we find ourselves facing the very law which dominates the whole culture and society of today: on the lower plane, the industrialist fever, means which become ends, mechanisation, the system of economic and materialist determinisms for which science beats the rhythm - linked with social climbing, with the race for success of men who do not live, but are lived - and, ultimately, the newest, already mentioned, myths of 'infinite progress' on the basis of 'social service' and of work having become an end-in-itself and universal duty; on the higher plane, the whole of the 'Faustian', evolutionistic,

Bergsonian doctrines which we mentioned above, and the basis of socialised truth, of the 'becoming of knowledge', of universalism, and of the impersonalism of the philosophies.

In the last analysis, all this confirms and testifies to one thing, the same thing: the decadence in the West of value and of individuality - of that value which it chatters about with so much impudence. Only lives which are not self-sufficient and which lose interest in themselves seek, in fact, for the 'other': they need society, a system of mutual supports, a collective law; and they aim - since they are not being, they are quest, dissatisfaction, dependence upon the future - they are becoming. They are terrified by man's natural environment: by silence, by solitude, by idle time, by the eternal - and they act, they toss restlessly, they turn here and there unceasingly, dealing with everything except themselves. They act to feel themselves, to prove that they exist: demanding form action and all that they do its own confirmation; actually, they do not act, but are obsessed by action.

This is the meaning of the activism of the moderns. It is not action, but the fever of action. It is the mad race of those who have been pushed away from the axis of the wheel and whose race is all the more insane the greater their distance from the centre. That race, that 'velocity', just as the tyranny of social law in the economic, industrial, cultural, and scientific domain, is entirely lethal, in the whole order of things which they have created, once the individual wandered from himself; once, with the sense of centrality, of stability, and of inner sufficiency, he also lost the sense of what really constitutes the value of individuality. The twilight of the West follows unquestionably from the twilight of the individual as such.

We said at the beginning that people today no longer know what action is. This is the truth. Those who would skim through some traditional Indian doctrines, with which, in addition, correspondences could be found also in our classical West, would certainly be surprised at the affirmation that everything which is movement, activity, becoming, and change is characteristic of the passive and feminine principle (*shakti*), whereas immobility is to be referred to the positive, masculine, solar principle (*shiva*). And in the same way, they would not quite realise the meaning of the other affirmation, contained in a relatively more well-known text - the Bhagavad-Gita; (IV, 18) - according to which the wise man distinguishes non-action from action and action from non-action.

What is expressed in this is neither quietism nor contemplative *nirvana* in any way: what is expressed, on the contrary, is the consciousness of what activity really is. The concept is rigorously identical to the one which Aristotle expressed in speaking of 'unmoved movers'. The one who is the cause of and in control of movement is not moved himself. He arouses, controls, and directs movement: he causes the act, but does not act, that is to say, he is not led by, not involved in action; he is not action, but rather an impassable, very calm superiority, whom action comes from and depends upon. This is why his potent and invisible control can be called, with Lao Tzu, an 'action-without-action' (*wei-wu-wei*). His opposite, the one who acts is acted on: the one who is seized by action, the one who is drunk with action, with 'will', with 'force' in elan, in passion, in enthusiasm, is already an instrument; he does not act but is subject to action; thus he appears - to these doctrines - as a feminine principle and a negation with respect to the higher, transcendent, motionless, and Olympian mode of the Masters of motion.

Well, what is exalted today in the West is precisely this negative, decentred, lower, action: a drunken spontaneity which is unable to control itself and to create a centre for itself, whose law is outside itself and whose secret workings is a will to dissipate and to keep up a whirl of activity. Thus, they call positive and masculine, and exalt, what is completely negative and feminine. In their blindness, contemporary men of the West do not see anything else and imagine that inner action, the secret force which does not create machines, banks, and companies, but men and gods, is not action, but renunciation, abstraction, a waste of time.

'Power', thus, is reduced to a synonym for violence; will is identified more and more only with the single type of what is animal-like and muscular, of that which the one assumes an antithesis, a resistance (within or outside himself) against which he strains and wears himself out. Tension, struggle, effort, aspiration - *nisus*, *struggle* - these are the watchwords of this activism.

But all this is not action.

Action is something elementary. It is something, simple, terrible, irresistible. There is no room in it for passion or for its antithesis, nor for 'effort', and even less for 'humanity' and 'feeling'. It starts from absolute centres without hatred, without craving, and without pity; from a calmness which terrifies and immobilises; from a level of 'creative indifference' superior to every opposition.

It is command. It is the fearsome power of the Caesars. It is the concealed and silent action of the Emperors of the Far East, inevitable like the forces of nature, whose 'purity' it shares. It is what can still be felt breaking out of the magic immobility of some Egyptian portraits, of the fascinating slowness of certain ritual gestures. It is the naked, new Machiavellianism, in all its hardness and its inhumanity. It is what bursts out when - as in the high feudal Middle Ages - man becomes alone again, man next to man or man against man, cloaked in his strength or in his weakness, without escape, without law. It is what shines when - in heroism, in sacrifice, or in great sacrilege - a force stronger than good and evil, mercy, fear, and happiness arises in man, a force before which the eye no longer stares either at itself or at others and in which arises the primordial power of circumstances and persons.

What is called in physics dissipation of energy by friction - this is what, instead, Europeans call 'heroism', in which, like children, they pride themselves. The torment of torn up souls, the pathos of naive weaklings powerless to control themselves, to impose upon themselves silence and absolute will, all this is exalted in the West in the name of the 'tragic sense of life' since unbalance an dualism, 'guilty conscience', the sense of 'sin', of man as enemy of himself and angry against himself, has grown in the soul.

And complication arose from complication: action disappeared behind pleasure of feeling and of torment. Resistance, that is powerlessness, became a condition for the sense of self, hence the need for effort, the romantic exaltation of violence, the running in circles, the yearning, the superstition that the value is not in arriving, but in the running; not mastery and control, but painful, struggling, conquest; not precise, bare, fulfilled, realisation, but 'unending task'. Christianity, denying classical harmony, the sense of autarchy and of absolute limit, the sense of Olympian superiority, of Dorian simplicity, of active, positive, hard, immanent force has prepared the ground for a world of the obsessed and the shackled.

Everyone in the West knows of chains, blood, and darkness, but nothing of freedom. The shout of freedom, which is heard ringing out everywhere, is only a shout of prisoners, a howling of chained wild animals, a voice which comes from below. Modern 'voluntarism' is not will, but a desperate rhetoric which is substituted for will, a mental effusion to convince oneself of a will which one does not have. Identical obsessive signs, symptoms of worry, assertions which only testify to the

lack of and the need for what they assert, are all modern exhalations of 'power' and of 'individuality': the desperate aspects of European decadence under a hard law of 'seriousness' and 'duty'.

For everything in the West is, in a sinister way, serious, tragic, un-free. Everything betrays a sense of deep coercion which, in some, manifests as rigourism, prohibitionism, imperativism, moralist or rationalist intolerance, in others as romantic impulse and human pathos. Crystalline clarity, agile simplicity, detached in a spiritual joy of free play, irony, and aristocratic superiority, all this exists and is conceived of only as a myth. In any thing there reigns instead a new sense of identification, of collapse, of greedy interest. It is the world of michelangelesque prisons which still echoes in humanity, embellished with 'heroism' and 'universality', with a Beethoven and a Wagner. And, how much seriousness and romantic passion there is in the Nietzschean exaltation of the 'gay science', in the very laugh of Zarathustra! The curse of the crucified god has spread everywhere, has wrapped the whole of Europe, a block of metal and blood, in its deep pain.

This 'human' sense of life, so typical of the modern West, confirms its plebeian and lower aspect. That which some were ashamed of - 'man' - others took pride in. The ancient world elevated the individual to God, made every effort to unbind him from passion, to adapt him to transcendence, with the free air of the heights in contemplation as well as in action; it knew traditions of non-human heroes and of men of divine blood. The Semiticised world not only deprived the 'creature' of the divine, but finally reduced God to a human figure. Bringing back to life the demonism of a Pelasgian substratum, it substituted the pure Olympian regions, vertiginous in their radiant perfection, with the terrorist viewpoints of its apocalypses, of hells, of predestination, of perdition. God was no longer the aristocratic god of the Romans, the god of the patricians, to whom one prays standing, in the light of the fire, head up high and which is carried at the head of the victorious legions; it was no longer Donar-Thor, the exterminator of Thrym and Hymir, the 'strongest of the strong', the 'irresistible', the master of the 'refuge against terror', whose fearsome weapon, the hammer Mjolnir, in a representation corresponding to the Vajra of Shiva - the same lightning force which hallowed the divine kings of the Aryans; it was no longer Odin-Wotan, the one who brings victory, the Eagle, the host of the heroes who, in death on the battlefield, celebrated the highest cult of sacrifice and were transformed into the phalanx of immortals - but become, to say it with Rougier, the patron of the wretched and of the desperate, the holocaust,

the comforter of the afflicted who is implored with tears of ecstasy in the annihilation of oneself. Therefore, the spirit was materialised, the soul softened. Only what is passion, feeling, effort, was then experienced. Not only the supramundane sense for Olympian spirituality, but also for virile Nordic-Roman dignity disappeared little by little and, in a general degeneration, a contorted world of tragedy, of suffering and of seriousness followed: the 'human' world instead of the epic and Dorian world.

'Humanism': in all this - a dirty fog exhaled from the earth, which has prevented the vision of the heavens - some take pride as being the 'value' of the West. It spreads effectively in each of its forms, it is at the root of old and new romanticisms, of all sentimentalisms, of all modern enthusiasms of action and will.

And we shout: it is necessary to purify oneself from it! The task is just as hard as the eradication of the other described elements which canonise European decadence.

What is 'human' must be overcome, absolutely, without mercy. But, to come to this, it is necessary that individuals attain the feeling of inner liberation. Let it be known that this cannot be the object of thirst, it cannot be the object of a greedy quest by the shackled who, as such, have no right to it. Either it is, as a simple matter which is neither solemnly proclaimed nor theorised about, which is barely noticed, as a natural, elementary, and inalienable presence of the elect - or it is not. The more it is sought and desired, the more it is elusive, because necessity is fatal to it.

It is necessary to regain consciousness: as the one who, realising that he is running, gasping for breath in the scorching heat, would say to himself: 'So? What if I walked more slowly?' - and, walking more slowly: 'So? What if I stopped walking?' - and, ceasing to walk: 'So? What if I lie down on the ground, here, in the shade?' - and, lying on the ground, he would feel an infinite rest and recall with amazement his race, his old haste; likewise, the soul of the Moderns, which does not know rest, silence, nor a breathing space, must be gradually appeased. It is necessary to bring men back to themselves and to force them to find in themselves their purpose and their value. They should learn again to feel alone, without help and without law, until they awaken to the act of absolute command and of absolute obedience. So that, looking coldly around, they realise that there is nowhere to go, that there is nothing to ask for, nothing to hope for, nothing to fear. They should breathe again, released from the weight, and acknowledge the misery

and the weakness of both love and hate. They should stand up as simple, pure, and yet no longer human things.

In the superiority of aristocrats, in the high estate of souls in control themselves, they mock the turbid avidity with which slaves rush at the banquet of life. They retreat into an active indifference capable of everything in accordance with a renewed innocence. The power of putting their own life on the line and to stare, smiling, into the abysses, of giving without passion, of acting while placing on the same level both victory and defeat, success and failure - it should spring from that superiority which disposes of oneself like a thing and in which the experience of a principle than every death and every corruption truly awakens. The sense of rigidity, of effort, of the brute 'you must!' no longer exists except as the memory of an absurd mania. Acknowledging the illusion of all 'evolutions', of all 'providential plans', of all 'historicisms', acknowledging the illusion of all the 'goals' and the 'reasons' as leashes necessary only for those who, still children, don't know how to walk on their own, men will cease to be moved, but will move. If their 'I' becomes their centre, men and no longer ghosts, action in its primitive, elementary, absolute sense will spring up again from them.

And, here, then, if the poisonous fog of the 'human' world is dispelled, besides intellectualism, besides psychology, besides the passion and the superstition of men, nature in its free and essential state will reappear. Everything around will become free again, everything will breathe, at last. The great disease of romantic man, faith, will now be overcome through experience. To man, thus reintegrated, new eyes, new ears, new wings, will really and spontaneously open. The supernatural will cease to be the pallid escape of pallid souls. It will be reality and will become on and the same thing with the natural. In the pure, calm, powerful, and incorporeal light of a revived Dorian simplicity, spirit and form, interiority and exteriority, reality and supra-reality, will become and the same thing in the balance of both members, of which none is higher, none is slower than the other. It will thus be an epoch of transcendent realism: in the forces of those who believe they are men and do not know they are sleeping gods, the forces of the elements will awaken, up to the thrills of absolute illumination and of absolute resurrection.

And then the other great human constraint, that of the faceless social amalgam, will also be overcome. If the law which has made them parts of machines, stones linked together in the impersonal cement of

collective despotism and humanitarian ideologies is swept aside, individuals will each be the beginning and end in themselves; each closed in himself like worlds, rocks, peaks, clad only in their strength and in their weakness. To everyone a place - a combat post - a quality, a life, a dignity, a distinct force, matchless, irreducible. Their moral will be: you must assert yourself over the need to 'communicate' and to 'understand each other', over the ignominy of the pathos of fraternity, over the sensual delight of loving and feeling loved, of feeling equal and close - assert yourself over that subtle force of corruption which dissolves and weakens the sense of aristocracy. Incommunicability will be desired, in the name of an absolute and virile respect: valleys and peaks, stronger forces and weaker forces, one beside the other or one against the other, loyally acknowledged, in the discipline of the spirit inwardly on fire but externally stiff and hard as steel, containing the immensity of the infinite to a magnificent extent: militarily, as in a warlike enterprise, a son the battlefield. Precise relationships, order, *cosmos*, hierarchy. Rigorously specific groups which organise, without intermediaries and without attenuations, through actions in which some will luminously rise, others will irremediably fall. Above, solar and haughty beings, a race of Masters with a 'long, distant, fearsome look', which does not take, but give slight and power superabundantly, and, in a resolute conduct of life, aspires to a more and more extraordinary intensity, yet always balanced in its supernatural calm.

Then the romanticist myth, that of 'man' and of the 'human', will vanish and we will approach the threshold of great liberation. In a world of limpidity, the words of Nietzsche, the precursor, will then be able to ring out in a transcendent sense: 'How beautiful, how pure, these free forces, no longer stained by spirit!'

Our European Symbol

Nietzsche, Misunderstood

Once again, we end up facing two ideal worlds, whose opposition we do not want to mitigate, but rather to exacerbate.

A break and a total change are needed, if there is to be a solution.

Considering the situation we have reached, the effectiveness of grafts should no longer be hoped for. Nothing, on the basis of the values of our contemporary world, could save this cadaver which plays every day with resurrections and exchanges the thrills of agony for the thrills of awakening.

It is the substance itself which must be destroyed and renewed, radically - otherwise, everything that can be given as salvation will be contaminated; it will not save but will itself be subject to the identical evil.

In all fields - as we have seen - currently prevailing conceptions are the absolute opposite of the spiritual premises on the basis of which a restoration in the traditional sense can be reached. Thus, we must not hesitate to demand that everything which in modern man is part of what he had led to the current corruption be destroyed. But, at the same time, we must bear this in mind: we demand destruction only insofar as we know of higher, more glorious, more living forms. We do not want negation, but restoration. There is a complete, total, positive system of values, developed in correspondence with all the other forms which have occurred in the profane 'civilisation' of today, as a secure base to surpass all the negations characteristic of European decadence without fear of ending up with nothing.

The ideal of a return to castes and qualitative hierarchy must be supposed to the demon of the collective, to the anonymity of omnipotent finance, and to the tyranny of the socialised and Semicivilised West.

The aristocratic ideal of Wisdom must be opposed to positive science and to the debasements which - through it - have opened up the floodgates of work and of culture to the mob.

The super-real and solar ideal of initiation must be opposed to the sanctimonious abstractionism and formalisms of an anti-Aryan faith.

The aristocratic ideal of metaphysical action, the unconditioned power which rite and sacred traditional science, can offer to the lenses of a reintegrated humanity, against the Luciferian illusion of technical-mechanical power, fruit of a total renunciation, instrument of new needs and of new slavery.

The liberated and domineering Nordic-classical vision and the ideal of a metaphysical experience, as the basis of a new action and new contemplation, to the romantic, evolutionistic and Faustian vision of life.

The rhythm accelerates, the circle of Western 'civilisation' threatens to close. There are three possible attitudes towards this.

Either withdraw, putting up barriers, leaving those deviators and betrayers to themselves; breaking the bridges - before the 'sons of Muspell' think of it - to prevent their contagions from reaching our most hidden corners.

Or wait for the solution, accelerating the rhythm of 'progress', waiting for the end, or, if this is not enough, going too far as to provoke it, so that the ground is clear for the instant rise of the new tree.

Or we unite, meanwhile, in the call to consciousness and to revolt, we oppose patiently, tenaciously, mercilessly, with a destructive force on one hand, with a creative force on the other, the tide which threatens to overwhelm the still sane parts of Europe.

But the basis for this - let us repeat - the premise of any other action is an inner renewal. Before any other type of bravery it is necessary to have the spiritual, which no longer allows us to tolerate any rapprochement and any compromise and which, manifesting the most complete indifference towards those who accused us of being anachronistic dreamers, utopians cut off from reality, fixes us firmly, impassive, in traditional truth.

And those who are still not capable on their own can find a precursor even in these dark times, someone misunderstood, who waits in the shadows: Friedrich Nietzsche. The Nietzschean experience is still not exhausted, since it has not even started. What is exhausted is the aesthetic-literary caricature of Nietzsche, conditioned over time, and theological-naturalistic reduction of some parts of his theories. But the value carried heroically by Nietzsche after much nameless suffering, in spite of the fact that his whole being revolted and yielded, until, without any complaint, after having given everything, it collapsed - this value

which is beyond his 'philosophy', beyond his humanity, beyond himself, identical to a cosmic meaning, reflection of an economic force - the *hvareno* and the terrible fire of solar initiations - this value is still waiting to be understood and assume by contemporaries. There is already in it the call for arms, the appeal for loathing, for awakening - and for the great struggle: the one in which - as we have said - the destiny of the West will be settled: either to fall into twilight or enter a new dawn.

Freeing the doctrine of Nietzsche from its naturalistic part, we see that the 'overman' and the 'will-to-power' are not true except as supra-biological qualities and, we should say, supernatural qualities, then this doctrine, for many, can be a path by which the great ocean can be reached - the world of the solar universality of great Nordic-Aryan traditions, from whose summit the sense of all the misery, of all the irrelevance, and of all the insignificance of this world of the shackled and maniacs imposes itself.

It is on this basis that temporary practical action must be understood, which should be based on the highest points of contact accessible, even if only to a tiny elite at the moment; whereas, for the others, who do not understand, they would only be the cause of confusion, which would force them to relinquish the ideals of immediate, practical, and realisable value along with those higher ideals.

Pagan Nordic values are transcendent values which get their true sense only within that full, anti-modern and anti-European conception, which we have already described in essential outline. But these could also constitute ethical principles, likely, in the meantime, to form a base for a new education and for a new style of life, free from hypocrisy, form the baseness and form the hallucinations of the most recent generations.

The pagan experience is not at all an impossible and anachronistic experience from any point of view whatsoever. Do we not feel almost every day how 'paganism' in the modern world is noticed and deplored by the representatives of European religions? Thus paganism is largely, and is truly, an imaginary paganism: we are dealing with an evil at whose root those who have followed us up to this point can recognise without difficulty the forces and the conditions which originally altered the ancient, pre-Christian world.

Under other aspects, instead, this paganism is a true paganism. It is a matter of discovering the aspects through which it can be used as a means to an end, by transforming itself into something positive; without being in any way a synonym for materialism and corruption, as is

assumed unfortunately by most people when they speak of paganism; and by becoming the expression of the preparation of a higher and truly spiritual state, such as to allow us to remain faithful to the forces of the nordic-Aryan race - where these forces, even if still oppressed, are not defeated.

The positive aspect of modern paganism exists wherever there is a realism that signifies the overcoming of romanticism; wherever, in the new generations, a non-theoretical but practically experienced elimination of the various bogeymen of thought, of feeling, of art, and of morality has taken place; wherever something original and barbaric arises, but united with the simplified, clear, and controlled forces of the most exceptional modernity; wherever a new objectivity, a new seriousness, a new isolation have really occurred, which, however, do not exclude the possibility of a union in action and for action; wherever objects, more than men, works, more than private 'personalities' and the 'tragedies' of their authors - whether individuals, races, or collectives - arouse interest once again; wherever the impulse to come out of one's own 'soul' in the vast world, restored to its character of eternity and to its indifference towards the human, gains in value; not as an escape, but as a return to normality, to naturalness, to centrality.

All this can contain principles for a temporary catharsis. The effort must aim at not letting the way of those 'overcomings' flow out - as they do in most cases - to the plane of matter and of a mere 'living' - to end up in the most horrible degeneration of human possibilities.

It would thus be necessary that the themes of a new realism, of a new Nordic-pagan classicism, of a new freedom in what is essential, in anti-sentimentalism, in the 'Dorian' and the objective - which, here and there, appear in various tendencies of the most recent generation, not seldom accompanied by the virile themes of a new Nietzscheanism - that these themes manage to transform, to reach a true level of spirituality (to find, therefore, ways which lead to something which is beyond both matter and 'spirit' as understood by modern culture) and - through forward-looking elites - with a style of clear vision, of control, and of supra-individual perfection, to end up in the extra-human.

If, on this basis, an ethic which we can still call Nordic-pagan cleanses our still sane races and fills them fully with a new style of life, the ground will be ready for the comprehension and the gradual fulfilment of that which has an even higher value, and which we have spoken about, to acknowledge that there is no void ahead or beyond, but the void is only now.

The True Paneuropa

Some practical considerations on the state of contemporary Europe can be connected to this.

It is a fact that, even in just the political and economic domain, definite negative forces which had previously manifested only sporadically and appeared in a disorganised condition, are organised today, they become powers in the true sense of the word and, in their hegemonic claim, in their destructive character, with respect to everything that can be considered as European tradition even in the narrow sense, they appear to us as a precise threat in the face of which a political and social alternative is forced.

Under these conditions, a fundamental problem arises: is it possible that Europe, despite its economic and political wound, can assert its autonomy against non-European and anti-European powers, or that, in order to save its existence, it needs to organise itself as a unit?

This is the so-called Paneuropean problem which Count Coudenhove-Kalergi has recently raised, indicating that Russia, England, and Asia are the three main powers with respect to which that problem assumes a special importance.

Besides, it is incontestable that, in the general feeling of crisis and of discomfort which even finds expression on the material plane of Western society, the best minds today find themselves forced to recall the ideal of a higher ecumenical civilisation, in which a new and uniform principle should reorganise European races, scattered and weakened in their strengths and in their individuals.

The Paneuropean problem can thus be included in our considerations, and we can say that it truly has meaning and a deeper *raison d'être*, insofar as - *in primis et ante omnia* - it expresses a need for the defence of the Europe linked to Tradition. The practical advantages of a Paneuropean union can have for us only a secondary and conditional interest, since the main problem which threatens Europe is not so much a material danger but rather a spiritual one. Let us not be mistaken about the possibilities of a unity on the plane of matter and of 'politics'. This is by its nature on a plane of contingency, of relativity, of irrationalism, and of compromise: it cannot be thought that it is on that plane that a form endowed with true stability can have life, since a higher principle - as its soul - is not present there. It is only on the plane of the spirit that a true unity can take on life and overcome any spirit of schism and of particularism.

Considering things from this point of view, one can continue to see - with Coudenhove - in Russia, in England, and in Asia, the main centres of forces against which a European bloc becomes necessary: provided that, at the same time, one tries to discover the aspect of the spiritual danger which corresponds to each one of them.

As far as Russia is concerned, we are actually in the presence of the most threatening force for our future. We have seen how the process of spiritual regression - especially in its aspect of the fall of power from one ancient Aryan caste to the other - tend to the rise of a new collectivistic, proletarian, mechanised barbarism, the declared enemy of everything which is freedom, spirit, and personality, as is precisely shown to us by the Russia of the Soviets. In the murky, demonic consciousness of this, the Soviets actually take on the prophetic mission of bring to future humanity a universal culture - the proletarian culture with its myth of the mass man. And Coudenhove rightly notes that, if Europe yesterday could represent order against chaos in the face of the Russian revolution, today it is precisely the contrary which is true: today, we see the Soviets constituting itself like an iron bloc - political, ideological and economic at the same time - and if such a barbaric power persists in this direction of an absolute organisation of every energy, of a rationalisation and use of any natural and human resource (of which their 'five-year plan' is the first manifestation and for which they have headed with respect to specific intentions of international political domination), then, for Europe, split up in its various national and international disagreements, in its economy, and above all in its ideals, there is a danger which is difficult to overestimate.

As for the second power, England, it must be considered in its tightest relation to America, in order to assess entirely the anti-Europeanism of a utilitarian, mercantilist, democratic-capitalist, essentially secular and Protestant, culture, which has reached precisely its ultimate conclusion in America: mammonism, excessive standardisation, tyranny of the trusts and of gold, the degrading religion of 'sociality' and of work, the destruction of every metaphysical interest, and glorification of the 'animal ideal'. Thus, from that point of view, England, whose world-wide empire is now heading for decline, constitutes a lesser danger than America, which can be considered objectively as the Western analogue of the same danger which, on the Eastern frontier, the Russia of the Soviets represents for us. The difference between both cultures consists only in this: those matters which the Soviets try to carry out with a tragic and cruel tension and by means of a dictatorship and a

system of terror, in America, instead, thrive with a semblance of democracy and freedom, insofar as they appear at the spontaneous result, necessarily reached through the interest in material and industrial production, of the detachment from any traditional and aristocratic point of reference, of the chimera of a technico-material conquest of the world.

As for the third danger, the Asiatic danger does not exist for us in Europeanised Japan and even less in China and in India. The merit of Rene Guenon is to have highlighted that it is precisely the opposite which is true, that is to say that it is the West which has represented a danger for those peoples, or rather, the principle of their decline: the West had injected into their veins the virus of modernisation, causing the quick dissolution of everything traditional and transcendent which those great peoples maintained in their organisations. If, some day, Asia, organising itself like the West and participating all the contaminations of modern spirit, comes to represent a political danger for Europe, only the latter will be responsible and guilty for it. We can speak of an Asiatic danger in a quite different sense: it is the danger which is constituted for the European soul, especially in the present state of affairs, by an ambiguous, pantheistic, confused, escapist spirituality, in flight from the world, which can be found in thousands of contemporary neomystical and theosophical currents and sects, almost always connected with the themes of humanitarianism, of pacifism, and of anti-hierarchy, surprisingly similar to the syncretic Asiatic culture of the Alexandrine period of decay. Naturally, all this has absolutely nothing to do with the traditional and especially Aryan East: it is a pathos which, ultimately, can lead us to the substratum of the inferior races, through whose rule and civilisation the great Eastern cultures were formed: a pathos which favours precisely the ferments of decomposition of the Semiticised West. Nevertheless and unfortunately, in many European currents the East is known and active in this sense, and it is in this sense that it represents a danger: the danger of falling into an anti-Western and non-virile spiritualism in order to fight Western materialism.

The triple hostility with respect to which the problem of a European unity can be put in its true terms must be integrated in that way. To fight, fair enough - but the main thing is: to fight in whose name? Let us suppose that Europe, in order to be able to oppose in the political and economical sense either Russia as a confederation of Soviet republics or the United States, should organise itself in a way which corresponds precisely to the anti-hierarchical, 'socialist', secular ideals of these two powers. Then, we would see that the positive solution would

coincide with the negative one; the opposition would amount to a hidden abdication, to a secret undoing, to a defecting to the enemy through the action which should have closed the door on it. Besides, it would be thoughtless to demand from the sum of two parts something which is not even present in one of them; to delude oneself that any form of European unity may be useful for anything, if each peoples have not already headed, each of them for themselves, toward a reaction in the same direction, toward a spiritual integration which rejects everything tending in the Russian or American direction. Well this creates a unitary spirit that actually gives to those peoples the possibility of becoming organically and, so to speak, spontaneously, united in something higher than their individual existence.

The soul of those individual reactions and integrations, which, from the inside, could clear the round for the formation of a European bloc, material and spiritual at the same time, is found in the ideals which we uphold, in the values fully assumed by the Nordic-Aryan tradition, as the base of an aristocratic restoration.

Coudenhove-Kalergi thinks he recognises individualism, heroism, and socialism as elements of the 'European soul' - and, therefore, as premises of a future Paneuropa: values which modern Europe would have drawn from the classical, or better, Nordic and Christian, tradition. But the union of those three values is a compromise: the introduction of 'socialism' as a European value - as shown by all our previous considerations - would amount to a sort of Trojan horse, which, sooner or later, would expose the European bloc to those forces which characterise the danger which it is necessary to oppose and which it is necessary to combat. Coudenhove made that mistake because he sees the element of 'individualism' form a purely pluralistic point of view; this is why he accepts, as a compensation for the division and the atomism to which pure individualism could lead, the right of 'socialism', as unifying cement. In fact, there is instead an individualism which, in itself - through the values of fidelity, of service, and of honour - contains the seeds of an overcoming of the isolation and of the egotism of the individual and opens the way to the possibility of a clear and sound hierarchical organisation. Neither Romans, nor primordial Aryan-Roman peoples, needed to wait for Christian socialism to reach real and higher forms of organisation. Besides, there is Aryan socialism, as warlike ideal of an association of free masters, and there is the Semitic, ambiguous, totemic, and non-virile socialism, made up of mutual need and *pathos*, of which we

would not know what to make of it, and which we consider a disgrace to the European soul.

If, in our conception, the aristocratic idea is the first foundation for a traditional restoration, we have simultaneously with it the principle that, even in the practical and political sense, could bring us to the overcoming of that which today is opposed in substance to European unity.

This substantial obstacle is nationalism. We see, as a matter of fact, how the fall of that universal unity which Europe already had in the Middle Ages occurred because of nationalism. Once the medieval hierarchic-aristocratic ideal had decayed; once the differentiation of castes and guilds had vanished, and since the work of national centralisation and of the creation of 'civil authorities' took their place and the leaders passed from the higher functions, which linked them to a liturgy of power, to a direct and absolutist interference in the world of a politics directly linked to the economy and nation - understood as country and collectivity - then there was a materialisation and a regression which gave rise to a dissolving particularism: to that particularism which still endures in an exacerbated manner and which the various European nations support, one against that either-, as so many schisms, as so many concepts which oppose each other, and behind which a series of hegemonies of a merely political, economical and territorial type is hidden.

Therefore, it is only by taking the road in the opposite direction - in a natural manner, without necessarily having to return to forms conditioned by time, but reassuming their spirit - that one can come to the fulfilment of the ideal of a European unity. To the extent that - like today - spirit is an instrument in the service of politics; and aristocracy can be changed to a plutocracy and to the leaders of a purely economic, administrative, or military organisation; that the State is precisely - and solely - the nation, and not a hierarchy of castes corresponding to a differentiation and a hierarchy of values - to the same extent, appetites, egotisms, competition, the plans of a greedy industry, and so on, although they are irrational and self-destructive, will be the stronger forces, against whose front any attempt at unification will fail.

Instead, it is necessary that a decentralisation and an economic demobilisation take place; that the State, as spiritual principle, as spiritual principle, frees itself from its material aspect; that it ascribes to that aspect a limited field, beyond which it rises according to the fully understood hierarchic ideal which, as such, could never end up as that which is conditioned by particularism and materialism, by ethnos and by geography. In the various States we will have then as many aristocracies

which, by experiencing the same tradition of spirit and the same rituals of power, by adhering inwardly to the essentially supranational values of this tradition, would bring about an actual unity from above: this supranational unity which unities in spirit without blending the bodies.

In this way, we could arrive at a Paneuropa; we could determine coherently everything which is useful to resolve the European crisis and to form a bloc against the dangers which, even materially, threaten to bury the remains of our civilisation. In some cases, European unity could stay in a state of experienced reality which does not need any external order. But, in other cases, it should be ready to show, even dynamically, its power, fathering in a sole and unstoppable impulse, and with a single will, various races and traditions for one and the same goal of defence and of conquest, and yet still proceeding from an impulse from above, which leaves behind it the blind determinisms of political passions, and which follow an ideality, something universal and transforming: roughly like the ideal of the Crusades, in which Europe, for the first and last time, achieved a universal, unifying action, beyond the limits of country and blood.

It is through the political form of such unity, that it would be consistent with European tradition, we can only indicate once again the ethos on which ancient Nordic-pagan constitutions were based. Thus, we think of those associations of free men who, in times of peace, were like a parliament of peers, of independent masters inside their own *mundium*; in times of war, instead, or in the moment of a common goal and so long as the common action lasted, ready for the call, they transformed themselves, along with their men, into vassals absolutely faithful to one leader.

The Myth of the Two Eagles

The immediately preceding considerations bring us to an even more practical problem: it consists in assessing the point from which the action for a new European unity could start.

Our conviction is that such a beginning could take place only with the union of the two Eagles: the German Eagle and the Roman Eagle. Lenin once said: 'The Roman-Germanic world constitutes the greatest obstacle to the fulfilment of the new proletarian ideal'. This admission is precious for us.

If there is the need to form a belt of insulation of the European countries which legitimately in themselves have a tradition as opposed

to those which either do not have it, have repudiated it, or have lost it, and which, for the former, in one form or the other, represents a danger - then, only the union of Italy with Germanic countries can constitute, to our mind, the heart of the formation of such a bloc. The Roman-Germanic world represents the symbol and the source of everything which in the West can be called 'civilisation' in the true, qualitative, traditional sense: in this sense a supposed to which the socialist, mechanistic, and plebeian turning point represents, as we know, the most shameful collapse. Italy, Germany, and Austria form together the traditional pole of the West. From East to West anti-traditional peoples push: the Slavs have never had a tradition; nor does America; France, republican and decadent, negrified and Semicised, the first breeding ground of the modern insurrection of the slaves, no longer has tradition; old aristocratic England is in the hands of democracy and, now, from every point of view, is close to its decline; the various satellites of the Mediterranean, the Balkans, and the North, to various degrees, are part of the same picture and do not have in any case any possibility of getting closer to something which has value as a universal symbol.

Therefore, we do not hesitate to affirm that, to the extent that the efforts of a revolt and of a restoration manifesting in the shadow of essentially pagan and Aryan signs - on the one hand, the Eagle and the Swastika, on the other hand, the Eagle and the Fasces - would manage to assume a greater importance among the German and the Italian peoples, these could not enclose themselves in so-called 'sacred egoism'.

However, in our opinion, the German nation and the Italian nation are especially called to a bond that is not dictated solely by political, economic, and military interests - as in the immoralism which today is the only thing that tightly binds or divides nations - to a supplementary, organic bond of the spirit and the intellect just like the body. And we do not hesitate to affirm the restoration - in different forms - of what had its uncertain anticipation in the "Triple Alliance" before the war, still represents the issue for a better future. It is linked to the possibility of giving Europe a first centre, a sound foundation for its defence in every sense.

Naturally, the premise is that, in both countries, this process of virile and 'solar' reintegration of which we have already spoken takes place, and in relation to which everything that Germany and Italy already offer on the basis of their new political idea can be considered only as an explorative preparation.

In any case, Italy has already taken a huge step forward in eliminating the last residues which, even if at this point hackneyed, still persisted in this ideology of renewal which insisted in portraying Austria and the German countries in general as its 'age-old-enemy' and the others, the Latin ones, as brothers. And if Italy evokes an imperial ideal, the ancient Roman ideal, not only in name but also in fact, of thinking that wars should be waged for romantic and 'patriotic' ideologies, will simply turn out ridiculous. Certainly, there will come the day in which - beyond its superficial and illusory impulses - the world war itself will reveal a meaning which will no longer have anything to do with the hypocritical pretexts of a humanitarian and anti-aristocratic ideology. Mussolini has already explained that 'the world war was revolutionary, because - in the middle of the blood bath - it liquidated the century of democracy, of numbers, of majority, and of quantity'. As a matter of fact, the world war only meant the resurrection and the coalition of plebeian nationalisms and of modern world-wide democracy against the peoples in which, basically, the last remains of the ancient imperial-feudal order had been kept, and which fought in the name of the feudal concept of right and honour rather than of the modern plebeian principle of land and of 'nation'.

Naturally, there is even a counterpart to this for the German peoples. If Italy has to pass from the national ideal, of which it has its own ancient tradition to a lesser extent and which therefore links it to the new French ideology, to the universal-imperial idea that it has by virtue of the Roman idea, then in Germany the barriers of this fanaticism and nationalism of race, by which, basically, it would fall into a materialistic and anti-traditional particularism, must then be broken. It is necessary that Germany also recalls its higher tradition, the supranational one of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation - and then the way to that 'Third Reich', forecast by many contemporary currents of German restoration, will not be able to avoid leading to the point where - as in the times of the universal medieval Europe - the Roman eagle unites once again with the Nordic eagle. If Germany has to defend the Nordic-Aryan tradition, it must then distinguish - as we have done - between the lower, biologically conditioned, and, therefore, contingent and particularistic, sense, and the higher, spiritual sense of that concept, which does not exclude the former, but integrates it and leads it essentially to the idea of a type, of a primordial formative force, which must be awakened as a creative force of the new unity and of the new civilisation of Europe. If it remains on the level on which the myth of blood and of race

has the value of last resort, it is clear that the claim of a universal mission, characteristic of higher races, would meet obstacles a sa rule. From our point of view, it is precisely that the behaviour of some German nationalist circles which must be overcome, not in the sense of a renunciation, but for self-assertion in a higher idea, free from the conditioning of nature and contingency. A spiritual nationalism could never be an obstacle to a universal idea, since it establishes itself as its prerequisite.

If Moeller van den Bruck said that Germany, after having lost the war, must win the revolution, this expression for us must then be essentially understood in the sense that Germany must reject any reformist concept which would lead it in the direction of those political ideas embodied by our ancient military adversaries. It is precisely that which some deplore today, that is to say, in the fact that Germany has still not been a 'nation', in the sense of a social and anti-hierarchical union of all the castes, that we see the value and the positive, anti-modern side of these people. It must break up any 'socialism', facing up resolutely to any extravagant tendencies of a certain youth. He who thinks that the German tradition stopped at the spirit of the Lutheran insurrection and the peasant wars (on the basis of which one has gone so far as to proclaim a 'message of the east', according to which a 'socialist' Germany should unite with Russia against Rome and against the remains of 'feudalism'), instead of searching for the true foundations of it in the medieval world and in the Aryan-Germanic *ethos*, demonstrates to us a most indicative evidence of lack of consciousness. If we encounter the anti-Romanism of a Ghibelline emperor, in conflict with the yoke under which a Rome having passed on to a Semitic religion would have liked to put him, weighing him down too much to support those remains of imperality, hierarchy and authority which Rome conserved in spite of everything, it must be firmly maintained that to the same extent that Christianity represented the great fall of Roman-pagan humanity, the Reformation represented the great fall of Nordic-German humanity, and that we must revolt against it, not in the name of the Church, but in the name of Nordic tradition, in the name of the pagan spirit fully assumed. Once that conviction is reached, many artificial antitheses, which some, even at a higher spiritual and cultural level, through incomprehension, lack of spiritual courage, or a sectarian spirit, foment against Rome, will automatically be eliminated. Luther is just as far from the true aristocratic German essence as is the 'socialism' of the Jew Karl Marx.

Moving on to a more empirical point of view: in Italy, a struggle has already manifested itself with 'fascism', against the parliamentary cancer, and against democracy and socialism. A will to order and to hierarchy, to virility, and to authority, are pervading the new national reality. Acknowledging whatever positive there can be in all this, must not however prevent us from determining the many limits which, if they persist, will still keep Italy far from a true aristocratic-traditional restoration. The Fascist tendency to the centralisation of the State certainly has value as an antidote against democratic liberalism and anarchic-destructive individualism, but must in any case be restrained, if we want to avoid that despotism of the 'authorities' which, as a necessary consequence, provokes levelling and decay into an impersonal mechanism. Thus, the corporatist idea of Fascism, even though it has the value of overcoming the Marxist deviation of class struggle in the name of a higher ideal of collaboration, must lead neither to an affirmation of politics through the economy, nor to a transformation in a syndicalist sense, nor to state control of the economy, as is wished by some Fascists who consider their movement as a fulfilment of the Muscovite revolution. It is instead a matter of reviving and defending the qualitative and pluralistic system of the guilds and of medieval corporations with their relative autarchy, and especially, with their secret spirituality, their superiority with respect to mere money making and activist-productive agitation: naturally, to the extent that this is still possible in the world of today, devastated by the machine and chained to the elusive determinisms of an omnipotent international finance. The Fascist 'revolution' preserved the monarchy - and this is already a lot - but it has not managed to bring monarchy back from a mere symbol to a living power. Monarchy, even in the context of Fascism, remains unfortunately a monarchy which 'rules but does not govern'. Besides, the so-called 'hierarchies' of Fascism are almost always composed only of mere party leaders, often people who have risen up from below, without name of true spiritual tradition, furnished more by the skill of instigating the 'tribunes of the people' or of 'mercenary leaders' in the secular sense of the Renaissance rather than truly aristocratic figures.

