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UNREASON AND REVOLUTION

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NOTE

This paper offers the text of a lecture given by Professor Richard Lowenthal before a RAND audience on February 28, 1969. Many of his listeners felt that the talk would be of considerable interest to a wider audience. It is therefore reproduced here.

UNREASON AND REVOLUTION: REFLECTIONS ON THE DISSOCIATION OF REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE FROM MARXIST THEORY

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This is a first and very tentative exploration of what I believe to be a major new phenomenon of our time -- the rise of a new type of revolutionary movement. Hitherto, we have been familiar with two broad classes of revolutionary movements. First, there are the movements which may be understood as resulting when the normal growth, the spontaneous evolution of a society, meets an obstacle in the form of rigid political institutions that are increasingly felt as oppressive: in such cases, sooner or later an acute political crisis occurs in which the obstacle is swept away by revolutionary action. That is, broadly speaking, the formula fitting the great democratic revolutions of modern Western history; it may also be applied to a number of the national movements for independence from colonial rule that have occurred in our time.

In the last fifty years, we have learnt to our cost to distinguish a second type of revolution and revolutionary movements -- those which I, for want of a better name, would still describe as "totalitarian revolutions." It seems to be characteristic for them that they do not occur because of the clash between a growing, dynamic society and a static political framework tending to shackle its growth, but because of some elements of stagnation, some major lopsidedness of development within the society itself, leading to a deadlock which a dynamic state is then called upon to resolve by the massive use of political force.

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This appeal from a deadlock in society to the "saviour state" has been the background to the rise of German National Socialism as a mass movement and to the long-lasting reign of violence which its victorious regime inflicted on the prostrate body of society. But the overcoming of social stagnation in the midst of change and of lopsided development has also been underlying the rise of Communist regimes in a number of underdeveloped countries -- the only ones that have come to power by the victory of indigenous revolutionary movements -- and has given them the opportunity for their repeated, forcible transformations of the social structure.

Now it seems to me that in recent years we have begun to be confronted by yet another kind of revolutionary movement. While these new movements, both within our Western world and in the so-called underdeveloped countries, use much of the familiar language of Communist ideology, and indeed have taken over much of the substance of the Marxist-Leninist critique of Western capitalism and imperialism as well as the Marxist Utopia of a society without classes or domination, they are nevertheless radically different from the Communist movements that had been created in the image of Lenin's Bolshevik party -- different in their forms of organization, their strategies of political action, and indeed in the rank order of values that gives operative meaning to their vision of the goal. In fact, one of the preconditions for the rise of these new movements has been the increasingly obvious disintegration of the "Marxist-Leninist" doctrinal synthesis; they are growing out of an ideological soil that has been fertilized by its decomposition. But while many of us may have observed this disintegration, and the political decay of "world Communism" of which it formed the ideological aspect, with a certain Schadenfreude, we must now recognize that what has taken its place is by no means uniformly an improvement: for some of the products of this decay appear to be as virulently destructive as any Leninist movements have been in the past -- without, so far, offering any tangible prospect of comparable constructive achievements.

A preliminary survey of these new movements may perhaps best start with marking them off by two negative statements. On one side, they

are not the democratic expressions of stable, productive sectors of the societies in which they arise; in other words, they do not originate as class movements, as interest groups or coalitions of interest groups. On the other hand, they are not disciplined parties of the Communist type, organized from the top downward as instruments of a single will, with a systematic strategic concept of what they want and how to get there given in advance. On the contrary, it is typical for them that action often precedes thought: despite the verbal echoes of the Marxist pathos of rationality that may still be heard from the ideological spokesmen of the Western "New Left," in practice the urge for violent action increasingly outruns consideration of any precise short-term objectives and of the rational tactical and organizational means for achieving them. It is the style of action and the utopian goal that define the movement, while all other ideas and organizational forms remain very much in flux. The goal itself, though it remains a powerful motivating force, never takes the form of a political program with precise institutional content. That, on the contrary, is increasingly rejected: the tendency is to say that the new institutions, if any, will have to emerge from the process of struggle and from the destruction of the old order.

While the "New Left" in the West is thus replacing Communist programs, strategies and organizational forms by the faith in Utopia and the cult of violent action, a number of revolutionary movements in the underdeveloped world are showing a parallel trend away from the elaborations of Communist doctrine and the organizational discipline based on ideological authority, and towards the primacy of violent action over social analysis and of military over political and ideological leadership. We may observe this tendency in the practice first of Castro's Cuban revolution and then of the guerrilla actions started in other Latin-American countries under the influence of the Cuban model, and we find its ideological justification sketched out by Che Guevara and elaborated by Regis Debray. A parallel, if delayed, breakthrough of immediate utopianism and immediate violence seems to have occurred in the transformation of Chinese Communism in the course of the last decade, beginning with the Great Leap Forward and the

creation of the People's Communes and culminating in the recent "Cultural Revolution." Finally, analogous processes seem to be at work in some of those revolutionary nationalist movements which, without ever having become formally Communist, are developing as passionately an anti-Western, anti-modernistic and anti-rational outlook as the last-named products of the disintegration of world Communism.

This, then, is our theme. Can we understand why those phenomena are arising in various parts of the world at this time, what are the intellectual roots of their beliefs and the social roots of their strength, and what are their significance and possible prospects?

I

Let us begin with a subject we know fairly well -- the role of Marxism and Leninism in the development of revolutionary ideas. If we cast our minds back to the 1840's when Marxism was born, and if we recall Engels' proud phrase about the development of socialism from a Utopia into a science, it is evident to us today that the real difference between Marx and many of his socialist precursors was not that Karl Marx was no utopian: his goals were just as utopian, just as rooted in a profound need to discover a road to salvation on earth, as theirs had been. The difference was that Marx turned his back on romantic and immediate utopianism in favor of a historical and forward-looking version. The birth of utopian socialism in the early 19th century had been part of the romantic revolt of the newborn European intelligentsia against the beginning of industrialization and the transformation of human relations by an increasingly specialized division of labor and an increasingly pervasive cash nexus. The new turn which Marx gave to those ideas was that he rejected the romantic element in them, the resistance to modernization based on an idealization of the past, and proclaimed instead that, thanks to the logic of history, Utopia would be achieved by ruthlessly carrying through the painful process of industrialization to the end. To quote a phrase which Raymond Aron coined in a recent conversation with me, Marx put forward the thesis that the only way to achieve the goals of Rousseau was to follow the precepts of St. Simon.

