

PROPAGANDA AND COMMUNICATION IN WORLD HISTORY

VOLUME II

Emergence of Public Opinion
in the West

edited by

Harold D. Lasswell

Daniel Lerner

Hans Speier

AN EAST-WEST CENTER BOOK ㊦

Published for the East-West Center by

The University Press of Hawaii

Honolulu

The editors

HAROLD D. LASSWELL (1902–1978) was one of the foremost political theorists of our time. A past president of the American Political Science Association, and co-director of the Policy Sciences Center in New York City, Lasswell taught at universities around the world and was professor emeritus at Yale University.

DANIEL LERNER is Ford Professor of International Communication and Sociology at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is the author of many books and papers, including the classic *Passing of Traditional Society* (1958).

HANS SPEIER is Robert M. MacIver Professor Emeritus in Political Science and Sociology at the University of Massachusetts and an honorary member of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie. He is the author of many books, written in English and German, in the fields of foreign affairs, sociology, and communication.

Copyright © 1980 by the East-West Center
All rights reserved

Manufactured in the United States of America

"The Enlightenment as a Communication Universe" is adapted and expanded by Peter Gay from *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, Vol. 1, by Peter Gay. Copyright © 1966 by Peter Gay. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

"Millenarianism as a Revolutionary Force" by Guenter Lewy is reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press from Guenter Lewy's *Religion and Revolution*. Copyright © 1974 by Oxford University Press.

"Thoughts on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom" by Andrei D. Sakharov, and "Appendix: People Mentioned," appeared in *The New York Times*, 22 July 1968. Copyright © 1968 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted by permission.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

Emergence of public opinion in the West.

(Propaganda and communication in world history ; v. 2)

"An East-West Center book."

Includes index.

1. Public opinion—History. 2. Propaganda—History.
3. Communication in politics—History. 4. Social movements—History. I. Lasswell, Harold Dwight, 1902– II. Lerner, Daniel. III. Speier, Hans, 1905– IV. Series.

HM258.P74 vol. 2 [HM261] 301.14s [301.15'4'09]

ISBN 0-8248-0504-6

79-18790

3 THE EAST-WEST CENTER—officially known as the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West—is a national educational institution established in Hawaii by the U.S. Congress in 1960 to promote better relations and understanding between the United States and the nations of Asia and the Pacific through cooperative study, training, and research. The Center is administered by a public, nonprofit corporation whose international Board of Governors consists of distinguished scholars, business leaders, and public servants.

Each year more than 1,500 men and women from many nations and cultures participate in Center programs that seek cooperative solutions to problems of mutual consequence to East and West. Working with the Center's multidisciplinary and multicultural staff, participants include visiting scholars and researchers; leaders and professionals from the academic, government, and business communities; and graduate degree students, most of whom are enrolled at the University of Hawaii. For each Center participant from the United States, two participants are sought from the Asian and Pacific area.

Center programs are conducted by institutes addressing problems of communication, culture learning, environment and policy, population, and resource systems. A limited number of "open" grants are available to degree scholars and research fellows whose academic interests are not encompassed by institute programs.

The U.S. Congress provides basic funding for Center programs and a variety of awards to participants. Because of the cooperative nature of Center programs, financial support and cost-sharing are also provided by Asian and Pacific governments, regional agencies, private enterprise and foundations. The Center is on land adjacent to and provided by the University of Hawaii.

East-West Center Books are published by The University Press of Hawaii to further the Center's aims and programs.

PROPAGANDA AND COMMUNICATION
IN WORLD HISTORY

VOLUME I The Symbolic Instrument in Early Times

VOLUME II Emergence of Public Opinion in the West

VOLUME III A Pluralizing World in Formation

These three volumes are dedicated to

JEAN LERNER

our indispensable collaborator

who, with insight, skill, and good cheer,

did whatever needed to be done

through the years of these studies

CONTENTS

Preface	xi
THE ENLARGING SYMBOLIC OF THE MODERN WEST	
1. The Renaissance and the Broadening of Communication <i>William Bouwsma</i>	3
2. The Impact of the Reformation Era on Communication and Propaganda <i>Nancy L. Roelker</i>	41
3. The Enlightenment as a Communication Universe <i>Peter Gay</i>	85
4. The Modern History of Political Fanaticism: A Search for the Roots <i>Zev Barbu</i>	112
THE SYMBOLIC IN WORLD REVOLUTIONARY PROCESSES	
5. The Rise of Public Opinion <i>Hans Speier</i>	147
6. Millenarianism as a Revolutionary Force <i>Guenter Lewy</i>	168
7. Karl Marx—The Propagandist as Prophet <i>Saul K. Padover</i>	210
8. Communist Propaganda <i>William E. Griffith</i>	239