Carried away in struggles and in the concerns for practical politics, Fascism seems to lose interest in creating a hierarchy in the higher sense, which depends on purely spiritual values and which has only scorn for all the contaminations proceeding from 'culture' and modern intellectualism, so as to shift once again the centre onto something which is above the secular limitation as well as the religious one. The

Fascist evocation of Roman symbols is still very far from being an evocation of the Roman-pagan idea, not just the military, but also the sacred, idea of the *Imperium*, which would make clear the whole compromising and purely opportunistic aspect of the union of an integral Fascism with any interpretation of the Judeo-Christian religion. Thus, the fact that the Fascist conception of the estate would seem to be essentially secular, 'political', at most, 'ethical', makes even us, pagan imperialists, consider as 'better than nothing' the situation by virtue of which Fascism, notwithstanding the contradiction, pays to the Roman Church - as bearer of a universal otherworldly authority, if not another tribute, the acknowledgment of its primacy. To the same extent that these limits could be overcome, Italy, on the road of Fascism, could be among the first peoples which the provisional traditional and aristocratic restoration calls to higher destinies.

As far as Germany is concerned, considering the state of struggle in which it still finds itself today, it is above all a matter of bringing to light the ideals and the myths which could best orient the currents made impatient by the current situation. If the swastika, the Aryan pagan sign of the sun and of the flame, which burns thanks to its own power, belongs certainly to the symbols which, better than others, could lead to a true Germanic rebirth, nevertheless, we have to acknowledge that the name of the political party which has recovered it as emblem, and which today is revolutionising Germany in a Fascist sense, is most unfortunate. As a matter of fact, leaving aside the reference to the workers' class, both 'nationalism' and 'socialism', are elements which match up poorly with the whole German tradition, and it would be clearly necessary to be convinced that what is needed instead by Germany is a counter-revolution against democratic socialism. The reconstituted Harzburg Front already indicated the right way: a movement of anti-Marxist and anti-democratic revolt that summoned itself in the face of the same conservative and traditional elements. It will be necessary to take care that the 'socialist' moment - even if it is a 'national socialism' - does not take the upper hand, leading the whole thing to the framework of a mass phenomenon, which gathers around the momentary prestige of a leader. Surely, many claims for 'social justice' are justified, and the revolt against capitalist oligarchy is even a presupposition for the restoration of qualitative and aristocratic order; therefore, it should not be forgotten that, so long as it is only about this, one still remains - even if with an opposite sign - on the same plane as the one on which Marxism acted and beyond which it did not grant a right to anything. The imprint

of a tradition of order, of discipline, and of aristocracy has still remained with the German people. They have to remain faithful to this tradition and to rebuild the metapolitical elements in which it can find a higher justification. In Germany, that the democratic-republican regime is only an interregnum, a transitional stage, is a conviction that always takes hold in the best minds.

In specific and stormy circumstances, dictatorship can turn out to be a necessary phenomenon, but it could never hold as a true and sufficient solution. It can apply insofar as it could perhaps represent a way of rebuilding what essentially an outer force - the destiny of an era lost after an extraordinary tension - has destroyed. This is naturally a matter of principle and not of persons. It is a matter of the type of regime. As we said at the beginning, monarchy - which as empire, in its supremacy over every single autonomous state, gave us a small picture of what an integral transnational European function could be - is the sounder base for the lasting preservation of a tradition and for the formation of a strongly personalised virile hierarchy; a hierarchy which would rest upon Aryan-feudal principles of service and of loyalty, and not on any 'law' or on any of the 'social truths' which have been insinuated with the coming to power of the caste of the merchants, and, finally, the caste of the serfs.

Naturally, a further requirement for Germany is to rid itself of all the substances of decomposition which have manifested since the post-war years in the many forms of a defeatist-pacifist, vague, coarse, vulgar-realistic literature. The antithesis which becomes established, on the one hand by means of a professional, battered, secular, and incompetent rationalism and on the other hand by the modern romanticism of life and the irrational, must be overcome by claiming the right to a new realism of a transcendent character in which the ideal of culture in a classical, supra-rational, Dorian-oriented sense, can take on a new form; we must impress on the spirit, the soul, and the body from above, in silence and dignity, its precise law; filled, as far we are concerned, with revulsion for the world of the men of letters, of learned people, and of insignificant men, in the dance around the complexes of *eros* and of the engine of the economy.

Considering the reservations already brought out against a doctrine of race one-sidedly understood, anti-Semitism is a further preliminary point for a German recovery. But, proceeding down to the bottom in that direction, one will realise that Judaism, which Germany is al-

ready fighting, is only one side of a still greater enemy: that anti-Semitism leads necessarily to the alternative offered by the profession of Christian religion, or rather of fidelity towards our true tradition, by the will of a new fully Nordic-solar and, therefore, pagan spirituality as a higher integration of our weakened and scattered forces in the dark age of the West. A radical anti-Semitism is possible only to the extent that there is at the same time an anti-Christianism. Only on the basis of an Aryo-pagan spirituality can a universal antithesis to Semitism develop, as just as universal a phenomenon, whose modern economic and social forms are only specific particular aspects on the material plane.

To favour on that basis the union of the two Eagles - the Roman and the German - is the first problem to be resolved of the future Europe. It is a matter of seeing if there will be enough courage and intransigence and if there will arise men capable of maintaining themselves at the heights of this 'myth', so that they can affirm it as a 'must be!' of a future reality. And the consciousness that only our two peoples can defend ancient Europe should give us enough power to allow us to overcome everything that, on the radical or political plane, might constitute an obstacle to an agreement.

In anticipation of the political upheavals which should indicate to Europe the way to a higher destiny, in the meantime it is necessary to take inner action, which is essentially this: to arrive at the creation of a state of mind and a lifestyle which, little by little, approaches the traditional type. The connection points and the primordial forces can be found again more deeply which, behind-the-scenes, thanks to those 'invisible leaders' of whom we spoke at the beginning, will be able to slow down the fall and to counterbalance those powers - themselves extra-human - which have contributed to the decline of the West.

Ghibelline Restoration

To conclude this series of considerations we must go deeper into the problem - just pointed out - of the relationship between the ideal of the new European civilisation and Catholicism. From the purely doctrinal point of view, it is not advisable to affirm that, given we have said, we have already given an unequivocal answer to this problem. But here it is about descending to a more contingent level, bearing in mind the principles through which movements of a political character can be strengthened today.

It must be stressed that we intend to speak specifically of Catholicism and not of Christianity in general. Certainly, a Catholic would not be such if he did not uphold that Catholicism is Christianity and that the Church represents the legitimate and sole heir of Christ. This 'orthodox' conviction of his, however, does not change the fact that Christianity, in connection with Judaism, has been the ground which, directly or indirectly, formed a whole very far from being reduced to pure Catholicism. We have already pointed out in what powers the Semitic-Christian factor can be found, leaving aside the current which, to a certain degree, has been Romanised by the city of the Eagle and the Fasces. We do not need to waste other words here on our attitude towards those powers. It is Catholicism, in the narrow sense that we must deal with now.

The fact is that Catholicism, with its great hierarchical apparatus, with its semblance a something stable, eternal, and universal, still exerts a seductive magic on any. This implies that, for some, the concept of tradition is based inevitably on Catholic tradition and someone, most recently, in Italy, has not hesitated to state officially that, if Rome is still the entry of a universal idea, it is such only in the Catholic Church. Besides, until just recently, many great traditional monarchies of Europe were Catholic and the legitimist idea was defended essentially on a Catholic basis. Many modern attempts at a return to the universal Middle Ages are based on the premise that Catholicism has been the main force of that period.

All this is true, and yet it only shows how the horizon of modern man has narrowed. The acknowledgement of Catholicism is possible inasmuch as the sense of a system of values of a very different dimension and of a very different purity has been lost. We just said it above: for the one who has nothing, Catholicism is at least something. Against the usurpations of a 'secular' or 'ethical' State, a State which at least acknowledges the authority represented by the Church as a higher and universal authority, for us, is undoubtedly a value. In spite of this, it is a question of having courage and of seeking thoroughly the elements for which Catholicism would be approved; then, of observing with clear eyes if these elements are present in Catholicism in a form beyond which a higher one is unthinkable.

These elements - to limit ourselves to the principal ones - have already been mentioned: a law of order, an acknowledgement of the supernatural, a principle of universality.

As far as the first point is concerned, whoever finds in the Church a principle of order must naturally leave out of consideration a past in

which it has certainly not always appeared under this aspect. But there is more. Even in the Bolshevik ideal there is a principle of order - consequently one should pinpoint which principle of order is being talked about, then examine to what degree a connection exists between the chosen principle and the fundamental premises of Catholic doctrine. As for the last question, the answer could not be doubtful: the embarrassment of the selection that demonstrates it on the basis of texts, encyclicals and syllabi would remain, that the Catholic ideal of order is essentially that of coordination, and surely not that of hierarchy, and that it is not interested in the specifically political form assumed by the individual States, provided that their subordination to the Church and to Catholic doctrines endures. Catholicism, basically, remains Christianity, as 'socialism' of the peoples - under a sort of paternal supervision which favours their spiritual levelling - this is the ideal of order which is most congenial to it than any other. Is this the ideal which could attract the best forces of European restoration? Of those who do not forget about the heritage of their most noble Aryan past? Certainly not. Instead, to the extent that Catholicism, in spite of everything, would represent the hierarchical ideal, those forces could find support in the Church.

Besides, from that point of view the fact is that everything good and great that the Church has managed to achieve over the centuries would find its justification not so much in the doctrinal affirmations of early Christianity and of orthodox philosophy itself but rather in the Roman element, which it partially revitalised and made its own. But if this is true, an unconscious return to Catholicism could only be a way of going beyond Catholicism, appealing directly to the pre-Christian, Roman, vital, and creative tradition, where compromise ends and those imperial forces which, when assumed by Catholicism, were enough to cause a Protestant opposition, are found in their pure state. The judgement of Maurras on the Church as principle of order belongs to a rather similar ambit of ideas. Italian Fascists - if it is not about the most vulgar political opportunism - could recognise the Church only according to the possibility of linking the Caesarean idea of Rome with Catholicism. And it would not be difficult to find other examples of that kind.

Let us get to an even more particular point: to Catholicism as base of the legitimist doctrine with respect to divine right. Even here, a distinction needs to be made. In the first place, it is a matter of recognising everything that in Catholicism has been in contradiction with this doctrine. Let us not forget that it was precisely the Church which, for the first time in the West, upheld the doctrine of natural right, that is to say,

of the popular origin and profane nature of royalty, against the Ghibelline thesis of the 'two suns' and of the principle of supernaturalism of the Empire. This, because the Church understood clearly that, in the context of a doctrine of divine right full understood - as was the case from the Hohenstaufens on - not much room would remain for its hegemonic aspirations. Therefore, if Catholicism has come to support the thesis of divine right, there is a further compromise in this. This doctrine, insofar as it creates a supernatural basis for the premise of legitimate power, is in fact only the reduction of a much more concrete, ancient and traditional doctrine, that of royal divinity, to which we have repeatedly referred. Would Catholicism perhaps wish to retract the admiration of Gelasius I that 'after Christ no man can be at the same time king and priest', as was the case in our Aryan and pagan traditions? Would it perhaps know how to understand the divine right of the Ruler in a different way from the mere condition in which the Church 'acknowledges' it as such only nominally, or even by a 'consecration' which - already excluded for centuries from true and proper sacraments - could represent today nothing but an empty symbol and a mere ceremonial. Once again: Catholicism is too little. We repeat that the principle of divine right must be understood concretely and not in a formal and conventional manner: it must be understood in the sense that an actually deified being, as person - beyond any convention and any exterior acknowledgement from another authority - showing an extrahuman nature, has the true and legitimate right to rule. Therefore, once again, what could lead us to Catholicism leads us beyond Catholicism and, to views like those which are typical of the great pre-Christian traditions, shows us a complete, definite and solid whole.

Let us now take into consideration the second point: the value of Catholicism in that it defends a metapolitical point of view and guides souls towards a supernatural order. Even here, it must first be said that, to be able to recognise this value in Catholicism, we must leave out of consideration everything that, as Christianity, is presented instead as a romantic, passionate, and sentimental reduction, and humanised in its behaviour towards the divine. In spite of this - after materialism and secularism have insinuated themselves everywhere as a cancer in the modern world - a higher right must be recognised, in a totally general way, to a system which shifts the barycentre to something truly supernatural. Certainly, this is only a premise. Beyond the problem of the relationship with the supraworld, the problem remains of examining the nature of such a relationship. And it is here that- as is known - the

greater and insurmountable obstacle is found, for us imperialists, for an acknowledgement of Catholicism. We said that two fundamental attitudes towards the supernatural are possible: the solar, virile, assertive one, corresponding to the ideal of traditional sacred royalty, and the lunar, feminine, religious, passive one, corresponding to the sacerdotal ideal. The priest, however powerful, is conscious of turning to God as Lord whom he serves and before whom he humbles himself. He has every power from God and he is only an intermediary of spirit. It is especially the Semites who have carried this behaviour to an extreme degree, in depicting in almost masochist colours the subjection of the creature and the pathos of their distance in principle from the Omnipotent. Instead, the traditional sacred king was himself of a divine nature and the 'gods' were his peers; he was, like them, of a 'celestial' stock, he had the same blood as they; he was thus a centre, an affirmative, free, and cosmic principle. Then, if our primordial tradition, that of our purest race, is a tradition of the 'solar' type, we must not delude ourselves: the will of restoration corresponding to this tradition, sooner or later, will be in conflict with Catholicism - precisely as happened in the Ghibelline Middle Ages; unless Catholicism, on the basis of what we are going to say, agrees to recognise the true hierarchical place proper to a religious system.

A similar problem, rather, even independent from the one which has just been dealt with, arises as far as the last point is concerned: the value of Catholicism as principle of universality. We have already emphasised that, if anti-Catholicism were limited to the affirmation of particularistic, strictly racialist, nationalist-totemist ideas, we would not hesitate, in spite of everything, to declare ourselves in favour of Catholicism. But instead, if, on an exceptional and provisional basis, one is satisfied with the acknowledgement of the higher value and of the higher right proper to what is universal, a further problem arises, insofar as there is universality and universality, as there is a solar form and a lunar form with respect to the supernatural. After everything which has been said up to this point, it is not necessary to lay stress on this conclusion, clear as it should be now for everyone: as against solar, imperial - and hierarchical - based universality, culminating in the ideal of royal divinity, there is lunar, ecclesial - and 'socialist' - based universality, culminating in the priest as slave of God. Which of these two universalities, we Aryans, we heirs of the sacred Caesars and of the royal sons of Thor and Odin, will we ask for a new European civilisation? The most secret voice of our blood must give the answer to this question and our

spiritual courage must be able to affirm it against the habits of thought, prejudice, superstition, and false traditions which have insinuated themselves into the various European races.

What place and what function could the Church continue to have in the context of a universal imperial civilisation? We are attempting to answer this question in the most unequivocal manner. To be able to do so, it is necessary to go back over what has already been said on the relationship between Wisdom and faith.

The principle of inequality, on which the traditional spirit was based, establishes as an axiom that, according to the diversity of men and their natural possibilities, there are very different ways to enter into relationship with the divine. For the best - who will always be a minority - it is possible to develop a link directly to the divine, transforming themselves into it and possessing it as a living and real state of their own experience: this is the solar path, the initiatory ideal. For the others, for the masses, it is not possible to actualise this kind of transformation and realisation. In them, the bonds of human nature are stronger. Another path is open to them: to connect themselves by a vow to something which is offered to them in the form of a particular, real, and transcendent being - that is God in the theistic concept. In place of the knowledge of the divine, faith in the divine supplants it; in place of experience, dogma; in place of the technique of overcoming and of real participation, prayer, fear of god, and religiosity; in place of the sense of sufficiency and supra-personality, insufficiency, and dependence upon the Omnipotent.

So there is a 'religious' system which has its place and its justification also in the traditional world, insofar as it pertained to the masses and was offered as a substitute to those for whom the path of aristocratic, super-religious, and initiatory fulfilment was precluded. The principle of hierarchy extended to the spiritual domain but, beyond popular and devotional religion, beyond the worship and faith for the masses, there prevailed without contradiction an initiatory doctrine, an esoterism, a tradition of Wisdom and of rite, which was originally the privilege of princes and nobility. This way, any tradition can accept in the full sense, and justify without scorn, those who know and those who do not know, provided that there is only one axis, provided that there is no way out, provided that those who do not know, or who only assume they know, acknowledge, revere, and praise those who are above them.

In this full conception, the system of the Catholic Church could represent only a system corresponding precisely, in an approximate manner, to that of the popular religion of ancient civilisations. Conflict with Catholicism is thus irremediable only to the extent that it does not acknowledge its 'place'; insofar as it claims to be the higher value, the religion *par excellence*, above which nothing could ever be found and outside of which there are only deviations and errors; in short, to the extent that it does not have or does not want to have any sense for a hierarchy of values which, objectively, are higher than everything which is 'religion'.

It is not necessary to notice that it is precisely this spirit of intolerance and of limitedness, which gave form to early Christianity and above all to Judaism, so as to assume the features of a true reversal of those values peculiar to traditional elites, in favour of those belonging to the lower cases: this is why pagan, aristocratic virtues, were called 'splendid vices', the type of the sage and of the initiate becomes the 'enemy of God', and the qualities of sufficiency, of calm and conscious force for self-realisation, is stigmatised as Luciferian pride. All this has already been emphasised by Nietzsche and there is no need to repeat it here. We have alluded, in general, to the phenomenon of usurpation - which already manifested itself in antiquity - of the castes of priests, which appropriated to themselves power and sacred functions, originally privileges of the kings.

But, coming back to the present, it must naturally be affirmed in the clearest terms that those values, vis-a-vis those to which the Church, with a return to normality and true hierarchy, would be forced to accept, are not at all present in reality. In the modern world, what is completely missing is the counterpart of an ideality which, even if taking root as the Church in a supernatural origin and purpose, still does not represent the religious pole, but the solar pole of spirit, and forms the soul of a universality, not of the socialist-lunar, but rather of the imperial type. And we think we made ourselves clear enough, so that no one can think that we could support an anti-Catholicism which represents the attempt of a temporal or national power to arrogate to itself a spiritual authority, even if of the merely religious type. In spite of everything, the fact remains that, in the case of the principle and of the myth, for our awakening the concept of a complete order must be developed unequivocally in which the Church - let us repeat - could be admitted, insofar as expression of the spirituality of those who can only 'believe'

- remains hierarchically dependent upon the Empire, understood as incarnation of the royal spirituality of those who 'know' and 'are'. The Eagle above the Cross, the solar symbol of the law of the Fathers (Empire) above the lunar one of the law of the Mothers (the Mother Church). It is only in this way that one can speak of a full traditionalism and return to an order of justice and of normality.

The light of the same origin proves to us, in effect, the legitimacy of this idea. It is only when the Aryan primordial stocks of India split up and came into contact with the adulterating forces of the races originating from the South, of the *purohita*, which was originally the priest in relation of dependence upon the sacred king, united with the king - according to the precise formula of the ritual - as the wife to the husband and the earth to heaven, that the Brahman, in the sense of a dominating caste of priests, arose. In China, in ancient Rome, in ancient Hellas, the rite was essentially the privilege of the king, and the sacerdotal caste, when it did not identify with aristocracy, was subordinated to it. This same can be said of the primordial Nordic stocks: it seems that the Norwegian kings were the only ones to celebrate the rite, and, among the Germans, if there ever were any priests, they still did not have the supremacy and the dignity of divine kings and leaders. In Egypt, it is only at the end of the twentieth dynasty that the sacerdotal caste managed to seize power and to give birth to the dynasty of the great priests of Thebes, to the detriment of the authority of the solar kings. In the first three centuries of Christianity, the Catholic Church itself was only an official organ dependent on the Empire, and, in the Councils, the bishops remitted the sanction of their decisions to the prince, not only in disciplinary matters, but also in dogmatic matters. To the Merovingian and the Carolingian kings pontiffs paid the tribute of acknowledgment, as expressed in the formula: 'Melchizedek noster, merito rex atque sacerdos, complevit laicus religionis opus' - 'vos gens sancta estis atque regale estis sacerdotum'¹; and, it is said that after Charlemagne had received the Roman crowd, Leo III prostrated himself before him according to the ancient tradition: 'Post laudes ab apostolico more antiquorum principuum adoratus est'² - the Liber Pontificalis says. These references, taken from among many others which could without doubt be

¹ 'Our Melchizedek, in merit both king and priest / a layman perfected the work of religion' from Venantius Fortunatus Carmina 2.10, 'De ecclesia Parisiaca'

² After the hymns of praise, he was worshipped by the pope in the way of the ancient princes.

added, show us the traditional orthodoxy of our Ghibelline concept: they show us what justice demands, or that, in a fully understood hierarchical ideal, the Cross - as sacerdotal symbol - has a function and a positive side, if it remains subordinated to the Eagle. To the extent that the Church cannot do it or does not want it, it immediately places itself in the context of the anti-traditional, destructive and paralysing forces; it lowers itself to the problematic Semitic-Christian factor, which, as one of the main causes of the decadence of our world, can only find in us anti-moderns implacable and inexorable enemies.

Conclusion

So, we believe we have said enough because the main features of our imperial myth have been made clearly recognisable. Here it is only about a standpoint. The systematic and comprehensive development of the premises which can consolidate this standpoint in a form which is not, a sphere, that of a military campaign, is found in our other writings.

In the beginning we said that European civilisation must plan on a radical upheaval, without which it is doomed to collapse. The plebeian superstition, according to which Western man has believed in the chimaera of development and to which he as devoted his material conquest of the world, has unfortunately vanished. To speak of decline and of the West is no longer, like yesterday - or like in the century of the Enlightenment and in the Jacobin custom of the goddess Reason - an absurd heresy. More or less everywhere, the ultimate results, to which the praised 'civilisation' had to lead, are made visible. Confronted with this result, it seems that some men return to their past, so that new forces might arise for the reconquest.

And this is why an appeal, which this book intends to represent, is not lacking justification today. There are still men who do not belong to this modern world and whom nothing in this world could lead astray, exalt, or humiliate - but who nevertheless are ready to fight this world with all their strength, as soon as it is time to.

Everyone knows of the saga of the Ghibelline emperor who awaits his awakening in the 'mountain' to fight the last battle with his loyal men. This will occur when the hordes of Gog and Magog have demolished the symbolic wall which barred their way, and they will fling themselves into the conquest of the world- the one who translates the meaning of this apocalyptic myth into reality cannot avoid thinking that the moment is no longer distant. The hordes of Gog and Magog are the

demons of the collective and the emergence of the socialist mass-man, omnipotent all over the world, in spirit as in matter Opposed to this, the imperial Ghibelline symbol represents the call to muster the still healthy forces.

We have not spoken much of 'politics', of social or economic reforms, since the thought of reaching a revival in this way is simply ridiculous: it would be like applying remedy on the sick parts of the body when the blood is already infected or poisoned. What only matters is the establishment of an order of values so that by their realisation the dark destinies which, even on the material plane, weight on Europe can be averted. To the one who tells us that this is not politics and reality, we calmly answer that he no longer knows what politics mean, what reality means.

The exaltation created by moments of danger, crisis, and alarm is composed of various, often irrational and contradictory, elements. Consequently, if one examines the various contemporary social and cultural, reactionary and reformist movements, one will find in them many impure factors, conditioned form below, passions belonging in one way or another to the same evil against which they would like to defend themselves. But, in a few movements, one can find something better, a will in which the possibility of a true revival secretly may awaken.

The path to this must be pointed out.

For the unbroken, the unvanquished, we propose the symbol rooted deep in Tradition and assert that it is only by a return to solar spirituality, to the living vision of the world, to the virile and pagan *ethos*, and to the imperial ideal, as sacred inheritance of our Nordic-Aryan blood, that the forces of the European revolt will be able to burn in that soul where they are still lacking, and only this can give them an absolute self-consciousness, only this can push them to fracture the circle of the 'dark age' of the West.

Appendix

The essays in this appendix expand on Evola's understanding of Romanity, myth, and race.

Introduction

The Order of Nations

In the September, 1941 issue of *La Vita Italiana*, Julius Evola wrote a review of *Das Reich der Volker* by the German political theorist, Hans Keller. The first part of Evola's essay is a review of the book. In the second part, whose translation appears below as the *Future Order of Nations*, Evola provides his own conception of the role of the Volk. Clearly, Evola supports neither Keller's naturalism nor the role of the Volk as the vanguard or the base for political organisation.

In the Traditional perspective, the Volk is lunar or passive and therefore has to rely on a spiritual and political hierarchy for its full development. Thus Evola opposes any sort of nationalism on the basis of an ethnicity or a race. In rejecting that sort of neo-Nordicism, Evola leads us back to the ideal of Romanity.

In this analysis of the German legal scholar Hans Keller, we see recognisable themes. In particular, Keller comes surprisingly close to the contemporary ideal of Ethnopluralism. In Klemmer's scheme, each people is free to define itself, to realise itself, and live independently of each other in their own enclaves. Evola rejects this conception on several grounds.

The first and most obvious is Keller's naturalistic starting point. Evola points out that for every Aryan civilisation, the authority of their law was based on its relationship to the supernatural, and the lawgivers themselves were considered 'divine'. So Klemmer's view has nothing at all to do with the self-understanding of the European peoples of the past. Keller regards such claims as fantasies and projections of earthly leaders onto an imaginary plane. Any rightist movement must be related to a transcendental tradition; the pseudo-tradition of neo-paganism would not qualify for reasons that are made clear.

The second difficulty with Keller's thesis is the very problem of defining a 'volk'. Keller speaks of nations of destiny or becoming, without specifying their actual destiny or the goal of the becoming. As such, it is

not very helpful. Furthermore, it implies that there will be nations in a lesser or greater state of becoming. Would the latter have to treat the former as minors and guide their development?

In common with similar idea held by some movements today, Keller blamed 'inorganicity and levelling' on the preceding religious Regnum. Evola rejects this thesis. Keller's ethno-pluralism is itself deracinated, since it lacks any content, or principles, that a supernatural conception of the Regnum would provide. Relations between the ethnocentric conclaves are *ad hoc*, relativistic, and contingent. In contrast, Evola envisions a supranational Imperium, in which the emperor power furnishes the structure to the other. This, he claims, is a real unity, opposed to the merely nominal unity defined by Keller.

The final objection is devastating. Keller sees a pacifistic union of separate peoples, each according to its nature. But Evola asks the question, 'what if the nature of a people is to be a warrior race?' This, Evola claims, is an essential part of Indo-European civilisations. This will blow up the ideal of peaceful ethnocentric enclaves, since one (or more) of them will seek to establish an Empire over the others; this an essential feature and not a historically contingent event that may or may not occur.

In opposition to Keller, Evola declares the Tradition is Roman, it forms a union with preceding traditions, with the Hyperborean tradition as its ultimate beginning. The Volk is a modern invention, opposed to Tradition. Its roots are found in Rousseau and the French Revolution. The life and traditions of early Germanic tribes is poorly documented, relying mostly on some comments of Tacitus, and the Eddas, which were preserved much later by post-pagans.

Nevertheless, since the Germans were Aryans, we can surmise about them, based on what we know of other Aryan civilisations. The Roman tradition, particularly that of the Middle Ages, is much more fully documented. Hence, that is where we put our focus. The State organises the people and relates them to spiritual reality. However, this is not a superstructure whose purpose is only to aggrandize its leaders and oppress the masses, as some in the New Right believe.

This orientation to transcendent values is a feature not only of the Christian Middle Ages, but also the authentic pagan traditions. Some civilisations may expand, creating a supranational organisation. But this is not merely an administrative function, hegemony, or acting as

the 'world police'. Rather, it is to spread its vision of a spiritual transcendental reality. Blocks of nations will arise, united by common transcendental values.

The Spirit of Roman of Civilisation

With this article from the December 1940 issue of *La Vita Italiana*, Evola takes up the idea of Romanity and its continuity beyond the Roman Empire itself. While different from the mystical vision of Guido de Giorgio, based on Dante, it is equally spiritual. Following a conception of Spengler, the difference between culture and civilisation is noted. Along the way, the features of the Old Right are delineated. That requires a *hierarchical order*, based on a *supreme, divine and transcendent power*.

Race and the Myth of the Origins of Rome

This essay by Julius Evola was originally published in the April 20, 1940 issue of the journal *La Difesa della Razza*.

To the modern mind this article can be understood as the 'Noble Lie' about the birth of Rome. From the point of view of profane history, these myths are simply superstitions. Evola, on the other hand, drawing on Vico, Bachofen, Rene Guenon, *inter alia*, views such symbols, myths, and legends as witnesses to the inner spirit of a people, which cannot be grasped simply in the accumulation of historical facts. Logically, this technique leads him to move beyond the merely physical and zoological understanding of race to his theory of the races of the spirit.

In this first part, Evola brings to light two aspects of the myth. First is the idea that the founder was born from the union of a god with a mortal woman. The god confers spiritual qualities on the founder. In this case, Mars, as the god-father of Romulus and Remus, is the spirit of warrior virility, not just on the twins, but on the entire city.

The second aspect is being saved from the Tiber as infants. For Evola, this represents the hero, the seer, etc., men who above the flow of time. The defect in Evola's methodology is that he is left in the same position as the profane historian: the third person perspective. Although he sees more deeply, he is still an outsider and does not participate in the myth. So, yes, for him, too, it is a Noble Lie. For the Romans, Mars was a living being, not some abstract force, and the story of their miraculous rescue from the Tiber was considered history, not legend.

There is the symbolism of fig tree, which was also the tree associated with Buddha's awakening. The next symbol is the She-Wolf who sucks the twin babies. The wolf curiously has a dual symbolism: it can represent both the forces of light and the forces of darkness. This is often depicted as the battle between order, or Logos, with Chaos.

The spirit of Rome is exemplified by the manifestation 'of a principle of light and of order, of an ethic and a vision of life that is witness to the Aryan spirit'. Here it is made clear that the Roman race is known through its spirit, not its genetics.

The Mysticism of Race in Ancient Rome

This is essay by Julius Evola was originally published in the May 20, 1940 issue of the journal *La Difesa della Razza*.

By 'race', Evola means both something less and something more than is meant by the world today. 'Less' in the sense that a race refers to any group of people of a common stock or lineage. 'More' in the sense that he includes the transcendent, spiritual, and mystical aspect of race, not just biological or physiological characteristics. In this essay, he describes the mystical element of race in ancient Rome. A lineage was founded by a spiritual father, not necessarily the common biological ancestor; this father determined the cult, laws, and customs of his lineage.

Note on translation: I have left the words lares, manes, penates, genius (NOT a clever person), gens and gente untranslated, following the model of *The Ancient City* by Fustel de Coulanges. The interested reader should consult that work for the proper definitions.

First of all, this essay confirms that the aristocratic interiority is centred on the higher mind, the mens, the ajna chakra, the seat of intellect and intuition, that commands the lower soul and the body. To be blunt, that describes the true 'aristocrat of the soul'.

The second is the idea of destiny and the spiritual impetus behind it. A people, a family, and so on, have certain spiritual qualities at their origin. The purpose of rites and worship was to keep those qualities present in order to project them into the future. The modern mind cuts off the past in order to create a future with no relationship to it. But human nature will not be denied. Instead of being guided by past heroes and sagas, able to distinguish good and evil, the deracinated contemporaries will latch onto any a spiritual influences at random. Devoid of true identity, they will create factitious identities.

Future Order of Nations

In primis et ante omnia we cannot adhere to the mythology of the *Volk*, of the 'people nation', so dear to Keller, who makes them the base of his juridical edifice. Mussolini once spoke ironically of the 'mysterious entity that calls itself the people'. 'People', be it only as 'Volk', is a simple myth that always and inevitably sounds like demagoguery: of the type which is accompanied by intense polemical applications to disvalue and degrade the significance of everything that is the State, the formative political force from above. Keller stands on the most naive optimistic natural law: he believes that the people exist as a very precise entity, equipped with its own consciousness, its own will, determined by 'eternal laws' superior to all political forms in which they are concretised, a depositary of determinate values. We can only speak of similar things to some naive types for whom, today, the natural meaning of nationality (quite different from every 'nationalism' and deprived of a 'political' character) becomes something extremely tenuous in the face of becoming the 'mass' of the people and the advent of a civilisation no longer based on truly traditional values. Hegel said, 'the people is that part of the State that does not know what it wills'. That is exact. Our fascist idea is that the people, the nation, exists only as the State, in the State, and in a certain measure, only through the work of the State.

But our State is not the end of Keller's artificial antitheses: it is not a juridical superstructure, a mere fact of 'power', an external power without basis. Our State is ethical and spiritual. It has the value of an *entelechy*, i.e., of a formative force of the nation and of the 'people', who otherwise would remain a diffuse and unformed reality, vegetating on a naturalistic plane of life, without any metaphysical, ethical, or truly heroic tension.

Our point of view is detached both from the idea of natural law and collectivising of the people, as well as the abstract, juridical, and rationalistic of the State. We are realists. We do not believe in the 'people', instead we believe in a guiding, formative elite, and, wherever it happens, leaders of the people. Keller has in mind the State only as *caput mortuum* i.e. as that which became in some cases, when the political structure created by leaders and elites personifying living traditions de-personalised themselves, objectified themselves, created an excuse to justify themselves, giving to understand the existence of public autonomous powers and neutral juridical forms or norms to order to obtain in that way recognition to which the direct affirmation and the prominent prestige by the high stature of the Leaders and by superior princes was not enough.

To reach the same goal, i.e., to hold it without exhibiting it, along other directions, therefore, it is joined to the creation of a myth opposite in appearance to that of the neutral 'State', but in reality answering to the same end: the myth of the 'people'. Keller lets himself avoid the admission that the idea of the Volk was 'discovered' in 1933. Even if the date is not for us so recent, having some precise antecedents especially in democratic nationalism and French Jacobinism (in fact even in France, as the antithesis to an excess of *statism*, determined by the centralising, absolutistic, and anti-aristocratic work followed by the king sup to Philip the Fair, left, for the first time, the mystique of the nation, of the people a source of every law, not putting up with any authority from above) - even, therefore, if the Volk was not even discovered in 1933, only it stands in fact that the mythology referring to it is new, it was unknown by preceding civilisations and there came to life for precise political and propagandistic reasons: the 'people' and *Volk*, far from being notions having, today, a real content, are two idea-forces, two myths taken up by a power to affirm a given political system, determined by circumstance, to capture and organise the forces - in themselves directionless and apt to follow very different suggestions - of the true people and to strengthen therefore a give type of political authority. For the less important socialising tendentially, it wasn't am I necessary to us in Italy to have recourse even to this myth: to us the spiritual idea of the State, and moreover, the direct authority that proceeds from a Duce and from a Monarch were sufficiently based to lead to the same result.

Keller says that all the differences between *statualistic* law and one based on the idea of Volk lies in the judgement on human nature: in the

first case, as in every idea of Reich and Imperium of Roman Catholic origin, it is pessimistic and does not have faith in human nature, while in the second case it has. But what is this 'human nature'? We are not pessimists, but realists. We believe in human nature, but not of everyone, less than ever in the collectivity as the mass, whose psychology we know well; instead, we believe in that of the minority who create the States, who animate the peoples, who lead the collectivities to the heights which they could never reach alone. Neither statism, therefore, nor natural law, but the aristocratic hierarchical ideal, without the charade that is necessary only to demagogues and weak natures. That is what we mean by Roman and Aryan realism.

Keller says: 'only the State is important to the Romanesque people, even if they serve additively nationalistic motives'.

We say that we can even renounce the additive motives; we value the Mussolinian idea, according to which the people is something weak and blind, before they came to constitute a reality and a unitary will, commentated by higher meanings with the birth of the State. But we are not statists, because we do not make an idol of the State, as Keller and certain German jurists make of the Volk: because behind the State, in our view, there is somebody, there are Leaders, Monarchs - if you want, there is a 'super race', in which alone 'nation', 'people', 'race', 'tradition' cease to be abstractions. Every great 'people' is always comprised of various influences, various racial elements, various traditions. It is the work of the elites to choose, to affirm a given element from among them all, to subordinate every other to it, leading back in that way to a precise order which otherwise would have remained heterogeneous and arrested in the form of a confused potentiality.

Keller believes in immanent laws of the people, given by 'nature', respected and followed in themselves, not originating from any power from above or however personified: in any case, having nothing to do with a 'beyond'. This is a 'faith' like any other. In reality, it would be difficult to adduce a single legal system of ancient peoples, the Aryans included, for whom the authority of the laws was not related to a 'divine' origin from above, and was not considered to have been introduced by legislators themselves 'divine'. But we already know Keller's point of view: instead of understanding the order proper to an earthly and temporal *Imperium* as the reflection of a transcendent order and, from another point of view, the secularisation of law and authority

purely spiritual in origin, he tends to see in every idea of a spiritual *Regnum* a type of fantastic projection of the fantastic image of an earthly reign. This stands, more or less, at the intellectual level of Euhemerism.

On the other hand, Keller finds it particularly difficult to define the concept of *Volk*. In certain cases, it seems that he values the national socialist conception of it as the criterion and measure, corresponding to the formula *Volksgemeinschaft*. Where he says that the 'community of nations', the hope for supranational order, will not be able to be realised until all the peoples have been realised according to the Nazi totalitarian social concept, expressed precisely by the formula mentioned. But on the other hand, he concedes:

'It is not important to see how the individual peoples conceive themselves, even if each one leaves the other free to form for themselves a given concept of their own essence and to live in conformity with it.'

This is the conclusion of the analysis of the analysis of the various ideas of the people, a conclusion that evidently leads to a full indifference and a pale norm of reciprocal tolerance on the international plane. The fact that Keller insufficiently acknowledges race to define the people; that he introduced the rather indeterminate concept of the 'community of destiny' (this is a greatness that is defined depending on directions and many directions exist in the history of a great people); that, finally, he speaks of a 'people in becoming', without being able to say exactly what will define the *terminus ad quem*, i.e., the definite form of such a becoming - all that goes to confirm the mythical and weak content of this conception of the *Volk*. The only coherent solution would be to assert dogmatically that nations as truly such do not exist before being 'total nations' according to the national socialist formula of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.

Nevertheless, to try to assume a provision for the membership with full rights in the *orde nationum* this political form is not, evidently, to fall short of the principle of respect of every 'people', even to the point of judging them 'as minors' and to putting them almost under guardianship, even under a foreign State, when it has not reached such a form?

There is more. Keller, as we saw, blames the organicity and the levelling that would be typical of every Roman or religious conception of the *Regnum*, or *Reich* if one prefers, of the nations. Such an accusation

is even turned against his own conception. In the logic of this, in fact, we don't encounter any obstacle to end up in the utopian vision of an order that takes up all the peoples of the earth. And we don't encounter any obstacle through the fact that this order is rather more abstract and deprived of content of that of the now defunct League of Nations. In it, there would be a question of only taking care of the laws of each people, of teaching them, of maintaining peace and the balance of power - in summary, a type of administrative function that does not presuppose any specific vision of the world, no higher point of reference. But, in its turn, the particularistic, relativistic, and collectivistic conception of the Volk, is the cause of that. If the authority of higher values is not recognised, it is evident that among the various 'national' unities, only extrinsic relations, 'gravitational' and 'equilibriums' will be able to exist, which do not involve, at its foundation, anything essential. In every way for us, such an *ordo nationum* as universal order is absurd and undesirable: we conceive of the concrete, differentiated, supranational unity, decentred in a well-defined vision of the world and in well-defined values that give the tone and the internal unity to a given 'imperial space'. The superior civilisation of a dominating race must furnish the reference point to a succession of political ethnic minors, in order that these, rising up from simply national values, and integrating such values, they find in them the basis to understand and to feel united to each other: to actually unite, and not in the style of an indifferent tolerance of belonging to the same club.

Therefore, these supranational unities, that will put a stop to the period of particularistic, schismatic, anti-European, as well as differentiated nationalism, will be able to even be combative. We see that Keller acknowledges war, but without recognising in it any specific value, in the same way that he eventually acknowledges the State, in a transitional phase, as an instrument and pedagogue that may help tie 'people' to realise themselves, finally, in a 'total' form. The general intonation of his view remains pacifistic. Wherever he uses the word 'power', *Macht*, Keller thinks only of oppression, tyranny, violence, distortion of the people. He barely remembers Moltke's phrase: 'universal peace is only a dream, and not even a beautiful dream'.

Nevertheless, since every people, according to him, should be respected according to their own inclinations, we can certainly think that there exist peoples of a warrior race and calling - we noted everything that was said, starting from Klemm and D'Eichthal, about the typological distinction of 'active races' and 'passive races', 'conquering races'

and 'slave races', etc. Keller, it is true, on the other hand, refers to research on savage tribes, where he would demonstrate natural inclinations to reciprocal respect and peace, for the purpose of challenging the idea that the natural state is the war of all against all. But much more documentation would be necessary to show such a thesis, against which, all the great Aryan history already remains: it is true, not a history of eternal war and for war itself, but history, nevertheless, which is consistent with virile and dominating natures, capable of realising superior values in battle - superior, often, to all that can come from a climate of peace of naturalistic harmony. Among the rights recognised by Keller for the people, he acknowledges the right to 'their own development': it would therefore behove us to ask why this development must be limited to the bourgeois domain of 'culture and economy', with the exclusion of everything that refers to the 'power' factor, where the natural inclination of such people was exactly that of the warrior and the heroic type. We think instead that the heroic and warrior elements are of particular importance even as the common basis of an 'imperial space', i.e., of a concrete and well-articulated order between a given group of nations.

Finding it necessary, therefore, to draw a conclusion, only what refers to the polemic against an abstract juridical internationalistic normativism is acceptable in Keller's ideas, after all, up to this point that is what the idea of State has assumed in certain cases in the modern world, in full settlement and against depersonalised 'neutral' forms, deprived of a substrate of quality and true strength. The points of positive reference invoked by Keller against what are nevertheless a problematic a sever, and hardly acceptable from the point of view of a tradition, that we without difficulty declare to be Roman, in order to immediately add that it in its Romanity forms a unity with the traditions characteristic of every great past civilisation, with that of ancient Aryanity at the head. In fact, as we said, this mythology of the *Volk*, of the people-nation as absolute source of every authority, is only a modern invention, that arose in Germany recently and that in Germany itself it now seems somewhat passé, through the same force of European events.