This was a highly original idea at the time, one might even say a rather absurd idea. But it also proved an extremely powerful idea: for it enabled Marx to forge a link between the belief in Utopia and the belief in the logic of history. As a result, he was able to inspire a movement that combined the religious fervor of utopianism with a historical and rational element. Utopia, and the violent revolution that was to precede it, were not to be achieved by mere enthusiasm and an act of will; they depended on well-defined economic and social conditions -- but the laws of history guaranteed that these conditions would be achieved in the fullness of time. Moreover, one effect of this analysis was to inspire the followers of Marx with a conviction of the vital importance of material progress; for together with the growth of the organization and consciousness of the working class, the rise of productivity was the most important of the conditions that must mature before mankind could enter the realm of freedom. Increasing productivity would eventually lead to abundance, and only abundance would permit the creation of a social order without classes or domination. Thus the utopian goal and the violent overthrow of the old order were not the objectives of immediate action: their possibility was mediated by the laws of the historical process, by Reason as manifested in History -- their achievement by a rational strategy based on the insight into that process.

In a sense, the disintegration of this rationalist and historic concept of the road to revolution and Utopia may be said to have started with Lenin -- as well as with the early "revisionists" on the opposite pole. For while the latter sought to retain the evolutionary optimism of Marx yet to eliminate the revolutionary and utopian perspective, Lenin was the first pupil of Marx deliberately to separate the task of "organizing the revolution" from some of its economic and social preconditions as formulated by the teacher: he argued, under the impact of World War I, that it was the duty of the Socialist Party to seize power in backward Russia without waiting for the maturing of the economic conditions for a socialist society, and he had even earlier "emancipated" this party from dependence on the actual support of the working class by giving it a highly centralistic, instrumental

structure. Implicitly, Lenin had thus attempted to replace the missing "objective" preconditions of socialism by the creation of his new vanguard party as an instrument for the seizure of power and for the subsequent transformation of the immature society, and to that extent had begun to turn Marxism upside down. But even while doing so, Lenin still clung to the Marxist analysis in believing that some objective conditions were needed for the victory of the revolution -- not indeed the condition of economic abundance, of objective maturity for socialism, but certainly the condition of a profound and acute crisis of capitalist society, and of a mass mood of bitter discontent enabling the revolutionary party to gain a mass following: only once the crisis had reached that stage, he taught to the end, only once the revolutionary party had won a strategically decisive following among the masses -- only then could the violent seizure of power take place. As a result, the role of the party never consisted for Lenin primarily in the organization of violence: violence might play a crucial part in its action at the critical moment, but the primary task of the party was to win over the masses before that moment by a policy based on a correct analysis of the crisis of society.

Some of the strategic changes introduced by Mao Tse-tung in transferring revolutionary Marxism to Asian soil and deliberately "adapting" it to Asian conditions may still be interpreted as mere developments along the road shown by Lenin. Striving to conquer power in a country where economic and social conditions were incomparably more backward -- and correspondingly more remote from "objective" maturity for socialism in the Marxist sense -- than in the Russia of 1917, Mao became the first pupil of Lenin to make use of the structural flexibility of the centralized vanguard party by seeking the necessary mass support among the peasants rather than the urban working class, and that for many years: he thus completed the effective emancipation of a "Marxist" party from working class support that had been implied as a potentiality in Lenin's separation of the seizure of power from conditions of economic maturity and of the party organization from working class democracy. Moreover, Mao recognized at an early stage that the role of armed force in the struggle for power was likely to be far more continuous and decisive

in China than it had been in Russia -- that here, power would "grow out of the barrel of a gun." But this greatly expanded role of violence in Mao's revolutionary strategy was still tied to objective political and social conditions in two important ways. In the first place, it was in Mao's own view only made possible by the special conditions of a semi-colonial country, in which neither a single native government nor a single colonial power enjoyed an effective monopoly of armed force; that, at least, was Mao's view at the time of his own struggle for power, though after his victory he came to persuade himself that similar "protracted war" strategies would prove appropriate for all the colonial and underdeveloped countries of the world. In the second place, he never ceased to insist that the success of the strategy of armed struggle depended not only on developing the correct military tactics for guerrilla warfare, but on winning and retaining the support of the peasant population in the regions concerned by correct policies and effective forms of political and economic organization. Only a policy based on a realistic analysis of the conditions and needs of the people in the area and a type of organization that maintained communications with them could enable the guerrillas "to live among the population like a fish in water," preventing their isolation by the militarily superior enemy and assuring them of intelligence, of supplies and of a reservoir for new recruitment. This insistence on maintaining mass support by policies based on a study of the concrete social situation constitutes the indispensable corollary to the Maoist emphasis on armed struggle and its link with the Marxist-Leninist tradition; it is the foundation for Mao's dictum that while power grows out of the barrel of a gun, the party must command the gun. For while the party no longer represents, as with Marx, the actual evolving consciousness of a working class increasingly aware of its true historical interests, it still represents, as with Lenin, the leaders' "scientific," analytical consciousness of the total social situation, its contradictions and tendencies, and hence of the objective possibilities for action which any successful political strategy must take into account. To that extent, Mao's concept of the leading role of the party preserves, like

Lenin's concept, the Marxian idea of a rational strategy based on perception of the rational laws of history.