SYMBOL MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTINUING SPREAD
OF CRISIS POLITICS

9. The Communication of Hidden Meaning 261
Hans Speier
10. The Truth in Hell: Maurice Joly on Modern
Despotism 301
Hans Speier
11. Selections from *Dialogue in Hell Between Machiavelli
and Montesquieu* 317
Maurice Joly
12. Deception—Its Decline and Revival in
International Conflict 339
Barton Whaley

MOBILIZATION FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AND
SECURITY

13. The Revolutionary Elites and World Symbolism 371
Daniel Lerner
14. Changing Arenas and Identities in World Affairs 395
Harold R. Isaacs
15. Communication, Development, and Power 424
Lucian W. Pye
16. Rhetoric and Law in International Political Organs 446
Oscar Schachter

NUCLEAR POWER: A COLLOQUY

17. War Department Release on New Mexico Test,
16 July 1945 463
18. Thoughts on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence and
Intellectual Freedom 471
Andrei D. Sakharov
19. The Chances for Peace 507
Hans Speier

- | | |
|--------------|-----|
| Contributors | 528 |
| Index | 531 |

VOLUME I: The Symbolic Instrument in Early Times

1. Introduction *The Editors*
2. Continuities in Communication from Early Man to Modern Times *Margaret Mead*
3. Early Mesopotamia 2500–1000 B.C. *Jacob J. Finkelstein*
4. Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires
A. Leo Oppenheim
5. Egyptian Civilization *John Wilson*
6. Indian Civilization *R. S. Sharma*
7. On the Spread of Buddhism to China *Arthur F. Wright*
8. Chinese Civilization *Arthur F. Wright*
9. Classical Civilization *John Ferguson*
10. Judaism: The Psychology of the Prophets *Max Weber*
11. Christian Missions in the Ancient World *Charles W. Forman*
12. Communication in Classical Islam *George Kirk*

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE: A COLLOQUY

13. The Modernization of Social Communication *Serif Mardin*
14. Ottoman Political Communication *Bruce McGowan*
15. Propaganda Functions of Poetry *Talat Sait Halman*
16. Communication Patterns in Centralized Empires
S. N. Eisenstadt
17. Western Civilization: The Middle Ages *Robert Brentano*

VOLUME III: A Pluralizing World in Formation

THE MULTIVALUE CONTEXT

1. Must Science Serve Political Power? *Harold D. Lasswell*
2. The Marriage of Science and Government *Jerome B. Wiesner*
3. Rising Expectations: Frustrations *Joseph J. Spengler*
4. The Respect Revolution: Freedom and Equality *Lewis M. Killian*
5. Love and Intimacy: Mass Media and Phallic Culture
Arnold A. Rogow

THE MULTIVARIATE PROCESS

6. The Language of Politics: General Trends in Content
Ithiel de Sola Pool
7. The Media Kaleidoscope: General Trends in the Channels
W. Phillips Davison

8. The Moving Target: General Trends in Audience Composition
L. John Martin
9. The Effects of Mass Media in an Information Era
Wilbur Schramm
10. The Social Effects of Communication Technology
Herbert Goldhamer

THE SYMBOLIC INSTRUMENT—RETROSPECTS AND PROSPECTS

11. The Historic Past of the Unconscious *Andrew Rolle*
12. Social Science and the Collectivization of Hubris
Joseph J. Spengler
13. The Emerging Social Structure of the World *Alex Inkeles*
14. The Future of World Communication and Propaganda
Harold D. Lasswell

PREFACE

In the world history of communication, the rise of Western civilization can be dated from the invention of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century. William Bouwsma's opening chapter shows that preparation for print began in the thirteenth century. The great Renaissance contribution to public, rather than elite, communication then shaped the development of print from the fifteenth through the seventeenth century. Maritime exploration and global colonization—in America conventionally dated from Columbus' voyage in 1492 to the landing of the Pilgrims in 1619—carried people from Europe around the world. They brought printed European messages with them.