Keller's and other's efforts to relate it back to an ancient German tradition are artificial. We saw, as much, that Keller was constrained to condemn as non-German and 'Romanizing' the very tradition of the Prussian state and to extend an analogy, he blamed the Medieval Empire. Perhaps he will be able to support himself on such a view of the primitive Germans. But such views interest us very little, because they

cannot be authoritative: the 'primitive' Germans are in fact only some isolated, dispersed and involute stocks of the great Aryan tree, and we have to judge and understand their traditions on the basis of that which, in a rather more complete, precise, and documented form, present to us the great Aryan civilisations of antiquity, including the Roman.

In such ancient traditions, there are so many 'myths', but of a more elevated and real content than the modern myth of the '*Volk*', which, as we noted, was essentially given to traditional and dynastic Europe by French Jacobinism and has a strongly collectivistic and anti-hierarchical flavour. According to our traditional point of view, the 'nationalities' can exist only on a naturalistic plane, not yet political nor properly spiritual: in place of certain spontaneous forms of sensibility and of certain customs where, however, the primary element ends up being less the 'nation' than the race. The centre and the indispensable condition of the nation as political and spiritual reality is instead the State. The State is not a mere fact of 'power' or a type of abstract juridical superstructure, but an ethical and spiritual reality and a formative and discriminatory force. This force, in its turn, is connected both to an elite, to a race of leaders and to the prestige proper to them, both to transcendent, to a certain extent, values (which are not necessarily only those of the Christian religion: ancient Iran, ancient Rome, etc., teach it) that legitimate them, because there is true authority only as authority from above.

The formative power of such principles, after having unified and animated a 'people', can be projected beyond its borders and, in different ways, does not exclude those of war, can give rise to higher unities, i.e., supranational, but nevertheless well defined, and ordered by a determinate law: they are the 'imperial spaces'. The 'rank' that goes to assure to a given nation the supranational directive function cannot be measured in materialist, administrative, bourgeois pacifist terms, and as quasi-police for collective security and peace. On the contrary, it is adherence to already noted transcendental values and to the corresponding faculty of animating, transporting, making capable of energy and commitment, capable even of confronting tragedy misfortune, which is the design of such a superiority. The logic of the system doesn't lead to its extension to every nation of the world, but to its limitations and particular zones, as blocks of nations, blocks united by the same chain of an 'Order', capable where it occurs, of the same heroic unanimity of a 'crusade'.

PAGAN IMPERIALISM

Leaving aside both universalistic and nationalistic myths, *the organisation of a block of the type like the European, Aryan, and Roman block is the only concrete tasks of our future and the only object of a serious consideration in regards to a new law and a new ordering of the people.*

The Spirit of Roman Civilisation

With the appearance of every new work on Roman Civilisation, we experience a certain sense of annoyance: in fact, for the most part, we take notice of books of this type only perfunctorily, they do not reveal any new idea, they repeat the clichés of earlier ‘positivist’ interpretations, adding only the rhetorical hype of commemoration, thereby producing a pathetic effect, and whatever true meaning it has of our original tradition, it is not so much illuminated by similar writings, but rather trivialised and almost profaned.

We were therefore pleased to have been removed, at least once, from prejudices of that type in reading a very recent book of crystalline clarity written by Pietro De Francisci on the Spirit of Roman Civilisation. [Spirito della civiltà romana, 1940]. Above all, beginning with its first chapters, we had to admit: finally there is an authoritative person who hits the mark and knows what must be considered essential in Romanity. And we also found ourselves totally consenting to the justification of the books, viz., that no constructive revolution is a creation from nothing, but has as conditions the return to elementary principles and factors, which for us can only be those of the original tradition of Rome. And De Francisci also very correctly criticises those who break our history into two parts: the history of Rome and her Empire on one side, the history of Italy on the other.

As for Corradini, so also for De Francisci, Italianity and Romanity are a single thing, or said better: they *must* be a single thing, on the basis of a decisive choice of their own callings and traditions: that is, we must exalt, consider as our own, and glorify as ‘Italian’ only what is of value to us in our history, as ‘Roman’, and not have any leniency or mitigation for the rest. De Francisci correctly says that to bring youth to the awareness of the power and depth of the current of Romanity that spreads throughout all our medieval and modern history, eliminating wrong

ideas and destroying old and new prejudices, mean not draw on precious nourishment for the ideal strength of our revolution.

Who does not see the abyss that separates similar positions from those which, nevertheless like De Francisci, had to have the direction of the fascist Istituto Nazionale di Cultura [National Institute of Culture] - we mean Gentile, who did not hesitate to assert what Romanity is for us, but only in the empty rhetoric of life and content, because for him the true Italian tradition is identified with a series of suspect thinkers and heretical rebels starting with the Renaissance, as if in fascist Italy itself no others should be seen and desired except those involved in the development of Italy of 1870? [when Italy was unified].

As the premise of his treatise, De Francisci, following up on an idea from Spengler, makes the appropriate morphological distinction between *culture* and *civilisation*. Culture, both as an intellectualistic phenomenon, as well as refinement of the material conditions of the life of a people, has nothing to share with *civilisation*, reality. De Francisci writes this very profound passage:

‘Civilisation is not only a manifestation of the prevalent intellectual activities but the complex and concrete expression of all the energies of the spirit: it is not only the ruler of man in his exterior nature, but is at the same time the dominion of man over his own human nature, the awareness of coordination with other men, of subordination to a certain hierarchical power, and of dependence by a supreme, divine and transcendent power.’

It is a unitary and organic construction which, by being such, even permeates the political field, i.e., it also presupposes a political organisation as the realiser and promoter of the fundamental values resting on the base of the organisation itself. And in this special point, we see the contrast between the idea of civilisation and the abstract conception of ‘culture’, as meant in its modern understanding, through which, culture would be a kingdom to itself, alienated from everything that is ‘political’, instead of being the highest animating and justifying force of the political, as always happened in all traditional civilisations and, at the forefront, let us admit it now, in the Roman civilisation.

Now, De Francisci studies the ancient Roman world exactly in respect to ‘civilisation’ in this precise meaning. Rome was eminently ‘civilisation’ and its greatness must speak to us in the sense of this unitary

and anti-intellectualist deal. What was the specific face of such a civilisation? What are the fundamental, typical, and constant elements of its 'style'? De Francisci considers four above all:

First of all, *clarity* and *simplicity*, founded on a precise and certain intuition of reality, and not only of visible reality, but also - it is the merit of our author to recognise it - invisible reality.

'While the Romans were realists, they never were materialists: thus few people like the Romans carried with themselves for centuries the conviction of the existence of a will and a transcendent power, to which laws must be adapted and human conduct conformed. But clarity and simplicity are the elements of grandeur.'

These are reflected - as the echo of something eternal and detached from the small events of individuals, from everything that is *pathos* and sensibility - in the monumental elements of the Roman world. Furthermore, the unity that together is organicity and solidity, founded on a balance of forces and factors, on a wise bond that surpasses and encompasses all varieties, distinctions, complications: unity as formative and organising power.

An order results from it, which, while 'it was experienced as a transcendent system of principles determined by the very nature of things' (which is the ancient Aryan conception of *cosmos* or *rta*), is expressed in a rigorous, definite, and essential style: intolerance for everything that is disordered, uncertain, subjective, scattered. Precision and clarity predominate in the *ethos*, but not as only a human norm, but rather as the rigorous objectification of a supersensible reality.

In that regard, De Francisci rightly opposes those who prefer to portray the ancient Roman as dry, lacking sentiment and imagination. What, alone, remains alien from the Roman soul, was the sterile subjectivism that surrenders itself to the caprices of the arbitrary in which every moral energy is scattered and dissipated:

'But not for this reason is his interiority less rich, which consists above all in the adhesion of the spirit to the norms of a higher Order.'

This is demonstrated in the three virtues of *pietas*, *fides* and *gravitas*. And, as we ourselves on other occasions have emphasised, the lack

of imagination in the Romans is more a sign of superiority than inferiority: it is to be taken in the sense, as De Francisci says:

‘The imagination of the Romans is not a gratuitous game of intellectual boldness, it is not the creation of a world of images detached from reality, but an instrument to seal this reality in well-defined forms to frame and organise its forces.’

The same thing must be pointed out regarding the accusation made against the Romans of having degraded thought in favour of action. But what thought is this about? No one denies the scarce sympathy of the Romans for theoretical constructions. But action itself, when it proves to be coherent, consistent, and efficacious - De Francisci notes - does that not itself bear witness to a thought, or rather, a higher power of thought? All the history of the Romans stands to demonstrate that they believed in such values and held firm to principles which, through their experience, were defined, made precise, affirmed, and even assumed an ever more universal importance and applicability.

In the order of the structural element, there is a specific element in the ‘civilisation’ of Rome, i.e., a hierarchy, in which the pre-eminence is reserved to political values: everything is assumed and organised in the operation of the State. But we were pleased to see that De Francisci avoided a double false turn in which, in this regard, he finishes the greatest part of the modern interpretations of Romanity. In fact, in the first place, such a pre-eminence of the political element is not at all to be understood according to certain modern political pretensions to the primary of temporal power over any spiritual authority. The political and religious elements in ancient Rome were an indissoluble union. The starting point of the Roman was the awareness that divine and transcendent forces exist and act bind human and historical forces. So the highest principle of Roman ‘politics’, and consequently of every determination of will and action, was that of conforming individual and collective life to the *fas* [divine law],

‘The revealed divine will, which is the supreme law against which it is not possible to rebel without committing a *nefas*, i.e., not just a reproachable act but producing dire consequences.’

After all, De Francisci had already mentioned the religious base of the first Roman law in his earlier History of Roman Law. In the new book he recalls the profound significance relative to the fact of the inseparable connection of the *imperium* of the Roman political leaders, with the *auspicium* [divination], that is to say, with a discipline having as a presupposition the possibility of coming into relationship with the divine forces and of presenting the directions, along which they were able to confirm and empower human forces and actions, Even if De Francisci doesn't go beyond an examination deeper into the meaning of the rite in the ancient world, but in that there is quite enough to clearly distance it from those, in this regard, who see only 'superstitions' and 'obtuse fatalism' in order to appreciate, in the Roman *ius* [law], only its positive juridical cadaver.

The other prejudice, which is often fostered in relation to the totalitarianism of Roman political civilisation, relates to *libertas* [civil liberty]. But, again, it is impossible to judge the ancient word with modern measures, which then are simply false and misleading. De Francisci clearly points out all the respect that ancient Rome attributed to *libertas*: but it is a concrete *libertas*, comprising in itself the concept of limits: it is freedom as the faculty and the legitimate right of movement, of acting, of disposing oneself, and even within a well-defined space, within a positive hierarchy, where each recognises his own: *suum cuique*. So the Roman would know an exemplary balance of *auctoritas* [responsibility] or *lex* [law] and *libertas* while disregarding the democratic concept of equality characteristic of Hellenic decadence, in the surpassing individualism with a determination of limits, with an obsession with hierarchy, with a coordination of activity. And this is another of the aspects, according to which Romanity remains, for centuries, the sign and symbol of a higher political and traditional ideal.

Since we nailed down the truly valuable and, for many, the illuminative, aspect of De Francisci's new work in these terms, let's allow ourselves to make some other points.

First of all, in regard to origins: it is true that, in this respect, one hears nothing said about them today. Nevertheless, whoever has eyes sufficiently trained can recognise and discern what there is of value in regards to race and spiritual forces of the world of the origins. On the Aryan problem in Italy, on the meaning of the crossing or make up of various symbols and costumes - for example the rites of burial or cremation, solar cults and telluric-maternal cults, etc. - the spiritual relations between Etruria and Rome and so on, little or nothing is found in

De Francisci's book. Now, if one does not succeed in having a, so to speak, *dramatic* vision of the ancient Italic world, as it concerns both race and spirit, one can in no way grasp the true meaning of Rome, her battles, her mission, her destiny.

In relation to that, what is equally missing in the work of De Francisci is any investigation of what we would call the 'subterranean history' of Rome. In his book, attention remains concentrated on history in the common bi-dimensional meaning of the term, even if examined with undeniable acumen. The analysis of the most profound, spiritual aspect of certain social rifts and certain oppositions of worship in Rome is not made. What was, for example, the influence that acts, in ancient Rome, through the Sibylline Books? It is a problem, among many others, of the subterranean history of Roma, whose importance is anything but to be neglected.

De Francisci, as we said, saw clearly in the connection of the human will, and therefore of action, to a more than human significance, an element characteristic of Roman reality. And it was emphasised more particularly by others that the Roman perceived essentially the revelation of the divine not in space, as a vision, but in time and in history, like action. Now, can one recognise that, without also recognising that a history of Romanity will always be incomplete, if it does not become, to a certain degree, a *metaphysics of history*, i.e., if it does not strive to grasp a symbolic content in its objective way in the more important and decisive upheavals of Romanity? The danger of digression and pure interpretations, here, naturally, is great. Nevertheless, it is necessary to do something in this direction, if Roman history is to truly speak to us. Does De Francisci know the famous introduction to Bachofen's *Legend of Tanaquil*? In this old work, even in reference to Romantiy, there are methodological ideas that still are particularly important today. [Such as the interpretation of legend as history and the use of imagination or intuition to grasp it. ~ tr.]

Also, De Francisci treated various problems of the imperial period, such as the importation of 'Asiatic' cults and their significance, in only an 'historical' way, in the current meaning of the word. The racial moment on the level of the elements of civilisation and cult, were not developed. For example: what of the Asiatic cults and forms of the same imperial cult, referring back, in spite of the degeneration of their exterior expressions, to elements of a common archaic Aryan tradition, in-

asmuch as, for example, certain aspects of the Augustan religious reform, in fact, call back to life some ideas forgotten or obscured by the first Romanity?

Instead, the best is the analysis made by De Francisci of the various political and social factors and various attempts of the restoration of the late imperial period. He brings to light the true use of decadence: the universal Empire could only hold on provided that the expansive moment would have a corresponding moment of deconcentration and national-racial intensification. Although indispensable, a unique supreme point of reference - the imperial divine authority - could not be sufficient: it would have been instead necessary to provide simultaneously for the spiritual and material defence of the Italic-Roman race as the matrix privileged by elements destined to govern and command in the world. In place of that, Rome accepted cosmopolitanism, the turmoil of levelling and disarticulation. The Empire presumed to embrace universally the human species without distinction of race, peoples, or traditions, on the only basis of the supreme central divine power, and close to a break up and a 'positivation' of the ancient judicial idea, at this point turning into the natural law.

On such a basis we incline to believe that contrary to the opinions of most and, it can be said, to judge by some of his comments, of De Francisci himself, Christianity or, at least, a certain Christianity, assumed the inheritance of only the negative aspects of the Empire. In fact, only in terms of the 'spirit', universalistically, it proposed to unify and gather the scattered peoples in the Empire, and if, beyond that, it created in the clergy a hierarchy and a central power, it was created without any racial presuppositions: the clergy was recruited from all the class and peoples and, because of celibacy, could not constitute a caste, it could not give rise to a regular tradition, also supported on blood, as instead happens in many ancient Aryan societies.

Only in the Middle Ages, by means of the Aryo-Germanic contribution, there came to a certain rectification of these negative aspects of the legacy of the last Romanity. The organic ideal arose. Catholicism itself came to show less the traits of a universalistic religion than those of the faith characteristic of the fighting block of the Aryan and European nations of 'Christianity'. And it is in these terms and in forms that, as we have had the occasion recently to note in this journal, today have a curious aspect of current affairs and even of 'futurism', that the purest force of our origins is reaffirmed beyond the decline of the first Rome.

Race and the Myth of the Origins of Rome

In his *Life of Romulus* (I, 8), Plutarch writes:

‘Rome would not have risen to such power had it not had, in any way, a divine origin, such as to offer to the eyes of men something great and inexplicable.’

Cicero repeats the same thing (Nat. Deor. II, 3, 8) and then goes on to consider (Har. Resp., IX, 19) the Roman civilisation as that which surpassed every other people or nation through sacred knowledge: *omnes gentes nationesque superavivums*. For the ancient Romans, Sallust has the expression *religiosissimi mortales* [the most religious mortals].

On the other hand, in our day all of that is fantasy or superstition for many ‘serious’ persons and ‘critical’ minds. The ‘facts’ are the only thing that count for them. The mythical traditions of the ancients have no value, or they have it only insofar as it is supposed that, here and there, they are confused reflections of real events, that is to say, tangibly historical. There is, in that, a fundamental misunderstanding that was already denounced to a certain degree by our Giambattista Vico, then by Schelling, still more recently by Bachofen and, finally, by the most recent school of the metaphysical interpretation of myth, and by those little known today (Guenon, W.R Otto, Altheim, Kerenyi, etc.). According to all these writers, the mystical traditions are neither arbitrary creations more or less on the poetic and fantastic plane, nor deformations and transpositions of historical elements. Especially in regard to origins, Bachofen correctly pointed out that symbols and legends,

‘If only in a dramatised form, represent actually and truly the history of the beginnings of a nation, but not the history of events occurring materially on earth, but rather of spiritual

processes that have given birth to a new people alongside other people although different in culture and civilisation: history, so to say, of its prenatal period.

Legend and history, are tightly connected; the former proceeds through interiorisation and is dispersed through images, while the latter proceeds through exteriorisation as facts and events. These images are the result of formative living forces, facts are organised by human thought. In legends one is transported by formative forces; in the other, there is premeditated organisation of facts. But the legend is the invisible part and root of history; it is not poetry, rather it is a reality much vaster than history itself. The threads of the destiny of a people that unravel visibly in the most various ways in their historical development, go back to the impulses, to the creative spheres, to which the heroes of its legends are connected.'

In a particular way, Bachofen revealed that even at the point in which evidence, by being recognised as a myth, came to be rejected by profane history, even when it is a positive witness to the spirit of a people.

In that way, a study of mystical traditions, using new criteria, can lead us to interesting conclusions from the point of view of a theory of race that is not defined by the material aspects of the issues, but also addresses the inner reality of race.

On the occasion of the current anniversary of the Birth of Rome, we want to illustrate this interpretative method, applying it precisely to the exegesis of the myth of our origins. The legends related to the birth of Rome concentrate such a quantity of sensitive elements based on general meanings of civilisations and mythologies of Aryan peoples, that a special work would be necessary to analyse them and clarify them adequately. Therefore, we will point out here only the most notable themes, among which are: the miraculous birth, the theme of being 'saved by the waters', the 'wolf', the 'tree', the rival pair of twins.

The myth of the union of a god with a mortal woman, in the present case, of Mars with Rhea Silvia, from which union Romulus and Remus were born, recurs in almost all traditions in regard to the birth of 'divine heroes'. Zeus and Leto gave birth to Apollo, Zeus and Alcmena to Hercules, Heracles being the symbolic hero of the Doric-Achaean Aryan

peoples, and Apollo having a connection with the land of the Hyperbo-reans and with the primordial Nordic-Aryan races. An analogous origin, in properly Germanic traditions, is attributed to the heroic peoples of the Volsungs, to which Siegfried belongs.

In the ancient royal Egyptian tradition - whose remote origin can with good reason also be considered to be Aryan and Atlantic-Occidental - every sovereign is thought to have been begotten by a god uniting with the queen: his tradition in which the hidden meaning of the myth comes to the fore, inasmuch as a miraculous birth without the help of a man, of a human father, was imagined. Since the queen had her consort, the idea that her son was conceived by a god, being awakened to life by her husband, could only indicate that he, not in his mortal part, but so to say, in that eternal and 'divinatory' part, had to be thought of as a type of incarnation of a decisive supernatural element that came to confer a royal dignity on him.

In the case of Rome, therefore, Mars is such an element from above, that is, the divine representation of the principle of warrior virility. Such a force stands therefore at the origins of the Eternal City and at the basis of its secret origin, veiled by the legend: so that in some traditions form the era of the Roman Republic itself, it will be directly conceived as the 'son' of Mars. And this 'Mars' force is associated with those who may be the guardians of the sacred flame of life; symbolically, with a vestal (Rhea Silvia).

The twins Romulus and Remus are abandoned to the waters and are saved from the waters. Here again is a symbolic theme recurring in many traditions: Moses is saved from the waters, the Indo-Aryan hero Karna is left in a basket in the river and is saved from the waters, and so on. But the symbol contained in the most ancient Aryan tradition is especially important, i.e., the Vedic tradition, in which ascetics are depicted as 'supreme natures who stand on the waters'. Analogous explanations and, therefore, the hidden meaning of such a symbol, can be clarified as follows: the waters have traditionally always depicted the current of time, i.e., the basic element of mortal, unstable, contingent, passionate, fleeting life. The weak man is taken from the waters and carried from the waters. The seer or hero, the ascetic or the prophet is saved from the waters, or is capable of standing on the waters, or of not sinking in the waters. Hence, in the myth of the origins of Rome this symbol must again characterise the 'divine' element of the founders of Rome, their, so to speak, supernatural dignity.

The twins find refuge near the fig tree [Ficus Ruminalis] and are suckled by a She-wolf. The word Ruminal contains the idea of feeding: the quality of Ruminus, related to Jupiter, alluded to the quality of 'nourisher', of the 'god who gives nourishment' in the ancient Latin language. But this is the most elementary aspect of the symbol. In general, in the most ancient traditions of the Aryan races, the tree is the symbol of universal life, it is the tree of the world or the cosmic tree. If it is in the form of a fig tree as it appears in the legend of Roman origins, precisely as a '*fico indico*' [Banyan tree] - the ashwattha tree - it is depicted as upside-down in the Indo-Aryan tradition to express that its roots are from above, in the 'heavens'. The idea of a mystical flood from the tree is an often recurring theme: the myth of Jason, Hercules, Odin, Gilgamesh, etc. Naturally, according to the races and their spirit, this then present diverse variations. We know from the Hebraic myth that to pick and eat from the tree in order to make oneself like god is considered as the principle of guilt, abuse of power, and a curse. Things are conceived in a very different way in the myths of the Aryan races and even in the paleo-Chaldean myth of Gilgamesh. Also, in the legends of the Ghibelline Middle Ages, the heroic theme prevails and the tree often appears as that of the universal empire, reaching it in the symbolic lands of the mysterious Prester John means insuring the same dignity that the ancient Ario-Iranian rulers associated with the title of 'king of kings'.

Returning to our main subject, in the myth of the twins at the origins of Rome, we therefore have the allusion to a supernatural food from the Tree - but also the She-Wolf. The symbol of the She-wolf, considered in its entirety and in all the stories that refer to it, has an ambiguous character. Lucian and Emperor Julian recall that, in the ancient world, on the basis of the phonetic resemblance between the two words, the idea of the wolf [*lupo*] and of light [*luce*] are often associated: *lykos*, which in Greek means world, sounds like *lyke*, light. But there are also figurations of the wolf as a hellish animal, as a dark force. The Wolf thus appears to us in the double aspect, symbol of a ferocious and savage nature and also as the symbol of aluminous nature. This duality is verifiable, not only in Hellenic-Mediterranean prehistory, but also in the Celtic and Nordic. In fact, on the one hand in the Nordic-Celtic and Delphic cults the 'wolf' is connected to Apollo, i.e., to the Hyperborean, Nordic-Aryan god, simultaneously conceived as the solar god of the golden age and significantly associated by Virgil with Roman greatness. 'Sons of the wolf', on this basis, was a designation for warrior and heroic peoples of Nordic-Germanic origins, designations that persisted even

up to the epoch of the Goths and Nibelungs. Yet, on the other hand, in the Edda, the 'age of the Wolf' signifies a dark age, marking the epoch of the outbreak of savage and elementary forces, almost of the power of chaos, against the forces of the 'divine heroes', or Aesir.

Now we can certainly also relate this quality to the principle that, according to the legend of origins, 'fed' the two twins insofar as we see it reflected in their very nature, that is, in the antagonistic duality of Romulus and Remus, as related to us in the myth. As others already noticed, so also the theme of a single principle from which an antithesis is differentiated, whether depicted by the antagonism of two brothers of twins or, in general, of a couple, is found again in many traditions, and not rarely in respect to particularly significant moments for the origins of a given civilisation, race, or religion. For example, we only recall that in the ancient Egyptian tradition Osiris and Set are two brothers of discord - sometimes conceived as wins - and one incarnates the luminous power of the sun, the other, a dark, 'infernal', principle, whose generation is called the 'sons of the impotent revolt'. Does not something similar also show through perhaps in the Roman legend? Romulus is the one who marks the contour of the city as the meaning of a sacre drite and a principle of *limit*- of order, of law - having received the right of putting his name to the city form the apparition of the solar number, of the *twelve* vultures. Remus is instead the one who violates such a limit and is killed for this reason. One could say that the primordial force of Roman origins thus are differentiated and destroys the 'dark' powers that contain din themselves, affirms in its luminous aspect of order, Olympian denomination, purified warrior force.

There have been attempts to see in the contrast between Romulus and Remus the reflection of the contrast between opposed Aryan racial forces, or of the Aryan type, and non-Aryan or pre-Aryan types. Research of this kind is without doubt interesting: problematic in its conclusions, if it intends to remain exclusively on the plane of material facts, or archaeological and anthropological evidence. It has greater possibilities if it also penetrates the myth and legend in order to extract elements that integrate research in other domains. Naturally, in order to accomplish that, it also needs to resolve to outline general frameworks of various aspects of ancient Roman society, considering, for example, with various writers, somewhat probable that the social system of castes of ancient Rome had a racial substrate.

In this totality, it is interesting to examine the link between the two principles, whose symbolic figurations could well be Romulus and Remus, with the two hills Palatine and Aventine. The Palatine is, as we know, Romulus' hill and the Aventine is Remus'. Now, according to the ancient Italic tradition, on the Palatine, Hercules met the good king Evander (who significantly founded a temple of the goddess Victoria on the same Palatine hill) after having killed Cacus, son of the Pelasgian (pre-Aryan) god of the subterranean fire: and Hercules conquered and killed in Cacus' cave, *located in the Aventine*, and erected an altar to the Olympic god, to whom he was allied according to the Hellenic myth. Researchers like Piganiol, are of the opinion that this duel between Hercules and Cacus - with the corresponding opposition of the Palatine and Aventine hills - could be a mythic transcription of the battle waged by peoples of opposing races.

The mythic legend of the origins of Rome is therefore saturated with deep meaning. The triumph of Romulus and the death of Remus is the key to the origin hidden in Romanity - and the first episode of a dramatic, outer and inner, spiritual, social and racial battle, in part known, in part still enclosed in symbols or in events not yet penetrated with respect to their most essential aspect - almost, we will say: with respect to the 'third dimension' Through this secular battle Rome rises gradually and asserts itself in the world as triumphal manifestations of a principle of light and of order, of an ethic and a vision of life that, in its original and uncorrupted forms, is witness to the Aryan spirit. And we know what it is, according to the most widespread tradition, the conclusion of the legend of origins: it is the apotheosis of Romulus, Romulus deified,

'He returned from the earth to heaven after his mortal part was destroyed by means of the dazzling fire.'

So what has been treated is neither fantasy, nor poetry, nor rhetoric. Analogous explanations recur in the traditions of all peoples, according to a uniformity that should lead anyone to reflection. Also in regards to Romulus, the myth contains a faith and a spiritual certainty: it is the meaning of a reality that, freed from the person and symbol, was not once, but will always be, and will always be present, in its greatness beyond history, the race that knows how to recall the 'mystery'.

The Mysticism of Race in Ancient Rome

The literature on racial theory has not failed to emphasise everything that shows the importance attributed to lineage, people, origin, and ancestry in ancient Rome at that time, and has also conducted research to recover the Aryan or Nordic-Aryan element and type in Romanity and to follow its destiny. Because of the predominant interests in modern racial theory and in the very nature of its development, this research is therefore almost always focused on the basically exterior and subordinate elements: thus it remains on the level of ancient law and custom, on certain aristocratic traditions, on the direct or indirect evidence in respect to a given physical type and, somewhat less often, is conveyed within the purview of the most noted and widespread cults and myths. It is curious that, as far as we know, a series of sources is instead almost systematically neglected which, in regard to the higher aspects of the doctrine of race, present a special meaning and are richly documented. The reason for that is in the predominance of the prejudice - which we previously reported in this journal - precisely to consider the totality of whatever in Roman antiquity had a super-rational and properly traditional character as fantasies, imaginations, superstitions, and finally, as something unserious and negligible. In this way a great part of the ancient Roman world still waits to be explored and this exploration, if conducted possessing the right principles and suitable qualification, is destined to yield valuable results, not just in regards to a spiritual and religious consciousness of the forces of the race.

The lares, penates, manes, genii familiari, the archeget heroes and so on are notions well known to anyone who has had even elementary studies of ancient Roman history. But known to what degree? Also, like the equivalents of dead and mute things that are conserved in museums, like the verbal residues of a world that is felt as foreign and 'dead',

as much to leave us indifferent, at least, for whatever technical and academic reasons, they are not compelled to make special studies of sources and traditions, in place of mere culture, resulting in a worthy monograph. To integrate such sings, including pulling sufficient elements form them to make us understand the meaning and fundamental truths of ancient Roman and, in general, Ario-Mediterranean, humanity is a task that, with very rare exceptions, is not at all felt. However, by this we also understand the most precise and significant racial profession of the faith of ancient Rome, not a 'philosophised' profession of faith restricted to any cultured circle, but alive and active in the most original, most widespread, most revered traditions.

The notions of lares, penates, genies, heroes, etc., are in good measure interdependent. In various ways, they all refer to the ancient Roman awareness of the mystical forces of blood and race, to the lineage, considered not only in its corporeal and biological aspects, but also in its 'metaphysical' and invisible, but not 'transcendent', aspects in the limited dualist meaning that has come to prevail for such terms. The single, atomic, deracinated individual does not exist. When he presumes to be a being in itself, he is deceived in the most pathetic way, because he cannot even name the last of the organic processes that condition his life and finite consciousness. The individual is part of a group, a folk, a *gente*. He is part of an organic unity, whose most immediate vehicle is blood, and is extended both in space and time. This unity is not 'naturalistic', it is not determined and called to life solely through natural, biological, and physiological processes. Such processes just constitute his exterior side, the necessary but not sufficient condition. There is a 'life' of life, a mystical force of blood and folk. It subsists beyond the forces of the life of the individuals that are dissolved in it at death or that are given by it through new birth; it is therefore a *vitae mortisque locus* [a place of life and death] - a placer that encompasses life and death and that for that very reason stands beyond both.

To maintain a living continuous, and deep contact with this profound force of the race is the most direct and essential form of *pietas*, religiosity, the basis and condition of every other, the principle canons of family laws are its consequences and applications, even in relation to the earth, that it itself- as the notion of the *genius loci* shows - maintains mysterious and 'mystical' relations with the blood and the original strength of the people or *gens* that possesses it and lives there. Looking toward the origins, there is the sense of a 'mystery' - there is the myth both of beings having come from above, and of men who transcended

self-humanity, to loosen their life from their person and to thus constitute it as the superindividual force of a folk, of a lineage, of an ancestry that will see its origin in it. Ideally, there is a contact and a perfect match of the individual with this power, to be able to signify through it the apotheosis, i.e., the conquest of the privilege of immortality, and to confer on it the right of be considered even a 'son' - in a higher sense - of the being of the lineage, if even a type of new manifestation of this being itself.

This is the essence of the mystical-racial creed of ancient Ario-Mediterranean and, particularly, Roman, humanity. The significance that it gives to the race a spirit, beyond that of the body, is an irrefutable fact and constitutes the base of the belief of the entities indicated and of the meticulous worship that was dedicated to them. We will put forward some evidence that will also be valid to highlight further aspects of the central ideas we succinctly exposed.

According to a noted work of Macrobius (Sat., III, 3) the lares for the Roman were 'the gods that give us life: they nourish our body and govern our soul'. Naturally that must not be understood in an ingeniously literal way, but in reference to the mystery of the ultimate forces of our organism. As we pointed out, not one of the most important processes that are at the base of our organic and psychic-physical life depends directly on our power and is illuminated by our consciousness. Ancient man, while he was uninterested in the exterior, physical work of such processes, which are studied by modern positive science, instead focuses all his attention on the forces that were presupposed by them and that precisely - in a higher and symbolic sense - 'nourished' and 'governed' our life. Macrobius' testimony, among many others, is the most explicit in indicating that the ancient cults of lares, manes, or penates were indeed related, above all, to such forces.

These moreover were brought back to a single origin in close relation with the idea of race.

'The most ancient documents of the cult of the lares mainly relate divinity to the individual and embodies it in the *lar familiaris* [the family spirit], the sole, but ideal, father, of a given race; this word, in reality, means not that he created materially the race at its origin as the forefather, but that he is the divine cause of its existence and duration.' (Saglio, Dict. Des Antiquites grecques and romaines, III.)

The *lar familiaris* was also called *familiae pater*, father or root of the family or of the *gens*, under this aspect identified with the *genius generis*, the genius [spirit] of a given lineage. Now the word *genius* was still meant more distinctly as the hidden and 'divine' force that generates - *genius nominator qui me genuit* - the creator of a given race is *generis nostri parens*, the word *genius* already in itself is related to the words *geno*, *gigno*, i.e., to the idea of generating, that lies at the base of the same word *gens*, *gente* [folk]: here it is still a question for the real power that acts beyond physical generation, in the union of the sexes (*a gignendo genius appellatur*, Consorino, *de die nat.* 3), through which the nuptial bed has also the name of *lectus genialis* (bed of the folk) and every offense to the sacredness of aristocratic marriage and to the lineage was considered as a crime above all in the face of the *genius* of the liege.

The ancient writers relate *genius* not only to the *geno*, *genere* (to generate), but also to the word *gero*, so that, by being etymologically inexact it is not less significant in relations of the idea that they had of the entity in word. This reconciliation in fact brings to light the conviction that the force constituting the mystical origin of a given lineage and the matrix of every generation, remains as a 'presence' in the group corresponding and by way of principle governs, directs, and sustains the life of the individuals (Hartung, *Die Religion der Romer*, I). Our language still has the word '*geniale*' [brilliant, inspired], but just to designate a rather different thing, also opposed to the most ancient conception. The 'inspired' individual, as commonly meant, is more or less the one who invents, who has some 'bright ideas', on the rebellious, disordered, individualistic basis. In the ancient conception, geniality could be conceived only as a special inspiration or inspiration that the individual enjoyed not in that way, but essentially in relation to his race and blood, to the *genius*, to the divine element of his *gens* and the tradition of the *gens*.

The 'presence' of the *genio*, the lares or the penates in the group to which it corresponded, was made aware and symbolised by the *fire*, the sacred flame, that had to burn uninterruptedly in the centre of the patristic houses, in the temple placed in the *atrium*, the place where the *pater familias* celebrated the rites and in which the various members of the domestic or aristocratic group were gathered for meals, for example, which itself had a ritualistic significance in ancient Roman and Aryan life. For example, a portion of the food was reserved for the god of the domestic fire, in order to remember the unity of life that connected

the individuals to him - a unity of life and also a unity of destiny. In certain aspects, in fact, the *genius*, beyond being the principle that determines the fundamental traits of the individuals arising under his sign, was also conceived as the directing principle of this most important and most decisive acts, like who helps and guides him, so to speak, from behind the scenes of his finite consciousness, becoming the ultimate cause of his destiny, both good and evil, that was intended for him. In that way, this being of the ancient Roman racial cult successively gave rise to the popular depictions, which however conserve very little of the original meaning: we can for example recall the undeniable relation of the *genius* with the popular Christian conception of the 'guardian angels' or of the good and evil angels, these images that have become absolutely mythological and deprived of the essential and concrete relation with the blood and mystical forces of the race.

The intimate connection existing between the individual and the *lares*, the *genius*, and in general with the divinity symbolised by the sacred fire of a given bloodline, and the living character, assumed to be present and acting in such a divinity, explain the peculiarities of the ancient cult. This entity of the fire appeared as the natural intermediary between the human world and the supernatural order. Starting from the idea of the unity, fulfilled in the bloodline and in the race, of the individual with a fore that, as the *genius* or the *lares*, was more than physical, ancient man was convinced of the real possibility of the influence precisely in this way, on his own destiny. Special rites had to propitiate and enoble in order to ensure that transcendent influence was of help to his strengths and actions through the mystery of blood and race to which he belonged. A specific character of the most ancient cults of the most ancient Aryan societies was its anti-universalism. Ancient man did not turn to a God in general, a God of all men and all races, but the god of a lineage, in fact, of his *gente* and his family. And vice versa: only the members of the group that corresponded to them could legitimately invoke the divinity of the domestic fire and to think that their rites were efficacious. It is easy to pronounce negative judgments and formulaic stereotypes, like that of 'polytheism'; it is difficult to clarify what, in the ancient world, that was about because the meaning of the ancient religion became almost entirely lost, in the ensuing centuries. We limit ourselves to make two points.

First of all, there is a visible hierarchy that legitimises the ancient aristocratic-racial Aryan and Roman cult. In an army, one does not directly address the supreme leader, but rather the hierarchy on which

he immediately depends, because of the effect that he, or the individuals closest to him, were able to settle the situation, without needing to go higher up. Likewise, admitting a universal God was not a reason to exclude every intermediary and to condemn any reference to the particular mystical forces that are closer to a folk or race and connected in a concrete unity of destiny of life. Celsus even brought up the hierarchical argument against the accusation of polytheism made by the Christians by observing, by analogy, that whoever pays tribute to obedience to an authority delegated to the government of a given province implicitly pays tribute to the central government, while whoever claims to address it solely and directly, beyond being impertinent, can, in reality, be acting in an anarchic way. And it is well known that Romanity, beyond particular aristocratic cults, also recognised more general cults, parallel to the universality to which the eternal city gradually elevated itself, and also indicates on the level of entities, like the *lares* or *genii* themselves, because there was also a national conception of the *lares*, for example, where they attributed a cult to the *lares militares*, or they spoke of the *lares publici*, or they referred to the mystical force of the imperial lineage, to the 'demigods who founded the city and established the universal empire', or they introduced the idea of 'genius or universal demons'.

In the second place, ancient traditional man did not reduce the cult to a mere sentimental disposition for which the rite was only an empty ceremony. Those who considered the relationship between the human world and the divine as real and effective, thought that there existed precise conditions. One of these was race and blood. Even without wishing to enter the complex field of the metaphysical presuppositions of the cult, it appears evident that the force, to which the individual thought he owed his life, that he supposed 'present' in his name body but to which he attributed superindividual and supernatural characteristics, was conceived as the most direct and positive path to return to what is highest in life. The race, as race of the spirit, was therefore a religious value, it contained a sacrament, it was hidden by 'magic', and that for considerations, one must recognise it well, in its positive and realistic mode.

The oath on the *genius* in Roman antiquity was made while touching the centre of the forehead, and the cult of the *genius* itself did not lack a relation with that of the *Fides*, the personification of essentially Aryan and virile virtue, of fidelity and loyalty. The detail related to the

gesture of the oath is, for every expert, rather interesting, because it related the *genius* and the entities similar to it back to *mens*, to the intellectual and virile principle of life, hierarchically superordinate both to the soul and to the purely corporeal forces: it cannot be by any chance that the place attributed by the Roman tradition to *mens* - the centre of the forehead - was that which in the Indo-Aryan tradition is certainly assigned the ajna chakra to the force of 'transcendent virility' and to the so-called 'centre of command'. With that in mind, the suspicion is unlikely, that in the Roman family cult, if not exactly of superstitious personifications, it was a type of 'totemism', the totem being the dark entity of the blood of a tribe of barbarians, related to the forces of the animal kingdom. We see instead that the ancient Roman world gave to the gods of the race and family group precisely some supernatural traits, the mind (*mens* or the *nous*) conceived in Mediterranean antiquity precisely as the supernatural and 'solar' principle of man.

Certainly, we must not generalise and think that it is about that in every case. The traditions encompassed in the ancient Roman world are more varied and complex than has been supposed up to now. Both ethnically and spiritually, diverse influences met in the most ancient period of Rome. Some are actually related to inferior forms of cult - inferior either by belonging to a non-Aryan ethnic substrate, or by representing a regressive and materialised form of somewhat more ancient cults, of Aryan and particularly Atlantico-Occidental origin. That is valid also for the cult created or mystical forces of blood, race, and family, that in some cases and phases has, let us admit, 'crepuscular' traits, with special regard to their inferior chthonic aspect predominantly relate to that instead of celestial and super-terrestrial symbols. One can nevertheless not contest the idea that in the greater number of cases the highest tradition was present in Rome and that in its development Rome was able to 'rectify' and purify to a not negligible measure the different traditions that it had included. So against the myths, which, in reference to the cult of the *lares*, at Acca Larentia, to the *re plebeo* Servio Tullio, and to the Sabine element remaining at an inferior level, we have the 'heroic' elements of the cult of the *lares* and *penates* and such elements assume ever more significance in the events at the time of the Empire. Some think that the very term '*lares*' comes from the Etruscan *lar*, a word that means leader or chief, that however was related to chiefs and leaders like Porsenna and Volumnio. A very widespread tradition among the ancients for which it suffices to recall Varrone, identifies the *lares* with the 'heroes', in the Greek sense of demigods, of men

who have transcended nature and were made participants of the indestructibility of the Olympics so that it validates, in spite of its generalisation, Mommsen's idea through which every gens would have had as one of its heroes, the principle of the people that was venerated precisely in the person of the *lar familiaris*.