Yet there is in Mao's emphasis on the decisive role of armed struggle also the germ of a different, more basically "voluntaristic" approach to social reality; and this is to be found in his view that the use of violent action by itself may be one of the most effective means for changing the relation of forces between revolution and reaction because the right technique of armed struggle may enable an initially much inferior, revolutionary force to whittle down step by step the initial superiority of its enemy -- to tire him out by exhaustion, cause splits in his ranks and finally wear down his will to fight. In a sense, the art of ensuring the survival and regeneration of inferior forces resisting a stronger and better-armed enemy is, of course, the essence of all guerrilla tactics, and the hope that this will enable the guerrillas to outlast the enemy's determination has always been their rationale; but the fulfillment of that hope depends clearly not on the dedication and skill of the guerrillas alone, but on a number of independent factors -- such as the enemy's fighting commitments outside the theatre of guerrilla warfare, the importance of that theatre in relation to his general policy objectives, and the cohesion of his political system as reflected in the support for the anti-guerrilla campaign and the loyalty of his troops. In the Chinese case, the evidence does not show that the Communists were effectively wearing down the Kuomintang regime or even substantially increasing its divisions before the attack of Japan, nor that they had any chance to defeat the Japanese occupants (who regarded control of China as vital to their purposes), until their will to fight was broken by defeat on other fronts; similarly, nobody has ever suggested that the Yugoslav Communists could have evicted the armies of Hitler Germany independent of the outcome of World War II. Conversely, guerrilla "wars of liberation" in Vietnam and Algeria could achieve political victory by military means because neither area was truly vital for the French republic; while Mao's final civil war defeated a nationalist regime whose political and moral cohesion had been gravely undermined by the disastrous effects of the long-lasting Japanese invasion. Mao's original doctrine of

protracted warfare, so far from neglecting the crucial importance of these "objective conditions," took them into account by laying down what conditions must be fulfilled for passing from guerrilla tactics proper to the stage of decisive battles, and thus implying that these conditions cannot be created at will but must be patiently waited for; and there have been echoes of that realistic approach even in fairly recent Chinese advice to the Vietnamese Communists. Yet, on the other hand, the attempts of the victorious Chinese Communists to recommend the Maoist strategy of armed struggle as a model for colonial revolutions in general, which became prevalent since about 1959, in the context of their ideological rivalry with the Soviet Communists, have increasingly treated the revolutionary faith and tactical military skill of the guerrillas as universal and sufficient prescriptions for victory in "wars of liberation" that would achieve their magic effects independent of the objective conditions in any particular case.

This growing tendency to separate the use of armed revolutionary force from any analysis of political and social conditions, implicit in the transformation of Maoist doctrine under the impact of the ideological rivalry with Russia for leadership of the revolutionary movements of the underdeveloped world, has become quite explicit with the leaders of the Cuban revolution and its would-be imitators in Latin America -- with Fidel Castro, "Che" Guevara and Regis Debray. Long before Fidel Castro ever dreamt of calling himself a Marxist-Leninist, and presumably before he read any serious Marxist literature, he acted on the assumption that armed minority action would by itself be sufficient to create a revolutionary situation; and after this prescription had proved successful in Cuba, Guevara spelt out this new doctrine in so many words as early as 1960. Guevara, of course, did have a background of Marxist knowledge, and in 1960 he still made the validity of the new strategy dependent on one objective condition: the existence of a -- presumably unpopular -- dictatorial regime; armed minority uprisings, he then suggested, would not be effective against a government which enjoyed some degree of democratic legitimacy. However, this qualification was dropped by the Fidelistas a few years later, when the democratic government of Venezuela became the main target of their effort to export the

strategy -- and to some extent the leading personnel -- of guerrilla insurrection; and since then it has become an official dogma of "Castroism" that a small but determined and well-led "foco" of professional guerrillas is in principle sufficient to shake the stability of <u>any</u> political system in Latin America, and thus to create eventually, by its own action alone, the conditions for the seizure of power.

The consequences of this separation of armed violence from any analysis of social and political preconditions, and hence from any rational political strategy, have been most fully developed in Regis Debray's "Revolution in the Revolution." The political significance of this statement of the new doctrine lies in the fact that it represents more than its author's individual opinion: It was written on the basis of long conversations with Castro and other Cuban leaders, who had made the diaries and other documents of their struggle for power accessible to the author, and it was published for mass circulation and used as training material by the ruling party in Cuba; hence, it must be regarded as an authorized summary of Castro's and Guevara's own views of the "Cuban model" for the conquest of power. Now Debray has become the first to state plainly that it is positively harmful for the chances of armed struggle if it arises from the defense of the interests of a particular productive group; for such a struggle by people who are tied to their place of production -- like the miners in Bolivia or the peasants of the most impoverished region of Colombia -- tends to take the form of "armed self-defense" also in military tactics. People who lead normal working lives, however poor and oppressed, have something to lose -- their working place, their houses with their families -- which they want to defend; hence, they are militarily too vulnerable and are bound to be defeated in the end by the government's regular forces. In order to have a chance of success, the revolutionary struggle must be conducted by perfectly rootless, and therefore perfectly mobile, professional guerrillas alone.

In the context of this complete dissociation of the "revolution" from any concrete social basis, it is only logical that Debray goes so far as to give his own, arbitrary new meaning to the familiar Marxist terms of "bourgeois" and "proletarian." According to him, only the

uprooted guerrilla is the true "proletarian," because he has chosen a life of extreme deprivation and constant danger; he has nothing more to lose but his life, and is willing to sacrifice that. Conversely, the industrial worker in the towns of Latin America is in the eyes of Debray a "bourgeois," simply because he has a regular job and values it. Now any writer is, of course, free to choose and define his own terminology. But an ideologist who uses the terms of "bourgeois" and "proletarian" in this purely moralistic and emotional way, and defines his "proletarian" as a figure wholly divorced from the productive process, has evidently completely abandoned the method of social analysis which Karl Marx inaugurated by his use of those terms in the Communist Manifesto.