The phases of communication history fit nicely with general historical periodization, which usually dates the rise of modern Western civilization with the transition from medievalism to the Renaissance in Europe. Accordingly, volume I ended with the Middle Ages and volume II begins with the Renaissance, focusing on the subsequent emergence of public opinion in the West. This sequence contributed to the transformation of stateways, thoughtways, and lifeways in the modern world.

Among the far-reaching reforms of the Renaissance and the Reformation was a shift from the Universal Latin of medievalism (a "universal" language shared by only a small elite in a few countries) to the "national" languages of the people. Much

of secular Renaissance literature was written in the vernacular. The Bible was translated into national languages everywhere; sermons were preached in German, French, English, and so forth; Luther's ninety-five theses were written in German. So effective was the New Word spread by the Reformation that the Catholic church soon followed suit by transforming much of its own communications into the vernacular. This process, which has continued from the Counter-Reformation to the present time, exemplifies a major communication strategy that has been characterized by Lasswell as "restriction by partial incorporation."

The Enlightenment took the history of communication in a new direction—to the secular "city of God" created by the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century. Their etiquette was French, but their ideas were deployed everywhere on the Old Continent and in the New World (Jefferson was their heritor and *The Federalist Papers* the fruit of their seed). If some of the new philosophers were deist, many of them were atheist and others were virulently antichurch. If they refrained from attacking religion, it was probably on the view attributed to Voltaire—that piety was good for "the common people" because it kept *vox populi* quiet. Themselves a cosmopolitan elite, the *philosophes* were cautious in politics and, as Peter Gay writes, indulged only in "gingerly treatment of the masses."

This was to change radically in the populist politics of the French Revolution. Even pre-Revolutionary Europe, as Hans Speier makes clear, was already promoting the rise of public opinion in many countries. In the post-Revolutionary century, roughly from the Congress of Vienna to World War I, radical politics in the form of secular (even "scientific") socialism claimed a large share of attention in Western communication. The successive chapters in the second part of this volume clarify the propaganda components of the historical process which hastened the spread of radical ideologies, both millenarian and Marxist. The global eruption of the latter in the Bolshevik Revolution, and its aftermath, are analyzed in chapters by Padover, Griffith, Speier, and Whaley.

A new era of crisis politics was inaugurated in Europe after World War I: dynasties fell; empires crumbled; and the coercive ideologues, whose "politics of the street" was amplified by the

mass media of print and radio, reached for and often grasped the reins of power. Communism in Russia was followed by Fascism in Italy, by Nazism in Germany, by Falangism in Spain, and by dozens of antidemocratic movements elsewhere.

The process of crisis politics was accelerated after World War II, when the European empires virtually disappeared and new nations emerged on the world stage. These changing arenas involved an arduous, and often violent, quest for new identities, national and personal, as discussed by Harold Isaacs. The aspirations and demands of the new nations are clarified by Lucian Pye. The world communication network was reshaped in significant ways, as described by Oscar Schachter, when the United Nations became the world forum for communication between the new nations and the old.

Over these struggles for terrestrial power hung the enigma of nuclear power: would it multiply the sources of energy that could benefit mankind, or would it destroy the human race? The three chapters assembled in our "nuclear colloquy" deal with this momentous question.

THE ENLARGING SYMBOLIC
OF THE MODERN WEST

1

THE RENAISSANCE AND THE BROADENING OF COMMUNICATION

WILLIAM BOUWSMA

The historical significance of the Renaissance, whether this term is taken to signify a cluster of cultural movements or a period of time variously defined for Italy and for northern Europe, has long been one of the classical problems of historical discussion. Much of this has been inconclusive, largely because it has been couched in excessively general terms. But recent scholarship has tended to focus on increasingly specific issues, with the result that scholars are more successful now than in the past in identifying particular areas of important innovation. Thus it has recently become apparent that the Renaissance occupies a crucial position in the development of theories about human communication and in the practical uses of communication for the promotion of concrete political and social goals. Behind these changes lay major transformations in political and social life, and at the same time they must be seen within the larger context of new values and attitudes toward human existence in general.

The importance of this development can be grasped only in the light of conceptions dominant in medieval culture. Two aspects of the situation at the beginning of the fourteenth century must be emphasized: that its vision of man and his relations with the world was largely appropriate to a fragmented agrarian society, and that it interpreted man's destiny in Christian terms

and proposed to coordinate all earthly matters to man's ultimate end.