The supernatural and 'regal' side of the ancient cult of the mystical forces of blood is emphasised with that. This is not everything. On the one hand, the funereal epigraphs attest to the Roman faith that the principle of immortality for his descendants was the lares themselves: many epigraphs do not indicate the negative 'telluric' possibility of a type of dull and nocturnal post mortem survival in an underworld, but they affirm the higher idea that death is the principle of a superior existence. They put death exactly in relation, to which they were dedicated, with the *lares* or heroes of his people. On the other hand, as previously noted, Romanity would universalise the notion of the *lares*, extending it to the central dominating force of Romanity. We find therefore the inscriptions dedicated to the *lar victor*, the *lar martis et pacis*, and finally to the *lares Augusti*. It is already in an environment in which it is not about more of the race as gens and nuclear family, but as folk and political community. Even outside the race so conceived a divine force, a mystical entity, is presented, connected to the destinies of war, victory, and triumphal peace - *lar victor*, *lar martis et pacis* - and connected finally to the 'genius', to the generating principle of the leaders, the Caesars, to the *lar Augusti*.

With that we will now discuss a very different subject which is the Aryan conception of the fortune and destiny of the leaders, the city, and nations. For now, we believe we have brought sufficiently to light the meaning of the mythical figurations and cults typical of the ancient Roman peoples, where unequivocally the consciousness of blood and race resided and where religiosity was not a factor of evasion and universalism, but constituted the most solid cement of the unity of folk and bloodlines. The mystery of blood was a central idea of ancient Roman spirituality and to disregard it means to be condemned to a superficial and profane understanding of the most tangible, noted, and celebrated aspects of the law, custom, and ethics of ancient society.

METAPHYSICS OF WAR

Introduction

by John B. Morgan IV

The Julius Evola to be found in this volume is one who has, thus far, remained largely unknown to English-speaking readers, apart from how he has been described second-hand by other writers – namely, the political Julius Evola. With the exception of *Men Among the Ruins*, which defines Evola's post-war political attitude, as well as the essays made available on-line and in print from the *Evola as He Is* Web site, all of Evola's works which have been translated into English prior to the present volume have been his works on esotericism, and this is the side of his work with which English-language readers are most familiar. The essays contained in this book were written during the period of Evola's engagement with both Italian Fascism and German National Socialism, and, while Evola regarded these writings as being only a single aspect – and by no means an aspect of primary importance – of his work, it is for these writings that he is most often called to account (and nearly always harshly condemned) in the court of the academicians and professional historians. For this reason alone, then, it is of great value that these essays are being made available so that English-speaking readers can now form their own opinion of Evola's work in this area. And for those who are interested in Evola as a teacher, then these essays will serve to open up an area of his work that his hitherto remained largely inaccessible, and which contains a great deal of practical advice for the traditionally-minded student.

It is important to remember while reading these essays, however, that Evola himself made no distinction between the various areas of culture with which he chose to engage – areas which have been artificially divided from each other by the philosophy of modernity, which treats the entire body of universal knowledge as a creature to be dissected and examined, one organ at a time, beneath a microscope, and thus each part of the creature's body is only understood as a thing in itself, without any understanding of how it relates to the whole. Evola's approach

to knowledge was traditional, and therefore it was integrated in nature. For him, there was always only one subject: Tradition, which, as his friend René Guénon had first defined it, is the timeless and unchanging esoteric core which lies at the heart of all genuine spiritual paths. ‘Traditionalism’, a term which Evola himself never used, refers to the knowledge and techniques derived from sacred texts that the individual can use to orient himself in order to know Tradition, and in knowing it, thereby live all aspects of his life in accordance with it. Politics was only of interest to Evola in terms of how the pursuit of certain political goals could be of benefit toward the spiritual advancement of a traditionally-minded individual, and also in terms of how the distasteful business of politics might be able to bring modern societies closer into line with the values and structures to be found within the teachings of traditional thought.

During the 1930s, two political phenomena seemed to bear some hopeful possibilities for him in terms of how they might be utilised as vehicles for the restoration of something at least approximating a traditional society: Italian Fascism and German National Socialism (Nazism). At no point, however, was Evola a starry-eyed, fanatical revolutionary, filled with idealistic enthusiasm for the cause. Indeed, in 1930 he wrote about Fascism, “To the extent to which Fascism embraces and defends [traditional] ideals, we shall call ourselves Fascists. And this is all.”¹ Reflecting on his political engagements later in life, he further wrote:

“Philosophy, art, politics, science, even religion,” were here stripped of any right and possibility to exist merely in themselves, and to be of any relevance outside a higher framework. This higher framework coincided with the very idea of Tradition... [My goal was] “to defend ideals unaffected by any political regime – be it Fascist, Communist, anarchist or democratic. These ideals transcend the political sphere; yet, when translated on the political level, they necessarily lead to qualitative differences – which is to say: to hierarchy, authority and *imperium* in the broader sense of the word” as opposed to “all forms of democratic and egalitarian turmoil”.²

¹ Quoted by Evola himself in *The Path of Cinnabar* (London: Arktos, 2009), p. 106.

² *Ibid.*, p. 106.

Taking all of Evola's comments into account, both before and after the war, he never considered himself to be very much of a Fascist. He understood from the beginning that both Fascism and National Socialism were thoroughly modern in their conception. In 1925, Evola had already written that Italian Fascism lacked a 'cultural and spiritual root', which it had only tried to develop after gaining power, 'just as a newly rich man later tries to buy himself an education and a noble title'.³ He attacked the notions of patriotism that Fascism tried to inculcate into Italian society as mere 'sentimentality'. He also condemned the violence which Mussolini was using against his political opponents. He labelled the Fascist revolution as an 'ironic revolution',⁴ which left far too much of the pre-existing political order untouched (a sentiment apparently shared by Hitler, who reputedly referred to Italian Fascism, with its odd blending of the dictatorial position of 'Il Duce' with the Fascist Grand Council and the traditional monarchy, as a 'half-job'). In later years he was to observe that, 'In strictly cultural terms, however, the Fascist 'revolution' was simply a joke.'⁵ Both Fascism and National Socialism relied on the masses for their support, which set them apart from the rule by aristocracy of the traditional world, and National Socialism was obsessed by a race theory derived from modern, scientific concepts of evolution and biology which were thoroughly anti-traditional.

Given so many problems with Fascism and Nazism from a traditional perspective, then why did Evola ever show any interest in them at all? The answer lies in the spirit of the times. By the 1930s, it was clear that the democratic nations of Western Europe and the United States, the Communist Soviet Union, and the fascist countries were all on a collision course with each other. And, despite their many flaws, the fascist movements, unlike democratic and Communist societies, were at least attempting to restore something akin to the traditional, hierarchical order within the social structure of the modern world – an order which had gone unquestioned throughout the histories of all civilisations for thousands of years, prior to the onset of modernity. While Fascism and National Socialism were thoroughly modernist in their conception, Evola believed that, given time, they could potentially be used

³ Quoted in H. T. Hansen's Introduction to Julius Evola, *Men Among the Ruins* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2002), p. 36.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁵ *The Path of Cinnabar*, p. 114.

as a gateway to re-establish an order in Europe based on genuinely traditional values, and that they might even eventually give rise to genuinely traditional social forms which would supercede them. It is in this context that these essays – some of which contain direct references to Fascism, being addressed to either Italian or German readerships as they originally were – should be understood.

Evola's political ideal was always the Roman Empire. It is invoked repeatedly throughout these essays. The Fascists spoke frequently about ancient Rome, just as the Nazis constantly invoked the myth of an idealised Nordic past. Their understanding of these ancient wonders, however, was of an extremely superficial sort, which in practice didn't extend beyond constructing new buildings in the style of the ancient world, and engendering artistic styles that were a mere imitation of the Classical era. Evola wanted to bring about change on a much deeper level. He didn't just want a few cosmetic changes to be made – he wanted modern-day Italians to actually resume thinking and behaving as their ancient ancestors had done. In short, he wanted the Italians to *become* like the ancient Romans – in thought, word and deed. This is why, for him, Fascism fell far short of his hopes for it – in his writings, he sometimes referred to what he wanted as 'super-fascism'. By using this term, he did not mean that he wished for more of what Fascism was already offering. Rather, he was calling for a *transcendence* of Fascism. He wanted for the Fascist revolution to tunnel inward, into the very soul of each individual Italian, and awaken the long-buried racial memory of their illustrious Imperial ancestors. When Italy disappointed him, he transferred his hopes to the Germans, particularly in the form of the *Schutzstaffel* (S.S.), which, with Heinrich Himmler's efforts to fashion it into something akin to a Medieval knightly order, seemed to hold a spark of the ancient Teutonic Knights within them. Evola was even invited to deliver a series of lectures to representatives of the S.S. leadership in 1938. However, the S.S. was fixated upon the Nazis' purely biological definitions of racial purity and their belief in the supremacy of the Nordic peoples, and as such they were unimpressed by the ideas of the 'Latin' Evola, who proposed the idea that spirit and character were as important to one's racial qualifications as ancestry and blood. He was politely sent away. As such, Evola's hope to influence the political forces of the period in such a way as to implement his plan for the spiritual and cultural regeneration of Europe was never to be realised.

The failure of Evola's efforts, however, should in no way be understood as reducing the relevancy of the essays in this volume to mere

relics of purely historical interest. Evola's writing was always directed at the individual, and he believed that genuine change had to begin at that level before any meaningful political or social change could follow suit. Furthermore, the root of all of Evola's thinking lay in the unchanging world of Tradition. Therefore, the attitudes and orientations which he encouraged his readers to adopt as a way of preparing for the worldwide struggle of his time are just as relevant to a traditionally-minded individual preparing to steel himself for the struggles and conflicts of our own era, whether they are political or of an entirely different sort. The definitions of heroism and the qualities of the warrior that Evola describes herein are surely timeless and universal. Indeed, in 'Varieties of Heroism', one can easily see, in the phenomenon of today's Muslim 'suicide bombers', a supra-personal heroism of a type identical to that of the Japanese *kamikaze* pilots that Evola describes. While it would not be correct to label today's Islamist radicals as 'traditionalists', since their particular interpretation of Islam has modernist roots in the Nineteenth-century Salafi school, we can still see some elements of a traditional conception of the warrior in their actions. For instance, Evola describes at great length the concept of *jihad*, which, as he explains, involves an inner struggle against one's own weaknesses as well as the struggle against one's external enemies – those whose characteristics resemble those aspects of himself that the warrior is attempting to purge. Regrettably, this dual concept of *jihad* as consisting of an inward as well as an outward form of struggle has been rejected by today's Islamist radicals, who believe that the war against the infidels should take precedence over all other considerations. Fortunately, however, the dual understanding of *jihad* is still to be found among the Islamic mystics: the Sufis, who may very well be the last guardians of a traditional Islam in the modern world.

Despite these differences, however, an attack carried out by an Islamist 'suicide bomber' still retains the essential idea of self-sacrifice, and yearning for transcendence, that is to be found in the traditional warrior concept. In 'Varieties of Heroism', Evola explains why those Japanese *kamikaze* pilots who died while crashing their planes into American ships should not be regarded as suicides, since the pilots carried out these attacks with the belief that they were merely giving up this life in favour of a more transcendent and supra-personal existence. Given that Muslim 'suicide bombers' similarly believe that they are destined for Paradise as a result of their actions, the objection to such at-

tacks on the basis of the *Qur'an's* prohibition against suicide is, therefore, ludicrous. Such was, indeed, the motivation behind the famed Ismaili Assassins of Alamut who terrorised the Islamic world, as well as the armies of the European Crusaders, for centuries. The Assassins carried out carefully-planned attacks on individual enemies without regard for the safety of the assassin, and, as such, the technique of the 'suicide attack' was their hallmark. The Assassins were always assured, however, that even if they were to die during the course of their attack, they would be rescued by angels, and sent to dwell in Paradise forever. Although the Assassins, who were a small offshoot of Shi'ism, are regarded as heretics by other Muslims, we can see the roots (or, perhaps, only a parallel) of today's 'suicide bombers' in their practices which is entirely consistent with Evola's description of the supra-personal mode of death in combat.

It is important for me to clarify that I am referring only to those attacks carried out against military or political targets. The mass-casualty attacks on civilians, which have become an all-too-common occurrence in Iraq and elsewhere in the Islamic world in recent years, are alien to the provisions of war laid out in traditional Islam, and can be justified only within the modern innovative doctrines of *takfir* – in which one can declare other Muslims to be apostates – or *jahiliyyah* – which regards fellow Muslims as living in a state of pagan ignorance. It is likewise forbidden in the *Qur'an* to attack the civilian population even of one's enemy, something which the Islamists have had to perform theological acrobatics to circumvent in order to justify their bloody attacks in the West. Certainly, such murderous behaviour, which is usually perpetrated out of desperation by individuals chosen from the lowest rungs of society, is not something which Evola would have defined as traditional or seen as desirable, even in opposition to societies he found detestable. Evola's ideal was that of the *kshatriya* described by Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which has been explained by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada as follows:

'One who gives protection from harm is called *kshatriya*. ... The *kshatriyas* are specially trained for challenging and killing because religious violence is sometimes a necessary factor. ... In the religious law books it is stated: 'In the battlefield, a king or *kshatriya*, while fighting another king envious of him, is eligible for achieving the heavenly planets after death, as the brahmanas also attain the heavenly planets by sacrificing animals

in the sacrificial fire.’ Therefore, killing on the battlefield on religious principles and killing animals in the sacrificial fire are not at all considered to be acts of violence, because everyone is benefited by the religious principles involved.’⁶

A *kshatriya*, therefore, is not an ordinary man, but rather a man of the highest aristocratic attitude and behavior. He does not kill out of a desire to fulfil some selfish desire or to bring about some temporary political gain. Rather, a *kshatriya* fights because he knows that it is the reason for his existence, his *dharma*. He fights to defend the principles of his religion and his community, knowing that if he carries out his duty, regardless of victory or defeat or even his own personal safety, he is destined to attain the highest spiritual platform. But, unfortunately, few genuine *kshatriyas* are to be found in the degenerate Kali-Yuga in which we are now living.

While Evola looked to the past for his understanding of the genuine warrior, Evola was far ahead of his time in his understanding of politics, as were all of the ‘Conservative Revolutionaries’ in Europe during the period between the wars who sought a form of politics beyond the banal squabbles among parties that have dominated in recent centuries. In our time, however, we find that the ideas first outlined by Evola and others are finding new appeal among those seeking an alternative to the seemingly unstoppable, global spread of democratic capitalism. As more people grow tired of the bland multicultural (or, more properly, anti-cultural) consumer society that is being offered as a vision of utopia, it seems likely that Evola’s writings will only continue to increase in relevance as the cracks of social crisis continue to deepen. In particular, ‘The Meaning of the Warrior Element for the New Europe’ contains a number of insights which are just as relevant today as they were in 1941. In this essay, Evola discusses the First World War in the context of ‘democratic imperialism’, and the attempt by the Allies to put to an end the last vestiges of the traditional way of life that were embodied in the Central Powers. We see the exact same phenomenon at work today in the efforts of the United States to spread ‘freedom’ through military action in the Middle East and elsewhere, which is similarly designed to put an end to resistance in the last areas of the world which are still actively opposing the culture of materialism with traditional

⁶ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-Gita as It Is* (Mumbai: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 2008), Chapter 2, Text 31, p. 105.

values. As such, we are now witnessing another case of 'democratic imperialism' by which the present-day democratic powers, having already succeeded in Europe, are attempting to destroy the last vestiges (and only a vestige, given how profoundly impacted by modernity the entire world has been over the last century) of the traditional conception of order. These forces will not be defeated through military means, however, but only by those who choose to embody the ideal of the warrior inwardly as well as outwardly, the world of Tradition being a realm which no amount of force or wealth can subdue.

This introduction will not contain a biographical summary of Evola's life, as that has already been done extensively by several writers elsewhere in the English language (most notable, particularly in terms of his political attitudes, is Dr. H. T. Hansen's Introduction to *Men Among the Ruins*), as well as in Evola's autobiography, *The Path of Cinnabar*. However, given that these essays are concerned primarily with war, it is worth mentioning that Evola did not understand war in a purely theoretical sense. Evola served as an artillery officer in the Italian army during the First World War, and he would have served again in the Second World War had not the controversial nature of his position in Fascist Italy intervened to prevent him from doing so. Evola practiced what he wrote. This is no more evident than in his essay 'Race and War', a passage from which seems like a premonition of the fate that was to befall him in 1945, when he was injured and paralysed for life from the waist down as the result of an air raid while he was working in Vienna. In it, Evola mentions a German article about bombing raids by aircraft, 'in which the test of sang-froid, the immediate, lucid reaction of the instinct of direction in opposition to brutal or confused impulse, cannot but result in a decisive discrimination of those who have the greatest probability of escaping and surviving from those who do not'. Here we may, indeed, be catching a glimpse of the thinking behind his refusal to retreat to shelters during air raids, instead choosing to walk the streets as a test of his own fate.

Lastly, a word about where these essays originally appeared. In 1930, Evola established a bi-weekly journal of his own, *La Torre*, which was to focus on the critique of Fascism from a traditionalist perspective, written by Evola as well as other writers. His attacks on the failures of Fascism angered many in the Fascist establishment, however, and the authorities forced a halt to the publication of *La Torre* after only five issues. Evola therefore realised that, if he wanted to continue to attempt to reach an audience of those who might be sympathetic to his message

of reform, he would need to find well-connected Fascist allies who would be willing to publish his writings, and he succeeded. This is the period to which nearly all of the essays in this book belong. Evola found an important ally in Giovanni Preziosi, who was the editor of the magazine, *La Vita Italiana* (see 'Varieties of Heroism'). Preziosi's publication was also sometimes critical of the Fascist regime, but Preziosi himself had earned Mussolini's trust and respect, and was thus allowed more freedom of content than most others. (According to Evola it was also rumoured that Preziosi possessed an archive of materials which, if made public, would embarrass many of the Fascist leaders.)⁷ Preziosi had been an admirer of Evola's *La Torre*, and he was also a friend of Arturo Reghini, the great Italian esotericist who had been Evola's mentor and collaborator when he first began studying spirituality and mysticism. He agreed to begin publishing Evola's writings in his own journal, and starting in 1936 he also funded many of Evola's trips to other countries, which he was making in an effort to build a network of contacts from among various 'Conservative Revolutionary' organisations all over Europe, in keeping with his hopes at the time of preparing a European – rather than a narrowly Italian – elite which might one day implement his 'super-Fascist' (or, as he himself put it, 'Ghibelline') ideals for the entire Continent. Evola himself wrote, 'My idea was that of coordinating the various elements which to some extent, in Europe, embodied traditionalist thought from a political and cultural perspective.'⁸ This desire is quite evident within the pages of this book, as Evola constantly refers to Aryan civilisation, and cites references from the whole of European culture and history, rather than focusing exclusively on the Italian tradition, as most Fascist writers, with their more conventional sense of nationalism, were doing.

Preziosi also introduced Evola to Roberto Farinacci. Farinacci was a Fascist who had a personal relationship with Mussolini, and he was the chief editor of *Il Regime Fascista* (see the first six essays as well as 'The Roman Conception of Victory'), a journal which was an official publication of the Fascist Party. Farinacci was indifferent to Evola's past troubles with the regime, and he sought to elevate the cultural aspirations of the Fascist revolution. To this end, he granted Evola a page of his journal every other week, in which he was given *carte blanche* to write on whatever subject he wished. This page, which began to appear

⁷ The Path of Cinnabar, p. 110.

⁸ The Path of Cinnabar, p. 155.

in 1933, was entitled 'Diorama Filosofico' (Philosophical Diorama), and it was subtitled 'Problems of the Spirit in Fascist Ethics'. Farinacci used his influence to deflect any attempt to rebuke Evola for writing about Fascism from a critical perspective. So it was that Evola was given an unassailable position from which to voice his observations. This situation was to continue for a full decade, until 1943. Frequently, Evola wrote the contents of the 'Diorama' himself, but he also used it as a forum to highlight like-minded thinkers, of both a literary as well as a political inclination, whom he wished to promote. Thus, by examining the history of Evola's efforts to publish politically-oriented texts during the Fascist era, we can understand the complexity of his relationship to Fascism in general, and thus see why it cannot be said with complete accuracy that Evola was either a Fascist or an anti-Fascist. The most truthful answer is that Evola saw in Fascism a possibility for something better, but that this possibility was one that remained unrealised.

For those newcomers to Evola who are seeking to understand the totality of his thought, these essays are not the ideal place to start. The foundation of all of his work is the book which was published shortly before the essays in this volume were written: *Revolt Against the Modern World*. This book lays out the metaphysical basis for all of his life's work, and one should familiarise himself with it before reading any of Evola's other writings. It should also be made clear that these essays were by no means Evola's last word on the subject of politics. Readers interested in where Evola's political thought ended up in the post-war years should consult his book *Men Among the Ruins*, in which he outlines his understanding of the concept of *apoliteia*, or the 'apolitical stance' which he felt was a necessary condition for those of a traditional inclination to adopt in the age of Kali-Yuga – the last, and most degenerate age within the cycle of ages as understood by in the Vedic tradition, and in which we are currently living. *Apoliteia* should not be confused with apathy or lack of engagement, however – it is, instead, a special form of engagement with political affairs that does not concern itself with the specific goals of politics, but rather with the impact of such engagement on the individual. This is not the place for an examination of this idea, however, as the essays in this book were written by a younger Evola, who felt that there was still a chance of restoring something of the traditional social order via the use of profane politics. Still, it is worth noting that in the very last essay in this volume, 'The Decline of Heroism', which was written not long before *Men Among the Ruins*, we can see something of the state of Evola's mind immediately after the

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war. Pessimism was something always alien to Evola's conception of life, but in this essay we can see Evola surveying the political forces at work in 1950 and realising that none of them can possibly hold any interest for those of a traditional nature. With the destruction of the hierarchical and heroic vision of Fascism, nothing was left to choose from on the political stage but the two competing ideologies of egalitarianism: democratic capitalism and Communism, both of which sought to dehumanise the individual. Moreover, Evola observes that war in the technological age has been reduced to the combat between machinery, and, as such, the opportunities for heroic transcendence offered by war in earlier times are no longer available. Therefore, the struggle for an individual seeking to experience heroism will not be one of politics, or even of combat on the battlefield, but rather, it will consist of the heroic individual in conflict with the phenomenon of 'total war' itself, in which the idea of humanity faces possible annihilation. This is, indeed, the predicament in which we have all found ourselves since 1945, the year when humanity not only harnessed the ability to extinguish itself, but also began to face the prospect of becoming lost within ever-multiplying machinery of our own creation. With no significant political forces opposing the conversion of our world into a universal marketplace, the conflict of our time is the struggle to retain one's humanity in an increasingly artificial world. That is the only battle that retains any genuine significance from a traditional perspective.

Most of the footnotes to the texts were added by myself. A small number of footnotes added by Evola himself were included with some of the essays and have been so indicated.

The Forms of Warlike Heroism

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The fundamental principle underlying all justifications of war, from the point of view of human personality, is 'heroism'. War, it is said, offers man the opportunity to awaken the hero who sleeps within him. War breaks the routine of comfortable life; by means of its severe ordeals, it offers a transfiguring knowledge of life, life according to death. The moment the individual succeeds in living as a hero, even if it is the final moment of his earthly life, weighs infinitely more on the scale of values than a protracted existence spent consuming monotonously among the trivialities of cities. From a spiritual point of view, these possibilities make up for the negative and destructive tendencies of war, which are one-sidedly and tendentially highlighted by pacifist materialism. War makes one realise the relativity of human life and therefore also the law of a 'more-than-life', and thus war has always an anti-materialist value, a spiritual value.

Such considerations have indisputable merit and cut off the chattering of humanitarianism, sentimental grizzling, the protests of the champions of the 'immortal principles', and of the 'International' of the heroes of the pen. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that, in order to define fully the conditions under which the spiritual aspect of war actually becomes apparent, it is necessary to examine the matter further, and to outline a sort of 'phenomenology of warrior experience', distinguishing various forms and arranging them hierarchically so as to highlight the aspect which must be regarded as paramount for the heroic experience.

To arrive at this result, it is necessary to recall a doctrine with which the regular readers of 'Diorama' will already be familiar, which – bear in mind – is not the product of some particular, personal, philosophical construction, but rather that of actual data, positive and objective in nature. It is the doctrine of the hierarchical quadripartition, which interprets most recent history as an involutory fall from each of the four hierarchical degrees to the next. This quadripartition – it must be recalled – is what, in all traditional civilisations, gave rise to four different castes: the slaves, the bourgeois middle-class, the warrior aristocracy, and bearers of a pure, spiritual authority. Here, 'caste' does not mean – as most assume – something artificial and arbitrary, but rather the 'place' where individuals, sharing the same nature, the same type of interest and vocation, the same primordial qualification, gather. A specific 'truth', a specific function, defines the castes, in their normal state, and not vice versa: this is not therefore a matter of privileges and ways of life being monopolised on the basis of a social constitution more or less artificially and unnaturally maintained. The underlying principle behind all the formative institutions in such societies, at least in their more authentic historical forms, is that there does not exist one simple, universal way of living one's life, but several distinct spiritual ways, appropriate respectively to the warrior, the bourgeois and the slave, and that, when the social functions and distributions actually correspond to this articulation, there is – according to the classic expression – an order *secundum equum et bonum*.¹

This order is 'hierarchical' in that it implies a natural dependence of the inferior ways of life on the superior ones – and, along with dependence, co-operation; the task of the superior is to attain expression and personhood on a purely spiritual basis. Only such cases, in which this straight and normal relationship of subordination and co-operation exists are healthy, as is made clear by the analogy of the human organism, which is unsound if, by some chance, the physical element (slaves) or the element of vegetative life (bourgeoisie) or that of the uncontrolled animal will (warriors) takes the primary and guiding place in the life of a man, and is sound only when spirit constitutes the central and ultimate point of reference for the remaining faculties – which, however, are not denied a partial autonomy, with lives and subordinate rights of their own within the unity of the whole.

¹ Latin: 'according to truth and justice'. This has long been a common legal maxim.

Since we are not talking about just any old hierarchy, but about 'true' hierarchy, which means that what is above and rules is really what is superior, it is necessary to refer to systems of civilisation in which, at the centre, there is a spiritual elite, and the ways of life of the slaves, the bourgeois, and the warriors derive their ultimate meaning and supreme justification from reference to the principle which is the specific heritage of this spiritual elite, and manifest this principle in their material activity. However, an abnormal state is arrived at if the centre shifts, so that the fundamental point of reference, instead of being the spiritual principle, is that of the servile caste, the bourgeoisie, or the warriors. Each of these castes manifests its own hierarchy and a certain code of co-operation, but each is more unnatural, more distorted, and more subversive than the last, until the process reaches its limit – that is, a system in which the vision of life characteristic of the slaves comes to orientate everything and to imbue itself with all the surviving elements of social wholeness.

Politically, this involutory process is quite visible in Western history, and it can be traced through into the most recent times. States of the aristocratic and sacred type have been succeeded by monarchical warrior States, to a large extent already secularised, which in turn have been replaced by states ruled by capitalist oligarchies (bourgeois or merchant caste) and, finally, we have witnessed tendencies towards socialist, collectivist and proletarian states, which have culminated in Russian Bolshevism (the caste of the slaves).

This process is paralleled by transitions from one type of civilisation to another, from one fundamental meaning of life to another. In each phase, every concept, every principle, every institution assumes a different meaning, reflecting the world-view of the predominant caste.

This is also true of 'war', and thus we can approach the task we originally set ourselves, of specifying the varieties of meaning which battle and heroic death can acquire. War has a different face, in accordance with its being placed under the sign of one or another of the castes. While, in the cycle of the first caste, war was justified by spiritual motives, and showed clearly its value as a path to supernatural accomplishment and the attainment of immortality by the hero (this being the motive of the 'holy war'), in the cycle of the warrior aristocracies they fought for the honour and power of some particular prince, to whom they showed a loyalty which was willingly associated with the pleasure of war for war's sake. With the passage of power into the hands of the bourgeoisie, there was a deep transformation; at this point, the concept

of the nation materialises and democratises itself, and an anti-aristocratic and naturalistic conception of the homeland is formed, so that the warrior is replaced by the soldier-citizen, who fights simply for the defence or the conquest of land; wars, however, generally remain slyly driven by supremacist motives or tendencies originating within the economic and industrial order. Finally, the last stage, in which leadership passes into the hands of the slaves, has already been able to realise – in Bolshevism – another meaning of war, which finds expression in the following, characteristic words of Lenin: ‘The war between nations is a childish game, preoccupied by the survival of a middle class which does not concern us. True war, our war, is the world revolution for the destruction of the bourgeoisie and the triumph of the proletariat.’

Given all this, it is obvious that the term ‘hero’ is a common denominator which embraces very different types and meanings. The readiness to die, to sacrifice one’s own life, may be the sole prerequisite, from the technical and collectivist point of view, but also from the point of view of what today, rather brutally, has come to be referred to as ‘cannon fodder’. However, it is also obvious that it is not from this point of view that war can claim any real spiritual value as regards the individual, once the latter does not appear as ‘fodder’ but as a personality – as is the Roman standpoint. This latter standpoint is only possible provided that there is a double relationship of means to ends – that is to say, when, on the one hand, the individual appears as a means with respect to a war and its material ends, but, simultaneously, when a war, in its turn, is a means for the individual, as an opportunity or path for the end of his spiritual accomplishment, favoured by heroic experience. There is then a synthesis, an energy and, with it, an utmost efficiency.

If we proceed with this train of thought, it becomes rather clear from what has been said above that not all wars have the same possibilities. This is because of analogies, which are not merely abstractions, but which act positively along paths invisible to most people, between the collective character predominating in the various cycles of civilisation and the element which corresponds to this character in the whole of the human entity. If, in the eras of the merchants and slaves, forces prevail which correspond to the energies which define man’s pre-personal, physical, instinctive, ‘telluric’, organic-vital part, then, in the eras of the warriors and spiritual leaders, forces find expression which correspond, respectively, to what in man is character and volitional personality, and what in him is spiritualised personality, personality real-

ised according to its supernatural destiny. Because of all the transcendent factors it arouses in them, it is obvious that, in a war, the majority cannot but collectively undergo an awakening, corresponding more or less to the predominant influence within the order of the causes which have been most decisive for the outbreak of that war. Individually, the heroic experience then leads to different points of arrival: more precisely, to three primary such points.

These points correspond, basically, to three possible types of relation in which the warrior caste and its principle can find themselves with respect to the other manifestations already considered. In the normal state, they are subordinate to the spiritual principle, and then there breaks out a heroism which leads to supra-life, to supra-personhood. The warrior principle may, however, construct its own form, refusing to recognise anything as superior to it, and then the heroic experience takes on a quality which is 'tragic': insolent, steel-tempered, but without light. Personality remains, and strengthens, but, at the same time, so does the limit constituted by its naturalistic and simply human nature. Nevertheless, this type of 'hero' shows a certain greatness, and, naturally, for the types hierarchically inferior to the warrior, i.e., the bourgeois and the slave types, this war and this heroism already mean overcoming, elevation, accomplishment. The third case involves a degraded warrior principle, which has passed into the service of hierarchically inferior elements (the castes beneath it). In such cases, heroic experience is united, almost fatally, to an evocation, and an eruption, of instinctual, sub-personal, collective, irrational forces, so that there occurs, basically, a lesion and a regression of the personality of the individual, who can only live life in a passive manner, driven either by necessity or by the suggestive power of myths and passionate impulses. For example, the notorious stories of Remarque² reflect only possibilities of this latter kind; they recount the stories of human types who, driven to war by fake idealisms, at last realise that reality is something very different – they do not become base, nor deserters, but all that impels them forward throughout the most terrible tests are elemental forces, impulses, instincts, and reactions, in which there is not much human remaining, and which do not know any moment of light.

² Erich Maria Remarque (1898-1970) was a German writer who served in the First World War. His most well-known work is his 1927 novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which depicted the war in horrific and pacifist terms.

In a preparation for war which must be not only material, but also spiritual, it is necessary to recognise all of this with a clear and unflinching gaze in order to be able to orientate souls and energies towards the higher solution, the only one which corresponds to the ideals from which Fascism draws its inspiration.

Fascism appears to us as a reconstructive revolution, in that it affirms an aristocratic and spiritual concept of the nation, as against both socialist and internationalist collectivism, and the democratic and demagogic notion of the nation. In addition, its scorn for the economic myth and its elevation of the nation in practice to the degree of 'warrior nation', marks positively the first degree of this reconstruction, which is to re-subordinate the values of the ancient castes of the 'merchants' and 'slaves' to the values of the immediately higher caste. The next step would be the spiritualisation of the warrior principle itself. The point of departure would then be present to develop a heroic experience in the sense of the highest of the three possibilities mentioned above. To understand how such a higher, spiritual possibility, which has been properly experienced in the greatest civilisations that have preceded us, and which, to speak the truth, is what makes apparent to us their constant and universal aspect, is more than just studious erudition. This is what we will deal with in our following writings, in which we shall focus essentially on the traditions peculiar to ancient and Medieval Romanity.

The Sacrality of War

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In our previous article, we have seen that the phenomenon of warrior heroism has different forms, and can have fundamentally different meanings, as seen from the point of view of a conception intended to establish the values of true spirituality.

Resuming our argument from that point, we shall begin by indicating some conceptions related to our ancient traditions, the Roman traditions. One generally has only a secular idea of the values of ancient Rome. According to this idea, the Roman was merely a soldier, in the most limited sense of the word, and it was by means of his merely soldierly qualities, together with a fortunate combination of circumstances, that he conquered the world. This is a false opinion.

In the first place, right up until the end, the Romans considered it an article of faith that divine forces both created and protected the greatness of Rome – the *imperium*¹ and the Aeternitas.² Those who want to limit themselves to a 'positive' point of view are obliged to replace this perception, deeply felt by the Romans, with a mystery; the mystery, that is, that a handful of men, without any really compelling reasons, without even ideas of 'land' or 'homeland', and without any of the myths or passions to which the moderns so willingly resort to justify war and promote heroism, kept moving, further and further, from one country to the next, following a strange and irresistible impulse, basing everything on an 'asceticism of power'. According to the unanimous

¹ *Imperium*, which was the power vested in the leaders of Rome, was believed to originate from divine sanction.

² Aeternitas Imperii, meaning 'the eternity of Roman rule', was a goddess who looked after the preservation of the Empire.

testimony of all the Classical authors, the early Romans were highly religious – *nostrī maiores religiosissimi mortales*, Sallust recalls³ – and Cicero⁴ and Gellius⁵ repeat his view – but this religiosity of theirs was not confined to an abstract and isolated sphere, but pervaded their experience in its entirety, including in itself the world of action, and therefore also the world of the warrior experience.

A special sacred college in Rome, the *Feciales*, presided over a quite definite system of rites which provided the mystical counterpart to every war, from its declaration to its termination. More generally, it is certain that one of the principles of the military art of the Romans required them not to allow themselves to be compelled to engage in battle before certain mystical signs had defined, so to speak, its ‘moment’. Because of the mental distortions and prejudices resulting from modern education, most people of today would naturally be inclined to see in this an extrinsic, superstitious superstructure. The most benevolent may see in it an eccentric fatalism, but it is neither of these. The essence of the augural art practiced by the Roman patriciate, like similar disciplines, with more or less the same characters which can easily be found in the cycle of the greater Indo-European civilisations, was not the discovery of ‘fates’ to be followed with superstitious passivity: rather, it was the knowledge of points of juncture with invisible influences, the use of which the forces of men could be developed, multiplied, and led to act on a higher plane, in addition to the everyday one, thus – when the harmony was perfect – bringing about the removal of every obstacle and every resistance within an event-complex which was material and spiritual at the same time. In the light of this knowledge, it cannot be doubted that Roman values, the Roman ‘asceticism of power’, necessarily possessed a spiritual and sacred aspect, and that they were regarded not only as a means to military and temporal greatness, but also as a means of contact and connection with supernal forces.

³ ‘Our ancestors were a most devout race of men’, from Sallust’s *The Conspiracy of Catiline*, chapter 12. In this passage Sallust praises the devotional character of the early Romans in opposition to the Romans of his day, whom he called ‘the basest of mankind’. Sallust (86-34 BC) was a noted Roman historian.

⁴ Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE) was a philosopher and famed orator in the Roman Republic.

⁵ Aulus Gellius (c. 125-c. 180 AD) was a Roman author whose only surviving work is his *Attic Nights*, which is a commonplace book of notes taken from various other sources that he had read or heard about.

If it were appropriate to do so here, we could produce various materials in support of this thesis. We will limit ourselves, however, to mentioning that the ceremony of the triumph in Rome had a character which was far more religious than militaristic in a secular sense, and that many elements seem to show that the Roman attributed the victory of his leaders less to their simply human attributes than to a transcendent force manifesting itself in a real and efficient manner through them, their heroism and sometimes their sacrifice (as in the rite known as the *devotio*, in which the leaders sacrificed themselves).⁶ The victor, in the aforesaid ceremony of the triumph, put on the insignia of the supreme God of the Capitol⁷ as if he was a divine image, and went in procession to place the triumphal laurels of his victory in the hands of this God, as if to say that the latter was the true victor.

Finally, one of the origins of the imperial apotheosis, that is to say, of the feeling that an immortal *numen*⁸ was concealed in the Emperor, is undoubtedly the experience of the warrior: the emperor was originally the military leader,⁹ acclaimed on the battlefield in the moment of victory: in this moment, he seemed transfigured by a force from above, fearful and wonderful, which imposed precisely the feeling of the *numen*. This view, we may add, is not peculiar to Rome, but is found throughout the whole of Classical Mediterranean antiquity, and it was not restricted to victors in war, but sometimes applied also to the winners of the Olympic Games and of the bloody fights of the circus. In the Hellades,¹⁰ the myth of heroes merges with mystical doctrines, such as

⁶ In the *devotio*, a Roman general would offer to sacrifice his own life in a battle in order to ensure victory.

⁷ The Capitolium was a temple on one of the seven hills of Rome which was dedicated to a triad of deities. The original triad consisted of Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus. Later it was comprised of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva.

⁸ "The *numen*, unlike the notion of *deus* (as it later came to be understood), is not a being or a person, but a sheer power that is capable of producing effects, of acting, and of manifesting itself. The sense of the real presence of such powers, or *numina*, as something simultaneously transcendent and yet immanent, marvelous yet fearful, constituted the substance of the original experience of the "sacred".' From Julius Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1995), p. 42.

⁹ This was the case in the Roman Republic. During the Roman Empire, the title of emperor was only granted to the Emperor, and occasionally members of his family.

¹⁰ The plural form of Hellas, which is the ancient name of Greece.

Orphism,¹¹ which significantly unite the character of the victorious warrior and the initiate, victor over death, in the same symbolism.

These are precise indications of a heroism and a system of values which develop into various more or less self-consciously spiritual paths, paths sanctified not only by the glorious material conquest which they mediate, but also by the fact that they represent a sort of ritual evocation involving conquest of the intangible.

Let us consider some other evidence of this tradition, which, by its very nature, is metaphysical: elements such as 'race' cannot therefore possess more than a secondary, contingent place in it. We say this because, in our next article, we intend to deal with the 'holy war' practiced by the warriors of the 'Holy Roman Empire'.¹² That civilisation, as is well known, represents a point of creative convergence between various components: Roman, Christian, and Nordic.

We have already discussed the relevant features of the first of these components (i.e., the Roman). The Christian component will appear with the features of a knightly, supranational heroism as the Crusade. The Nordic component remains to be indicated. To avoid alarming our readers unnecessarily we have stated at the outset that what we refer to has, essentially, a supra-racial character, and is not therefore calculated to encourage the stance of any self-styled 'special' people towards others. To limit ourselves to one hint at what sort of thing we here mean to exclude, we will say that, surprising as it may seem, in the more or less frantic Nordic revivalism celebrated today *ad usum delphini*¹³ by National Socialist Germany, we find mainly a deformation and vulgarisation of Nordic traditions as they existed originally, and as they could still be found in those princes who considered it a great honour to be able to say of themselves that they were Romans, although of the Teutonic race. Instead, for many racist writers today, 'Nordic' has come

¹¹ Orphism was a religion in ancient Greece which differed in a number of respects from the popular religion, said to have been founded by the poet Orpheus who descended to Hades and then returned.

¹² The Holy Roman Empire, as it came to be known, was founded in 962 AD and survived in various forms until 1806. Its territorial makeup was always in flux, but at its peak it consisted of Central Europe, including modern-day Germany, as well as parts of present-day Italy and France. In spite of its name, Rome was rarely ever part of the Empire, and there was no direct connection between it and the original Roman Empire.

¹³ 'For the use of the Dauphin', after a practice of censoring the Greek and Roman classics which was promoted by Louis XIV for the education of his son, which called for the removal of supposedly offensive passages from them.

to mean anti-Roman, and 'Roman' has come to mean, more or less, 'Jewish'.

Having said that, we think it is appropriate to reproduce this significant formula of exhortation to the warrior as found in the ancient Celtic tradition: 'Fight for your land, and accept death if need be, since death is a victory and a liberation to the soul.'

The expression *mors triumphalis*¹⁴ in our own Classical tradition corresponds to this concept. As for the properly Nordic tradition, well-known to all is the part which concerns Valhalla, the seat of celestial immortality, reserved for the 'free' divine stock and the heroes fallen on the battlefield ('Valhalla' means literally 'from the palace of the chosen'). The Lord of this symbolic seat, Odin or Wotan, appears in the *Ynglingasaga* as the one who, by his symbolic self-sacrifice on the 'world tree', showed the heroes how to reach the divine sojourn, where they live eternally as on a bright peak, which remains in perpetual sunlight, above every cloud. According to this tradition, no sacrifice or form of worship was more appreciated by the supreme God, and rich in supra-mundane fruits, than that which is performed by the warrior who fights and falls on the battlefield. But this is not all. The spirits of the fallen heroes would add their forces to the phalanx of those who assist the 'celestial heroes' in fighting in the *ragnarökk*, that is to say, the fate of the 'darkening of the divine', which, according to these teachings, and also according to the Hellenes (Hesiod),¹⁵ has threatened the world since time immemorial.