Finally, the cutting of all ties between the revolutionary movement and any defined social basis leads Debray with equal logic to a reversal of the relation between military and political leadership and to a new view of the role and formation of the revolutionary party. He argues that it is futile to concentrate first on creating a Marxist-Leninist party which would then organize a guerrilla movement in due course, because the party could only develop in the towns and its leaders might then be afraid to leave the towns. Instead, the only promising way in Latin America will be to begin by recruiting a band of armed volunteers who will form a guerrilla focus. The volunteers may have little or no previous political experience; they should be attracted on no narrower basis than their willingness to risk their lives in fighting Yankee imperialism and its ruling native stooges. As their ideas become more clearly defined due to the experience of the common struggle, a party will eventually arise -- usually only after victory -- with the proven guerrilla leaders at its head. Thus, military leadership precedes political leadership both in time and as a source of authority: it is no longer the party that commands the gun -- it is the gun that creates the party.

So far, we have discussed the progressive dissociation of the revolutionary struggle for power from "objective conditions" -- first from the maturity of the productive forces and of the consciousness of a large, organized working class for a socialist society, then from

any objectively given crisis of society and any defined social basis -- along the road leading from Marx via Lenin and Mao to Castro. If we now turn to the problems of a Communist regime in power, we notice in some countries a progressive dissociation of the effort to achieve the utopian goal from the objective conditions of economic development. This is a fairly recent phenomenon; for while Lenin was the first to sanction the seizure of power independent of the conditions of economic maturity, it would never have occurred to Lenin, or for that matter to Stalin or any other Russian party leader, to suggest that the criteria of the higher stage of the classless society -- work according to ability and distribution according to needs -- could become reality before a state of economic abundance had been reached. Stalin was emphatic that the basic task in "building socialism" was to create, at high pressure, those economic pre-conditions which had been lacking at the moment of political victory, and that pending the achievement of economic abundance the link between individual contribution and individual reward -- distribution of scarce goods not according to needs but according to performance -- was an indispensable incentive to rapid economic progress. Yet, in recent years, conscious attempts to cut this link and to introduce the distributive principles of the "higher stage" of communism in conditions of poverty and want have been made both in China and in Cuba.

In China, this occurred first at the time of the Great Leap Forward in 1958, when the creation of the "People's Communes" was accompanied by a major effort to introduce specifically "Communist" relationships, with distribution approaching complete equality as the share of equal "free supplies" in kind in the members' income rose quickly at the expense of the still unequal cash wages; thus, the peasants were expected to work less and less for material incentives and more and more from enthusiasm for the common good. In fact, this army-like system of equal supplies in kind was for a time described as "distribution according to needs," even though on the basis of the existing poverty the "needs" were assessed by the authorities, and not by the individuals themselves as Marx had envisaged on a basis of abundance. This attempt was severely criticized by the Soviets at the time, and the Chinese

themselves soon backtracked under the impact of its disastrous economic consequences. Yet in the course of the Cultural Revolution, they have largely returned to the same basic view that the use of material incentives and income differentiation, which Lenin and Stalin had regarded as necessary tools of economic development, was really a "revisionist" concession to the capitalist spirit. Mao's decisive argument seems to be that, in the light of Russian experience, a desperate effort must be made to educate the new Communist man here and now, without waiting for the achievement of economic abundance, because otherwise he may never be created at all: the remoulding of the people to create the new, collectively motivated man should be given priority over the immediate need for increasing productivity by material incentives, because the latter tend to create not the new socialist man, but the familiar type of economic man -- which to Mao means capitalist man.

To an increasing extent, the same principles have lately come to be applied in Cuba as well. The use of youthful "volunteer" labor to work under discipline in the rural "campamento" recalls both the earlier Chinese communes and the more recent mass transfer of Chinese students to work in the countryside; and it has lately been supplemented by a general ban on overtime payments, based on the same principle that in the interest of socialist education, the needed increases in output must be achieved by appealing only to collective solidarity and enthusiasm, not to ambition and avarice. In other words, here, too, the connection between the achievement of Utopia and the stage of economic development is being denied in action: the goal is dissociated from the "objective conditions" stipulated by Marx.

Finally, just as the dissociation of the revolutionary struggle for power from an analysis of objective social conditions leads ultimately to the replacement of the primacy of the party and the political leadership by the primacy of the guerrilla foco and the military leadership, so the dissociation of the attempt to build a communist Utopia from the effort to achieve its economic preconditions leads to a change in the basic legitimation for ruling a country engaged in that attempt -- to a transfer of the claim to legitimate leadership from the exponents of the "scientific" road to socialism and communism to the

exponents of heroic determination, from the technicians skilled in adapting the ideology to economic needs by interpretation to the technicians skilled in enforcing ideological conformity by violence. This is a development that has not, so far, been fully consummated, but is recognizable as an increasingly powerful tendency in both China and Cuba. In Cuba, the old Communist party had a much clearer economic program as well as a much more effective centralistic discipline than the ideologically heterogeneous crowd of Castro's original followers, and up to a point Castro was eager to learn from them as well as to use their disciplined apparatus; but ultimately it was the charismatic prestige of the successful insurrection rather than the bureaucratic merits of long-term party building, the military prowess of Castro and a few men around him rather than the ideological certainty of the old Communists that legitimated the new leadership. The resulting regime is probably as much of a pseudomorphosis -- a similar shape without similar substance -- of a Communist party dictatorship as many Latin American "democracies" have been of true parliamentary or presidential democracies: the "Marxist-Leninist" party is supposed to rule and its offices are everywhere, but its central organs hardly ever meet, while actual power is exercised by the revolutionary Caudillo, using his personal impact on television on one side and the armed force of the militia on the other.

In China, the virtual destruction of the Communist party machine as well as of much of the state administration in the course of the "Cultural Revolution" seems to have started a similar shift of the basis of legitimacy. For Mao turned on the bureaucracy of party and government with its growing preference for routine and economic rationality in the name of the heroic traditions of the Long March and in an effort to train the young generation in the spirit of its veterans; he found it much easier to revive the utopian spirit of the heroic period in the army than in the party or in economic life, and since 1964 increasingly called on all other organizations to "learn from the army"; and, having undermined the discipline of all other organizations by proclaiming the "right to rebel" in the Cultural Revolution, while leaving only army discipline intact, he has now

proceeded to reorganize the shattered party from the top with an unprecedently high share of military men in the leadership, on the principle of sworn personal loyalty to him and to the head of the Military Council who is his designated successor.