For most men, the agricultural basis of life, with its dependence on the seasons and the eternal round of biological nature, had supplied some foundation in experience for a perception of reality as dependable regularity. Interruptions in the patterns of life, irregularity and disorder, were experienced as intrusions rather than as the normal condition of existence; they were literally perceived as special acts of God. At the same time the constant and trivial changes in the almost infinitely articulated mosaic of the feudal world, which lacked strong and relatively stable centers of political organization, stood in the way of any conception of linear and significant political development. Under these conditions earthly change seemed meaningless and, in the nature of things, unresponsive to deliberate efforts at transformation by men.

The high degree of abstraction in much of medieval thought corresponded, then, to a world in which experience displayed a high degree of regularity, so that man could generalize about it and identify reality as a set of objective and eternal verities relieved of the need for empirical verification. This vision of the world also fitted a conception of man, inherited from Greek philosophy rather than from the Judaeo-Christian past, that identified man's essence with his rational intellect, which in turn was understood to have a direct access and correspondence to an external reality created by God for man's edification and use. Thus the order man discerned in the universe was assigned an objective existence, and the supreme function of the intellect was seen as the identification of the abstract pattern underlying all reality, and the elaboration and development of its ultimate implications by the rigorous application of logic. The characteristic products of such intellectual activity were the comprehensive and utterly consistent systems of scholastic thought resting on a metaphysical base and corresponding in both method and substance (if not identical) with the equally systematic and objective truths of theology.

This conception of intellectual activity made scholastic thought fundamentally passive in relation to the world. Thought was directed, at its highest level, to contemplation rather than to worldly action; by the same token, the primary

function of communication was to convey a species of ultimate, systematic, objective, and rational wisdom for human admiration. The world, on the other hand, appeared worthy of attention only when it obstructed the elaboration and dissemination of this ultimate wisdom or seemed incongruent with it. The world then needed to be reminded of the ideal structure of reality to which it was obligated to conform, and on occasion it also needed to be disciplined. Other types of communication, such as were required to hold together even a relatively simple society, commanded only minimal attention and little esteem.

These conceptions found further support in a characteristic social structure, and especially in the social role assumed by the clergy. Society was itself conceived of as an order, descending from God himself through a hierarchy of social ranks, that was also an expression of the central principles of order inherent in all reality. Wisdom therefore was to be proclaimed, and conformity to its prescriptions enforced from above. Its supreme representative in this world was, of course, the pope; those entrusted with the discovery, elaboration, preservation, and transmission of wisdom were primarily members of the clergy, a specialized group of intellectuals, generally university men and members of religious orders under the special protection of the pope, who were conceived to be closer to ultimate truth precisely because of their separation from and superiority to the world. The abstract, technical, and esoteric language they employed served to emphasize both the subtlety and sublimity of wisdom and their own superior status, on which all other men were presumed to depend.

I

But even as this ideal model was achieving its fullest articulation in the thirteenth century, it was being undermined by forces of political and social change already long at work. In major parts of Europe the feudal mosaic had been giving way in a slow process of centralization that was eventually to culminate with the emergence of city states and powerful monarchies, as well as other types of territorial states, that had increasingly clear geographical definition, a relatively long life, and individual patterns of development that appeared to refute the assumptions that change is meaningless and that only the abstract and gen-

eral is real. And as these entities claimed an equality of status despite obvious inequalities of power, their existence tended to dissolve the notion that reality is necessarily organized hierarchically.

For men whose attitudes were defined in this new atmosphere, the real world was more and more the absorbing world of their own daily experience, not—as it now often appeared—the coldly impersonal and rigid world of scholastic abstraction. Experience presented itself to them not as dependable regularity based on the universal and objective order of things, but as a series of unpredictable and novel events. From this perspective, scholastic systems seemed not so much false as merely irrelevant; the real world was not, after all, intellectually apprehensible in the old manner but fraught with contradiction and even moral ambiguity. It could be made to yield a kind of sense only in more modest personal ways, in the context of individual needs and particular situations. Truth itself now looked different and required new, more concrete, and more flexible forms of expression.