We will see this motif reappear, in a different form, in the Medieval legends which relate to the 'last battle', which the immortal emperor will fight. Here, to illustrate the universality of these elements, we will point out the similarity between these ancient Nordic conceptions (which, let us say in passing, Wagner¹⁶ has rendered unrecognisable by means of his hazy, bombastic, characteristically Teutonic romanticism) and the ancient Iranian, and later Persian, conceptions. Many may be astonished to hear that the well-known Valkyries, which choose the

¹⁴ Latin: 'triumphal death'.

¹⁵ Hesiod (approx. 7th century BC) was an early Greek poet. His most famous work, the *Works and Days*, outlines the cyclical Five Ages of Man, beginning with the utopian Golden Age and ending in the apocalyptic Iron Age.

¹⁶ Richard Wagner (1813-1883), the German composer, whose works were very influential in all spheres of European culture at this time. Evola no doubt has in mind Wagner's tetralogy of music dramas, *The Ring of the Nibelungen*, the libretto of which is based on the ancient Norse myths.

souls of the warriors destined for Valhalla, are only the transcendental personification of parts of the warriors themselves, parts which find their exact equivalent in the Fravashi, of which the Iranian-Persian traditions speak – the Fravashi, also represented as women of light and stormy virgins of battle, which personify more or less the supernatural forces by means of which the human natures of the warriors ‘faithful to the God of Light’ can transfigure themselves and bring about terrible, overwhelming and bloody victories. The Iranian tradition also includes the symbolic conception of a divine figure – Mithra, described as ‘the warrior who never sleeps’ – who, at the head of his faithful Fravashi, fights against the emissaries of the dark god until the coming of the Saoshyant, Lord of the future kingdom of ‘triumphant’ peace.

These elements of ancient Indo-European tradition, in which the motifs recur of the sacrality of war and of the hero who does not really die but becomes part of a mystical army in a cosmic battle, have had a perceptible effect on certain elements of Christianity – at least that Christianity which could realistically adopt the motto: *vita est militia super terram*,¹⁷ and recognise not only salvation through humility, charity, hope and the rest, but also that – by including the heroic element, in our case – ‘the Kingdom of Heaven can be taken by storm’. It is precisely this convergence of motifs which gave birth to the spiritual conception of ‘Greater War’ peculiar to the medieval age, which we shall discuss in our next article in ‘Diorama’, where we shall deal more closely with the interior, individual, but nevertheless topical aspect of these teachings.

¹⁷ Latin: ‘life is a struggle on Earth’.

The Meaning of the Crusades

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Let us resume our examination of those traditions concerning heroism in which war is regarded as a path of spiritual realisation in the strictest sense of the term, and thus acquires a transcendent justification and purpose. We have already discussed the conceptions of the ancient Roman world in this respect. We then described the Nordic traditions regarding the immortalising character of the truly heroic death on the battlefield. It was necessary to examine these traditions before considering the medieval world, since, as is generally recognised, the Middle Ages, as a culture, arose from the synthesis of three elements; firstly, Roman; secondly, Nordic; and thirdly, Christian.

Thus, we are now in a position to examine the idea of the 'sacredness of War' as the Western Medieval age knew and cultivated it. As should be evident, we here refer to the Crusades as understood in their deepest sense, not the sense claimed by historical materialists, according to which they are mere effects of economical and ethnic determinisms, nor the sense claimed by 'developed' minds, according to which they are mere phenomena of superstition and religious exaltation – nor, finally, will we even regard them as simply Christian phenomena. In respect to this last point it is necessary not to lose sight of the correct relationship between means and ends. It is often said that, in the Crusades, the Christian faith made use of the heroic spirit of Western chivalry. However, the opposite is the truth: that is to say, the Christian faith, and the relative and contingent imperatives of the religious struggle against the 'infidel' and the 'liberation' of the 'Temple' and 'Holy Land',

were merely the means which allowed the heroic spirit to manifest itself, to affirm itself, and to realise a sort of asceticism, distinct from that of the contemplative, but no less rich in spiritual fruits. Most of the knights who gave their energies and their blood for the 'holy war' had only the vaguest ideas and the sketchiest theological knowledge regarding the doctrine for which they fought.

However, the cultural context of the Crusades contained a wealth of elements able to confer upon them a higher, spiritually symbolic meaning. Transcendent myths resurfaced from the subconscious in the soul of Western chivalry: the conquest of the 'Holy Land' located 'beyond the sea' was much more closely associated than many people have imagined with the ancient saga according to which 'in the distant East, where the Sun rises, lies the sacred city where death does not exist, and the fortunate heroes who are able to reach it enjoy celestial serenity and perpetual life'.

Moreover, the struggle against Islam had, by its nature and from its inception, the significance of an ascetic test. 'This was not merely a struggle for the kingdoms of the earth', wrote the famous historian of the Crusades, Kugler,¹ 'but a struggle for the Kingdom of Heaven: the Crusades were not a thing of men, but rather of God – therefore, they should not be thought of in the same way as other human events.'

Sacred war, according to an old chronicler, should be compared to 'a bath like that in the fire of purgatory, but before death'. Those who died in the Crusades were compared symbolically by Popes and priests to 'gold tested three times and refined seven times in the fire', a purifying ordeal so powerful that it opened the way to the supreme Lord.

'Never forget this oracle', wrote Saint Bernard,² 'whether we live, or whether we die, we belong to the Lord. It is a glory for you never to leave the battle [unless] covered with laurels. But it is an even greater glory to earn on the battlefield an immortal crown [...] Oh fortunate condition, in which death can be approached without fear, waited for with impatience, and received with a serene heart!' It was promised that the Crusader would attain an absolute glory – *glorie asolue*, in the Provençal

¹ Bernhard Kugler, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge* (Berlin: G. Grote, 1880). No English translation exists.

² Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), a French abbot who was extremely influential in raising the Second Crusade. He also helped to formulate the Rule of the Knights Templar.

tongue – and that he would find ‘rest in paradise’ – *conquerre lit en paradis* – that is to say, he would achieve the supra-life, the supernatural state of existence, something beyond religious representation. In this respect, Jerusalem, the coveted goal of the conquest, appeared in a double aspect, as an earthly city and as a symbolic, celestial and intangible city – and the Crusade gained an inner value independent of all outer integuments, supports and apparent motives.

Besides, the greatest contribution in manpower was supplied to the Crusades by knightly orders such as the Templars and the Knights of Saint John, which were made up of men who, like the monk or the Christian ascetic, had learned to despise the vanity of this life; warriors weary of the world, who had seen everything and enjoyed everything, withdrew into such orders, thus making themselves ready for an absolute action, free from the interests of common, temporal life, and also of political life in the narrow sense. Urban VIII³ addressed chivalry as the supranational community of those who were ‘ready to run to war wherever it might break out, and to bring to it the fear of their arms in defence of honour and of justice’. They should answer the call to ‘sacred war’ all the more readily, according to one of the writers of the time, since its reward is not an earthly fief, always revocable and contingent, but a ‘celestial fief’.

Moreover, the course of the Crusades, with all its broader implications for the general ideology of the time, led to a purification and internalisation of the spirit of the enterprise. Given the initial conviction that the war for the ‘true faith’ could not but have a victorious result, the first military setbacks undergone by the Crusader armies were a source of surprise and dismay; but, in the end, they served to bring to light the higher aspect of ‘sacred war’. The unhappy fate of a Crusade was compared by the clerics of Rome to the misfortunes of virtue, which are made good only in *another life*. But, by taking this approach, they were already close to recognising something superior to both victory and defeat, and to according the highest importance to the distinctive aspect of heroic action which is accomplished independently of any visible and material fruits, almost in the sense of an offering, which draws, from the

³ Urban VIII (1568-1644) was Pope from 1623 until his death, during the Thirty Years’ War. He was the last Pope to use armed force in an effort to increase the area under Papal authority. He was also the Pope who condemned Galileo for his theory of heliocentrism.

virile sacrifice of all human elements, the immortalising 'absolute glory'.

One sees that in this way they approached a plane that was supra-traditional, in the most strict, historical and religious sense of the word 'tradition'. The particular religious faith, the immediate purposes, the antagonistic spirit, were revealed clearly as mere means, as inessential in themselves, as the precise nature of a fuel which is used for the sole purpose of reviving and feeding a flame. What remained at the centre, however, was the sacred value of war. Thus it became possible to recognise that the opponents of the moment accorded to battle the same traditional meaning.

In this way and despite everything, the Crusades were able to enrich the cultural exchange between the Ghibelline⁴ West and the Arabic East (itself the centre of more ancient traditional elements), an exchange whose significance is much greater than most historians have yet recognised. As the knights of the crusading orders found themselves in the presence of knights of Arab orders which were almost their doubles, manifesting correspondences in ethics, customs, and sometimes even symbols, so the 'sacred war' which had impelled the two civilisations against each other in the name of their respective religions, led them at the same time to meet, that is to say, to realise that, despite having as starting points two different faiths, they had eventually accorded to war the identical, independent value of spirituality.

In our next article, we shall study the way in which, from the premises of his faith, the ancient Arab Knight ascended to the same supra-traditional point which the Crusader Knight attained by his heroic asceticism.

For now, however, we would like to deal with a different point. Those who regard the Crusades, with indignation, as among the most extravagant episodes of the 'dark' Middle Ages, have not even the slightest suspicion that what they call 'religious fanaticism' was the visible sign of the presence and effectiveness of a sensitivity and decisiveness, the absence of which is more characteristic of true barbarism. *In fact, the man of the Crusades was able to rise, to fight and to die for a purpose*

⁴ The Ghibellines were a faction in the Holy Roman Empire who favoured the imperial power of the Hohenstaufen throne over the power of the Vatican, as was supported by their rivals, the Guelphs. Evola saw this conflict as highlighting the distinction between priestly and royal authority in the state, since he believed the Ghibelline view to be the only valid one from a traditional perspective. He discusses this at length in *Revolt Against the Modern World*

which, in its essence, was supra-political and supra-human, and to serve on a front defined no longer by what is particularistic, but rather by what is universal. This remains a value, an unshakeable point of reference.

Naturally, this must not be misunderstood to mean that the transcendent motive may be used as an excuse for the warrior to become indifferent, to forget the duties inherent in his belonging to a race and to a fatherland. This is not at all our point, which concerns rather the essentially deeply disparate meanings according to which actions and sacrifices can be experienced, despite the fact that, from the external point of view, they may be absolutely the same. There is a radical difference between the one who engages in warfare simply as such, and the one who simultaneously engages in 'sacred war' and finds in it a higher experience, both desired and desirable for the spirit.

We must add that, although this difference is primarily an interior one, nevertheless, because the powers of interiority are able to find expression also in exteriority, effects derive from it also on the exterior plane, specifically in the following respects:

First of all, in an 'indomitability' of the heroic impulse: the one who experiences heroism spiritually is pervaded with a metaphysical tension, an impetus, whose object is 'infinite', and which, therefore, will carry him perpetually forward, beyond the capacity of one who fights from necessity, fights as a trade, or is spurred by natural instincts or external suggestion.

Secondly, the one who fights according to the sense of 'sacred war' is spontaneously beyond every particularism and exists in a spiritual climate which, at any given moment, may very well give rise and life to a supranational unity of action. This is precisely what occurred in the Crusades when princes and dukes of every land gathered in the heroic and sacred enterprise, regardless of their particular utilitarian interests or political divisions, bringing about for the first time a great European unity, true to the common civilisation and to the very principle of the Holy Roman Empire.

Now, in this respect as well, if we are able to leave aside the 'integument', if we are able to isolate the essential from the contingent, we will find an element whose precious value is not restricted to any particular historical period. To succeed in referring heroic action also to an 'ascetic' plane, and in justifying the former according to the latter, is to clear the road towards a possible new unity of civilisation, to remove every antagonism conditioned by matter, to prepare the environment

THE MEANING OF THE CRUSADES

for great distances and for great fronts, and, therefore, to adapt the outer purposes of action gradually to its new spiritual meaning, when it is no longer a land and the temporal ambitions of a land for which one fights, but a superior principle of civilisation, a foreshadowing of what, even though itself metaphysical, moves ever forward, beyond every limit, beyond every danger, beyond every destruction.

The Greater War and the Lesser War

Originally published on 21 July 1935 as
'La grande e la piccola guerra' in 'Diorama
mensile', *Il Regime Fascista*.

Our readers should not consider it strange that, after having examined a group of Western traditions relating to holy war – that is to say, to war as a spiritual value – we now propose to examine this same concept as expressed in the Islamic tradition. In fact, for our purposes (as we have often pointed out) it is interesting to clarify the objective value of a principle by means of the demonstration of its universality, that is to say, of its conformity to the principle of *quod ubique, quod ab omnibus, et quod semper*.¹ Only in this way can we establish with certainty that some values are absolutely independent of the views of any particular thinker, and also that, in their essence, they are superior to the particular forms which they have assumed in order to manifest themselves in one or another historical tradition. The more we manage to demonstrate the inner correspondence of such forms and their unique principle, the more deeply the reader will become able to delve into his own tradition, to possess it fully, and to understand it from its own unique metaphysical point of origin.

Historically, in order to comprehend what concerns us here, it must first be understood that the Islamic tradition, rather than having such a unique metaphysical point of origin, is essentially dependent upon its inheritance of the Persian tradition – Persia, as is well known,

¹ Latin: 'that which is accepted everywhere, by everyone, and always'. This is an axiom of the Catholic Church.

having possessed one of the highest pre-European civilisations. The original Mazdaist conception of religion, as military service under the sign of the 'God of Light', and of existence as a continuous, relentless struggle to rescue beings and things from the control of an anti-god, is at the centre of the Persian vision of life, and should be considered as the metaphysical counterpart and spiritual background to the warrior enterprises which culminated in the creation of the empire of the 'kings of kings' by the Persians. After the fall of Persia's power, echoes of such traditions persisted in the cycle of Medieval Arabian civilisation in forms which became slightly more materialistic and sometimes exaggerated, yet not to such an extent that their original elements of spirituality were entirely lost.

We bring up traditions of that kind here, above all because they introduce a concept which is very useful in further clarifying the order of ideas set out in our latest articles; namely, the concept of the 'greater' or 'holy war', as distinct from the 'lesser war', but at the same time as related to the latter in a special manner. The distinction itself derives from a saying of the Prophet, who, returning from a battle, declared, 'I return now from the lesser to the greater war.'²

The lesser war here corresponds to the exoteric war, the bloody battle which is fought with material arms against the enemy, against the 'barbarian', against an inferior race over whom a superior right is claimed, or, finally, when the event is motivated by a religious justification, against the 'infidel'. No matter how terrible and tragic the events, no matter how huge the destruction, this war, metaphysically, *still remains a 'lesser war'*. The 'greater' or 'holy war' is, contrarily, of the interior and intangible order – it is the war which is fought against the enemy, the 'barbarian', the 'infidel', whom everyone bears in himself, or whom everyone can see arising in himself on every occasion that he tries to subject his whole being to a spiritual law. Appearing in the forms of craving, partiality, passion, instinctuality, weakness and inward cowardice, the enemy within the natural man must be vanquished, its resistance broken, chained and subjected to the spiritual

² This is recorded in the *Hadith* (oral traditions) of the Prophet Muhammad – specifically, in the *Tarikh Baghdad* of Khatib al-Baghdadi (13:493, 523). The text goes on to say that Muhammad's followers asked him, 'What is the greater war?', to which he replied, 'The war against the lower part of our nature.'

man, this being the condition of reaching inner liberation, the 'triumphant peace' which allows one to participate in what is beyond both life and death.

Some may say that this is simply asceticism. The greater, holy war is the ascesis which has always been a philosophical goal. It could be tempting to add as well: it is the path of those who wish to escape from the world and who, using the excuse of inner liberation, become a herd of pacifist cowards. This is not at all the way things are. After the distinction between the two types of war there is their synthesis. It is a feature of heroic traditions that they prescribe the 'lesser war', that is to say the real, bloody war, as an instrument in the realisation of the 'greater' or 'holy war'; so much so that, finally, both become one and the same thing.

Thus, in Islam, 'holy war' – *jihad* – and 'the path of God' are interchangeable terms. The one who fights is on the 'path of God'. A well-known and quite characteristic saying of this tradition is, 'The blood of heroes is closer to the Lord than the ink of scholars and the prayers of the pious.'³

Once again, as in the traditions already reviewed by us, as in the Roman ascesis of power and in the classical *mors triumphalis*, action attains the value of an inner overcoming and of an approximation to a life no longer mixed with darkness, contingency, uncertainty and death. In more concrete terms, the predicaments, risks and ordeals peculiar to the events of war bring about an emergence of the inner 'enemy', which, in the forms of the instinct of self-preservation, cowardice, cruelty, pity and blind riotousness, arise as obstacles to be vanquished just as one fights the outer enemy. It is clear from this that the decisive point is constituted by one's inner orientation, one's unshakeable persistence in what is spiritual in this double struggle, so that an irresistible and blind changing of oneself into a sort of wild animal does not occur, but, instead, a way is found of not letting the deepest forces escape, a way of seeing to it that one is never overwhelmed inwardly, that one always remains supreme master of oneself, and, precisely because of this sovereignty, one remains able to affirm himself against every possible limitation. In a tradition to which we will dedicate our next article, this situation is represented by a most characteristic symbol: the warrior is

³ I am uncertain of the origin of this saying, but it is contradicted by another Hadith taken from the *Al-Jaami' al-Saghîr* of Imam al-Suyuti: 'The ink of the scholar is holier than the blood of the martyr.'

accompanied by an impassive divine being who, without fighting, leads and guides him in his struggle, side by side with him in the same war chariot. This symbol is the personified expression of a duality of principles, which the true hero, from whom something sacred always emanates, maintains unceasingly within himself.

To return to the Islamic tradition, we can read in its principal text, 'So let those who sell the life of this world for the Next World fight in the Way of Allah. If someone fights in the Way of Allah, whether he is killed or is victorious, We will pay him an immense reward'⁴ (4:74).

The metaphysical premises for this are prescribed as follows: 'Fight in the Way of Allah against those who fight you' (2:190); 'Kill them wherever you come across them' (II, 191); 'Do not become faint-hearted and call for peace' (47:35); 'The life of this world is merely a game and a diversion' (47:36); 'But whoever is tight-fisted is only tight-fisted to himself' (47:38).

This last principle is obviously a parallel to the evangelical text: 'Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it',⁵ as is confirmed by these further passages: 'You who have *iman*!⁶ what is the matter with you that when you are told, "Go out and fight in the way of Allah", you sink down heavily to the earth? Are you happier with this world than the Next World?' (9:38); 'Say [to the Companions]: "What do you await for us except for one of the two best things [martyrdom or victory]?" (9:52).

These excerpts too are worth noting: 'Fighting is prescribed for you even if it is hateful to you. It may be that you hate something when it is good for you and it may be that you love something when it is bad for you. Allah knows and you do not know' (2:216), and also, 'When a *sura*⁷ is sent down saying: "Have *iman* in Allah and do *jihad* together with His Messenger", those among them with wealth will ask you to excuse them, saying, "Let us remain with those who stay behind." They are pleased to be with those who stay behind. Their hearts have been stamped so they do not understand. But the Messenger and those who have *iman* along with him have done *jihad* with their wealth and with

⁴ *The Noble Qur'an: A New Rendering of Its Meaning in English* (Norwich: Bookwork, 2005), interpreted by Aisha Bewley. All quotes from the *Qur'an* are taken from this edition.

⁵ *Luke 17:33*, as rendered in *Holy Bible: The New King James* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1982).

⁶ Arabic: 'belief'.

⁷ A *sura* is a chapter of the *Qur'an*.

themselves. They are the people who will have the good things. They are the ones who are successful' (9:86-89).

Therefore we have here a sort of *amor fati*,⁸ a mysterious way of intuiting, evoking and heroically resolving one's own destiny in the intimate certainty that, when the 'right intention' is present, when all indolence and cowardice are vanquished, and the leap beyond the lives of oneself and others, beyond happiness and misfortune, is driven by a sense of spiritual destiny and a thirst for the absolute existence, then one has given birth to a force which will not be able to miss the supreme goal. Then the crisis of tragic and heroic death becomes an insignificant contingency which can be expressed, in religious terms, in the following words: 'As for those who fight in the Way of Allah, He will not let their actions go astray. He will guide them and better their condition and He will admit them into the Garden which He has made known to them' (47:4-6).

As if by a circular path the reader is thus brought back to the same ideas which were examined in our previous writings on the subject of tradition, whether classical or Nordic-Medieval: that is to say, to the idea of a privileged immortality reserved for heroes, who alone, according to Hesiod, pass on to inhabit symbolic islands, which image forth the bright and intangible existence of the Olympians.⁹

Additionally, in the Islamic tradition, there are frequent references to the idea that some warriors fallen in the 'sacred war' are in reality *not dead*,¹⁰ in a sense which is not symbolic in any way, and which need not be referred to supernatural states cut off from the energies and destinies of the living. It is not possible to enter into this domain, which is rather mysterious and requires the support of references which would ill befit the present article. What we can say definitely is that, even today, and particularly in Italy, the rites by which a warrior community declares its most heroically fallen companions still 'present' have regained a special evocative force. He who begins from the belief that everything which, by a process of involution, retains today only an allegorical and, at best, moral character, whereas it originally possessed the value of *reality*, and every rite contained real *action* and not mere 'ceremony' – for him these warrior rites of today could perhaps provide

⁸ Latin: 'love of fate'.

⁹ The gods of the Greek pantheon.

¹⁰ For example, *Qur'an* 1:154: 'Do not say that those who are killed in the Way of Allah are dead. On the contrary, they are alive but you are not aware of it.'

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material for meditation, and he could perhaps approach the mystery contained in the teaching already quoted: that is, the idea of heroes who really never died, and the idea of victors who, like the Roman Caesar, remain as 'perpetual victors' at the centre of a human stock.

The Metaphysics of War

Originally published on 13 August 1935 as
'Metafisica della guerra' in 'Diorama
mensile', *Il Regime Fascista*.

We will conclude our series of essays for the 'Diorama' on the subject of war as a spiritual value by discussing another tradition within the Indo-European heroic cycle, that of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which is a very well-known text of ancient Hindu wisdom compiled essentially for the warrior caste.

We have not chosen this text arbitrarily and we would not wish anyone to imagine that we offer a newspaper like the *Regime* articles on exotic subjects as objects of curiosity. Now that our discussion of the Islamic tradition has allowed us to express, in general terms, the idea that the internal or 'greater war' is the attainable counterpart and soul of the external war, so a discussion of the tradition contained in the aforementioned text will allow us to present a clear and concise metaphysical vision of the matter.

On a more exterior plane, such a discussion of the Hindu East (which is the great, heroic East, not that of Theosophists, humanitarian pantheists or old gentlemen in rapture before the various Gandhis and Rabindranath Tagores¹) will assist also in the correction of a viewpoint and the supra-traditional understanding which are among the first necessities for the New Italian. For too long we have permitted an artificial

¹ Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was a highly influential Bengali artist and philosopher who won the 1913 Nobel Prize in Literature, which brought him great international fame at the time Evola was writing. Although Tagore drew upon his native Hindu tradition in his works, he emphasized the individual over tradition, and integrated elements of artistic modernism into his works. From the perspective of Evola's conception of tradition, therefore, he was a poor representative of the Hindu tradition.

antithesis between East and West: artificial because, as Mussolini has already pointed out, it opposes to the East the modern and materialistic West, which, in fact, has little in common with the older, truer and greater Western civilisation. The modern West is just as opposed to the ancient West as it is to the East. As soon as we refer to previous times we are effectively in the presence of an ethnic and cultural heritage which is, to a large extent, common to both, and which can only be described as 'Indo-European'. The original ways of life, the spirituality and the institutions of the first colonisers of India and Iran have many points of contact not only with those of the Hellenic and Nordic peoples, but also with those of the original Romans themselves.

The traditions to which we have previously referred offer examples of this: most notably, a common spiritual conception of how to wage war, how to act and die heroically – contrary to the views of those who, on the basis of prejudices and platitudes, cannot hear of Hindu civilisation without thinking of nirvana, fakirs, escapism, negation of the 'Western' values of personhood and so on.

The text to which we have alluded and on which we will base our discussion is presented in the form of a conversation between the warrior Arjuna and the divine Krishna, who acts as the spiritual master of the former. The conversation takes place shortly before a battle in which Arjuna, the victim of humanitarian scruples, is reluctant to participate. In the previous article we have already indicated that, from a spiritual point of view, the two persons, Arjuna and Krishna, are in reality one. They represent two different parts of the human being – Arjuna the principle of action, and Krishna that of transcendent knowledge. The conversation can thus be understood as a sort of monologue, developing a progressive inner clarification and solution, both in the heroic and the spiritual sense, of the problem of the warrior's activity which poses itself to Arjuna as he prepares for battle.

Now, the pity which prevents the warrior from fighting when he recognises among the ranks of the enemy some of his erstwhile friends and closest relatives is described by Krishna, that is to say by the spiritual principle, as 'impurities...not at all befitting a man who knows the value of life. They lead not to higher planets but to infamy' (2:2).²

² From A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-Gita as It Is*. All quotes from the *Bhagavad-gita* are taken from this edition.

We have already seen this theme appear many times in the traditional teachings of the West: '[E]ither you will be killed on the battlefield and attain the heavenly planets, or you will conquer and enjoy the earthly kingdom. Therefore, get up with determination and fight' (2:37).

However, along with this, the motif of the 'inner war', to be fought at the same moment, is outlined: 'Thus knowing oneself to be transcendental to the material senses, mind and intelligence, O mighty-armed Arjuna, one should steady the mind by deliberate spiritual intelligence and thus – by spiritual strength – conquer this insatiable enemy known as lust' (3:43).

The internal enemy, which is passion, the animal thirst for life, is thus the counterpart of the external enemy. This is how the right orientation is defined: 'Therefore, O Arjuna, surrendering all your works unto Me, with full knowledge of Me, without desires for profit, with no claims to proprietorship, and free from lethargy, fight' (3:30).

This demand for a lucid, supra-conscious heroism rising above the passions is important, as is this excerpt, which brings out the character of purity and absoluteness which action should have so as to be considered 'sacred war': 'Do thou fight for the sake of fighting, without considering happiness or distress, loss or gain, victory or defeat – and by so doing you shall never incur sin' (2:38).

We find therefore that the only fault or sin is the state of an incomplete will, of an action which, inwardly, is still far from the height from which one's own life matters as little as those of others and no human measure has value any longer.

It is precisely in this respect that the text in question contains considerations of an absolutely metaphysical order, intended to show how that which acts in the warrior at such a level is not so much a human force as a divine force. The teaching which Krishna (that is to say the 'knowledge' principle) gives to Arjuna (that is to say to the 'action' principle) to make his doubts vanish aims, first of all, at making him understand the distinction between what, as absolute spirituality, is incorruptible, and what, as the human and naturalistic element, exists only illusorily: 'Those who are seers of the truth have concluded that of the non-existent [the material body] there is no endurance and of the eternal [the soul] there is no change. ... That which pervades the entire body you should know to be indestructible. No one is able to destroy that imperishable soul. ... Neither he who thinks the living entity the slayer nor he who thinks it slain is in knowledge, for the self slays not nor is slain.

... He is not slain when the body is slain. ... The material body of the indestructible, immeasurable and eternal living entity is sure to come to an end; therefore, fight...' (2:16, 17, 19, 20, 18).

But there is more. The consciousness of the metaphysical unreality of what one can lose or can cause another to lose, such as the ephemeral life and the mortal body – a consciousness which corresponds to the definition of human existence as ‘a mere pastime’ in one of the traditions which we have already considered – is associated with the idea that spirit, in its absoluteness and transcendence, can only appear as a destructive force towards everything which is limited and incapable of overcoming its own limited nature. Thus the problem arises of how the warrior can evoke the spirit, precisely in virtue of his being necessarily an instrument of destruction and death, and identify with it.

The answer to this problem is precisely what we find in our texts. The God not only declares, ‘I am the strength of the strong, devoid of passion and desire. ... I am the original fragrance of the earth, and I am the heat in fire. I am the life of all that lives, and I am the penances of all ascetics. ... I am the original seed of all existences, the intelligence of the intelligent, and the prowess of all powerful men’ (7:11, 9, 10), but, finally, the God reveals himself to Arjuna in the transcendent and fearful form of lightning. We thus arrive at this general vision of life: like electrical bulbs too brightly lit, like circuits invested with too high a potential, human beings fall and die only because a power burns within them which transcends their finitude, which goes beyond everything they can do and want. This is why they develop, reach a peak, and then, as if overwhelmed by the wave which up to a given point had carried them forward, sink, dissolve, die and return to the unmanifest. But the one who does not fear death, the one who is able, so to speak, to assume the powers of death by becoming everything which it destroys, overwhelms and shatters – this one finally passes beyond limitation, he continues to remain upon the crest of the wave, he does not fall, and what is beyond life manifests itself within him. Thus, Krishna, the personification of the ‘principle of spirit’, after having revealed himself fully to Arjuna, can say, ‘With the exception of you, all the soldiers here on both sides will be slain. Therefore get up. Prepare to fight and win glory. Conquer your enemies and enjoy a flourishing kingdom. They are already put to death by My arrangement, and you, [O Arjuna], can be but an instrument in the fight. ... Therefore, kill them and do not be disturbed. Simply fight, and you will vanquish your enemies in battle’ (32-34).

We see here again the identification of war with the 'path of God', of which we spoke in the previous article. The warrior ceases to act as a person. When he attains this level, a great non-human force transfigures his action, making it absolute and 'pure' precisely at its extreme. Here is a very evocative image belonging to the same tradition: 'Life – like a bow; the mind – like the arrow; the target to pierce – the supreme spirit; to join mind to spirit as the shot arrow hits its target.'

This is one of the highest forms of metaphysical justification of war, one of the most comprehensive images of war as 'sacred war'.

To conclude this excursion into the forms of heroic tradition, as presented to us by many different times and peoples, we will only add a few final words.

We have made this voyage into a world which, to some, could seem *outré*³ and irrelevant, out of curiosity, not to display peculiar erudition. We have undertaken it instead with the precise intention of showing that the sacrality of war, that is to say, that which provides a spiritual justification for war and the necessity of war, constitutes a *tradition* in the highest sense of the term: it is something which has appeared always and everywhere, in the ascending cycle of every great civilisation; while the neurosis of war, the humanitarian and pacifist deprecation of it, as well as the conception of war as a 'sad necessity' or a purely political or natural phenomenon – *none of this corresponds to any tradition*. All this is but a modern fabrication, born yesterday, as a side-effect of the decomposition of the democratic and materialistic civilisation against which today new revolutionary forces are rising up. In this sense, everything which we have gathered from a great variety of sources, constantly separating the essential from the contingent, the spirit from the letter, can be used by us as an inner fortification, as a confirmation, as a strengthened certainty. Not only does a fundamentally virile instinct appear justified by it on a superior basis, but also the possibility presents itself of determining the forms of the heroic experience which correspond to our highest vocation.

Here we must refer to the first article of this series, in which we showed that there can be heroes of very different sorts, even of an animalistic and sub-personal sort; what matters is not merely the general capacity to throw oneself into combat and to sacrifice oneself, but also the precise *spirit* according to which such an event is experienced. But we now have all the elements needed to specify, from all the varied

³ French: 'to go to excess'.

ways of understanding, the heroic experience, which may be considered the supreme one, and which can make the identification of war with the 'path of God' really true, and can make one recognise, in the hero, a form of divine manifestation.

Another previous consideration must be recalled, namely, that as the warrior's vocation really approaches this metaphysical peak and reflects the impulse to what is universal, it cannot help but tend towards an equally universal manifestation and end for his race; that is to say, *it cannot but predestine that race for empire*. For only the empire as a superior order in which a *pax triumphalis*⁴ is in force, almost as the earthly reflection of the sovereignty of the 'supra-world', is adapted to forces in the field of spirit which reflect the great and free energies of nature, and are able to manifest the character of purity, power, irresistibility and transcendence over all pathos, passion and human limitation.

⁴ Latin: 'peace through victory'.

'Army' as Vision of the World

Originally published on 30 May 1937 as
'Sulla "Milizia" quale visione del mondo' in
'Diorama mensile', *Il Regime Fascista*.

Undoubtedly, the new Fascist generation already possesses a broadly military, warlike orientation, but it has not yet grasped the necessity of integrating the details of simple discipline and psychophysical training into a superior order, a general vision of life.

The ethical aspect

One begins to see this when one studies our ancient traditions, which, certainly not by chance, so often used a symbolism taken from fighting, serving and asserting oneself heroically, to express purely spiritual realities. The group of initiates was called *stratos*, or 'army', in Orphism; *miles* expressed a degree of the Mithraic hierarchy; symbols of agony always recur in the sacred representations of classic Romanity, and passed, in part, to Christian asceticism itself.

But here we shall deal with something more precise than mere analogies, namely, the related doctrine of 'holy war', of which we have spoken previously in our books, as well as in these pages. We shall confine ourselves to the ethical field and refer to a special and central attitude, calculated to bring about a radical change of meaning in the whole field of values, and to raise it to a plane of manliness, separating it completely from all bourgeois attitudes, humanitarianism, moralism and limp conformism.

The basis of this attitude is summed up in Paul's well-known phrase, *vita est militia super terram*. It is a matter of conceiving the being here below as having been sent in the guise of a man on a mission

of military service to a remote front, the purpose of this mission not always being directly sensed by the individual (in the same manner that one who fights in the outposts cannot always form a precise idea of the overall plan to which he contributes), but in which inner nobleness is always measured by the fact of resisting, of accomplishing, in spite of all, what must be accomplished, in the fact of not doubting, nor hesitating, in the fact of a fidelity stronger than life or death.

The first results of this view are an affirmative attitude with respect to the world: assertion and, at the same time, a certain freedom. He who is really a soldier is so by nature, and therefore because he wants to be so; in the missions and tasks which are given to him, consequently, he recognises himself, so to speak. Likewise, the one who conceives his existence as being that of a soldier in an army will be very far from considering the world as a vale of tears from which to flee, or as a circus of irrational events at which to throw himself blindly, or as a realm for which *carpe diem*¹ constitutes the supreme wisdom. Though he is not unaware of the tragic and negative side of so many things, his way of reacting to them will be quite different from that of all other men. His feeling that this world is not his Fatherland, and that it does not represent his proper condition, so to speak – his feeling that, basically, he 'comes from afar' – will remain a fundamental element which will not give rise to mystical escapism and spiritual weakness, but rather will enable him to minimise, to relativise, to refer to higher concepts of measure and limit, all that can seem important and definitive to others, starting with death itself, and will confer on him calm force and breadth of vision.

The Social Aspect

The military conception of life, then, leads to a new sense of social and political solidarity. It goes beyond all humanitarianism and 'socialism': men are not our 'brothers', and our 'neighbour' is in a way an insolent concept. Society is neither a creature of necessity, nor something to be justified or sublimated on the basis of the ideal of honeyed universal love and obligatory altruism. Every society will instead be essentially conceived in the terms of the solidarity existing between quite distinct beings, each one determined to protect the dignity of its personality, but nevertheless united in a common action which binds them side

¹ Latin: 'seize the day'.

by side, without sentimentalism, in male comradeship. Fidelity and sincerity, with the ethics of honour to which they give rise, will thus be seen as the true basis of every community. According to ancient Indo-Germanic legislation, killing did not appear to be as serious a fault as betrayal, or even mere lying. A warlike ethics would also lead to more or less this attitude and it would be inclined to limit the principle of solidarity by means of those of dignity and affinity. The soldier can regard as comrades only those whom he holds in esteem and who are resolute to hold to their posts, not those who give way, the weak or the inept. Besides, the one who guides has the duty of gathering and pushing forward the valid forces, rather than wasting them on concern and lament for those who have already fallen, or have yielded or have landed themselves in *culs-de-sac*.

Sense of Stoicism

However, the views we put forward here are most valuable in terms of inner strengthening. Here we enter in the field of a properly Roman ethics, with which the reader should already be familiar through those excerpts from classical authors which are published on a regular basis in the 'Diorama'. As we have stated previously, we speak here of an inner change, by virtue of which one's reactions towards facts and life-experiences become absolutely different, and, rather than being negative, as they are generally, become positive and constructive. Stoic Romanity offers us an excellent insight into this, provided that it is known as it really was, as true and indomitable life-affirmation, far from the preconceived opinions which endeavour to make us see in the Stoic only a stiffened, hardened being become foreign to life. Can one really doubt this, when Seneca² affirms the true man as superior to a god, since, while the latter is protected by nature from misfortune, man can meet the latter, challenge it, and show himself superior to it? Or when he calls unhappy those who have never been so, since they have never managed to know and to measure their force? In these authors precisely one can find many elements for a warlike system of ethics, which revolutionises completely the common manner of thinking. A very characteristic aspect of this viewpoint is this: the one who is sent off to

² Seneca (4 BC-65 AD) was a noted Roman writer and philosopher. He committed suicide after being accused of involvement in an assassination plot against the Emperor Nero.

a dangerous place curses his fate only if he is a vile person; if he is a heroic spirit, he is instead proud of it, since he knows that his commander chooses the worthiest and strongest for any risky mission and for any post of responsibility, leaving the most convenient and secure posts only to those whom he basically does not hold in esteem.

This same thought is appropriate to the most dark, tragic, discouraging moments of life: it is necessary to discover in these either a hidden providentiality or an appeal to our nobility and superiority.

'Who is worthy of the name of Man, and of Roman', Seneca writes precisely, 'who does not want to be tested and does not look for a dangerous task? For the strong man inaction is torture. There is only one sight able to command the attention even of a god, and it is that of a strong man battling with bad luck, especially if he has himself challenged it.'

This is a wisdom, besides, which is taken from ancient ages, and finds a place even in a general conception of the history of the world. If Hesiod, before the spectacle of the Age of Iron, the dark and deconsecrated age which is identified as the last age, exclaimed, 'If only then I did not have to live [in the Age of Iron], but could have either died first or been born afterwards!'³ a teaching peculiar to the ancient Indo-Germanic traditions was that precisely those who, in the dark age, resist in spite of all will be able to obtain fruits which those who lived in more favourable, less hard, periods could seldom reach.

Thus the vision of one's life as membership within an army gives shape to an ethic of its own and to a precise inner attitude which arouses deep forces. On this basis, to seek membership in an actual army, with its disciplines and its readiness for absolute action on the plane of material struggle, is the right direction and the path which must be followed. It is necessary to first feel oneself to be a soldier in spirit and to render one's sensibility in accordance with that in order to be able to do this also in a material sense subsequently, and to avoid the dangers which, in the sense of a materialistic hardening and overemphasis on the purely physical, can otherwise come from militarisation on the external plane alone: whereas, given this preparation, any external form can easily become the symbol and instrument of properly spiritual meanings.

³ Hesiod, *Theogony* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press/The Loeb Classical Library, 2006), pp. 101-102.

A Fascist system of ethics, if thought through thoroughly, cannot but be directed along those lines. 'Scorn for the easy life' is the starting point. The further points of reference must still be placed as high as possible, beyond everything which can speak only to feeling and beyond all mere myth.

If the two most recent phases of the involutory process which has led to the modern decline are first, the rise of the bourgeoisie, and second, the collectivisation not only of the idea of the State, but also of all values and of the conception of ethics itself, then to go beyond all this and to reassert a 'warlike' vision of life in the aforementioned full sense must constitute the precondition for any reconstruction: when the world of the masses and of the materialistic and sentimental middle classes gives way to a world of 'warriors', the main thing will have been achieved, which makes possible the coming of an even higher order, that of true traditional spirituality.

Race and War

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One of the most serious obstacles to a purely biological formulation of the doctrine of race is the fact that cross-breeding and contamination of the blood are not the only cause of the decline and decay of races. Races may equally degenerate and come to their end because of a process – so to speak – of inner extinction, without the participation of external factors. In purely biological terms this may correspond to those enigmatic 'inner variations' (idiovariations) which science has been forced to recognise are just as powerful as variations due to cross-breeding in bringing about mutations.

This will never be completely understood if the biological conception of race is not integrated with that 'racism of the second and of the third degree' of which we have repeatedly spoken here. It is only if race is considered as existing not only in the body, but also in the soul and in the spirit, as a deep, meta-biological force which conditions both the physical and the psychical structures in the organic totality of the human entity – it is only if this eminently traditional point of view is assumed – that the mystery of the decline of races can be fathomed in all its aspects. One can then realise that, in a way analogous to the individual abdication and inner breakdown of the individual, where the loss of all moral tension and the attitude of passive abandonment can gradually find expression in a true physical collapse, or can paralyse natural organic resources far more efficiently than any threat to the body – so developments of the same nature can occur on the plane of those greater entities which are human races, on the greater scale in space and in time of their aggregate life spans. And what we have just pointed out about organic resources neutralised, when the inner – moral and spiritual – tension of an individual is lacking, can even allow us to consider less simplistically and less materialistically the matter of racial alterations due to mixing and contamination, as well.

This is quite similar to what happens in infections. It is known, in fact, that bacteria and microbes are not always the sole effective and unilateral causes of illness: for a disease to be acquired by contagion a certain more or less strong predisposition is necessary. The state of integrity or tonicity of the organism, in turn, conditions this predisposition, and this is greatly affected by the spiritual factor, the presence of the whole being to himself, and his state of inner intrepidity or anguish. In accordance with this analogy, we may believe that, for cross-breeding to have a really, fatally, inexorably degenerative outcome for a race, it is necessary without exception that this race already be damaged inwardly to a certain extent, and that the tension of its original will be lax as a result.