There seems to be a significant parallel here with developments in some of those revolutionary nationalist single-party regimes, particularly in the Arab world, in which the official, ideological doctrine was poorly developed from the beginning, and in which military prestige has therefore sooner or later proved superior to party legitimacy. The case of Nasser's Egypt may be regarded as too obvious to be really significant in our context, because there the military Junta was first and the four successive attempts to create a state party have only confirmed its character as at best an auxiliary to charismatic rule by a military leader. But it seems symptomatic that the Algerian FLN, which originated as a fighting guerrilla organization under political nationalist leadership, proved unable to provide stable rule until a full-time military commander took political control by force, barely bothering to have himself confirmed by the legitimate party organs afterwards; and the transformation of the Baath party, which started with a more elaborate nationalist-socialist ideology than either the Algerians or the Nasserites yet has degenerated into little more than a congeries of rival officers' clans in both Syria and Iraq, the two countries in which it officially governs, seems even more eloquent testimony to the strength of a general tendency. It may be at least worth inquiring whether this parallel tendency to a decline in the role of political leadership and ideological guidance, and to a reversion of legitimacy to the military hero (or would-be hero), to the charismatic specialist in the techniques of violence, in a number of underdeveloped countries under both Communist and national-revolutionary regimes is not due to the impact of similar causes.

II

The dissociation of revolutionary passion and action from the Marxist belief in the rationality of history is not confined to the particular examples we have analyzed; on the contrary, it appears to

be a universal process, in which movements and regimes that remain strongly influenced by a Marxist outlook are ceasing to be revolutionary, while those that remain revolutionary renounce essential parts of the Marxist analysis. Thus, we observe that the Communist party régime in the Soviet Union, as it comes increasingly to regard the development of its productive capacity as the only decisive factor for its advance towards the "higher stage" of Communism and as its principal contribution to the victory of its cause on a world scale, is becoming less concerned with either forcibly imposing "revolutions from above" on its own people or actively fostering revolutionary movements elsewhere: it has retained the belief that the final, world-wide achievement of Communism is guaranteed by the laws of History, but it interprets those laws in an increasingly revisionist spirit as working mainly through the logic of economic development, so that the eventual attainment of Utopia will not require further revolutionary action on its part. Even more explicitly, Communist parties in some advanced Western countries, particularly those with a strong following in a modern, industrial working class, are proposing revisionist strategies for the socialist transformation of their countries by peaceful, democratic methods, based on the expectation that the inherent trends of modern industrial societies will enable them to join the governments and carry out their program with majority support, and preferably without violence.

Conversely, those "New Left" movements in the same countries, recruited chiefly from students and other adolescents divorced from production, that are preoccupied with the need for violent action and the revolutionary overthrow of the social order, have come increasingly to reject the Marxist belief in the rationality of history and the link between the progress of industrialization, the growth of the working class and the utopian goal: instead, they are looking for support to the peoples of the underdeveloped "countryside of the world" whose revolutionary ardor has not yet been dampened by material comfort, and for guidance to Mao and Castro who promise to solve the economic problems of their poor countries through an upsurge of collective effort called forth by an appeal to solidarity rather than to egoistic

self-interest. Nor is their choice difficult to understand in view of the fact that the working class in the industrially advanced countries has become less and less revolutionary, and that the successful industrialization of Russia has evidently not created a society without classes and domination, but a bureaucratic class society still ruled by a harsh party dictatorship after 50 years. To return to the remark of Raymond Aron's that I quoted in the beginning, it has become obvious that the world has not come the least bit closer to the goals of Rousseau after following the precepts of St. Simon for more than a century; hence, those who will not abandon utopianism have at long last decided to try and approach those goals directly. The intellectual importance of Herbert Marcuse for the development of the Western "New Left" is that he has classically formulated this disappointment of the Marxist Utopian who feels betrayed by the logic of History: the author of "Reason and Revolution" still put his trust in that Goddess; to the author of "One-Dimensional Man," the Devil is the Prince of the Modern World. But once the assurance is gone that justice will triumph when the millennium comes in the fullness of time, the only alternative left to the believer is to try and bring it about by storming the heavens here and now. We are faced with a regression to a more primitive kind of secular religion -- as different from that of Marx as was the faith of the Bohemian Taborites and the Muenster Anabaptists from the main stream of Western Christianity.

As the term "regression" implies, the breakdown of the rationalist and historical constructs by which Marx had "mediated" the revolutionary struggle for Utopia, and the consequent return to immediate utopianism and immediate violence links the contemporary "New Left" to an earlier type of revolutionary tradition -- a tradition that, in contrast to Marx, directly expressed the romantic resistance to the growth of mechanized industry and to the destruction of "natural" communities by the process of modernization, and exalted the values of "life," community feeling and spontaneous, violent action in opposition to "calculating" reason. There are, in fact, two distinct but frequently entangled strands of this romantic-revolutionary tradition, which we may provisionally designate by the names of two friends who fought

together on the barricades of the Dresden insurrection of 1849: Michael Bakunin and Richard Wagner.