Furthermore the problem had a serious practical dimension. Survival in the arena of politics and commerce depended above all on adaptation to novelty, on flexibility and improvisation; any insistence on the universal application of general principles threatened these practical virtues. In social life itself the notion of hierarchy was less and less compelling as men, driven by profit or ambition, sought to rise in the world through their own talents. In addition, towns and other secular-political organizations were dominated by laymen, whose authority, dignity, and thus political effectiveness were threatened by claims of clerical superiority. Increasingly well educated, self-conscious, and assertive, such men required a new culture of which they would themselves be the major representatives. This new culture, in contrast to the old, would need to deal directly with the concrete world of common experience in all its color, variety, and change. It would be required, too, to serve practical needs; and because these were increasingly perceived as relative to time and place, it would no longer be expected to reflect the sublime consistency of the older patterns. And among its other obligations, it would have to serve the needs of social control in a new climate in which reliable guidance could no longer be accepted from above.

These stipulations were generally met by the culture of the Renaissance, with its antipathy to abstract system building, its compartmentalization of life, its secularism (though this should by no means be interpreted as a hostility to religion, which Renaissance thought chose rather to define in its own way), its tendencies to naturalism, its relativism and skepticism. Integrally related to all of these was a set of novel views about the nature and uses of communication, which was now conceived to be no longer primarily a means of conveying an ultimate wisdom, but rather the essential bond among men in society. The significance of the Renaissance here lies first of all in its changing sense of what is communicable, but equally in its conception of the uses of communication to meet the needs of social existence. For the new age, communication could no longer transmit ultimate truths, for these—as experience demonstrated—seemed beyond all human comprehension. It had, if it would communicate anything, to deal with lesser things, base itself on the familiar world of concrete experience apprehensible to ordinary men, speak in a common language they could understand, and attempt to serve their various and changing needs.

II

This is the general significance of Renaissance humanism, with its repudiation of scholastic discourse and its effort to revive and adapt to contemporary uses the rhetorical theory and practice of antiquity. If humanism is defined simply as the study of the classics, it must be acknowledged that medieval culture also included a strong humanistic element. Vergil and Cicero, in addition to Aristotle, were widely read in earlier centuries; the *Summa Theologica* and the *Divine Comedy* bear witness in different ways to the seriousness with which the literature and the insights of antiquity were regarded. But such uses of the antique past as one encounters in Thomas Aquinas and Dante were quite different from those of the Renaissance. For such medieval thinkers the classics were primarily guides in the pursuit of a perennial philosophy ultimately independent of any particular culture. Once identified, this philosophy was to be fused with the equally perennial revelations of the Christian faith into a single, universally valid system of eternal truth. Seen in this way classical literature was of small value for itself, as a splendid

creation of men; it was likewise of small importance to examine it in its integrity, as a communication out of the past based on the common humanity of mankind. Renaissance humanism was a novelty because it approached the classics in a different spirit. It disclaimed the reduction of classical themes to a system of final wisdom and sought instead to appropriate the works of ancient literature in all their human individuality.

The characteristic medieval preoccupation with the expression of ultimate truth had been reflected in an emphasis within the medieval arts curriculum that was to make education one of the major areas of conflict between Renaissance humanists and schoolmen. Based on the traditional division of learning into the seven liberal arts, which in turn were grouped in the literary *trivium* (grammar, logic, rhetoric) and the quantitative *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music), this curriculum had developed a decided preference for logic in the course of the thirteenth century. There was a corresponding distaste for rhetoric (except in sermons) as a sophistical technique likely to falsify truth under the influence of human interests and sinful passions; grammar was largely a tool for getting at the meaning of texts for logical evaluation. Only logic seemed useful to get at the truth. This emphasis led, within the classical corpus, to a preference for the ancient philosophers, whose distrust of poetry was shared by their medieval followers. The humanists of the Renaissance, on the other hand, often identified themselves as poets, that is, as artists of verbal expression.

Nevertheless Renaissance humanism, as it first emerged in fourteenth-century Italy, owed much to medieval classicism, from which it inherited a body of classical texts and an initial respect for antiquity itself. The needs that humanism met also had developed only gradually. The precocious urbanization of northern and central Italy had been gathering force since at least the tenth century, in a process that required novel and increasingly complex social organization, and with it the less tangible bonds of community. Italian towns needed governments capable of maintaining the support of their inhabitants; agencies to maintain order, levy taxes, correspond with other governments, and keep records; lawyers and notaries to meet the needs of both private and public business. Under such conditions talent for both oral and written expression was essential; thus in 1284 a public official in Reggio had to be dismissed because of a