When a race has been reduced to a mere ensemble of atavistic automatisms, which have become the sole surviving vestiges of what it once was, then a collision, a lesion, a simple action from outside, is enough to make it fall, to disfigure it and to denature it. In such a case, it does not behave like an elastic body, ready to react and to resume its original shape after the collision (provided, that is, that the latter does not exceed certain limits and does not produce permanent actual damage), but, rather, it behaves like a rigid, inelastic body, which passively endures the imprint of external action.

On the basis of these considerations two practical tasks of racism can be distinguished. The first task could be said to be one of passive defence. This means sheltering the race from all external actions (crossings, unsuitable forms of life and culture, etc.) which could present the danger to it of a crisis, a mutation or a denaturation. The second task, in contrast, is active resistance, and consists in reducing to a minimum the predisposition of the race to degeneration, that is to say, the ground on which it can be exposed passively to external action. This means, essentially, 'to exalt' its inner race; to see to it that its intimate tension is never lacking; that, as a counterpart of its physical integrity, within it there is something like an uncontrollable and irreducible fire, always yearning for new material to feed its blaze, in the form of new obstacles, which defy it and force it to reassert itself.

This second task is obviously more arduous than the first, because it can demand solutions which vary from individual to individual, and because external, general and material measures are of little use for it. It is a matter of overcoming the inertia of spirit, that force of gravity which is in force in human interiority no less than in the outer, physical

world, and here finds expression precisely in the inclination to abandonment, to 'take it easy', to always follow the path of least resistance. But, unfortunately, for the individual as well as for the race, to overcome this danger it is necessary to have a support – for the ability to act directly, to always remain at the crest of the wave, to maintain an inner initiative which is always renewed, without the need for renewed stimuli, can only occur as the result of an exceptional endowment, and cannot reasonably be demanded as a matter of course. As we have said, for tension which has become latent to reawaken before it is too late and the processes of the automatism of race follow, an obstacle, a test, almost a challenge, is necessary. It is then that the crisis and the decision occur: by their way of reacting, the deeper, meta-biological powers of the race then show whether they have remained stronger than the contingencies and the destinies of the given period of history. In the case of a positive reaction, new potentialities come from deep inside to again saturate the racial circuit. A new ascending cycle begins for that race.

In some cases, it is even possible that precision cross-breeding – naturally kept within very stringent limits – carries out a function of that kind. This is well-known in zootechnics. The 'pure breed' in some animal species is both the result of the preservation of heredity and of judicious cross-breeding. We do not share the opinion of Chamberlain,¹ who was inclined to apply this kind of thinking to the 'superior races' of humanity. However, it is a well-proven fact that in some aristocratic families, which, with their centuries-old blood law, have been the only experimental field for racism in history so far, some cross-breedings have had precisely the merit of preventing extinction of the line through inner degeneration. Here – let us stress – the cross-breeding has the function of an ordeal, not a rule – an ordeal, moreover, which can also present a dangerous challenge for the blood. But danger reawakens the spirit. Before the heterogeneous element introduced by cross-breeding, the homogenous nucleus is called to reaffirm itself, to assimilate to himself what is alien, to act towards it in the capacity of the 'dominant' towards the 'recessive', in terms of the Laws of Mendel.² If the reaction is

¹ Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1927) was one of the most influential racial theorists of the early Twentieth century. His most important work was *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: John Lane, 1910).

² Gregor Johann Mendel (1822-1884) was a Czech-German scientist, and is often called 'the father of modern genetics'. Mendel's Laws of Inheritance, based on his

positive, the result is an awakening. The stock which seemed spent and exhausted reawakens. But if it has already fallen too much, or if the heterogeneity is excessive, the ordeal fails and the decline is quick and definitive.

But the highest instrument of the inner awakening of race is combat, and war is its highest expression. That pacifism and humanitarianism are phenomena closely linked to internationalism, democracy, cosmopolitanism and liberalism is perfectly logical – the same anti-racial instinct present in some is reflected and confirmed in the others. The will towards sub-racial levelling inborn in internationalism finds its ally in pacifist humanitarianism, which has the function of preventing the heroic test from disrupting the game by galvanising the surviving forces of any remaining not completely deracinated peoples. It is odd, however, and illustrates the errors to which a unilaterally biological formulation of the racial problem can lead, that the racial theory of ‘mis-selections’, as expressed for example by Vacher de Lapouge,³ partakes, to a certain extent, of the same incomprehension of the positive meaning of war for race – but here, in the face of full knowledge of the facts – as is found in internationalist democratism. To be specific, they suppose that every war turns into a progressive elimination of the best, of the exponents of the still-pure race of the various peoples, thus facilitating an involution.

This is a partial view, because it only considers what is lost through the disappearance of some individuals, not what is aroused to a much greater extent in others by the experience of war, which otherwise would never have been aroused. This becomes even more obvious if we do not consider ancient wars which were largely fought by elites while the lower strata were spared by them, but rather modern wars which engage entire armed nations and which, moreover, in their character of totality, involve not only physical but also moral and spiritual forces of

study of plants across several generations, attempted to define how specific characteristics are transmitted from parents to their offspring.

³ Georges Vacher de Lapouge (1854-1936) was a French anthropologist, socialist, and racial theorist. He was the author of *L’Aryen: son rôle social (The Aryan and His Social Role)*, published in Paris in 1899 and never translated into English. In this work he classified the various races, and proposed that the European Aryans are in opposition to the Jews as racial archetypes. His ideas were highly influential upon the racialist and eugenics movements.

combatants and non-combatants alike. The Jew Ludwig⁴ expressed fury about an article published in a German military review which brought out the possibilities of selection related to air bombardments, in which the test of sang-froid, the immediate, lucid reaction of the instinct of direction in opposition to brutal or confused impulse, cannot but result in a decisive discrimination of those who have the greatest probability of escaping and surviving from those who do not.

The indignation of the humanitarian Jew Ludwig, who has become the bellicose propagator of the 'new Holy Alliance' against fascism, is powerless against what is truthful in considerations of this sort. If the next world war is a 'total war' it will also mean a 'total test' of the surviving racial forces of the modern world. Without doubt, some will collapse, whereas others will awake and rise. Nameless catastrophes could even be the hard but necessary price of heroic peaks and new liberations of primordial forces dulled through grey centuries. But such is the fatal condition for the creation of any new world – and it is a new world that we seek for the future.

What we have said here must be considered as a mere introduction to the question of the significance which war has, in general, for race. Three fundamental points should be considered in conclusion. First, since we proceed from the assumption that there is a fundamental difference between human races – a difference which, according to the doctrine of the three degrees of racism,⁵ is not restricted to corporeality but concerns also soul and spirit – it should be expected that the spiritual and physical behaviour towards the experience or test of war varies between the various races; it will therefore be both necessary and interesting to define the sense according to which, for each specific race, the aforementioned reaction will occur.

Second, it is necessary to consider the interdependent relationship between what a well-understood racial policy can do to promote the aims of war, and, conversely, what war, in the presupposition of a correct spiritual attitude, can do to promote the aims of race. We can speak, in this respect, of a sort of germ, or primary nucleus, created initially or

⁴ Emil Ludwig (1881-1948) was primarily known at the time as the author of a number of popular biographies of historical figures, including Goethe, Bismarck and Mussolini.

⁵ For more on Evola's theory of race, see 'Julius Evola's Concept of Race: A Racism of Three Degrees' by Michael Bell.

reawakened by racial policy, which brings out racial values in the consciousness of a people; a germ or nucleus which will bear fruit by giving the war a value, while conversely the experience of war, and the instincts and currents of deep forces which emerge through such an experience, give the racial sense a correct, fecund direction.

And this leads us to the third and last point. People are accustomed to speaking too generally, and too romantically, about 'heroism', 'heroic experience' and the like. When they are done with such romantic assumptions, in modern times, there seem to remain only material ones, such that men who rise up and fight are considered simply as 'human material', and the heroism of the combatants is related to victory as merely a means to an end, the end itself being nothing but the increase of the material and economic power and territory of a given state.

In view of the considerations which have been pointed out here, it is necessary to change these attitudes. From the 'ordeal by fire' of the primordial forces of race and heroic experience, above all other experience, has been a means to an essentially spiritual and interior end. But there is more: heroic experience differentiates itself in its results not only according to the various races, but also according to the extent to which, within each race, a super-race has formed itself and come to power. The various degrees of this creative differentiation correspond to so many ways of being a hero and to so many forms of awakening through heroic experience. On the lowest plane, hybrid, essentially vital, instinctive and collective forces emerge – this is somewhat similar to the awakening on a large scale of the 'primordial horde' by the solidarity, unity of destiny and holocaust which is peculiar to it. Gradually, this mostly naturalistic experience is purified, dignified, and becomes luminous until it reaches its highest form, which corresponds to the Aryan conception of war as 'holy war', and of victory and triumph as an apex, since its value is identical to the values of holiness and initiation, and, finally, of death on the battlefield as *mors triumphalis*, as not a rhetorical but an effective overcoming of death.

Having indicated all these points in a basic but, we trust, sufficiently intelligible manner, we propose to tackle them one by one in writings which will follow the present one, each of which will specifically consider the varieties of heroic experience according to race and then the vision of war peculiar to the Nordic-Aryan and Ario-Roman tradition in particular.

Two Heroisms

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To pursue our previous discussions about the varied meanings that the fact of war and the experience of heroism can represent for the race it is necessary to briefly explain the concept of the 'super-race' and the related distinction between races as given by 'nature' and races in the higher, human and spiritual sense.

According to the traditional view, man as such is not reducible to purely biological, instinctive, hereditary, naturalistic determinisms; if all this has its part, which is wrongly neglected by a spiritualism of dubious value, the fact still remains that man distinguishes himself from the animal insofar as he participates also in a supernatural, super-biological element, solely in accordance with which he can be free and be himself. Generally, these two aspects of the human being are not necessarily in contradiction with one another. Although it obeys its own laws, which must be respected, that which in man is 'nature' allows itself to be the organ and instrument of expression and action of that in him which is more than 'nature'. It is only in the vision of life peculiar to Semitic peoples, and above all to the Jewish people, that corporeality becomes 'flesh', as root of every sin, and irreducible antagonist of spirit.

We should apply this way of seeing the individual to these vaster individualities which are races. Some races can be compared to the animal, or to the man who, degrading himself, has passed to a purely animalistic way of life: such are the 'races of nature'. They are not illuminated by any superior element; no force from above supports them in the vicissitudes and contingencies with which their life in space and in time presents them. In these ordeals, what predominates in them is the collectivist element, in the form of instinct, 'genius of the species', or spirit and unity of the horde. Broadly speaking, the feeling of race and blood here can be stronger and surer than in other peoples or stocks:

nevertheless, it always represents something sub-personal and completely naturalistic, such as, for example, the dark 'totemism' of savage populations, in which the totem, which is in a way the mystical entity of the race or tribe but meaningfully associated with a given animal species, is conceived as something prior to each individual, as soul of its soul, not in the abstract, in theory, but in every expression of daily life. Having referred to the savages, incidentally, and reserving the right to return eventually to the argument involved, we must indicate the error of those who consider the savages as 'primitives', that is, as the original forms of humanity; from which, according to the usual mendacious theory of the inferior miraculously giving rise to the superior, superior races would have 'evolved'. In many cases it is exactly the contrary which is true. Savages, and many races which we can consider as 'natural', are only the last degenerate remnants of vanished, far anterior, superior races and civilisations, even the name of which has often not reached us. This is why the presumed 'primitives' who still exist today do not tend to 'evolve', but rather disappear definitively and become extinct.

In other races, however, the naturalistic element is, so to speak, the vehicle of a superior, super-biological element, which is to the former what the spirit is to the body. Such an element almost always becomes incarnated in the tradition of such races and in the elite which embodies this tradition and keeps it alive. Here, therefore, there is a race of the spirit behind the race of body and blood in which the latter expresses the former in a more or less perfect manner according to the circumstances, individuals, and often castes, in which this race is articulated.

The truth of this is clearly felt wherever, in symbolic form, Antiquity attributed 'divine' or 'celestial' origins to a given race or caste. In this context, therefore, purity of blood, or the lack of it, is no longer sufficient to define the essence and rank of a given race. Where the regime of the castes was in force every caste could obviously be considered 'pure' because the law of endogamy or non-mixing applied to all of them. Not to have merely pure blood, but to have – symbolically – 'divine' blood, instead defined the superior caste or race with respect to the plebeian one, or to what we have called the 'race of nature'. Hence the fact that, in the ancient Indo-Germanic civilisations of the East, the community or spiritual race of the *arya* identified itself with that of the *dvija*, the 'twice-born' or 'reborn': this was a reference to a supernatural element pertaining to it, to latent gifts of 'race' in a superior sense, which a special ritual, compared to a second birth or to a regeneration,

had to progressively confirm in the individual. But maybe we will have to go back over this also; these points are, however, sufficient for the argument which we now intend to make.

We need only add that, if we look at humanity today, not only is it difficult to find a group which maintains one race of the body or another in the pure state, but it should unfortunately also be recognised that the general distinction between naturalistic races and superior races, or super-races, becomes in very many cases extremely uncertain: often, modern man has lost both the steadiness of instinct of the 'races of nature' and the superiority and metaphysical tension of the 'super-race'. He looks rather like what primitive peoples in reality, and not in the view of evolutionists, are: beings which, even though they proceed from originally superior races, have degraded themselves to animalistic, naturalistic, amorphous and semi-collectivist ways of life. What Landra¹ has accurately described in these pages as 'the race of the bourgeois', of the petty conformist and right-thinking man, the 'advanced' spirit who invents a superiority for himself on the basis of rhetoric, empty speculations and exquisite aestheticisms; the pacifist, the social climber, the neutralist humanitarian, all this half-extinguished material of which so significant a part of the modern world is made up, is actually a product of racial degeneration, the expression of the deep crisis of the Man of the West, all the more tragic as it is not even felt as such.

Let us now come to the fact of war and the experience of heroism. Both, we have claimed in our previous writings, are instruments of awakening. An awakening, however, of what? War, experienced, determines a first selection; it separates the strong from the weak, the heroes from the cowards. Some fall, others assert themselves. But this is not enough. Various ways of being heroes, various meanings, can arise in heroic experience. From each race, a different, specific reaction must be expected. Let us ignore this fact for now and follow instead the 'phenomenology' of the awakening of race determined by war, that is, the various typical modalities of this awakening, working theoretically on the distinction which has just been made ('race of nature' and 'super-race') and practically on the concrete aspect, that is to say the fact that, since it is no longer specialised warlike elites but masses which face war, war therefore to a great extent concerns the mixed, bourgeois,

¹ Guido Landra was an anthropologist, and was the first director of the Office of Racial Studies, a department within the Ministry of Popular Culture of Fascist Italy.

half-degraded type, whom we have described above as a product of crisis.

To put such a product of crisis to the test of fire, to impose upon him a fundamental alternative, not theoretical, but in terms of reality and even of life and death: this is the first healthy effect of the fact of war for race. *Ignis essentiae*, in the terminology of ancient alchemists: the fire which tests, which strips to the 'essence'.

To follow this development more concretely we shall refer to the unique documentation which is found in famous authors such as, for example, Erich Maria Remarque and the French René Quinton.²

Everyone knows Remarque as the author of the notorious novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*,³ considered a masterpiece of defeatism. Our opinion in this matter is no different: it is nevertheless worth examining this novel with the coldest objectivity. The characters of the novel are teenagers who were imbued as volunteers with every sort of 'idealism', resonant with that rhetorical, romantic and choreographically heroic conception of war spread by those people who, with fanfare and beautiful speeches, had limited themselves to accompanying them to the station. Once they have reached the front and have been caught in the true experience of modern war, they come to realise that it is something quite different and that none of the ideals and the aforementioned rhetoric can support them any longer. They do not become either vile wretches or traitors, but their inner being is transformed; it is an irredeemably broken generation, even where the howitzers have spared it. They advance, they often become 'heroes' – but as what? They feel war to be an elemental, impersonal, inhuman vicissitude, a vicissitude of unleashed forces, in which to survive is only possible by reawakening as beings made of instincts which are absolute, as lucid as they are inexorable, instincts almost independent from their persons. These are the forces which carry such youngsters forward, which lead them to assert themselves where others would have been broken, or would have been driven crazy, or would have preferred the fate of the deserters and the vile wretches: but, beyond this, no enthusiasm, no ideal, no light. To

² René Quinton (1866-1925) was the author of *Soldier's Testament: Selected Maxims of René Quinton* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1930). This is the English version of the book discussed by Evola below.

³ *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1929). It is perhaps the most famous anti-war novel ever written.

mark in a morbidly evocative manner the terrible anonymity of this vicissitude, in which the individual no longer counts, Remarque makes the book end with the death of the only young person in the original group who had escaped, and who dies almost at the threshold of the armistice, on a day so calm that the communiqués confine themselves to this sentence: 'All quiet on the western front'.

Even leaving aside the fact that the author of this book actually was a combatant, it would be hard to say that processes of this sort are only 'novelistic', without relation to reality. The defeatism of the book, its insidious and deleterious side, lies rather in reducing the whole war, that is, all the possibilities of the experience of war, to a single, certainly real, but particular, aspect of it; in fact this is merely the negative outcome of a test, which, however, can be overcome by others positively. A point should be borne in mind: the anti-bourgeois thesis. Up to this point, we can even agree with Remarque. War acts as a catharsis, as a 'purification': *ignis essentiae*. Beautiful words, beautiful feelings, rhetorical flights, myths and watchwords, humanitarianism and verbose patriotism are swept away, and so is the petty person with the illusion of its importance and its usefulness. All this is far too little. One is in the face of pure forces. And, to resist, one must reawaken likewise as an embodiment of pure forces intimately connected with the depth of race: forgetting one's own 'I', one's own life. But it is precisely here that the two opposite possibilities show themselves: once the superstructures of the 'race of limbo', of the bourgeois, half-extinguished man, have been blown up, two ways of overcoming the 'human' are likewise open: the shift to the sub-human, or the shift to the superhuman. In one case, the beast reawakens; in the other, the hero in the true sense, the sacred and traditional sense; in the former, the 'race of nature' revives, and, in the latter, the 'super-race'. Remarque only knows the first solution.

Some years ago, a work by René Quinton was published in Italian translation: *Massime sulla guerra*. It represents another very singular testimony. Eight times injured in the World War, repeatedly decorated with the most coveted decorations, Quinton can obviously aspire to the generic qualification of 'hero'. But what meaning has this 'hero' experienced in war? This book is the answer. War is conceived and justified by Quinton biologically, in close dependency on the instincts of the species and 'natural selection'. Some quotations:

'There are, at the base of any being, two motives: the egoistic one which drives him to conserve his own life, and the altruistic one which leads him to forget himself, to sacrifice himself for a natural end which he does not know and which becomes identified with the benefit of the species. Thus, the weak, in the service of the species, attacks the more powerful, without prudence, without reason, without even hoping to win. The genius of the species commands him to attack and to gamble his life [...] The male and the female are created for the service of the species. The males are organised to fight each other [for the purpose of sexual selection]. War is their natural state, as for the female the sacred order is to conceive and then to nurture.'

Hence this singular conception of heroism:

'The hero does not act from a sense of duty, but from love [meaning: according to race instincts, which the sexual function obeys]. In war man is no longer man, he is only the male [...] War is a chapter of love – males become intoxicated with tearing each other to pieces. The drunkenness of war is a drunkenness of love.'

The instrument of the species, of the race of the body, in a primordial outburst, according to Quinton:

'Thus, there is nothing sublime about the hero, nor about the heroic mother who rushes towards a fire in order to save her child: they are the born male and female.'

To indicate the conclusion that all this leads to, we will quote these further excerpts from Quinton:

'Every ideal is a pretext to kill. Hatred is the most important thing in life. The wise men who no longer hate are ready for sterility and death. You must not understand the [enemy] peoples, you must hate them. The more man rises, the more his hatred for man grows. Nature has by no means created males, and peoples, in order for them to love each other.'

The joy of hurting the adversary constitutes, then, one of the essential elements of the hero.

‘Socialised life is composed of merely artificial duties. War frees man from these and returns him to his primal instincts.’

In the evolutionistic-biological framework of a view such as this, these instincts are essentially dependent on race, in the sense of species.

Just as it would be inaccurate to regard Remarque merely as a jaundiced defeatist, so it would be inaccurate to regard Quinton merely as a combatant who, in trying to express his experiences theoretically, became a victim of the notorious theory of combat as the natural selection of the species. There is more. There is, despite several features of caricature and one-sidedness, a sign of real life. Actually, the lion can arise from the sheep precisely in this sense. Man reawakens and resumes contact with the deep forces of life and race from which he had become alienated, but in order to be no more than a ‘male’ and, at best, a ‘magnificent beast of prey’. In the realm of the ‘races of nature’, this may be normal, and the phenomena by which experiences of that sort are likely to be accompanied – horde solidarity, unity of destiny, *etc.* – may even have a healthy, reviving effect for a given organised ethnic group. But from the point of view of one who already belongs to a ‘race of the spirit’ this can only be his ordeal of fire turned into a fall. The catharsis, the amputation of the ‘bourgeois’ excrescence brought about by war, here, exposes not what is superior to the ideal of personality but what is inferior to it, marking the borderline point of the involution of the race of the spirit into that of the body. To use the terms of ancient Aryan traditions, this is *pitr-yana*, the path of those who are dissolved in dark ancestral forces, not *dava-yana*, the ‘path of gods’.⁴

Let us now consider the other possibility, that is, the case in which the experience of war turns into a restoration, an awakening, of the race of the spirit, or ‘super-race’. We have already stated the normal relationship in the super-race between the biological element and the super-biological one, or, if we prefer, between the ‘vital’ element and the properly spiritual one. The former must be considered as an instrument for the manifestation and expression of the latter. Having this point of reference, the essentials of the positive solution can be expressed in a

⁴ This is discussed in the Upanisads, especially *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanisad*.

very simple formula: heroic experience and, in general, the experience of risk, of combat, of painful tension, must constitute for the individual one of those inner culminations in which the extreme intensity of life (*qua*⁵ biological element) is almost transformed into something more-than-life (the supra-biological element). This implies a freeing upwards from the confines of individuality and the assumption of the bursting upwards of the deeper side of one's own being as the instrument of a sort of active ecstasy, implying not the deepening but the transfiguration of personality, and, with it, of all lucid vision, precise action, command and domination. Such moments, such culminations of heroic experience, not only do not exclude, but actually demand all the aspects of war that have an 'elemental', destructive, we could almost say telluric, character: precisely that which, in the eyes of the petty individuality and the petty 'I', the unwarlike 'intellectual' and the sentimental humanitarian, has a baleful, deplorable, deleterious character for 'human values', and shows itself instead here to have spiritual value. Even death – death on the battlefield – becomes, in this respect, a testimony to life; hence the Roman conception of the *mors triumphalis* and the Nordic conception of Valhalla as a place of immortality exclusively reserved for 'heroes'. But there is more: the assumptions of such heroic experience seem to possess an almost magical effectiveness: they are inner triumphs which can determine even material victory and are a sort of evocation of divine forces intimately tied to 'tradition' and the 'race of the spirit' of a given stock. That is why, in the ritual of the triumph in Rome, the victorious leader bore the insignia of the Capitoline divinity.

These remarks are sufficient to allow the reader to anticipate that what we say is not a mere 'theory' of ours, a philosophical position or interpretation thought up by us. This doctrine of heroism as a sacred and almost magical culmination, this mystical and ascetic conception of fighting and of winning, itself expresses a precise tradition, today forgotten but extensively documented in the testimonies of ancient civilisations, and especially of Aryan ones. This is why, in a subsequent article, we propose to express the same meanings by making ancient myths and symbols and rituals, Roman and Indo-Germanic, speak, which will clarify what, so far, we have had necessarily to expose in a synthetic and general form.

⁵ Latin: 'by virtue of being'.

Race and War: The Aryan Conception of Combat

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del combattere' in *La Difesa della Razza*.

In our previous article, dealing with the capacity of war and heroic experience to bring about an awakening of deep forces connected to the substratum of the race, we have seen that, in the most general way, two distinct, and indeed opposite, types appear. In the first type, the petty bourgeois personality – tamed, conformist, pseudo-intellectual or emptily idealistic – may undergo a disintegration, involving the emergence of elementary forces and instincts, in which the individual regresses to the pre-personal stage of the 'races of nature', which exhaust themselves in a welter of conservative and affirmative instincts. In the second type, in contrast, the most 'elemental' and non-human aspects of the heroic experience become a means of transfiguration, of elevation and integration of personality in – so to speak – a transcendent way of being. This constitutes an evocation of what we have called 'the race of the spirit', that is, of the spiritual element from 'above', which, in superior stocks, acts formatively on the purely biological part, and is at the root of their 'tradition' and of their prophetic greatness – simultaneously, from the point of view of the individual, these are experiences which Antiquity, and specifically Aryan antiquity, considered no less rich in supernatural fruits than those of asceticism, holiness and even initiation. Having thus recalled our point of departure, let us specify the subjects which we intend to develop further. First of all, as we have said, we want to present a brief account which makes it apparent that the aforementioned conception of heroism, far from being the product of a

particular speculation of ours, or of an empty rhetorical projection, corresponds to a precise tradition which appears in a whole series of ancient civilisations. In the second place, we want to develop the Aryan conception of 'victory', understood precisely as a 'mystical' value, closely connected to an inner rebirth. Finally, passing to a more concrete plane, we want to see, in general terms, of what is the behaviour of the various races in relation to this order of ideas. In the present article, we will deal thoroughly with the first point.

Broadly speaking, we find that, especially among ancient Aryan humanity, wars were thought of as images of a perennial fight between metaphysical forces: on one hand there was the Olympian and luminous principle, uranic and solar truth; on the other hand there was raw force, the 'titanic', telluric element, 'barbaric' in the classical sense, the demonic-feminine principle of chaos. This view continually recurs in Greek mythology in various symbolic forms; in still more precise and radical terms it appears in the general vision of the world of the Irano-Aryan races, which considered themselves literally to be the armies of the God of Light in his struggle against the power of darkness; they persist throughout the Middle Ages, often retaining their classical features in spite of the new religion. Thus, Frederick I of Swabia,¹ in his fight against the rebellious Commune, recalled the symbol of Hercules and the arm with which this symbolic hero of Dorian-Aryan and Achaean-Aryan stocks fought as all of the 'Olympian' forces against the dark creatures of chaos.

This general conception, intimately experienced, could not help but be reflected in more concrete forms of life and activity, raised to the symbolic and, we could almost say, 'ritual-like' level. For our purposes, it is worth noting particularly the transformation of war into the 'path of God' and 'greater holy war'.

We omit deliberately here any documentation peculiar to Romanity because we will use this when dealing, in the next article, with the 'mysticism of victory'. We will begin instead with the testimonies, which are themselves very well-known, relating to the Nordic-Aryan tradition. Here, Valhalla is the place of an immortality reserved above all for heroes fallen on the battlefield. The Lord of this place, Odin or

¹ Frederick I (1122-1190), also known as Barbarossa (Redbeard), was the Holy Roman Emperor. He led six invasions of Italy, and was a Crusader. According to legend, he was also one of the holders of the Spear of Destiny (the Lance which pierced the side of Christ), and will one day return to restore Germany to its former greatness.

Wotan, is presented to us in the *Ynglingasaga* as having shown to the heroes, by his own symbolic self-sacrifice on the cosmic tree Yggdrasil, the path which leads to that divine sojourn, where they live eternally, as if on a dazzling luminous peak beyond the clouds.

According to this tradition, no sacrifice or cult is more appreciated by the supreme God than that which is performed by the hero who fights and falls on the battlefield. In addition to this there is a sort of metaphysical counterpart reinforcing this view: the forces of the heroes who, having fallen and sacrificed themselves to Odin, have gone beyond the limits of human nature, and then increase the phalanx which this god needs to fight the *Ragna-rökr*, that is, the 'darkening of the divine', which has threatened the world since ancient times. In the *Edda*, in fact, it is said that 'no matter how great the number of the heroes gathered in Valhalla, they will never be too many for when the Wolf comes'. The 'Wolf' here is the symbol of a dark and wild power which, previously, had managed to chain and subdue the stock of the 'divine heroes', or Aesir; the 'age of the Wolf'² is more or less the counterpart of the 'Age of Iron' in the Classical tradition, and of the 'dark age' – Kali-Yuga³ – in the Indo-Aryan one: it alludes symbolically to an age of the unleashing of purely terrestrial and desecrated forces.

It is important to note that similar meanings remain under the Christian outer garment in the Medieval ideology of the Crusades. The liberation of the Temple and the conquest of the Holy Land had a much closer relationship than is commonly supposed with ancient traditions relating to mystical Asgard, a distant land of heroes, where there is no death, and whose inhabitants enjoy an incorruptible life and supernatural calm. 'Holy war' appeared as a very spiritual war, so much so that it could be compared literally by ancient chroniclers to 'a bathing, which is almost like the fire of purgatory before death' – a clear reference to the ascetic meaning of combat. 'It is a glory for you never to leave the battle [unless] covered with laurels. But it is an even greater glory to earn on the battlefield an immortal crown ...' said Saint Bernard to the Crusaders, addressing especially the Templars, in his *De Laude Novae*

² The Age of the Wolf is described in the 45th verse of the 'Völuspá', or Prophecy of the Seeress, the first poem of the Norse *Poetic Edda*. The wolf age is said to be the age of brother turning against brother, constant warfare, widespread whoredom and hard-ship. It is the prelude to the end of the world, although the world is destined to be recreated afterward in an even more perfect form. See *The Poetic Edda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

³ The last and darkest age in the Vedic, or Hindu, cycle of ages.

Militiae.⁴ *Glorie asolue*,⁵ attributed to the Lord who is above, in the skies – *in excelsis Deo* – was promised to the warrior in Provençal texts.

Moreover, the first military setbacks undergone by the Crusaders, which were initially a source of surprise and dismay, served to purify the notion of war from any residue of materialism and superstitious devotion. The unhappy fate of a crusade was compared by the Pope and the **clerks** to that of an unfortunate life, which is judged and rewarded only according to the criteria of a non-earthly life and justice. Thus, the Crusaders learned to regard something as superior to victory and defeat, and to regard all value as residing in the spiritual aspect of action.

Thus we approach the most inward aspect of heroic experience, its ascetic value: it should not cause surprise if, to characterise it further, we now turn to the Muslim tradition, which might seem to be the opposite pole to the one just discussed. The truth is that the races which confronted each other in the Crusades were both warlike ones, which experienced in war the same supra-material meaning, even while fighting against one other. In any case, the ideas which we wish to discuss now are essentially to be considered as echoes within the Muslim tradition of an originally Persian (Aryo-Iranian) conception, assumed now by members of the Arab race.

In the Muslim tradition, in fact, we find the central nucleus of the whole order of ideas dealt with here in the theory of the twofold war, that is, of the 'lesser and greater *jihad*'. The lesser war is the material war fought against a hostile people and, in particular, against an unjust one, the 'barbarians' or 'infidels', in which case it becomes the 'lesser *jihad*', identical to the Crusade in its outer, fanatical and simply religious sense. The 'greater *jihad*' is, in contrast, of the spiritual and interior order: it is the fight of man against the enemies which he bears within himself, or, more exactly, the fight of the superhuman element in man against everything which is instinctual, passionate and subject to natural forces. The condition for inner liberation is that these enemies, the 'infidels' and 'barbarians' within us, are pulled down and torn to shreds.

Now, given this background, the essence of the tradition in question lies in its conceiving the lesser war, that is, the concrete, armed one, as a path through which the 'greater *jihad*', the inner war, can be achieved, in perfect simultaneity. For this reason, in Islam, *jihad* and 'Path of God' are often synonymous. And we read in the *Qur'an*: 'So let

⁴ *In Praise of the New Knighthood* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2010).

⁵ Latin: 'absolute glory'.

those who sell the life of this world for the Next World fight in the Way of Allah. If someone fights in the Way of Allah, whether he is killed or is victorious, We will pay him an immense reward' (4:74).⁶ And again: 'As for those who fight in the Way of Allah, He will not let their actions go astray. He will guide them and better their condition and He will admit them into the Garden which He has made known to them' (47:4-6). In these last words there is an allusion to the case of an effective death on the battlefield, which, therefore, assumes the same meaning which the expression *mors triumphalis*, triumphant death, had in classical antiquity. But the same conception can also be taken in the symbolic sense in that the one who, while fighting the 'lesser war', has triumphed in the 'greater *jihad*' (by refusing to let himself be overcome by the current of the inferior forces aroused in his being by the vicissitudes of war, as happens in the heroism *a la* Remarque or *a la* Quinon, which we discussed in the previous article) has evoked, in any case, a force able, in principle, to overcome the crisis of death. In other words, even without having been killed one can have experienced death, can have won and can have achieved the culmination peculiar to 'supra-life'. From a higher point of view 'Paradise', 'the celestial realm', are, like Valhalla, the Greek 'Isle of Heroes', etc., only symbolic figurations, concocted for the masses, figurations which actually designate transcendent states of consciousness, beyond life and death. Ancient Aryan tradition has the word *jivanmukti*⁷ to indicate a realisation of that sort obtained already in the mortal body.

Let us come now to a pure metaphysical exposition of the doctrine in question. We find it in a text originating from the ancient Indo-Aryan races, imprinted with a sense of the heroic-spiritual reality which it would be hard to match elsewhere. It is the *Bhagavad-Gita*, a part of the epic poem, the *Mahabharata*,⁸ which to an expert eye contains precious material relating not only to the spirituality of the Aryan races which migrated to Asia, but to that of the 'Hyperborean' nucleus of these which, according to the traditional views to which our conception of race refers, must be considered as the origin of them all.

⁶ The references to the *Qur'an* and *Bhagavad-Gita* in this essay are identical to those in 'The Greater War and the Lesser War' and 'The Metaphysics of War'.

⁷ From the Sanskrit, this term is used in the Advaita Vedanta tradition of Vedic, or Hindu, philosophy.

⁸ The *Mahabharata*, along with the *Ramayana*, are the two great epic poems of the Hindu tradition. It describes the Kurukshetra War, which was an epic struggle between two branches of the royal family.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* contains in the shape of a dialogue the doctrine given by the incarnate divinity, Krishna, to a warrior prince, Arjuna, who had invoked him, as, overcome by humanitarian and sentimentalist scruples, he found himself no longer able to resolve to fight the enemy. The judgement of the God is categorical: it defines the mercy which had withheld Arjuna from fighting as 'degrading impotence' (2:4) and 'impurities...not at all befitting a man who knows the value of life. They lead not to higher planets but to infamy' (2:2). Therefore, it is not on the basis of earthly and contingent necessities but of a divine judgement that the duty of combat is confirmed here. The promise is: '[E]ither you will be killed on the battlefield and attain the heavenly planets, or you will conquer and enjoy the earthly kingdom. Therefore, get up with determination and fight' (2:37). The inner guideline, necessary to transfigure the 'lesser war' into 'greater, holy war' in death and triumphant resurrection, and to make contact, through heroic experience, with the transcendental root of one's own being, is clearly stated by Krishna: 'Therefore, O Arjuna, surrendering all your works unto Me, with full knowledge of Me, without desires for profit, with no claims to proprietorship, and free from lethargy, fight' (3:30). The terms are just as clear about the 'purity' of heroic action, which must be wanted for itself, beyond every contingent motivation, every passion and all gross utility. The words of the text are: 'Do thou fight for the sake of fighting, without considering happiness or distress, loss or gain, victory or defeat – and by so doing you shall never incur sin' (2:38).

But beyond even this a true metaphysical justification of war is arrived at. We will try to express this in the most accessible way. The text works on the fundamental distinction between what in man exists in the supreme sense and, as such, is incorruptible and immutable – spirit – and the corporeal and human element, which has only an illusory existence. Having stressed the metaphysical non-reality of what one can lose or make another lose in the vicissitudes of combat, as ephemeral life and mortal body (there is nothing painful and tragic – it is said – in the fact that what is fatally destined to fall, falls), that aspect of the divine which appears as an absolute and sweeping force is recalled. Before the greatness of this force (which flashes through Arjuna's mind in the moment of a supernatural vision), every created, that is, conditioned, existence appears as a 'negation'. It can therefore be said that such a force strikes as a terrible revelation wherever such 'negation' is actively denied; that is to say, in more concrete and intelligible terms,

wherever a sudden outburst sweeps up every finite life, every limitation of the petty individual, either to destroy him, or to revive him. Moreover, the secret of the 'becoming', of the fundamental restlessness and perpetual change which characterises life here below, is deduced precisely from the situation of beings, finite in themselves, which also participate in something infinite. The beings which would be described as 'created' by Christian terminology, are described rather, according to ancient Aryan tradition, as 'conditioned', subject to becoming, change and disappearance, precisely because, in them, a power burns which transcends them, which wants something infinitely vaster than all that they can ever want. Once the text in various ways has given the sense of such a vision of life it goes on to specify what fighting and heroic experience must mean for the warrior. Values change: a higher life manifests itself through death; and destruction, for the one who overcomes it, is a liberation – it is precisely in its most frightening aspects that the heroic outburst appears as a sort of manifestation of the divine in its capacity of metaphysical force of destruction of the finite – in the jargon of some modern philosophers this would be called 'the negation of the negation'. The warrior who smashes 'degrading impotence', who faces the vicissitudes of heroism 'with your mind absorbed in the supreme spirit', seizing upon a plan according to which both the 'I' and the 'thou', and therefore both fear for oneself and mercy for others, lose all meaning, can be said to assume actively the absolute divine force, to transfigure himself within it, and to free himself by breaking through the limitations relating to the mere human state of existence. 'Life – like a bow; the mind – like the arrow; the target to pierce – the supreme spirit; to join mind to spirit as the shot arrow hits its target.' – These are the evocative expressions contained in another text of the same tradition, the *Markandeya Purana*. Such, in short, is the metaphysical justification of war, the sacred interpretation of heroism, the transformation of the 'lesser war' into the 'greater holy war', according to the ancient Indo-Aryan tradition which gives us therefore, in the most complete and direct form, the intimate content present also in the other formulations pointed out.

In conclusion, let us mention two more points.

The first concerns the meaningful relation, in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, between the teaching which has just been described on the one hand and tradition and race on the other. In 4:1-3, it is said that this is the 'solar' wisdom received from Manu, who, as is well known, is the most ancient 'divine' legislator of the Aryan race. His laws, for Aryans, have

the same value that the *Talmud* has for Hebrews: that is to say, they constitute the formative force of their way of life, the essence of their 'race of the spirit'. Now, this primordial wisdom, which was at first transmitted through direct succession, 'in course of time the succession was broken, and therefore the science as it is appears to be lost' (4:2). It was not to a priest, but to a warrior prince, Arjuna, that it was revealed again in the way just recounted. To realise this wisdom by following the path of sacred heroism and absolute action can only mean, therefore, restoration, awakening, resumption of what was at the origin of tradition, which has survived for centuries in the dark depths of the race and routinised itself in the customs of successive ages. The meaning that we have already indicated, the re-galvanising effect which the fact of war in given conditions can have for the 'race of the spirit', is thus exactly confirmed.

Secondly, it can be noticed that one of the main causes of the crisis of Western civilisation lies in a paralysing dilemma, constituted, on the one hand, by a weak, abstract, or conventionally devotional spirituality, rich in moralistic and humanitarian implications; and, on the other hand, by a paroxysmal development of action of all sorts, but in a materialistic and nearly barbaric sense. This situation has remote causes. Psychology teaches us that, in the subconscious, inhibition often transforms energies repressed and rejected into causes of disease and hysteria. The ancient traditions of the Aryan races were essentially characterised by the ideal of action: they were paralysed and partially suffocated by the advent of Christianity, which, in its original forms, and not without relation to elements derived from non-Aryan races, shifted the emphasis of spirituality from the domain of action to that of contemplation, devotion and monastic asceticism. Catholicism, it is true, often tried to rebuild the smashed bridge – and here, in discussing the spirit of the Crusades, we have already seen an example of this attempt. However, the antithesis between passive spirituality and unspiritual activity has continued to weigh on the destinies of Western man and recently it has taken the form of a paroxysmal development of all sorts of action in the already stated sense of action on the material plane, which, even when it leads to realisations of unquestionable greatness, is deprived of every transcendent point of reference.

Given these conditions the advantages of the resumption of a tradition of action which is once again charged with spirit – adapted, naturally, to the times – justified not only by the immediate necessities of a particular historical situation, but by a transcendent vocation – should

be clear to all. If beyond the re-integration and defence of the race of the body we must proceed to the rediscovery of values able to purify the race of the spirit of Aryan humanity from every heterogeneous element, and to lead to its steady development, we think that a new, living understanding of teachings and of ideals such as those briefly recalled here is a fitting task for us to undertake.

Soul and Race of War

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In the previous articles in this series we have spoken about the varieties of heroic experience and described its possible forms from the point of view of race and spirit. We here resume the argument and discuss in more detail the heroism and sense of the meaning of combat which we need to grasp as ideals in relation to our higher race and our higher tradition.

We have already been obliged to observe that, today, 'heroism' is often spoken of in a vague and unspecified sense. If by heroism what is meant is simply impulsiveness, contempt for danger, audacity and indifference towards one's own life there is in this a sort of common denominator which can put on the same level the savage, the gangster and the crusading knight. From the material point of view this generic heroism might be sufficient for many contingencies, especially in the context of mere human herds. From a higher point of view, however, we must enquire further into the question of what heroes are, and what is the meaning which leads and determines individual heroic experience.