It is hardly accidental that Bakunin has lately been rediscovered by sections of the "New Left" in a number of countries. What seems to attract them is not just his anarchist vision, the goal of a stateless society of free associations of producers (which others have developed more fully both before and after him), but his passionate opposition to the bureaucratic rationality of the rising industrial age, his readiness to assign priority to the "creative pleasure of destruction" over any program for what was to come afterwards, his hatred and contempt for liberalism, reform and all representative institutions, not only in Russia but everywhere, his belief that a cumulation of uncoordinated, spontaneous acts of local violence could bring down both the Tsarist regime and the ruling economic and social system (alternating with fantasies of a super-centralistic, conspirative organization which were never put into practice), and his tendency to rely on the uprooted peasant (the "bandit") as the true revolutionary and on the backward regions on the Eastern and Southern periphery of Europe-Russia, Spain, Southern Italy -- for the ultimate revolutionary assault on the modern core that was already corrupted by capitalism and bureaucracy. Yet Bakunin's Panslavism, his hatred of Germans and Jews, and his abiding hostility to liberalism (which he did not disdain to use as arguments in the "Confession" he sent to the Tsar from prison in the hope of being reprieved) constitute a bond with other ideologies of anti-modern violence directed not to the goal of egalitarian anarchy, but to that of the dictatorship of an elite in the name of nationalism. Wagner, who was to become one of the intellectual ancestors of Nazism, already dreamt -- and spoke and wrote -- of the destruction of the bankers' rule by a popular Emperor and of the replacement of Westernized, liberal pseudo-culture by a truly national German folk culture at the time of his youthful friendship with Bakunin; and the kinship between the more violent and irrational forms of anarchism and fascist tendencies has since been repeatedly demonstrated in other countries and later generations.

Thus Georges Sorel, whose special contribution to the syndicalist movement has been to give it an irrationalist turn and to exalt the role of violence as the test of social vitality, came for a time to support the extreme right wing "Action Française" and influenced the elitism of Pareto and Mussolini. Again, if one asks to what historical model Fidel Castro's early intellectual background, his style of governing Cuba by harangues and his reliance on a mixture of nationalist and socialist appeals resembles most strikingly, the picture that comes to mind is not that of any victorious Communist leader, but of Gabriele d'Annunzio, his Republic of Fiume and his highly original witches' brew of nationalist passion, anarchist ideals and plebiscitary techniques of government -- though Castro, no doubt, has shown less poetical and more political ability than his illustrious predecessor; and d'Annunzio's movement, by its ideological prestige and its practical failure, helped to recruit many of the cadres for Italian Fascism. Finally, the semi-anarchist violence of Benito Mussolini's anti-militarist agitation during the Libyan war of 1911, when he was at the height of his "New Left" period as editor of the Socialist Party daily, fed on the same emotional and partly on the same ideological sources which enabled him in 1914/5 to break with the Socialist Party as a violent advocate of a "revolutionary" war for nationalist objectives on the side of the Entente, and later to found the fascist movement and lead it to victory through terror. We might also mention as belonging to the same spiritual family those German ideologues of the 1920's -- the period preceding the victory of National Socialism -- who were then known as "National Bolsheviks" or "Linke Leute von Rechts," and who sought to combine an anti-capitalist social radicalism (which in their case was much more genuine than with the Nazi party) with an anti-Western, but often explicitly pro-Russian nationalism and with a cult of heroic violence based on the memory of the "frontline experience" -- of the true community of those who had been ready to die (and to kill) for the fatherland. In short, those ardent believers in salvation on earth by political revolution who rejected the historical and rationalist "mediation" of their goal in favor of irrational passion and immediate violence have always tended to rely on romantic ideologies

using varying mixtures of arguments of the Bakuninist and the nationalist-fascist type. It is typical that in the later writings of Marcuse, his earlier Hegelian-Marxist rationalism is getting increasingly overlaid by the elitist anti-Western cultural pessimism of Heidegger -- his first teacher.

The revival of both strands of the romantic ideological tradition in the irrational revolt of the Western "New Left" indicates a revival of the basic emotional attitude underlying them both: The rebels reject the modern industrial world in both its Western-capitalist and Soviet-Communist forms -- the crude materialism of its values, the pervasive bureaucratism of its organization, the purely instrumental character of its rationality. Indeed, their despair is a reaction to the discovery that the process of "rationalization" in the instrumental sense, which Max Weber recognized as a universal law of the modern world, does not assure the triumph of "Reason" in the sense of the achievement of Utopia. It is the same rejection of the industrial order that also constitutes the fundamental link between the Western "New Left" and some of the revolutionary movements of the poor nations: To the new romantics, Mao Tse-tung and Castro embody the promise of a spontaneous community without conflict, hence without need for rational rules and institutions -- just as to Frantz Fanon, Sorel has revealed the liberating dignity of irrational violence.

But this means that in some of the revolutionary movements of the ex-colonial and semi-colonial peoples, we are now facing a "revolt against the West" in a new and different sense. The classical nationalist movements for colonial liberation and for the independent development of the underdeveloped countries have always been, and many of them still are, characterized by ambivalence towards the West: They have been fighting for political independence from the Western powers, for economic independence from Western capital, to some extent also for the chance to preserve their cultural identity, to keep their own soul -- but they have also wished to learn from the West in order to imitate it successfully in the techniques of production and power, to catch up with it in science and material development. For the classical movements of national liberation from colonialism or semi-colonialism, one

essential goal has been to make their country as rich and powerful as its former Western masters, though this goal could only be achieved by a struggle for independence which often required prolonged conflicts with the Western powers. This was an ambivalent attitude in that it was not inspired by a total rejection of Western models and values, but in part by a desire to emulate Western achievements -- even though the road there led through a struggle against Western domination.

The new attitude which we encounter in Mao's Cultural Revolution, in Castro's Cuba and potentially in other movements influenced by them (whether formally Communist or not) is a total rejection of some Western values: it is a determination to stay poor but honest rather than imitate the West in promoting the development of economic man (as the Soviets have done), to accept some of the consequences of nondevelopment (though not all) rather than assimilate to Western civilization. Indeed, we observe for the first time since the decline of the early nativistic movements in those countries, for the first time in movements that claim to be not traditionalist but modern, nationalist and revolutionary, a fundamental resistance not just to Western power and Western capital, but to the pull of Western civilization that had hitherto been inseparable from any effort at the modernization of non-Western countries.