speech defect.¹ Expressive gifts were especially required among notaries, representing the traditional *ars dictaminis*, who prepared documents and wrote letters for a variety of clients,² and among lawyers, who represented them in the courts. The importance of these occupations in both the backgrounds and the development of humanism is, indeed, only now widely recognized. It is significant that the famous law school at Bologna originated as an academy of rhetoric, that law was the favorite discipline of Italian students, and that lawyers were in a unique position to perceive the value of eloquence for practical life; lawyers and notaries, organized in a single guild, were also unusually prominent in public affairs.³ Meanwhile, as town chanceries became increasingly active, their officials were more and more concerned with the effectiveness of literary style. Collections of their correspondence began to circulate as stylistic models before the end of the thirteenth century.⁴

Renaissance humanism was a product of the combination of this practical development with an interest in the classics, which had previously been more lively in northern Europe, especially in France, than in Italy. Two features of the Italian scene made Italy unusually receptive to classicism. One was the fact that scholastic culture had relatively shallow roots in Italy, where it was introduced, chiefly in the schools of the religious orders, only toward the end of the thirteenth century. In addition the history and geography of Italy suggested that Italians were the legitimate heirs of ancient, and in particular of Latin, culture; the fact that ancient literature had met the needs of a society based on cities did not escape attention. Indeed, classical interests of a very different sort from those exhibited by the schoolmen were already manifesting themselves in Italy before the end of the thirteenth century, notably in Padua and Florence, where public officials had begun to imitate Latin models in composing letters and orations.

In Padua this interest produced the first prominent humanist of a Renaissance type in Albertino Mussato (1262–1329), a notary who defended poetry as a source of wisdom against the exclusive claims of philosophy and theology; exhibited a novel concern with the changing world of human affairs by writing history modeled on Livy, Caesar, and Sallust, and a Latin tragedy attacking tyranny; and influenced chancery style and education in Venice as well as in his native city.⁵ In Florence the

early fusion of classical and civic interests was represented by Brunetto Latini (about 1220–1294), who studied the rhetoric of Cicero in order to teach his contemporaries, in the words of the chronicler Giovanni Villani, “how to speak well, and how to guide and rule our republic according to policy.”⁶

These interests were much stimulated by fourteenth-century Italian contacts with France, especially through Avignon during the long papal residence there. Study of the classics, though submerged by scholastic emphasis on logic, had never disappeared in France, and works of ancient literature were more readily available there than in Italy. They were especially numerous in the papal library at Avignon, which was therefore a center for copying manuscripts and of trade in books.⁷ These resources were notably exploited by Francesco Petrarca, known as Petrarch (1304–1374), greatest of the fourteenth-century Italian humanists, who was soon to be regarded as the father of the humanist movement.

Petrarch anticipated most of the themes that were to make Renaissance humanism into a movement of major historical importance. He attacked the schoolmen of his day for their unintelligibility and for an abstract intellectuality irrelevant to the moral and political needs of men.⁸ But his sense of these needs led him to seek a remedy. Regarding his own time as peculiarly wretched, and thus animated by a nostalgic admiration for antiquity as a happier age, he attempted to master Latin literature as a whole. In this interest he collected manuscripts, improved texts, and modeled his own style on the ancients, with marked benefits for the clarity and—as his interests were both broad and lively, touching on many aspects of human experience and the world—for the range of both Latin prose and Italian lyric verse.

Language, under Petrarch’s influence, became a more flexible and effective instrument, and what it could communicate was vastly enlarged. Thus his classicism was also related to a new conception of the uses of human discourse. Words, for Petrarch, realized their highest potentiality not in the revelation of an ultimate wisdom, for he was largely skeptical of man’s ability to penetrate into such matters, but in their use as a tool for a variety of concrete human purposes. He had himself taken occasional service with princes, undertaking diplomatic missions on which he delivered official orations; he was also a reformer and

moralist, and valued language for its ability to persuade men to virtue.