For this problem various elements should be borne in mind, and above all those relating to the general type of civilisation, to race and, in a way, to caste as a further differentiation of race. Things can be clarified best if, as a starting point, we recall the general outline of ancient Aryan social hierarchy as it is most clearly exhibited in the Indo-Aryan civilisation, as well as in the Nordic-Romanic Medieval civilisation. This hierarchy was quadripartite. At the top were the exponents of spiritual authority – we could say, generalising, the spiritual leaders to whom the

warrior nobles were subject. Then came the bourgeoisie (the ‘Third Estate’)¹ and, in the fourth place, the caste or class of the simple workers – today we would call them the proletariat. Evidently, this was not so much a hierarchy of men as one of functions, in which, though each function had its own dignity, the functions could not help but exist normally in the relations of subordination which have just been pointed out. It is quite clear, in fact, that these relations correspond exactly to those which exist between the various faculties of every man worthy of the name: the mind directs the will, which, in its turn, dominates the functions of the organic economy – to which, finally, the purely vital forces of the body are subordinated.

This outline is very useful, if only because it allows us to distinguish general types of civilisation, and to grasp the sense of their succession, or their alternation, in history. Thus we have four general types of civilisation, distinguished according to whether they are guided supremely by the truths, values and ideals of the spiritual leaders, the warriors, the bourgeoisie or the slaves. Leaving aside the Middle Ages, in the quadripartite hierarchy as it appeared among the Aryans of the ancient Mediterranean world, and still more among those of the Hindu-Iranian civilisation, the properly Aryan element was concentrated in the two superior castes and determined the values which dominated these cultures, while in the two other castes another blood, coming from subjugated aboriginal peoples, predominated; this fact could lead one to interesting conclusions about the racial background involved in the development of the civilisations of each of the aforementioned types.

Considerations of this nature, however, would offer little comfort to an attempt to grasp the general sense of the history of the West since it is quite clear that anyone keeping in mind the outline here explained would be led to recognise in this history, not the much-spoken-of ‘evolution’, but rather an ‘involution’ – more precisely, successive falls from each of the four hierarchical degrees to the next. It is quite clear, in fact, that civilisation of the pure heroic-sacral type can only be found in a more or less prehistoric period of the Aryan tradition. It was succeeded by civilisations at the top of which was the authority no longer of spiritual leaders, but of exponents of warrior nobility – and this is the age of the historical monarchies up to the period of revolutions. With the

¹ In pre-revolutionary France, the estates were the various orders which defined the stratification of society. The Third Estate was comprised of the poorest elements of the populace.

French and American revolutions the Third Estate becomes the most important, determining the cycle of bourgeois civilisations. Marxism and Bolshevism, finally, seem to lead to the final fall, the passage of power and authority to the hands of the last of the castes of ancient Aryan hierarchy.

Now, returning to our main argument, that is, to the typology of heroism, it should be noted that the transitions which have just been pointed out have not only a political significance, but they invest the whole sense of living and lead to the subordination of all values to those proper to the dominant caste or race of the spirit. Thus, for instance, in the first phase ethics has a supernatural justification and the supreme value is the conquest of immortality; in the second phase – that is, in the civilisation of warrior nobility – ethics is already ‘secular’: the ethics of fidelity, honour and loyalty. Bourgeois ethics follow this with the ideal of economic well-being, of prosperity and capitalist adventure. In the last phase the only ethics are those of materialised, collectivised and deconsecrated work as supreme value. Analogous transformations can be found in all fields – take for example architecture: as central architectonic type the temple is followed by the castle, then by the city of the commune, and finally by the rationalised hive-house of modern capitals. Another example would be the family: from a unit of the heroic-sacral type, which it was in the first phase, it passes to the type of the ‘warrior’ family, centred in the firm authority of the father; then follows the family as bourgeois unity on an exclusively economic-sentimental basis; and, in the last phase, there is the communist disintegration of the family.

Precisely the same articulations can be noticed in the types of heroic experience and in the meaning of war and combat in general. We do not need to dwell on the conception of war and heroism peculiar to the civilisations of the first type, or even to the original Aryans, because we have already referred repeatedly and at length to their traditions in previous articles. Here we will limit ourselves to saying that war and heroism in this first phase can be viewed essentially as forms of ‘asceticism’, as paths along which those same supernatural and immortality-granting fruits can be picked which are promised by initiation, or by asceticism of the religious and contemplative type. But in the second phase – in the civilisation of the ‘warriors’ – the perspective has already shifted; the ‘sacred’ content of heroic experience and the concept of war almost as symbol and glimmer of an ascending and metaphysical struggle is veiled; what is above all important now is fighting and waging war

on behalf of one's race, his honour and his glory. With the advent of 'bourgeois' civilisations the type of the warrior gives way to that of the soldier and the national-territorial aspect which, only a little before, was not pronounced, but is emphasised: we are in the presence of the *citoyen*² who takes up arms, of the pathos of war and heroism 'for freedom', that is, more or less, for the cause of the 'immortal principle' of 'struggle against tyranny' – the jargon equivalent of the political-social forms of the previous civilisation of the warriors. It is with such 'myths' that the 1914-1918 World War has been supported, in which the Allies stated quite baldly that it represented for them the 'crusade of democracy', the new leap forward of the 'great revolution' for the cause of the freedom of the peoples against 'imperialism' and the residual forms of 'Medieval obscurantism'. In the first forms of the final phase, that is, of the 'civilisation of the slaves', the concept of war is transformed; it internationalises itself and collectivises itself, tending towards the concept of the worldwide revolution of the proletariat. It is only in the service of this revolution that war is legitimate, that dying is noble and that the hero must arise from the worker. These are the fundamental meanings to which the heroic experience can conform, leaving aside its immediate and subjective aspect of impulse and boldness which lead beyond themselves.

In talking of the penultimate phase, that is, 'bourgeois war', we have deliberately spoken of 'myths'. Bourgeois nature has two main aspects: sentimentalism and economic interest. If the ideology of 'freedom', and 'nation' democratically conceived, corresponds to the first aspect, the second has no less weight in the unconfessed motives of 'bourgeois war'. The 1914-1918 war shows clearly, in fact, that the 'noble' democratic ideology was only a cover, while the part which international finance really played is now well-known. And today, in the new war, this appears even more clearly: the sentimental pretexts offered have proved to be more and more inconsistent, and it is obvious, on the contrary, that material and plutocratic interests, and the desire to maintain a monopoly upon the raw materials of the world, as well as upon gold, are what have set the 'tone' of the fight of the democratic Allies and have led them to take up arms and ask millions of men to sacrifice their lives.

² French: 'citizen'.

This allows us also to remark upon the racial factor. We should not confuse what a caste or a class is when it is a subordinate part in a hierarchy which conforms to given values with what it becomes when it seizes power and subordinates everything to itself. Thus, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat of the modern world have characters very different from those which were characteristic of the corresponding classes in traditional Aryan civilisations. The desecrated and dark character of the former is as marked as were the sacred and spiritual superior values which, by means of participation, were reflected in the most humble and material forms of human activity of the latter. Every usurpation has a degradation as its fatal consequence: this process almost always presupposes the infiltration of socially and racially inferior elements. In the case of the Western bourgeoisie these elements have been supplied by Hebraism. Let us not delude ourselves: the type of the plutocrats and of the capitalists, the three kings of bourgeois and democratic civilisation, is essentially a Jewish type, even when precise physical descent from the Jewish race cannot be demonstrated. With respect to America, everyone knows the considerations which led Sombart³ to call capitalism the quintessence of the doctrine of Moses. It is well-known that, in the final phase of the normal society of the West which was the Ghibelline Middle Ages, international trade and commerce using gold were to a large extent Jewish prerogatives, and that, even in the 'bourgeois professions' of the Third Estate of that time, wherever they remained in the hands of Aryans, before the emancipation and degeneration of the civilisation of the Communes, features of great dignity and probity were maintained which can hardly be found in the modern civilisation of the merchants, i.e., the bourgeois capitalist civilisation. It is essentially from the Jewish element that this civilisation has drawn its 'style'. And, given these facts, it is obvious that, by means of elective affinities, this civilisation had to be completely opened to Hebraism, which has scaled its main positions of responsibility with ease, and has taken over control of all its powers by means of its own specialised racial qualities.

Thus, it can well be said that the current war is one of merchants and Jews, who have mobilised the armed forces and the heroic possibilities of democratic nations to defend their interests. Certainly, there are other contributory factors. But it is unquestionable that England is a typical case of this phenomenon, which is hardly new, and, to tell the

³ Werner Sombart (1863-1941), a German economist, and the author of *The Jews and Modern Capitalism* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1913).

truth, exhibits a characteristic phenomenon of inversion. To be specific, in England monarchy and nobility still exist and, until yesterday, a military class with an unquestionable heritage of character, sang-froid and contempt for danger existed also. But it is not in such elements that the centre of the British Empire lies, but rather in the Jew and the Judaised Aryan. The degenerate remains of a 'civilisation of warriors' serve a 'civilisation of merchants', which – normally – would rather have had to serve them. Only those who have a precise sense of this can grasp the dark and confused forces at work in the race of those whom Italy fights today: and it is precisely the character of these forces which explains the decline of English fighting ability, and the impossibility of true heroism and true boldness because by now even the 'mythic' premises of the 1914-1918 war are lacking, as has been pointed out just above.

Let us come now to our final point, which is the clarification of the sense of our war and our heroism on the basis of the general doctrinal and historical views we have expressed. At the risk of being taken for hopeless Utopians we will never grow tired of repeating that our taking up once more of the Aryan and Roman symbols must lead to the taking up once more, also, of the spiritual and traditional conceptions which were peculiar to the original civilisations which developed under those symbols.

We have spoken of the superior Aryan conception of war and heroism as asceticism, catharsis, overcoming of the tie of the human 'I' and, ultimately, effective participation in immortality. Now let us emphasise that the inferior is comprised in the superior – meaning, in our case, that the experience of combat according to this superior meaning must not be understood as a sort of confused mystical impulsiveness, but as the development, integration and transfiguration of everything which can be experienced in war, or which can be asked of war, from any of the subordinate and conditioned standpoints. Proceeding from what is below to what is above, it can therefore be said that an unavoidable need for social justice in the international arena and a revolt against the hegemony of nations incarnating the 'civilisation of the merchants' may be the immediate determinant of the war. But the one who fights the war on such grounds can find in it also the occasion to realise, simultaneously, a higher experience, that is, fighting and being a hero not so much as soldier but as warrior, as a man who fights and loves to fight not so much in the interest of material conquests as in the name of his King and of his tradition. And beyond this stage, in a successive phase, or a higher class, this same war can become a means to achieve war in

the supreme sense, as asceticism and 'path of God', as culmination of that general meaning of living, of which it was said: *vita est militia super terram*. All this becomes integrated and – it can be added – there is no doubt that the impulse and the ability to sacrifice are superior by far in the one who realises this supreme meaning in war, as compared one who stops at one of the subordinate meanings. And even on this mundane plane the law of the earth can meet with the law of God when the most tragic demands which can be made in the name of the greatness of a nation are fulfilled in an action whose ultimate sense is, however, the overcoming of the human tie, contempt for the petty existence of the 'plains', the tension which, in the supreme culminations of life, means choosing something which is more than life.

If this is the idea of the 'holy war' as simultaneously material and spiritual struggle which was peculiar to the Aryan peoples, a further, specific reference to Aryan Romanity is opportune to avoid some 'romantic' distortions to which that idea has been subjected in a later period in some stocks of that people, above all Nordic ones. We mean to allude to so-called 'tragic heroism', the love of combat for its own sake, which among Nordic peoples takes on overtones of the Titanic, the 'Nibelungian'⁴ and the Faustian. To the extent that this is not just literature – and bad literature – it contains glints of Aryan spirituality, certainly, but they have degenerated to the level appropriate to a simple civilisation of warriors since they have not been able to remain on the superior level of the origins, which is not merely heroic, but also 'solar' and 'Olympian'. The Roman conception does not know this distortion. Inwardly, as outwardly, war cannot be the last word; it is rather the means to conquest of a power as calm as it is perfect and intangible. Beyond the mysticism of war, in the higher Aryan conception as well as in the Roman one, is the mysticism of victory. The soldiers of Fabius⁵ did not romantically swear to win or to die, but rather to return as victors – as they indeed did. In the Roman ceremony of the triumph, which,

⁴ Nibelungen is the name of the Burgundian royal family in Germanic mythology.

⁵ Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus (280 BC?-203 BC) was a Roman consul who was appointed dictator of the Roman Republic after its initial defeat during the Second Punic War, in which Rome was invaded by the Carthaginians under Hannibal's command. Fabius managed to keep the stronger Carthaginian force at bay by engaging in a protracted guerilla war against them, rather than by confronting them directly, which he knew would lead to defeat. For his victorious service, the Romans hailed Fabius as 'The Shield of Rome'.

as we said in another article, had a more religious than military character, the personality of the victor was in the closest relation with Jupiter, the Aryan god of cosmic order and law. The authentic idea of *Pax Romana*⁶ had distinctly 'Olympian' characteristics – to realise this all one needs to do is to refer to the writers of the age of Augustus⁷ and to Virgil⁸ above all. It is not the cessation of the spiritual tension of war, but its fecund and luminous culmination – as such, it represents the overcoming of war as an end-in-itself and obscurely tragic vocation.

These are the fundamental characteristic elements of the highest Aryan conception of combat. The importance of recalling them and experiencing them again today cannot be doubted by anyone who is aware that the current conflict is not merely an almost 'private' affair between certain nations, but is destined, by destroying confused and violently established situations, to lead to a new general order, truly worthy of the name: spiritually Roman.

⁶ 'The Roman Peace', this was a period of the history of the Roman Empire, lasting roughly from 27 BC to 180 AD, during which the Empire prospered and fought no major wars.

⁷ Augustus (63 BC-14 AD) was the first Emperor of the Roman Empire who initiated the *Pax Romana*.

⁸ Virgil (70-19 BC) was a Roman poet who authored the *Aeneid*, which was the national epic of Classical Rome.

The Aryan Doctrine of Combat and Victory

Originally published as *Die arische Lehre von Kampf und Sieg* (Vienna: Anton Schroll & Co., 1941), comprising the text of the address given by Evola in German at the Abteilung für Kulturwissenschaft des Kaisers Wilhelm-Instituts conference, at the Palazzo Zuccari in Rome on 7 December 1940.

The decline of the modern West, according to the view of a famous critic of civilisation,¹ clearly possesses two salient characteristics: in the first place the pathological development of activity for its own sake; in the second place contempt for the values of knowledge and contemplation.

By knowledge this critic does not mean rationalism, intellectualism or the vain games of men of letters – nor by contemplation does he mean cutting oneself off from the world, renunciation or a misunderstood form of monastic detachment. Knowledge and contemplation represent for him, rather, the most normal and appropriate forms of participation of man in supernatural, superhuman and supra-rational reality. Notwithstanding this clarification, his view involves what is, to us, an unacceptable presupposition. In fact, he has already tacitly implied that every act in the material domain is limiting and that the highest spiritual sphere is accessible only in ways different from those of action.

In this premise the influence of a vision of life is clearly recognisable which, in its essence, remains strange to the spirit of the Aryan race, even if it is so embedded in the thought of the Christianised West that it can even be found revived in the imperial conception of Dante.² The

¹ The critic referred to is probably René Guénon.

² Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) is regarded as the greatest writer in the Italian language and was the author of *The Divine Comedy*. Here, Evola is likely referring to

opposition between action and contemplation, however, was unknown to the ancient Aryans. Action and contemplation were not regarded as the two terms of an opposition. They designated merely two distinct paths to the same spiritual realisation. In other words, it was thought that man could overcome the conditioning of individuality and participate in the supernatural reality by means of contemplation or, equally, by means of action.

Starting from this conception we must therefore evaluate the character of the decline of Western civilisation in a different way. The tradition of action is in the nature of the Aryan-Western races. This tradition has, however, undergone a progressive deviation. The modern West has thus come to know and honour only a secularised and materialised form of action, devoid of any point of contact with transcendence – a desecrated activity, which has necessarily degenerated fatally into fever and mania and become action for the sake of action, merely producing simple mechanical effects conditioned by time. In the modern world ascetic and authentically contemplative values cannot be drawn into correspondence with such degenerate action either, but only a confused culture and a lifeless and conventional faith. This is the point of reference for our analysis of the situation.

If the watchword for any current movement of renewal is 'return to the origins' then recovering awareness of the ancient Aryan conception of action must be considered an essential task. This conception must operate with transformative effectiveness, evoking vital forces in the new man, aware of his race. Today, we ourselves propose to attempt a general survey of the speculative universe of the ancient Aryans in order to provide new evidence for some fundamental elements of our common tradition, with particular relevance to the meaning of combat, war and victory.

* * *

For the ancient Aryan war had the general meaning of a perpetual fight between metaphysical powers. On the one hand there was the Olympian principle of light, the uranic and solar reality; on the other hand, brute violence, the titanic-telluric, barbaric element in the classi-

Dante's work of political philosophy, *Monarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

cal sense, the feminine-demonic substance. The motif of this metaphysical fight resurfaces continually through countless forms of myth in all traditions of Aryan origin. Any fight, in the material sense, was experienced with greater or lesser awareness as an episode in that antithesis. But the Aryan race considered itself to be the army of the Olympian principle: accordingly, it is necessary to restore this conception among Aryans, as being the justification, or the highest consecration, of any hegemonic aspiration, but also of the very idea of empire, whose anti-secular character is basically very obvious.

To the traditionally based world view, all apparent realities are symbolic. This is therefore true of war as well, as is seen from the subjective and interior point of view. War and the Path of God are thus merged into a single entity.

The significant testimonies found within the Nordic-German traditions regarding this are well-known. It is necessary to note, however, that these traditions, in the terms in which they have reached us, have become fragmented and jumbled up, or constitute materialistic residues of higher, primordial Aryan traditions, often decayed to the level of popular superstitions. This consideration does not prevent us from establishing some essential motifs.

First of all, as is well-known, Valhalla is the centre of celestial immortality, reserved mainly for heroes fallen on the battlefield. The lord of this place, Odin-Wotan, is presented to us in the *Ynglingasaga* as having shown to the heroes the path which leads to the place of the gods, where immortal life flourishes. According to this tradition no sacrifice or cult is more appreciated by the supreme god, and none produces richer fruits, than that sacrifice which one offers as one falls fighting on the battlefield. In addition to this, behind the confused popular representation of the *Wildes Heer*³ this meaning is hidden: through the warriors who, falling, offer a sacrifice to Odin the power is increased which this god needs for the ultimate battle against the *Ragna-rökkr*, that is, the 'darkening of the divine', which has threatened the world since ancient times. This illustrates clearly the Aryan motif of the metaphysical struggle. In the *Edda*, it is said that 'no matter how great the number of the heroes gathered in Valhalla they will never be too many for when

³ German: 'wild host'. This is a concept present in many ancient cultures in which a group of hunters on horseback can be seen pursuing their prey across the sky. In some versions the hunters are believed to be the souls of dead warriors being led by the gods.

the Wolf comes'. The 'Wolf' here is the symbol of dark and wild powers which the world of the Aesir had managed to chain and subdue.

The Aryo-Iranian conception of Mithra, the 'sleepless warrior', who at the head of the Fravashi of his faithful wages battle against the enemies of the Aryan God of Light is completely analogous. We will soon deal with the Fravashi and their correspondence with the Valkyries of the Nordic tradition. For now, we would like to explain the general meaning of the 'holy war' by means of other, concordant testimonies.

It should not cause surprise if we refer in the first place to the Muslim tradition. Here, the Muslim tradition serves as transmitter of the Aryo-Iranian tradition. The idea of 'holy war' – at least as far as the elements that we are considering are concerned – reached the Arabian tribes via the world of Persian speculation. It was, therefore, a late re-birth of a primordial Aryan heritage, and seen from this perspective we can certainly adopt it.

Having said that, in the tradition in question two 'holy wars' are distinguished: the 'greater holy war' and the 'lesser holy war'. The distinction is based on a saying of the Prophet, who, when he got back from a military expedition, said, 'I return now from the lesser to the greater war'.⁴

In this respect the greater holy war belongs to the spiritual order. The lesser holy war, in contrast, is the physical struggle, the material war, fought in the outer world. The greater holy war is the struggle of man against the enemies he bears in himself. More precisely, it is the fight of the supernatural element, innate in man, against everything which is instinctual, passionate, chaotic and subject to the forces of nature. This is also the idea that reveals itself in a text of the ancient Aryan warrior wisdom, the *Bhagavad-Gita*: 'Thus knowing oneself to be transcendental to the material senses, mind and intelligence, O mighty-armed Arjuna, one should steady the mind by deliberate spiritual intelligence and thus – by spiritual strength – conquer this insatiable enemy known as lust' (3:43).

The necessary condition for the inner work of liberation is that this enemy is destroyed once and for all. In the context of a heroic tradition the lesser holy war – that is, external combat – serves only as something by means of which the greater holy war is achieved. For this reason 'holy war' and 'Path of God' are often treated as synonymous in the

⁴ All references to Islamic scriptures and the *Bhagavad-Gita* in this essay are identical to those contained in 'The Greater War and the Lesser War' and 'Metaphysics of War'.

texts. Thus we read in the *Qur'an*: 'So let those who sell the life of this world for the Next World fight in the Way of Allah. If someone fights in the Way of Allah, whether he is killed or is victorious, We will pay him an immense reward' (4:74). And further: 'As for those who fight in the Way of Allah, He will not let their actions go astray. He will guide them and better their condition and He will admit them into the Garden which He has made known to them' (47:4-6).

This is an allusion to physical death in war, which corresponds perfectly to the so-called *mors triumphalis* – 'triumphant death' – of the Classical traditions. However, the same doctrine can also be interpreted in a symbolic sense. The one who, in the 'lesser holy war', has been able to live a 'greater holy war' has created within himself a force which puts him in a position to overcome the crisis of death. Even without getting killed physically, through the asceticism of action and combat, one can experience death, one can win inwardly and realise 'more-than-life'. In the esoteric respect, as a matter of fact, 'paradise', 'the celestial realm' and analogous expressions are nothing but symbolic representations – concocted for the people – of transcendent states of consciousness on a higher plane than life and death.

These considerations should allow us to discern the same contents and meanings, under the outer garment of Christianity, which the Nordic-Western heroic tradition was forced to wear during the Crusades in order to be able to manifest itself in the external world. In the ideology of the Crusade the liberation of the Temple and the conquest of the 'Holy Land' had points of contact – much more numerous than one is generally inclined to believe – with the Nordic-Aryan tradition, which refers to the mystical Asgard, the remote land of the Aesir and heroes, where death does not reign and the inhabitants enjoy immortal life and supernatural peace. Holy war appeared as an integrally spiritual war, so much so that it could be compared literally by preachers to 'a bathing which is almost like the fire of purgatory, but before death'.

Saint Bernard declared to the Templars, 'It is a glory for you never to leave the battle [unless] covered with laurels. But it is an even greater glory to earn on the battlefield an immortal crown ...'

The 'absolute glory' – attributed to the Lord who is above, in the skies – *in excelsis Deo*⁵ – is ordained also for the Crusader. Against this background Jerusalem, the coveted goal of the 'lesser holy war', could

⁵ Latin: 'God in the highest'.

be seen in the twofold aspect of terrestrial city and celestial city and the Crusade proved to be the prelude to a true fulfilment of immortality.

The oscillating military vicissitudes of the Crusades provoked bafflement, initial confusion and even a wavering of faith. But later their sole effect was to purify the idea of holy war from every residue of materiality. The ill-fated outcome of a Crusade came to be compared to virtue persecuted by misfortune, a virtue whose value can be judged and rewarded only in the light of a supra-terrestrial life. Beyond victory or defeat the judgement of value focused on the spiritual dimension of action. Thus, the holy war was worthwhile for its own sake, irrespective of its visible results, as a means to reach a supra-personal realisation through the active sacrifice of the human element.

The same teaching appears, elevated to a metaphysical plane of expression, in a famous Hindu-Aryan text – the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The humanitarian compassion and the emotions which hold the warrior Arjuna back from fighting against the enemy are characterised by the god as ‘impurities...not at all befitting a man who knows the value of life. They lead not to higher planets but to infamy’ (2:2).

Instead the god promises the following: ‘[E]ither you will be killed on the battlefield and attain the heavenly planets, or you will conquer and enjoy the earthly kingdom. Therefore, get up with determination and fight’ (2:37).

The inner disposition to transmute the lesser holy war into the greater holy war is clearly described in the following terms: ‘Thus knowing oneself to be transcendental to the material senses, mind and intelligence, O mighty-armed Arjuna, one should steady the mind by deliberate spiritual intelligence and thus – by spiritual strength – conquer this insatiable enemy known as lust’ (3:43).

Equally clear expressions assert the purity of this action: it must be wanted for itself, beyond every material aim, beyond every passion and every human impulse: ‘Do thou fight for the sake of fighting, without considering happiness or distress, loss or gain, victory or defeat – and by so doing you shall never incur sin’ (2:38).

As a further metaphysical foundation the god enlightens his listener on the difference between absolute spirit, which is indestructible, and the corporeal and human elements, which possess only illusory existence. On the one hand Arjuna becomes aware of the metaphysical unreality of what one can lose or cause others to lose, i.e., the ephemeral life and the mortal body. On the other hand Arjuna is led to experience the manifestation of the divine as a power which sweeps the one who

experiences it away into irresistible absoluteness. Compared to this force any conditioned form of existence appears as a mere negation. When this negation is itself continuously and actively negated, that is, when every limited form of existence is overwhelmed or destroyed in combat, this force becomes terrifyingly evident. It is in these terms that the energy suitable to provoke the heroic transformation of the individual can be properly defined. To the extent that he is able to act in the purity and absoluteness which we have indicated the warrior breaks the chains of the human, evokes the divine as metaphysical force of destruction of the finite, and attracts this force effectively into himself, finding in it his illumination and liberation. The evocative watchword of another text, belonging to the same tradition, is appropriate here: 'Life - like a bow; the mind - like the arrow; the target to pierce - the supreme spirit; to join mind to spirit as the shot arrow hits its target.'

It is highly significant that the *Bhagavad-Gita* presents these teachings, which explain how the higher form of the metaphysical realisation of combat and heroism should be understood as referring to a primordial Aryan heritage of a solar nature. These teachings were in fact given by 'The Sun' to the primordial legislator of the Aryans, Manu, and subsequently maintained by a sacred dynasty of kings. In the course of centuries they came to be lost and were therefore newly revealed by the divinity, not to a priest, but to a representative of the warrior nobility, Arjuna.

* * *

What we have discussed so far allows us to understand also the intimate content of another group of classical and Nordic traditions. We must start with a simple observation: in these traditions, certain specific symbolic images appear exceptionally often: that of the soul as demon, double, genius and the like; those of the Dionysian⁶ entities and the goddess of death; and, finally, that of a goddess of victory, who often appears also as goddess of battle.

To understand these we should first clarify the meaning of the image of the soul as demon, genius or double. The man of Classical Antiquity symbolised in the demon or double a deep force, which is the life of life, so to speak, insofar as it rules over all the corporeal and animic

⁶ Dionysus was the Greek god of ecstasy and intoxication.

events which ordinary consciousness does not reach, but which, however, are determinative of the contingent existence and destiny of the individual. A close relationship was believed to exist between this entity and the mystical powers of race and blood. The demon seems in many aspects to be similar to the *lares*, the mystical entities of a stock or of a progeny, of which Macrobius,⁷ for example, asserts: 'The gods are those who keep us alive – they feed our body and guide our soul.' It can be said that there is a relationship between the demon and ordinary consciousness analogous to that which exists between the individuating principle and the individuated principle. The former is, according to the teaching of the ancients, a supra-individual force, superior, therefore, to birth and death. The latter, i.e., individuated consciousness, conditioned by the body and the outer world, is destined as a rule to dissolution or to an ephemeral and indistinct survival. In the Nordic tradition, the image of the Valkyrie has more or less the same meaning as that of the demon in Classical Antiquity. In many texts the image of the Valkyrie merges with that of the *fylgja*, that is, a spiritual entity at work in man, to whose power the destiny of man is subject. And as *kynfylgja* the Valkyrie is – like the *lares* of ancient Rome – the mystical power of the blood. The same thing applies to the Fravashi of the Aryo-Iranian tradition. The Fravashi, a famous Orientalist explains, 'is the intimate power of any human being, it is what keeps him alive and sees to it that he is born and exists'.

At the same time the Fravashi are, like Roman *lares*, related to the primordial powers of a stock, and are, like the Valkyries, terrifying goddesses of war, dispensers of fortune and victory.

This is the first connection we wish to examine. This mysterious power, which is the deep soul of the race and the transcendent factor at work in the individual, what can it have in common with the goddess of war? To understand this point correctly, it is necessary to remember that ancient Indo-Europeans had, so to speak, an aristocratic and differentiated conception of immortality. Not all escape the dissolution of the 'I' into that lemuric residuum of which Hades and Niflheim⁸ were ancient symbolic representations. Immortality is the privilege of the few,

⁷ Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius (395-423), a Roman Neoplatonist philosopher. His primary work is the *Saturnalia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).

⁸ In Norse mythology Niflheim was the location of Hel, which is where the souls of those who die unheroic deaths were sent.

and, according to the Aryan conception, specifically the privilege of heroes. Continuing to live – not as a shadow, but as a demigod – is reserved to those which a special spiritual action has elevated from the one nature to the other. Here, we unfortunately cannot prove *in extenso* the following affirmation: from the operative standpoint this spiritual action consisted of the transformation of the individual ‘I’ from the form of ordinary human consciousness, which remains circumscribed and individuated, into a deep, supra-individual and individuating power, which exists beyond birth and death, a power to which we have said the notion of the ‘demon’ corresponds.⁹

The demon is, however, beyond all the finite forms in which it manifests itself, and this not only because it represents the primordial power of an entire stock, but also with respect to intensity. Consequently, the abrupt passage from ordinary consciousness to the power symbolised by the demon causes a destructive crisis, a sort of rupture, as a result of the tension of a potential too strong for the human circuit. Let us suppose therefore the case in which, in completely exceptional conditions, the demon can itself, so to speak, burst out in the individual, making him feel its destroying transcendence: in this case a sort of living and active experience of death would be aroused. The second connection, that is, the reason why in the mythical representations of Antiquity the image of the double or demon has been able to merge with that of the divinity of death, therefore becomes clear. In the Nordic tradition the warrior sees his Valkyrie as he dies or he experiences a mortal danger.

Let us go further. In religious asceticism mortification, the renunciation of the ‘I’ and the impulse to give oneself up to God, are the preferred means by which one attempts to cause the aforementioned crisis and to overcome it effectively. Expressions like ‘mystical death’ or ‘dark night of the soul’,¹⁰ etc., which indicate this condition, are well-known. As opposed to this, in the context of a heroic tradition the active impulse, the Dionysian unleashing of the element of action, is the preferred means to the same end. At the lowest degree of the corresponding phenomenology we observe, for example, dance when employed as a sacred technique to evoke and employ, through the ecstasy of the soul,

⁹ For a more precise understanding of the general conception of life in which the teachings mentioned here are based, we refer the reader to our *Revolt*. (Note added by Evola).

¹⁰ This is the title of a work by St. John of the Cross.

forces which reside in its depths. Another life arises within the life of the individual when freed by the Dionysian rhythm, almost like the emergence of his own abysmal root. The Wildes Heer, the Furies,¹¹ the Erynnyes and other analogous spiritual natures are symbolic representations of this force. They therefore correspond to a manifestation of the demon in its terrifying and active transcendence. Sacred games represent a higher level of this process. A still higher level is that of war. In this way we are led back again to the ancient Aryan conception of combat and warrior asceticism.

The possibility of some such supra-normal experience was acknowledged to reside at the peak of danger and of heroic combat. The Latin word *ludere* (to play, to fight) already seems to contain the idea of resolving (Bruckmann).¹² This is one of the many references to the property, innate to combat, of freeing one from individual limitation and of bringing to emergence free forces which are latent in the depths. The third analogy draws its origin and foundation from this: the demon, the *lares*, the individuating 'I', etc., are identical not only to the Furies, the Erynnyes, and other unleashed Dionysian natures, which themselves have numerous features in common with the goddess of death; they correspond also to the virgins who guide the attacker in battle, the Valkyries and the Fravashi. The Fravashi, for example, are referred to in the texts as 'the terrifying, the omnipotent', 'those who storm and grant victory to the one who invokes them' – or, to say it better, to the one who evokes them within himself.

It is a short step from here to our final analogy. The same warlike entities assume finally in Aryan traditions the features of goddesses of victory, a metamorphosis which marks precisely the happy fulfilment of the inner experiences in question. Just like the demon or double they signify a deep and supra-individual power, which remains in its latent state during ordinary consciousness; just as the Furies and the Erynnyes reflect a special manifestation of demonic eruptions and outbursts – and the goddesses of death, Valkyries, *fravashi*, etc. refer to the same situations, insofar as these are made possible by means of heroic combat – so the goddess of victory is the expression of the triumph of

¹¹ In Roman mythology, the Furies were female deities who took revenge on the living on behalf of dead people who had been wronged. Their name in Greek mythology was the Erynnyes.

¹² Heinz Bruckmann, a German scholar of Latin.

the 'I' over this power. It marks the successful impulsion towards a condition situated beyond the danger innate in the ecstasy and the sub-personal forms of destruction, a danger always waiting in ambush behind the frenetic moment of Dionysian action and of heroic action itself. What finds expression in this representation of mythical consciousness is therefore the impulse towards a spiritual, truly supra-personal state, which makes free, immortal, inwardly indestructible – which, as it is said, 'makes, of the two, one' (the two elements of the human essence).

Let us come now to the overall meaning of these ancient heroic traditions, that is, to the mystical conception of victory. The fundamental idea was that there was an effective correspondence between the physical and the metaphysical, between the visible and the invisible; a correspondence whereby the works of the spirit manifested supra-individual features and were expressed through real operations and facts. From this presupposition, a spiritual realisation was pre-ordained as the secret spirit of certain warlike enterprises of which concrete victory would be the crown. Accordingly, the material, military dimension of victory was regarded as the correlative of a spiritual fact, which brought the victory about in accordance with the necessary relationship between the interior and exterior worlds. Victory, then, appears as the outward and visible sign of a consecration and a mystical rebirth achieved at the same point. The Furies and death, whom the warrior has faced materially on the battlefield, contested spiritually within him in the form of a threatening eruption of the primordial forces of his being. As he triumphs over these, victory is his.

It thus becomes clear why, in the traditional world, victory assumed a sacred meaning. Thus, the chieftain, acclaimed on the battlefield, provided a living experience of the presence of a mystical power which transfigured him. The deep meaning of the other-worldly character bursting out in the glory and the 'divinity' of the victor – the fact that, in ancient Rome, the celebration of the triumph assumed features much more sacred than military – becomes therefore comprehensible. The recurrent symbolism in ancient Aryan traditions of victories, Valkyries and analogous entities which guide the soul of the warrior to the 'sky', is revealed to us in a completely different light now, as does the myth of the victorious hero, such as the Dorian Hercules, who obtains the crown which makes him share in Olympian immortality from Nike, the 'goddess of victory'. The extent to which the perspective which wants to see only 'poetry', rhetoric and fables in all this is distorted and superficial becomes clear now.

Mystical theology teaches that the beatifying spiritual vision is achieved in glory, and Christian iconography puts the aureole of glory around the heads of saints and of martyrs. All this indicates a heritage, albeit faded, of our more elevated heroic tradition. The Aryo-Iranian tradition already knew, in fact, glory – *hvareno* – understood as celestial fire, a glory which comes down on kings and chiefs, renders them immortal and in victory testifies for them. And, in classical Antiquity, the radiating royal crown symbolised glory precisely as solar and celestial fire. In the Aryan world light, solar splendour, glory, victory, divine royalty are images and notions which appear in the tightest conjunction, not in the sense of abstractions and inventions of man, but rather with the meaning of latent potentialities and absolutely real actualised capacities. In such context the mystical doctrine of fight and victory represents for us a luminous apex of our common tradition of action.

* * *

Today this tradition speaks to us in a way which is still comprehensible – provided, of course, that we renounce its outer and contingent modalities of manifestation. If we want to go beyond an exhausted, battered spirituality, built upon speculative abstractions and pietistic feelings, and at the same time to go beyond the materialistic degeneration of action, what better points of reference can be found today than the aforementioned ideals of ancient Aryan man?

But there is more. In the West spiritual and material tensions have become entangled to such a degree in recent years that they can only be resolved through combat. With the present war an age goes towards its end and forces are gaining ground which can no longer be dominated by abstract ideas, universalistic principles or myths conceived as mere irrationalities, and which do not in themselves provide the basis for a new civilisation. A far deeper and far more essential form of action is now necessary so that, beyond the ruins of a subverted and condemned world, a new age breaks through for Europe.

In this perspective a lot will depend on the way in which the individual of today is able to give shape to the living experience of combat: that is, on whether he is in a position to assume heroism and sacrifice as catharsis, and as a means of liberation and of inner awakening. This work of our combatants – inner, invisible, far from gestures and grandiloquences – will have a decisive character not only for the conclusion,

victorious and definitive, of the events of this stormy period, but also for the configuration and the attribution of the sense of the Order which will rise from victory. Combat is necessary to awaken and temper that force which, beyond onslaughts, blood and danger, will favour a new creation with a new splendour and a powerful peace.

For this reason it is on the battlefield that pure action must be learned again today: action not only in the sense of virile asceticism, but also in the sense of purification and of path towards higher forms of life, forms valid in themselves and for themselves – this means precisely a return to ancient Aryan-Western tradition. From remote times, this evocative watchword still echoes down to us: ‘Life – like a bow; the mind – like the arrow; the target to pierce – the supreme spirit; to join mind to spirit as the shot arrow hits its target.’

The one who still experiences combat today, in the sense of this acknowledgement of this profession, will remain standing while others will collapse – and his will be an invincible force. This new man will overcome within himself any drama, any dusk, any chaos, forming, with the advent of the new times, the principle of a new development. According to the ancient Aryan tradition such heroism of the best men can assume a real evocative function, that is, it can re-establish the contact, lost for centuries, between world and supra-world. Then the meaning of combat will be, not horrible slaughter, nor desolate destiny conditioned by the will-to-power alone, but a test of the good reason and divine vocation of a stock. Then the meaning of peace will not be renewed drowning in colourless bourgeois everyday life, nor the lack of the spiritual tension found in combat, but the fullness of the tension itself.

‘The blood of Heroes is closer to the Lord than the ink of scholars and the prayers of the pious.’

The traditional conception is also based on the presupposition that, far more than individuals, the mystical primordial powers of the race are at work in ‘holy war’. These powers of the origins are those which create worldwide empires and bring to men ‘victorious peace’.

The Meaning of the Warrior Element for the New Europe

Originally published in March 1941 as
'Sul significato dell'elemento guerriero
per la nuova Europa' in *La Vita Italiana*.

One of the main oppositions which the First World War brought to light concerns the relationship between the state and the military element. What appeared was a characteristic antithesis, which in reality reflected not so much two different groups of people as two different ages, two mentalities and two different conceptions of 'civilisation'.

On one hand one found the idea that the military and, more generally, the warrior element is merely subordinate and instrumental to the state. The normal and correct rulers of the state, according to this view, are what one might call the 'civil' or 'bourgeois' element. This 'bourgeois' element engages in professional politics and – to use a well-known expression – when politics must be continued by other means,¹ the military forces are employed. Under these conditions the military element is not expected to exercise any particular influence on politics or on the life in society in general. It is acknowledged, certainly, that the military element has its own ethics and values. However, this view considers it undesirable, and even absurd, to apply these ethics and values to the entire normal life of the nation. The view in question is in fact

¹ 'We see, therefore, that War is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means.' A famous quotation from Claus von Clausewitz (1780-1831), a Prussian military theorist. The quotation can be found in his book *On War* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 42.

closely related to the democratic, *illuminé*² and liberal belief that true civilisation does not have anything to do with that sad necessity which is war, but that its foundation, rather than the warlike virtues, is 'the progress of the arts and sciences' and the formation of social life according to the 'immortal principles'. That is why, in such a society, one should speak of a 'soldier' element rather than a true warrior element. In fact, etymologically the word 'soldier' refers to troops which fight for a salary or a fee in the service of a class which does not itself wage war. This is, more or less, the meaning which, in spite of obligatory conscription, the military element has in liberal and democratic-bourgeois States. These States use it to resolve serious disputes on the international plane more or less in the same way as, in the domestic order, they use the police.

Over and against this view there is the other according to which the military element permeates the political, and also the ethical, order. Military values here are authentic warrior values and have a fundamental part in the general ideal of an ethical formation of life; an ideal valid also, therefore, beyond the strictly military plane and periods of war. The result is a limitation of the civilian bourgeoisie, politically, and of the bourgeois spirit in general in all sectors of social life. True civilisation is conceived of here in virile, active and heroic terms: and it is on this basis that the elements which define all human greatness, and the real rights of the peoples, are understood.

It hardly needs to be said that, in the 1914-1918 World War, the former ideology was proper to the Allies and above all to the western and Atlantic democracies, while the latter was essentially represented by the Central Powers. According to a well-known Masonic watchword – which we have often recalled here – that war was fought as a sort of great crusade of worldwide democracy³ against 'militarism' and 'Prussianism', which, to those 'imperialist' nations, represented 'obscurantist' residues within 'developed' Europe.

This expression contains, however, the truth which we pointed out at the beginning, namely that the opposition was not only between two groups of peoples but also between two ages – even though, naturally, at the time and subjectively things appeared in a very different manner. What were called in the Masonic jargon 'anachronistic residues' meant

² French: 'enlightened'.

³ When the United States entered the war in 1917, President Woodrow Wilson characterised it as a 'crusade for democracy'.

really the survival of values peculiar to the whole of traditional, warlike, virile and Aryan Europe, while the values of the 'developed world' did not mean anything but the ethical and spiritual decline of the West. Moreover, we know better now what 'imperialists' the hypocritical exponents of this latter world were in their own peculiar way: theirs was, to be exact, the imperialism of the bourgeoisie and the merchants who wanted to enjoy undisturbed the benefits of peace, which was to be imposed and preserved, not so much by their own military forces as by forces enlisted from all parts of the world and paid for this purpose.