But this in turn throws further light also on the revolt of part of the young generation in the West; for that revolt, too, is directed against important aspects of Western civilization. This is often denied by well-meaning liberals who, in trying to understand the young rebels, argue that the latter "really" share our liberal values -- that they merely take them more seriously than their hypocritical elders and want to act on principles which the establishment merely talks about. If that were all, we should be faced with a political and social movement of a familiar type, for that is indeed the classical role of revolutionary (and also of reformist) movements within a growing civilization -- to regenerate the traditional values of that civilization by giving them a new institutional content corresponding to changed social conditions: thus the basic Western idea of the rights of the human person has been reinterpreted in course of time from referring to "the rights of each according to his station" to meaning "equal

political rights for all," and more recently to imply the rights of each to equal opportunity and social security. But this, it seems to me, no longer applies to many of either the politically active or the passive and nonpolitical young rebels of our time; for while it is true that they generally accept the familiar values of love and individual freedom, of truth and social justice, merely seeking to turn these values into an indictment of the older generation, it is also true that they have increasingly come to reject the values of material and in part even of intellectual achievement and of the effort and discipline needed to accomplish it, including the discipline of reason -- values which are equally essential parts of the cultural heritage of the West. The same is apparent in their rejection of any time perspective in the name of a cult of immediacy; for the sense of measured time and the gearing of action to foresight have been basic for all Western civilization from the age when Western churchtowers were first endowed with clocks to the latest achievements of science and industry. In other words, we are witnessing a major failure to transmit an important part of our basic values to a significant part of the young generation. Indeed, it seems to me that the rebellion of the young which is taking place in all advanced Western countries, and which is assuming both politically revolutionary forms and the form of a passive nonpolitical refusal to grow into roles within the industrial society and submit to its pressures, is not primarily a political phenomenon -- that it is above all a sign of a crisis in our civilization.

For there are, I believe, two basic tests for the vitality of a civilization. One is the ability to transmit to the young generation its essential values even while adapting their concrete, practical meaning to changing conditions. The other is its capacity to attract and assimilate outsiders, "barbarians," who come within range of its material influence -- and not only subject them and disrupt their traditional forms of life. As recently as the last generation, this vitality of Western civilization was subjected to extremely serious strain, for the destructive outbreak of Nazism constituted a radical, nihilistic revolt against that civilization from within; yet following its military defeat, the reassimilation of Germany by the West has

been extremely successful, and even the Soviet Union, for all the rigidity of its political structure and all the seriousness of its continuing conflicts with the Western powers, shows unmistakable signs of a progressive cultural "convergence" with the West. Now for the first time, the West is faced simultaneously with growing evidence of a crisis both in its capacity to assimilate its "external proletariat" (in the sense given to this term in Toynbee's "Study of History"), the poor, underdeveloped, non-Western peoples, and in its ability to transmit its heritage to its own youth.

This diagnosis is confirmed by the fact that the quasi-religious character of some of the new movements is manifested not only in their commitment to chiliastic goals, but in their cult of saviour-leaders and in their search for a new code of conduct. Thus the asceticism and heroic self-sacrifice of Guevara have permitted the growth of a legend around him that combines Christ-like features with those of a militant secular leader. The official cult of Mao Tse-tung no longer describes him as a mere creative continuator of the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary tradition, nor even merely as the unique architect of the political rebirth of the Chinese nation and state: he is presented as the author of a totally new system of thought and action -- a system that will enable all those to work miracles who believe in Mao and live by his new rules. Many of the "Quotations from Chairman Mao" in the little Red Book, from which hundreds of millions of Chinese are taught to recite several times a day, stand in competition not with any Western or Soviet political document, but with the Analects of Confucius and the Bible.

Yet, while the new movements are largely united in [illegible] rejection of the Western way of life, or at any rate of major aspects of it, they diverge widely in seeking to define their alternatives. Castro and Mao reject Western materialism, and at least Mao also Western individualism; but both believe in the need for collective effort and discipline which are rejected by large parts of the Western "New Left" as well as by the nonpolitical Western hippies, dropouts and drugtakers. Conversely, many of the would-be revolutionaries of the "New Left" retain an anarchist type of individualism, but "petty bourgeois anarchism" remains

a term of abuse in Cuba and China as much as in Russia, while the prophets of a nonpolitical drug-culture clearly believe that community can only be established by escaping from individuality. There is thus no unity of values among the new movements except in their common target of attack -- their negation of the modern industrial society. Beyond that the "New Left's" admiration for Castro and Mao is based on a romantic misunderstanding that sees those hard-striving, hard-driving taskmasters of their peoples as the Noble Savages of our time.

III

This, then, is the tentative conclusion at which we have arrived. The new type of revolutionary movements, both on the outer fringes of our Western-centered world and in the advanced Western countries, as well as some phenomena within the latter that are not "revolutionary" in the conventional, political sense of the term, can best be understood as symptoms of a crisis of Western civilization. It is this which explains their increasing turning away from the Marxist type of analysis and strategy: for Marxism, in its origin, its values and its commitment to rationality, is indissolubly linked to its Western heritage.

I am conscious that while that conclusion may help us to grasp the historical significance, intellectual background and spiritual character of the new movements, it does not answer the further questions about their concrete social roots, the reasons for their appearance at this time, and their prospects of political success. Nor can I even attempt to deal seriously with those questions in the framework of the present essay. All that is possible here is to sketch out some of the directions in which the answers may be looked for.

The main point I should like to make here is that the crisis in our civilization has followed an unprecedented acceleration both of the external expansion of its influence and of the pace of its internal change. Externally, Western expansion over the last two centuries has effectively disrupted the traditional societies created by other civilizations all over the globe; and the political reflux of that expansion, the extrusion of Western dominance from the former colonial areas in the last few decades, has not reversed its disruptive effects and has

left the new nations with problems of "modernization" that in most cases are proving far more difficult than anticipated. As suggested above, the goal of modernization was at first generally conceived as implying at least a partial imitation of the West, even if often by different institutional means -- for instance, industrialization not by free enterprise but by state planning, or political mobilization by single-party rule rather than by multi-party competition. But it now looks as if in countries where "development" in this sense proves particularly difficult -- owing to the pressure of population, or to the extreme shortage of cadres with modern training, or simply to the strength of traditionalist cultural resistance, or to any combination of those factors -- important aspects of the goal itself are coming to be doubted. Thus total rejection of the Western model is proclaimed in the accents of revolt in order to avoid the confession of failure and the disappointment of the expectations aroused; and as the West can always be blamed for having started the whole agonizing process by its intrusion, and for either having refused to help the development of the latecomers or at any rate having failed to give enough aid to be effective, the rejection of the unattainable model is accompanied by a deepening of resentment against its possessors.