With these preoccupations, he discovered the rhetorical doctrines of Cicero and employed them to meet the needs of the new social and political order. For Cicero rhetoric had been the supreme art, supreme in the first place because it drew on every other art and every branch of knowledge, so that it also implied the broadest possible education, in contrast to the narrowness of the schools. This pointed ultimately to a new cultural ideal; the universal man of the Renaissance is foreshadowed in the Ciceronian idea of the orator. But above all, rhetoric was supreme for Cicero because, unlike abstract philosophy, it conceived of man as not merely or even primarily an intellectual being; and because it appealed to other dimensions of his personality as well, rhetoric alone could advance truth to its full realization in action. The Ciceronian subordination of wisdom to action evidently pointed to a view of truth and of man's access to final knowledge quite different from that of the schoolmen; it also pointed to a different audience.

For in the world of action, communication had to be directed generally to the understanding of ordinary men and thus to employ their language rather than an esoteric technical vocabulary; it remained incomplete if it was apprehensible only to a specialized elite. As Cicero had written in his *De oratore*, "Whereas in all other arts that is most excellent which is farthest removed from the understanding and mental capacity of the untrained, in oratory the cardinal sin is to depart from the language of everyday life, and the usage approved by the sense of the community." Whereas the humanists had begun by writing chiefly in Latin, this revived Ciceronian position would eventually compel Latin to give way before the various vernaculars of Europe. In addition, as the common man and his community had variable and changing needs, these doctrines implied that communication, as an informative and persuasive act, should be capable of assuming many forms and of pointing in various directions that might not assume, as a whole, any consistent pattern. Thus wisdom itself tended to assume a practical and relative character; it became a function of social needs.⁹

All of this was conveyed by Petrarch to his contemporaries,

although its full appreciation took several generations. In addition Petrarch was largely responsible for a new quality of historical perspective that involved what might be described as an ability to communicate with the past as the past. For from the contrast between his own time and the age of Cicero, between which he saw that there had intervened a Dark Age, he perceived the profound disjunction between the present and the past. No longer could the pronouncements of ancient worthies be regarded as expressions of a perennial truth applicable to all men in any period, so that one could regard Cicero as an oracle for every age. The ancients had to be regarded as products of a different time and different conditions, and to understand them required not simply intellectual effort but a strenuous act of imagination working on the authentic sources thrown up from the past. This insight may not have been altogether consistent with Petrarch's insistence on the relevance of Cicero, but it was based on a new and fruitful recognition of the reality of change and the individuality of particular cultures. It meant that figures of the past could now be approached as complex human beings in all their concreteness rather than as abstract types.¹⁰ It also facilitated the development of a new type of discourse, based on the importance of change, that was to culminate in the later Renaissance with the great histories of Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and Paolo Sarpi.

The fourteenth century, however, was still ambivalent in the presence of these novel conceptions, which were in such radical conflict with traditional values. In addition the peculiar uncertainties of later fourteenth-century life, the demographic catastrophes initiated by the Black Death in 1348, prolonged economic depression, internal disorders, and foreign wars, made the public world whose needs humanism was calculated to meet appear singularly unattractive, and the security afforded by the older patterns of thought constantly alluring.¹¹ Petrarch himself shared in this ambivalence, often giving expression to the attractions of a life of solitude devoted to the pursuit of a reliable abstract wisdom. Similar uncertainties may be discerned in his followers of the generation after his death. In Florence, which was destined eventually to give particular expression to Petrarch's more profound influence, his immediate followers were often the partisans of a merely academic classicism in which the

Petrarchan love of antiquity was detached from contemporary life and converted into narrow philological scholarship.¹²

But the most important figure of this period, Coluccio Salutati, although he wavered between the attractions of the contemplative life and civic responsibility, nevertheless served Florence well through a series of crises. A professional notary in various towns before coming to Florence, he was chancellor of the city from 1375 till his death in 1406; in this important post, despite his moments of doubt about the values of this world, he applied the humanism of Petrarch directly to civil life. The eloquence of his official correspondence, which reflected his wide knowledge of classical authors, made a profound impression on contemporaries. For perhaps the first time in European history, the pen seemed mightier than the sword; the tyrant of Milan is reported to have said that Salutati's writings were worth more than a thousand horsemen. Against the challenge to Florence from this ruler he wrote persuasively of the city he served as the heir to republican Rome in the defense of civic freedom, which he praised as the necessary condition of human virtue and high culture.