With the peace treaties and the developments of the post-war period this has become more and more evident. The function of the military element deteriorated into that of a sort of international police force – or, rather than really 'international', a police force organised by a certain group of nations to impose, against the will of the others and for their own profit, a given actual situation: since this was, and is, what 'the defence of peace' and 'the rights of nations' really mean. The decline of all feelings of warrior-like pride and honour was subsequently demonstrated by the fact that all sorts of ignoble means were developed to secure the desired results without even having to resort to this army degraded to the status of international police: systems of sanctions, economic blockades, national boycotts, *etc.*

With the most recent international developments which have led to the loss of authority of the League of Nations and, finally, to the current war, an effective reversal of values, not only on the political plane but also on the ethical one and in general of life-view as a whole, has become clearly visible. The current battle is not so much against a particular people but rather against a particular idea, which is more or less the same as the one supported by the Allies in the previous war. That war was intended to consolidate 'democratic imperialism' against any dangerous troublemakers; the new war is intended to mark the end of this 'imperialism' and of several myths which serve it as 'alibis', and to create the preconditions for a new age in which warrior ethics are to serve as the basis for the civilisation of the collective of European peoples. In this sense the present war can be called a restorative war. It restores to their original standing the ideals and the views of life and right which are central to the original traditions of the Aryan peoples – above all the Aryo-Roman and Nordic-Aryan ones – so central that, when they decayed or were abandoned, this led inevitably to the fall of each of those peoples and power passed into the hands of inferior elements, both racially and spiritually.

It is, however, advisable that misunderstandings do not arise about the meaning which the warrior element will have in the new Europe, focusing on the word 'militarism', similar to those already deliberately fostered – with full knowledge of the facts – by the democratic adversaries. It is not a matter of confining Europe to barracks, nor of defining a wild will-to-power as *ultima ratio*⁴ or arriving at an obscurely tragic and irrational conception of life.

Thus, in the first place it is necessary to become well aware that specifically warrior values, in the military context, are only representations of a reality which, in itself, can have a higher, not merely ethical, but even metaphysical meaning. Here we shall not repeat what we have already had the opportunity to discuss at length elsewhere:⁵ we will only recall that ancient Aryan humanity habitually conceived of life as a perpetual battle between metaphysical powers, on the one hand the uranic forces of light and order, on the other hand the dark forces of chaos and matter. This battle, for the ancient Aryan, was fought and won both in the outer and in the inner world. And it was the exterior battle which reflected the battle to be fought in oneself, which was considered as the truly just war: the battle against those forces and peoples of the outer world which possessed the same character as the powers in our inner being which must be placed under subjection and domination until the accomplishment of a *pax triumphalis*.⁶

What follows from this is an interrelation of the true warrior-like or heroic ethos with a certain inner discipline and a certain superiority, an interrelation which, in one form or another, always appears in all our best traditions. That is why only one who is short-sighted or prejudiced can believe that the unavoidable consequence of putting forward a warrior-like vision of the world and of maintaining that the new Europe will have to be formed under the sign of the warrior spirit must be a chaos

⁴ Latin: 'the last resort'.

⁵ Cf. above all our work *Revolt Against the Modern World*, Hoepli, Milan 1934. (Note added by Evola.)

⁶ Even in the Christian doctrine of Saint Augustine, this view on the just war clearly remains: '*Proficientes autem nondumque perfecti ira [to fight] possunt, ut bonus quisque ex ea parte pugnet contra alterum, qua etiam contra semet ipsum; et in uno quippe homine caro concupiscit adversus spiritum et spiritus adversus carnem*' (*De Civ.*, XV, 5). ['But with the good, good men, or at least perfectly good men, cannot war; though, while only going on towards perfection, they war to this extent, that every good man resists others in those points in which he resists himself. And in each individual "the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh".' From *St. Augustin's City of God and Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988).] (Note added by Evola.)

of unleashed forces and instincts. The true warrior ideal implies not only force and physical training but also a calm, controlled and conscious formation of the inner being and the personality. Love for distance and order, the ability to subordinate one's individualistic and passionate element to principles, the ability to place action and work above mere personhood, a feeling of dignity devoid of vanity are features of the true warrior spirit as essential as those which refer to actual combat: so that, from a higher point of view, combat itself can be worthwhile not so much for its immediate material results as for evidence of these qualities, which have a self-evident constructive value and can amount to elements of a special 'style', not only in a given area of the nation devoted specifically to soldiering, but also in a whole people and even beyond the frontiers of a given people.

This last point must be especially stressed, precisely in relation to our fight for a new Europe and a new European civilisation. The relation which, according to the aforementioned Aryan and traditional view, exists between inner struggle and 'just war' is useful, in addition, in preventing the equivocal irrationalism of a tragic and irrational vision of the world, and also allows one to go beyond a certain hardening, devoid of light, found in some subordinate aspects of the purely military style. According to the highest view, which is resurfacing today in the staunchest and most potent forces of our peoples, warrior-like discipline and combat are connected with a certain 'transfiguration' and participation in an effective 'spirituality'. This is how an idea of 'peace', which has nothing to do with the materialistic, democratic-bourgeois conception is outlined: it is a peace which is not the cessation of the spiritual tension at work in combat and in warrior-like asceticism, but rather a sort of calm and powerful fulfilment of it.

Fundamentally, it is here that the irreducible antithesis between the two different conceptions of 'civilisation' appears. There is not really 'imperialist materialism' and 'warlike brutality', on the one hand, and, on the other, 'love for culture' and interest in 'spiritual values'. Rather, there are spiritual values of a given type and of a properly Aryan origin, which oppose a different, intellectualistic, 'humanistic' and bourgeois conception of these. It is useless to delude ourselves that a warrior civilisation can have the same consideration for the so-called 'world of sciences and arts' as that which they enjoyed in the previous age of liberalism and of the Nineteenth-century bourgeoisie. They may retain their own significance but in a subordinate manner, because they

represent not what is essential, but the accessory. The main thing consists instead in a certain inner style, a certain formation of the mind and character, a simplicity, clarity and harshness, a directly experienced meaning of existence, without expressionisms, without sentimentalisms, a pleasure for commanding, obeying, acting, conquering and overcoming oneself.

That the world of 'intellectuals' considers all this as 'unspiritual' and almost barbaric is natural, but it has no significance. A very different seriousness and depth from the point of view of which the 'culture' of the bourgeois world appears itself as a reign of worms, of forms without life and without force, belongs to the 'warrior' world. It will only be in a subsequent period when the new type of European is sufficiently formed that a new 'culture', less vain, less 'humanist', can be expected to reflect something of the new style.

Today it is very important to become aware of these aspects of the warrior spirit so that, in forming the bases of the future agreement and common civilisation of the European peoples, abstract and outdated ideas are not again brought into play. It is only by working from the energies which in the test of the fire of combat decide the freedom, dignity and mission of the peoples that true understanding, collaboration and unity of civilisation can be forged. And as these energies have little to do with 'culture' as understood by the 'intellectuals' and the 'humanists' to which they cannot be expected to rededicate themselves, so every abstract conception of right, all impersonal regulation of the relations between the various human groups and between the various States will appear intolerable to them. Here, another fundamental contribution which the warrior spirit can offer to the form and sense of a new European order becomes clear. Warrior spirit is characterised by direct, clear and loyal relations, based on fidelity and honour and a sound instinct for the various dignities, which it can well distinguish: it opposes everything which is impersonal and trivial. In every civilisation based on warrior spirit all order depends on these elements, not on legal paragraphs and abstract 'positivist' norms. And these are also the elements which can organise the forces, aroused by the experience of combat and consecrated by victory, into a new unity. That is why, in a certain sense, the type of warrior organisation which was peculiar to some aspects of the feudal Roman-Germanic civilisation can give us an idea of what, perhaps, will work, in an adapted form, for the new Europe for which today we fight. In dealing with relationships, not only man-to-man, but also State-to-State and race-to-race, it is necessary to be able to conceive

again of that obedience which does not humiliate but exalts, that command or leadership which commits one to superiority and a precise responsibility. Instead of the legislation of an abstract 'international law' comprising peoples of any and all sorts, an organic right of European peoples based on these direct relationships must come about.

*Suum cuique.*⁷ This Aryan and Roman principle defines the true concept of justice on the international plane as on the personal and is intimately connected to the warrior vision of life: everyone must have a precise sense of their natural and legitimate place in a well-articulated hierarchical whole, must feel pride in this place and adapt themselves to it perfectly. To this end, in fact, the 'ascetic' element also comprised in the warrior spirit will have a particular importance. To realise a new European order, various conditions are necessary: but there is no doubt that in the first place must be the 'asceticism' inherent in warrior discipline: the ability to see reality, suppressing every particularistic haughtiness, every irrational affection, every ephemeral pride; scorn for comfortable life and for all materialistic ideas of well-being; a style of simplicity, audacity and conscious force, in the common effort, on all planes.

⁷ Latin: 'to each his own'.

Varieties of Heroism

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A point to which we have often drawn the attention of our readers is that examination of the topic of 'inner race' is worthwhile, however incomplete it may remain at this stage, because of the fact that, rather than just noting the occurrence or non-occurrence of struggle and death among a people, it is necessary to consider their distinct 'style' and attitude regarding these phenomena and the distinct meanings which they may give to struggle and heroic sacrifice at any particular time. In fact, at least in general terms, we can speak of a scale along which individual nations may be placed according to how the value of human life is measured by them.

The vicissitudes of this war have exposed contrasts in this respect, which we would like to discuss briefly here. We shall limit ourselves essentially to the extreme cases, represented, respectively, by Russia and Japan.

Bolshevik Sub-Personhood

It is now well known that Soviet Russia's conduct of war does not attach the slightest importance to human life or to humanity as such. For them the combatants are nothing but 'human material' in the most brutal sense of this sinister expression – a sense which, unfortunately, has now become widespread in a certain sort of military literature – a material to which no particular attention need be given and which, therefore, they need not hesitate to sacrifice in the most pitiless way, providing they have an adequate supply of it to hand. In general, as recent events have shown, the Russian can always face death readily because of a sort of innate, dark fatalism, and human life has been cheap

for a long time in Russia. However, in the current use of the Russian soldier as the rawest 'human fodder' we see also a logical consequence of Bolshevik thought, which has the most radical contempt for all values derived from the idea of personhood and intends to free the individual from this idea, which it regards as superstition, and from the 'bourgeois prejudice' of the 'I' and the 'mine', in order to reduce him to the status of a mechanical member of a collective whole, which is the only thing which is regarded as important.

From these facts the possibility of a form of sacrifice and heroism which we would call 'telluric' and sub-personal, under the sign of the collective, omnipotent and faceless man, becomes apparent. The death of the bolshevised man on the battlefield represents, thus, the logical culmination of the process of depersonalisation, and of the destruction of every qualitative and personal value, which underlay the Bolshevik ideal of 'civilisation' all along. Here, what Erich Maria Remarque had tendentiously proposed in a book which became notorious as the comprehensive meaning of war can be accurately grasped: the tragic irrelevance of the individual in a situation where pure instinctuality, unleashed elemental forces and sub-personal impulses gain ascendancy over all conceivable values and ideals. Indeed, the tragic nature of this is not even felt, precisely because the sense of personhood has already vanished every higher horizon is precluded and collectivisation, even of the spiritual realm, has already struck deep roots in a new generation of fanatics, brought up on the words of Lenin and Stalin. We see here one specific form, albeit one almost incomprehensible to our European mentality, of readiness for death and self-sacrifice, which affords perhaps even a sinister joy in the destruction both of oneself and of others.

The Japanese Mysticism of Combat

Recent episodes of the Japanese war have made known to us a 'style' of dying which, from this point of view, seems to have affinities with that of Bolshevik man in that it appears to testify to the same contempt for the value of the individual and of personhood in general. Specifically, we have heard of Japanese airmen who, their planes loaded with bombs, hurl themselves deliberately upon their targets, and of soldiers who place mines and are doomed to die in their action, and it seems that a formal body of these 'volunteers for death' has been in existence in Japan for a long time. Once again, there is something in this which is hardly comprehensible to the Western mind. However, if we

try to understand the most intimate aspects of this extreme form of heroism we find values which present a perfect antithesis to those of the lightless 'telluric heroism' of Bolshevik man.

The premises here are, in fact, of a rigorously religious or, to put it better, an ascetic and mystical character. We do not mean this in the most obvious and external sense – that is, as referring to the fact that in Japan the religious idea and the Imperial idea are one and the same thing, so that service to the Emperor is regarded as a form of divine service, and self-sacrifice for the *Tenno*¹ and the state has the same value as the sacrifice of a missionary or martyr – but in an absolutely active and combative sense. These are certainly aspects of the Japanese politico-religious idea: however, a more intimate explanation of the new phenomena must be looked for, on a higher plane than this, in the vision of the world and of life proper to Buddhism and above all to the Zen school, which has been rightly defined as the 'religion of the samurai', that is, of the Japanese warrior caste.

This 'vision of the world and of life' really strives to lift the possessor's sense of his own true identity to a transcendental plane, leaving to the individual and his earthly life a merely relative meaning and reality.

The first notable aspect of this is the feeling of 'coming from afar' – that is, that earthly life is only an episode, its beginning and ending are not themselves to be found here, it has remote causes, it is held in tension by a force which will express itself subsequently in other destinies, until supreme liberation. The second notable aspect, related to the first, is that the reality of the 'I' in simple human terms is denied. The term 'person' refers itself back to the meaning that it originally had in Latin, namely the mask of an actor, that is, a given way of appearing, a manifestation. Behind this, according to Zen, that is, the religion of the samurai, there is something incomprehensible and uncontrollable, infinite in itself and capable of infinite forms, so that it is called symbolically *sunya*, meaning 'empty', as against everything which is materially substantial and bound to specific form.

We see here the outline of the basis for a heroism which can be called 'supra-personal' – whereas the Bolshevik one was, contrarily, 'sub-personal'. One can take hold of one's own life and cast it away at its most intense moment out of super-abundance in the certainty of an eternal existence and of the indestructibility of what, never having had a beginning, cannot have an end. What may seem extreme to a certain

¹ The Japanese term for the Emperor, meaning 'heavenly sovereign'.

Western mentality becomes natural, clear and obvious here. One cannot even speak here of tragedy – but for the opposite reason to that which applied in the case of Bolshevism: one cannot speak of tragedy because of the lived sense of the irrelevance of the individual in the light of the possession of a meaning and a force which, in life, goes beyond life. It is a heroism which we could almost call ‘Olympian’.

And here, incidentally, we may remark on the dilettante triviality of one author who in a certain article has tried to demonstrate in four lines the pernicious character which such views, opposed to those which hold that earthly existence is unique and irrevocable, must have for the idea of the state and service to the state. Japan offers the most categorical refutation of such wild imaginings and the vigour with which our ally Japan wages her heroic and victorious battle demonstrates, on the contrary, the enormous warrior-like and spiritual potential which can proceed from the lived feeling of transcendence and supra-personhood to which we have referred.

Roman Devotio

Here it is appropriate to emphasise that, if the acknowledgment of the value of personhood is peculiar to the modern West, what is also peculiar to it is an almost superstitious emphasis on the importance of upbringing, which under recent conditions of democratisation has given rise to the famous concept of ‘human rights’ and to a series of socialistic, democratic and humanistic superstitions. Along with this clearly less than positive aspect there has been equal emphasis on the ‘tragic’, not to say ‘Promethean’, conception, which again represents a fall in level.

In opposition to all this we must recall the ‘Olympian’ ideals of our most ancient and purest traditions; we will then be able to conceive as equally ours an aristocratic heroism, free from passion, proper to beings whose life-centre is truly on a higher plane from which they are able to hurl themselves, beyond any tragedy, beyond any tie and any anguish, as irresistible forces.

Here, a little historical reminiscence is called for. Although this is not widely known, our ancient Roman traditions contained motifs concerning the disinterested, heroic offering of one’s own person in the name of the state for the purpose of victory analogous to those which we have seen in the Japanese mysticism of combat. We are alluding to the so-called *devotio*. Its presuppositions are equally sacred. What acts

in it is the general belief of the traditional man that invisible forces are at work behind the visible ones and that man, in his turn, can influence them.

According to the ancient Roman ritual of *devotio*, as we understand it, a warrior, and above all a chieftain, can facilitate victory by means of a mysterious unleashing of forces determined by the deliberate sacrifice of his own person, combined with the will not to come out of the fray alive. Let us recall the execution of this ritual by Consul Decius in the war against the Latins (340 BC),² and also the repetition of it – exalted by Cicero³ (*Fin.* II, 19, 61; *Tusc.* I, 37, 39) – by two other members of the same family. This ritual had its own precise ceremony, testifying to the perfect knowledge and lucidity of this heroic-sacrificial offer. In proper hierarchical order, first the Olympian divinities of the Roman state, Janus, Jupiter, Quirinus, and then, immediately following this, the god of war, Pater Mars, and then, finally, certain indigenous gods, were invoked: ‘gods – it is said – which confer power to heroes over their enemies’; by the virtue of the sacrifice which these ancient Romans proposed to perform the gods were called upon to ‘grant strength and victory to the Roman people, the Quirites, and effect the enemies of the Roman people, the Quirites, with terror, dismay, and death’ (cf. Livy, 8:9).⁴ Proposed by the pontifex,⁵ the words of this formula were uttered by the warrior, arrayed in the *praetesta*, his foot upon a javelin. After that he plunged into the fray, to die. Incidentally, here the transformation of the sense of the word *devotio* must be noticed. While it applied originally to this order of ideas, that is, to a heroic, sacrificial and evocative action, in the later Empire it came to mean simply the fidelity of the citizen and his scrupulousness in making his payments to the state

² Publius Decius Mus was a consul of the Roman Republic during the Latin War. He performed the *devotio* prior to the Battle of Vesuvius after an oracle predicted that he would not survive it. When the Roman attack began to falter, he called upon the gods to fulfil their promise and plunged single-handed into the army of the Latins and was killed. The Romans won the battle. His son of the same name also performed the *devotio* during the Third Samnite War in 295 BC. His son in turn sacrificed himself in the Battle of Asculum in 279 BC.

³ Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC-43 BC) was a great Roman statesman and orator. Evola is likely referring to his works *De Finibus, Bonorum et Malorum* (*About the Ends of Goods and Evils*), and *Tusculanae Quaestiones* (*Questions Debated at Tusculum*).

⁴ Titus Livius (59 BC-17 AD), author of *The History of Rome*. This passage is taken from *Livy*, vol. 3 (London: A.J. Valpy, 1833), p. 16.

⁵ A pontifex was a priest in the ancient Roman religion.

treasury (*devotio rei annonariae*). As Bouché-Leclercq⁶ puts it, in the end, 'after Caesar was replaced by the Christian God, *devotio* means simply religiosity, the faith ready for all sacrifices, and then, in a further degeneration of the expression, devotion in the common sense of the word, that is, constant concern for salvation, affirmed in a meticulous and tremulous practice of the cult'. Leaving this aside, in the ancient Roman *devotio* we find, as we have shown, very precise signs of a mysticism aware of heroism and of sacrifice, binding the feeling of a supernatural and superhuman reality tightly to the will to struggle with dedication in the name of one's own chieftain, one's own state and one's own race. There are plenty of testimonies to an 'Olympian' feeling of combat and victory peculiar to our ancient traditions. We have discussed this extensively elsewhere. Let us only recall here that in the ceremony of the triumph, the victorious *dux*⁷ displayed in Rome the insignia of the Olympian god to indicate the real force within him which had brought about his victory; let us recall also that beyond the mortal Caesar, Romanity worshipped Caesar as 'perennial victor', that is, as a sort of supra-personal force of Roman destiny.

Thus, if succeeding times have made other views prevail, the most ancient traditions still show us that the ideal of an Olympian 'heroism' has been our ideal as well, and that our people have also experienced the absolute offering, the consummation of their whole existence in a force hurled against the enemy in a gesture which justifies the most complete evocation of abysmal forces; and which brings about, finally, a victory which transforms the victors and enables their participation in supra-personal and 'fatal' powers. And so, in our heritage, points of reference are indicated which stand in radical opposition to the sub-personal and collectivist heroism we discussed above, and not only to that, but to every tragic and irrational vision which ignores what is stronger than fire and iron, and stronger than life and death.

⁶ Auguste Bouché-Leclercq (1842-1923), a French scholar of Roman history. His works have not been translated.

⁷ Latin: 'leader'.

The Roman Conception of Victory

Originally published on 16 May 1943 as
'La concezione romana della Vittoria' in *Augustea*.

Sallust described the original Romans as the most religious of mortals: *religiosissimi mortales* (*Cat.*, 13),¹ and Cicero said that ancient Roman civilisation exceeded every other people or nation in its sense of the sacred: *omnes gentes nationisque superavimus* (*Hat.*: respon., IX, 19). Analogous testimonies are found in numerous variants in many other ancient writers. As against the prejudice of a certain historiography which persists in assessing ancient Rome from a solely legal and political point of view, what should be brought out is the fundamentally spiritual and sacred content of ancient Romanity, which should really be considered the most important element, because it is easy to show that the political, legal and ethical forms of Rome, in the last analysis, had as their common basis and origin precisely a special religious vision, a special type of relationship between man and the supra-sensory world.

But this relationship is of a quite different type from that characteristic of the beliefs which came to predominate subsequently. The Roman, like ancient and traditional men in general, believed in a meeting and mutual interpenetration of divine and human forces. This led him to develop a special sense of history and time, to which we have drawn attention in another of our articles here, speaking about a book by Franz Altheim.² The ancient Roman felt that the manifestation of the divine was to be found in time, in history, in everything which is carried out through human action, rather than in the space of pure contemplation, detached from the world, or in the motionless, silent symbols of a *hyperkosmia* or 'super-world'. He thus lived his history, from his very

¹ See note 4 in 'The Sacrality of War'.

² Franz Altheim, *A History of Roman Religion* (London: Methuen & Co., 1938).

origins onwards, more or less in terms of 'sacred', or at the very least 'prophetic' history. In his *Life of Romulus* (1:8) Plutarch³ says in so many words, 'Rome could not have acquired so much power if in one way or another it had not had a divine origin, such as to show to the eyes of men something great and inexplicable.'

Hence the typically Roman conception of an invisible and 'mystical' counterpart to everything visible and tangible which transpires in the human world. This is why rites accompanied every explanation of Roman life, whether individual, collective or political. Hence, also, the particular conception that the Roman had of fate: fate for him was not a blind power as it was for late ancient Greece, but the divine order of the world as development, to be interpreted and understood as means to an adequate science, so that the directions in which human action would be effective could be foretold, those along which this action could attract and actualise forces from above with a view not only to success, but also to a sort of transfiguration and higher justification.

Since this set of ideas applied to the whole of reality it reaffirmed itself also for ancient Rome in the field of warlike enterprises, of battle, heroism and victory. This fact allows us to see the error of those who consider the ancient Romans essentially as a race of semi-barbarians, who prevailed only through brutal force of arms, borrowing from other peoples, such as the Etruscans, Greeks and Syrians, the elements which served them in lieu of true culture. Rather, it is true that ancient Romanity had a particular mystical conception of war and victory, whose importance has oddly escaped the specialists in the study of Romanity, who have limited themselves to pointing out the many and well-documented traditions in question in a distracted and inconsequential manner.

It was the essentially Roman opinion that, to be won materially, a war needed to be won – or, at least, favoured – mystically. After the Battle of Trasimene, Fabius says to the soldiers, 'Your fault is to have neglected the sacrifices and to have failed to heed the warnings of the oracles, rather than to have lacked courage or ability' (Livy, *History of Rome*, 17:9, cf. 31:5; 36:2; 42:2).

No Roman war began without sacrifices and a special college of priests – the *Feciales* – was in charge of the rituals related to war, which was considered a 'just war', *iustum bellum*, only after these had been

³ Mestrius Plutarchus (46-127) was a Greek historian. All of his biographies are collected in *Plutarch's Lives*.

performed. As once pointed out by de Coulanges,⁴ the root of the military art of the Romans consisted originally in not being forced to fight when the gods were against it; that is, when by means of 'fatal' signs the agreement of forces from above with human forces was perceived to be absent.

Thus, the focus of the enterprise of war fell on a more than merely human plane – and both the sacrifice and the heroism of the combatant were considered to be more than merely human. The Roman conception of victory is particularly important.

In this conception every victory had a mystical side in the most objective sense of the term: in the victor, the chief, the imperator, applauded on the battlefield, was sensed the momentary manifestation of a divine force, which transfigured and trans-humanised him. The military victory ritual itself, in which the imperator (in the original sense, not of 'emperor', but of victorious chief) was lifted on a special shield, is not devoid of symbolism, as can be inferred from Ennius:⁵ the shield, previously sanctified in the Capitoline temple of Jupiter, signifies here the *altisonum coeli clupeum*, the celestial sphere, beyond which victory raises the man who has won.

Revealing and unambiguous confirmations of this ancient Roman conception are provided by the nature of the liturgy and the pomp of the triumph. We speak of 'liturgy' since this ceremony with which every winner was honoured had in Rome a character much more religious than military. The victorious leader appeared here as a sort of manifestation or visible incarnation of the Olympian god, all the signs and the attributes of whom he wore. The quadriga of white horses corresponded to that of the solar god of the bright sky, and the mantle of the triumphant, the purple toga embroidered with gold stars, reproduced the celestial and stellar mantle of Jupiter. And so did the gold crown and the sceptre which surmounted the Capitoline sanctuary. And the winner dyed his face with minimum as in the cult of the temple of the Olympian God, to which he then went to place solemnly before the statue of Jupiter the triumphal laurels of his victory, intending by this that Jupiter was its true author, and that he himself had gained it, essentially, as a

⁴ Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges (1830-1889), a French historian. His principal work was *The Ancient City: A Study on the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1956.

⁵ Quintus Ennius (c. 239 BC-c. 169 BC) was a poet and historian of the Roman Republic. Only fragments of his works survive.

divine force, a force of Jupiter: hence the ritual identification in the ceremony.

The fact that the aforementioned cloak of the triumphant corresponded to that of the ancient Roman kings could give rise to further considerations: it could remind us of the fact brought out by Altheim that even before the ceremony of the triumph of the king was defined he had appeared in the primitive Roman conception as an image of the celestial divinity: the divine order, over which the latter presided, was reflected and manifested in the human one, centred in the king. In this respect – in this conception, which, along with several others from the time of the origins, was to resurface in the Imperial period – Rome testifies to a universal symbolism, which is found again in a whole cycle of great civilisations in the Indo-Aryan world and Aryo-Iranian world, in ancient Greece, in ancient Egypt and in the Far East.

But, not to wander from the argument, let us point out another characteristic element in the Roman conception of victory. It is precisely because it was seen as a more than merely human event that the victory of a chief often assumed for the Romans the features of a *numen*, an independent divinity, whose mysterious life was made the centre of a special system of rituals designed to feed it, enliven it and confirm its invisible presence among men. The most well-known example is provided by the *Victoria Caesaris*. Each victory was believed to actualise a new centre of forces, separate from the particular individuality of the mortal man who had realised it; or, if we prefer, by victory the victor had become a force existing in an almost transcendent order: a force not of the victory achieved in a given moment of history, but, as the Roman expression stated exactly, of a 'perpetual' or 'perennial' victory. The cult of such entities, established by law, was designed to stabilise, so to speak, the presence of this force, so that it added invisibly to those of the race, leading it towards outcomes of 'fortune', making of each new victory a means for revelation and reinforcement of the energy of the original victory. Thus, in Rome, since the celebration of the dead Caesar and that of his victory were one and the same, and the games, which had ritual meaning, were consecrated to the *Victoria Caesaris*, he could be considered as a 'perpetual victor'.

The cult of victory, which was believed to have prehistoric origins, can be said more generally to be the secret spirit of the greatness of Rome and of Rome's faith in its prophetic destiny. From the time of Augustus the statue of the goddess Victory had been placed on the altar of

the Roman Senate, and it was customary that every senator, before taking office, went to this altar and burned a grain of incense. The force of victory seemed thus to preside invisibly over the deliberations of the *curia*;⁶ hands reached out towards its image when, with the coming of a new Princeps,⁷ fidelity was sworn to him and again on the Third of January of each year when solemn prayers were said in the Senate for the health of the Emperor and the prosperity of the Empire. It is particularly worthy of interest that this was the most tenacious Roman cult of so-called 'paganism', surviving after the destruction of all the others.

Other considerations could be derived from the Roman notion of *mors triumphalis*, 'triumphal death', which shows various aspects with which we will perhaps deal on another occasion. Here we just want to add something about one special aspect of the heroic dedication connected to the ancient Roman concept of *devotio*. It expresses what in modern terms could be called a 'tragic heroism', but linked to a sense of supra-sensory forces and a higher and very specific purpose.

In ancient Rome *devotio* did not mean 'devotion' in the modern sense of the meticulous and over-scrupulous practice of a religious cult. It was, rather, a warlike ritual action in which the sacrifice of oneself was vowed and one's own life was dedicated consciously to 'lower' powers, whose unleashing was to contribute to bringing victory, on one the hand, by endowing one with irresistible strength and, on the other hand, by causing panic to the enemy. It was a rite established formally by the Roman State as a supernatural addition to arms in desperate cases, when it was believed that the enemy could hardly be defeated by normal forces.

From Livy (8:9) we know all the details of this tragic ritual and also the solemn formula of evocation and self-dedication which the one who intended to sacrifice himself for victory had to pronounce, repeating it from the pontifex, clothed in the *praetesta*, his head veiled, his hand at his chin and his foot on a javelin. After that he plunged to his death in the fray, a hurled, 'fatal' force, no longer human. There were noble Roman families in which this tragic ritual was almost a tradition: for example, three of the stock of the Deci performed it in 340 B.C. in the war against the rebellious Latins, then again in 295 in the war against the Samnites, and once more in 79 at the Battle of Ascoli: as if this was 'a family law', as Livy puts it.

⁶ The Roman Senate.

⁷ Another term for the Roman Emperor.

As pure inner attitude this sacrifice may recall, by its perfect lucidity and its voluntary character, what still happens today in Japan's war: we have heard of special torpedo boats, or of Japanese aeroplanes, hurled with their crew against the target and, once again, the sacrifice, almost always performed by members of the ancient warrior aristocracy, the samurai, has a ritual and mystical aspect. The difference is certainly that they do not aim at a more than merely material action, a true evocation, to the same extent as in the ancient Roman theory of the *devotio*.

And naturally, the modern and, above all, Western atmosphere for thousands of reasons which have become, so to speak, constitutive of our being over the centuries makes it extremely difficult to feel and to move forces behind the scenes and to give every gesture, every sacrifice, every victory, transfiguring meanings, such as those discussed above. It is however certain that, even today, in this unleashed vicissitude one should not feel alone on the battlefields – one should sense, in spite of everything, relationships with a more than merely human order, and paths which cannot be assessed solely by the values of this visible reality can be the source of a force and an indomitability whose effects on any plane, in our view, should not be underestimated.

Liberations

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It is a principle of ancient wisdom that situations as such never matter as much as the attitude that is assumed while in them, and therefore the meaning that is attributed to them. Christianity, generalising from a similar viewpoint, has been able to speak of life as of a 'test' and has adopted the maxim *vita est militia super terram*.

In the quiet and ordered periods of history, this wisdom is accessible only to a few chosen ones, since there are too many occasions to surrender and to sink, to consider the ephemeral to be the important, or to forget the instability and contingency which is the natural state of things. It is on this basis that what can be called, in the broader sense, the mentality of bourgeois life is organised: it is a life which does not know either heights or depths, and develops interests, affections, desires and passions which, however important they may be from the merely earthly point of view, become petty and relative from the supra-individual and spiritual point of view, which must always be regarded as proper to any human existence worthy of the name.

The tragic and disrupted periods of history ensure, by force of circumstances, that a greater number of persons are led towards an awakening, towards liberation. And really and essentially it is by this that the deepest vitality of a stock, its virility and its unshakability, in the superior sense, can be measured. And today in Italy on that front which by now no longer knows any distinction between combatants and non-combatants, and has therefore seen so many tragic consequences, one should get used to looking at things from this higher perspective to a much greater extent than is usually possible or necessary.

From one day to the next, even from one hour to the next, as a result of a bombing raid one can lose one's home and everything one most loved, everything to which one had become most attached, the objects of one's deepest affections. Human existence becomes relative – it is a

tragic and cruel feeling, but it can also be the principle of a catharsis and the means of bringing to light the only thing which can never be undermined and which can never be destroyed. We need to remember that, for a complex set of reasons, the superstition which attaches all value to purely individual and earthly human life has spread and rooted itself tenaciously – a superstition which, in other civilisations, was and remains almost unknown. The fact that, nominally, the West professes Christianity has had only a minimal influence in this respect: the whole doctrine of the supernatural existence of the spirit and of its survival beyond this world has not undermined this superstition in any significant way; it has not caused knowledge of what did not begin with birth and cannot end with death to be applied in the daily, sentimental and biological life of a sufficient number of beings. Rather, people have clung convulsively to that small part of the whole which is the short period of this existence of individuals, and have made every effort to ignore the fact that the hold on reality afforded by individual life is no firmer than that of a tuft of grass which one might grab to save himself from being carried away by a wild current.

It arouses this awareness precisely not as something cerebral or 'devotional', but rather as a living fact and liberating feeling, which everything today that is tragic and destructive can have, at least for the best of us: creative value. We are not recommending insensitivity or some misconceived stoicism. Far from it: it is a matter of acquiring and developing a sense of detachment towards oneself, towards things and towards persons, which should instil a calm, an incomparable certainty and even, as we have before stated, an indomitability. It is like simplifying oneself, divesting oneself in a state of waiting, with a firm, whole mind, and with an awareness of something which exists beyond all existence. From this state the capacity will also be found of always being able to begin again, as if *ex nihilo*,¹ with a new and fresh mind, forgetting what has been and what has been lost, focusing only on what positively and creatively can still be done.

A radical destruction of the 'bourgeois' who exists in every man is possible in these disrupted times more than in any other. In these times man can find himself again, can really stand in front of himself and get used to watching everything according to the view from the other shore, so as to restore to importance, to essential significance, what should be so in any normal existence: the relationship between life and

¹ Latin: 'out of nothing'.

the 'more than life', between the human and the eternal, between the short-lived and the incorruptible.

And to find ways over and above mere assertion and gimmickry, for these values to be positively lived, and to find forceful expression in the greatest possible number of persons in these hours of trial is undoubtedly one of the main tasks facing the politico-spiritual elite of our nation.

The Decline of Heroism

Originally published on 1 October 1950 as
'Tramonto degli eroi' in *Meridiano d'Italia*.

War and rearmament in the world of the 'Westerners' is once again about guaranteeing security. Intensive propaganda with a crusading tone, using all its tried and tested methods, is in the air. Here, we cannot go thoroughly into the concrete questions which concern our specific interests, but rather hint at something more general, one of the inner contradictions of the notion of war, which undermines the foundations of the so-called 'West'.

The technocratic error of thinking of 'war potential' primarily in terms of arms and armaments, special technical-industrial equipment and the like, and assessing man – according to the brutal expression now widespread in military literature – simply as 'human resources' – has already been widely criticised. The quality and spirit of the men to whom the arms, the means of offence and destruction, are given have represented, still represent and will always represent the basic element of 'war potential'. No mobilisation will ever be 'total' if men whose spirit and vocation are up to the tests which they must face cannot be created.

How are things, in this respect, in the world of the 'democracies'? They now want, for the third time in this century, to lead humanity to war in the name of 'the war against war'. This requires men to fight at the same time that war as such is criticised. It demands heroes while proclaiming pacifism as the highest ideal. It demands warriors while it has made 'warrior' a synonym for attacker and criminal, since it has reduced the moral basis of 'the just war' to that of a large-scale police operation, and it has reduced the meaning of the spirit of combat to that of having to defend oneself as a last resort.

The Bourgeois Ideal

Let us examine this problem more closely. In what cause should the man of 'the Western bloc' go to war and face death? It is obviously nonsensical to respond in the name of the bourgeois ideal, the carefully maintained 'security' of existence which abhors risk, which promises that the maximum comfort of the human animal shall be easily accessible to all. Few will be deluded enough to imagine that, by sacrificing themselves, they can secure all this for future generations. Some will try to make others go and fight instead of them, offering as inducements beautiful words about humanitarianism, glory and patriotism. Apart from this, the only thing a man in such a world will fight for is his own skin.

His skin is the same in Curzio Malaparte's¹ sense as here: 'Certainly, only the skin is undeniable and tangible. One no longer fights for honour, for freedom, for justice. One fights for this disgusting skin. You cannot even imagine what man is capable of, of what heroisms and infamies, to save his skin.'

If one wants a profession of faith from the democratic world beyond all its pretences, it is contained in these words. They express the only credo, leaving aside mere verbiage and lies, with which it can spiritually equip its army. This means to rush to the crusade against the Communist threat only out of physical terror; of terror for one's own skin; for the frightening, wavering ideal of *Babbitt*;² of bourgeois safety; of the 'civilisation' of the domesticated and standardised human animal, which eats and copulates, and the limits of whose horizon is *Reader's Digest*, Hollywood and the sports stadiums.

Thus, those who are fundamentally lacking in heroism will seek to awaken warriors for the 'defence of the West' by playing upon the complex of anxiety. Since they have deeply demoralised the true Western soul; since they have debased and demeaned, firstly, the true basis of

¹ Curzio Malaparte (1898-1957) was an Italian writer and journalist. Originally a Fascist supporter, he turned against Fascism after covering the war on the Eastern front for the Italian newspapers (documented in his books *Kaputt* and *The Volga Rises in Europe*). Here, Evola is referring to his post-war novel about the struggles of life in Italy under Allied occupation, *The Skin* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1997).

² *Babbitt* is a novel first published in 1922 by the American writer Sinclair Lewis (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co.). As a result of its popularity, the term 'Babbitt' became synonymous with bourgeois conformism and philistinism, which is the theme of the novel.

the state, hierarchy and virile solidarity; and secondly, the notion of war and combat, they must now play the 'trump card' of the anti-Bolshevik crusade.

Enough of Illusions

Not many illusions can remain concerning the sort of 'morality' which can support this endeavour and which no industrial mobilisation with atomic bombs, flying superfortresses, supersonic fighters and so on, can replace. It is with these 'trump cards' alone that the 'Western world' now stands on the threshold of a possible third worldwide cataclysm, having broken down and insulted everything which had survived from the authentic warrior traditions of Europe and the Far East.

In the opposing bloc there are forces which combine technology with the elemental force of fanaticism, of dark and savage determination and of the contempt for individual life found among masses which, whether through their own ancient traditions or through the exaltation of the collectivist ideology, hardly value their own existence. This is the tide which will swell forth not only from the Red East, but from the whole of a contaminated and unleashed Asia.

However, what is really required to defend 'the West' against the sudden rise of these barbaric and elemental forces is the strengthening, to an extent perhaps still unknown to Western man, of a heroic vision of life. Apart from the military-technical apparatus, the world of the 'Westerners' has at its disposal only a limp and shapeless substance – and the cult of the skin, the myth of 'safety' and of 'war on war', and the ideal of the long, comfortable, guaranteed, 'democratic' existence, which is preferred to the ideal of the fulfilment which can be grasped only on the frontiers between life and death in the meeting of the essence of living with the extreme of danger.

Some will object that after all that Europe has been through, we have had enough of 'militarism' and war-mongering, and 'total war' should be left in the past and forgotten. Granted, 'militarism' can be left behind us since it is only a degraded, inferior echo of a heroic (and far from exclusively belligerent) conception, and to condemn all heroism as 'militarism' is one of the expedients of 'democratic' propaganda, an expedient which has now begun to backfire on its proponents. In any case, unfortunately there probably won't be any choice. It will be hard for the forces already in motion to stop (in general, irrespective of the

outcome of the current Korean affair) and there will only remain one course of action: to ride the tiger,³ as the Hindu expression puts it.

One of the most highly praised contemporary writers in Europe has written things about modern war which he experienced thoroughly and actively (he volunteered, was injured eighteen times, and was awarded the highest German military decoration), whose value will become more and more obvious in the times to come.⁴ He has said that modern man, by creating the world of technology and putting it to work, has signed his name to a debt which he is now required to pay. Technology, his creature, turns against him, reduces him to its own instrument and threatens him with destruction. This fact manifests itself most clearly in modern war: total, elemental war, the merciless struggle with materiality itself. Man has no choice but to confront this force, to render himself fit to answer this challenge, to find in himself hitherto unsuspected spiritual dimensions, to awake to forms of extreme, essentialised, heroism, forms which, while caring nothing for his person, nevertheless actualise what the aforementioned author calls the 'absolute person' within him, thus justifying the whole experience.

There is nothing else one can say. Perhaps this challenge will constitute the positive side of the game for especially qualified men, given that game must be accepted and played out anyway. The preponderance of the negative part, of pure destruction, may be frightening, infernal. But no other choice is given to modern man since he himself is the sole author of the destiny and the aspect which he is now starting to see.

This is not the moment to dwell on such prospects. Besides, what we have said does not concern any nation in particular, nor even the present time. It concerns the time when things will become serious, globally, not merely for the interests of the bourgeois, capitalist world, but for those men who know and, at that point, will still be able to gather together into an unshakeable bloc.

³ An expression frequently used by Evola, particularly in his book of the same name, to describe the problems faced by an individual who attempts to resist the norms and values of the modern world while simultaneously being forced to live in it.

⁴ Evola is referring to the German writer Ernst Jünger (1895-1998), and specifically his 1932 work *Der Arbeiter* (*The Worker*), which has not been translated into English. However, many of the ideas from *Der Arbeiter* are summarised in Jünger's own essay 'Total Mobilisation', which is available in English in Richard Wolin (ed.), *The Heidegger Controversy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