Internally, the acceleration of change in technology, and with it in social structures and habits of living, has in the last few decades created intense moral uncertainty in many Western countries. While the material progress of the industrial societies has not abolished scarcity and made effort and discipline superfluous, as the new utopians believe, it has indeed created an unprecedented degree of relative affluence, solved the crucial problem of steadiness of employment, and permitted improvements in the standards of living, leisure and social security on so broad a front as to reduce traditional class conflicts to marginal proportions. Yet this tremendous progress has been achieved at the price of a concentration on individual material advantage and been accompanied by the loss of a sense of common purpose, as first the traditional certainties of religious faith and then the substitutes offered by national loyalties were undermined; and the moral sensitivity of the young is shocked by the contrast between the intense effort

devoted by their elders to the pursuit of minor individual advantages or to expenditure for national military power on one side, and their lack of concern for the suffering of the marginal poor inside and the undernourished majority of mankind outside the industrial world on the other. The result is that many of them perceive an acute moral conflict between the ideals they have been taught and the competitive conformism into which they are expected to grow -- a conflict all the more insoluble because the society which they reject as empty is technically well-functioning and is apparently accepted without question by the large majority of adults. Now where intolerable moral conflict is not confined to individuals but expresses a crisis of civilization, the response has always been an upsurge of utopian beliefs -- a collective escape into the dream of a perfect society where every conflict would be solved in advance. The difference this time is that we are dealing with a utopianism inspired not by hope, but by despair: that is the ultimate reason for its lack of a time perspective, its irrationality and violence.

As for the social locus of the revolt, just as a turn towards total rejection of the Western model is most likely to occur among those non-Western nations that experience the most discouraging difficulties in their effort at modernization, so a radical denial of the need for material effort and discipline appears to prove most attractive to those strata of Western youth that have remained longest and furthest removed from the productive process -- be it as students from upper- and middle-class families or as under-educated members of minority groups who find themselves virtually unemployable through no fault of their own. Indulgence in pipedreams about the effortless abundance possible in the "post-industrial society" is most natural for those who have either been preserved from any contact with the productive sources of our relative affluence by the economic security of their parents, or have been barred from both those sources and their benefits by the underprivileged position of theirs. Karl Marx once pointed out that while the (nonproductive) proletariat of ancient Rome lived on society, modern capitalist society lived on its (industrial) proletariat. But the "internal proletariat" that is coming to be as disaffected from Western

civilization as some parts of its "external proletariat" does not consist of the industrial workers for whom Marx reserved the term: it is a "proletariat" in the ancient Roman sense, divorced from production but convinced that society owes it a living, and willing only to supplement the publicly supplied bread by providing its own circuses. For today as in Rome, the only forms of separate collective action open to a group that cannot withdraw its productive contribution, because it makes none, are highly emotional and violent. The neo-Bakuninism of the "New Left" appears to be the ideological expression of this transfer of the revolutionary mission from the industrial working class to the neo-Roman proletariat of our time; and as its purely destructive forms of action repel all productive sectors of society but attract its marginal and semi-criminal elements, the danger of its degeneration into a movement of the Lumpenproletariat becomes manifest.

There remains the question of the political prospects of these new movements. In terms of "power politics," I do not rate their chances of success very high; that is indeed implied in what I have described as their lack of rationality. Because of Maoist irrationality, China seems to have made very little progress in the last decade, except on the narrowest sector of nuclear weapons; and it will not become an effective model of development so long as it remains Maoist in this sense. Nor has the model of Castroism, and the strategy of small guerrilla bands starting operations regardless of social and political conditions, gained much influence in Latin America or shown much promise of doing so in the foreseeable future -- unless widespread failures of development give them a chance. Finally, today's campus rebels are not, like the student movements of Tsarist Russia or Weimar Germany or British India, the forerunners of a political revolution: they do not operate in stagnant or politically oppressed societies and are not the articulate expression of the inarticulate mood of large masses of people. Moreover, for all the traits of kinship we have mentioned, the "New Left" students are not fascists -- and Bakuninists have never and nowhere taken power; indeed they would not kno what to do with it.

But the danger to Western society from these new movements is nevertheless serious. It is not a Third World bloc abroad or revolution at home; it is destruction, decay and barbarization. The real threat is not that Mao will be able to overrun Asia or that Castro will revolutionize Latin America; it is that overpopulation and hunger, indigenous governmental incompetence and Western self-satisfied indifference will cause the festering sores of despair, political instability and violence to spread. Again, the real menace within the West is not that young extremists will "take over"; they cannot even take over the universities. But they can paralyze and in some cases destroy them by first destroying the climate of tolerance and rational discourse which is the breath of academic life; they can deprive our societies of an important part of the well-trained and loyal elites needed for the steady renewal of administration and economic management, of research and education; and they can create a backlash of police brutality and right wing extremism which will in effect help them to obstruct the working of democracy and the constructive solution of urgent problems.

I do not, of course, know any simple answer to these problems, any magic prescription for coping with them. All I should like to state in conclusion is that, in dealing with the danger constituted by the new type of revolutionary movements, it is wrong -- even more wrong than it was with the old type of Communist movements -- to be obsessed with "the enemy" as if he were a devil suddenly appearing out of nowhere, a diabolus ex machina. The forces of destruction have, of course, to be resisted; civilization cannot be defended by surrendering to violence. But this is only the minor part of the task. Above all, civilization must be defended by upholding and renewing its standards in action, by combining a faith in its values with the determination to apply them constructively in a changing world -- and therefore, to make sacrifices for them -- inside and outside the West. Only if we can restore hope by doing that will the West survive; otherwise, it will succumb to barbarization -- and that means, as the whole of history is there to teach us, not to some particular barbarian ideology, movement or tribe, but to its own failure.