In a famous tract Salutati praised law above medicine because laws are directed to "the conservation of society, the common good and political felicity," a more important end than the systematic knowledge of nature on which medicine was based. Against this background he elaborated on the function and importance of rhetoric as the source of eloquence. This art alone, he declared, made it possible "to control the motions of the mind, to turn your hearer where you will, and to lead him back to the place from which you moved him, pleasantly and with love."¹³ Only speech made it possible for one man to help another; to it therefore were owed all the benefits of society. Such sentiments did not prevent him from expressing quite different views on other occasions, so that the identification of his own convictions has been the source of some controversy; but such adaptability to a variety of audiences or even to one's own changing moods was at the heart of rhetoric, as it was not with the logic of the schoolmen.

In Florence, the uncertainties that had characterized the fourteenth century in the presence of the new culture of humanism were resolved only in the course of the prolonged crisis of Flor-

entire independence provoked by the aggressive expansionism of Milan in the years before and after 1400, together with a similar danger from Naples some years later. In this period Salutati was succeeded as the major figure in the humanist movement by an even greater humanist, Leonardo Bruni, under whose leadership humanism was at last largely accepted as the basis of the new culture required by citizenship in a free and independent republic. In 1414 Bruni became chancellor of Florence, and in this position he both applied in practice the Ciceronian rhetorical theory of Petrarch and Salutati and developed some of its deeper implications. Above all, in the course of defending the values represented by Florence, he celebrated the moral effects of the civic life of free communities, in which he discerned a uniquely favorable environment for the release of human energy and the realization of man's potentialities. In Florence, he proclaimed in one of his most famous orations, a typical expression of the rhetorician's art:

Equal liberty exists for all . . . ; the hope of winning public honors and ascending is the same for all, provided they possess industry and natural gifts and lead a serious-minded and respected way of life; for our commonwealth requires virtue and probity in its citizens. Whoever has these qualifications is thought to be of sufficiently noble birth to participate in the government of the republic. . . . This, then, is true liberty, this equality in a commonwealth: not to have to fear violence or wrong-doing from anybody, and to enjoy equality among citizens before the law and in the participation in public office. . . . But now it is marvellous to see how powerful this access to public office, once it is offered to a free people, proves to be in awakening the talents of the citizens. For where men are given the hope of attaining honor in the state, they take courage and raise themselves to a higher plane; where they are deprived of that hope, they grow idle and lose their strength. Therefore, since such hope and opportunity are held out in our commonwealth, we need not be surprised that talent and industry distinguish themselves in the highest degree.

The amiable sentiments conveyed in this passage illustrate nicely, however, the ease with which the new humanist rhetoric could be converted to the uses of political propaganda. And

meanwhile other humanists were employed by the tyrants of the age, for example Conversino (1343-1408) at Padua and Decembrio (1392-1477) at the Visconti court in Milan. Predictably, such men praised not liberty but the security, prosperity, and efficiency that were allegedly guaranteed by despotic rule, under which most men would be freed of all public responsibility and could therefore devote themselves to merely private concerns. The ideal for human life implied here suggests that such uses of rhetoric were in the long run subversive of rhetoric itself, understood as public communication for social ends. So too does the fact that arguments for autocracy tended to be inserted into a framework of traditional conceptions such as God's monarchy over the universe, the ultimate model, to which, as it was maintained, princely rule alone conformed.

Thus humanism under the patronage of despots could not bring out the full implications of the rhetorical tradition. It pointed ultimately to the imposition of a stable order from above in which, in the end, rhetorical appeal would presumably become superfluous. Only in the more open society supplied by a republic could humanism take on its full significance.¹⁴ For Bruni the freedom of Florence made her the center of a new culture, nourished by the revival of classical letters and based on the needs and capacities of citizens to communicate with one another, for the rest of Italy (and by implication, perhaps the rest of the world) to imitate. That Bruni was right is suggested by the fact that Florence, rather than Milan, was the major center of Renaissance culture.

These values and attitudes shaped Bruni's major work, his *History of the Florentine People*, composed between 1415 and 1429, which, as a *history*, reflected both the new historical perspective and the concreteness, the concern with the changing world of human affairs, and the flexibility of the new humanist culture. It had a practical and patriotic purpose; Bruni stated immediately his intention "to write down the deeds of the Florentine people, their weighty struggles at home and abroad, their renowned deeds in peace and in war." At the same time, the work is notable for its concern with truth (a matter of major importance if a history is to provide useful guidance to its readers), its critical rigor, and its psychological insight and expository skill, qualities that reflect both rhetorical training and

a practical sense of the interconnection of all events and their human actors that may be seen as the fruit of Bruni's own political experience. Bruni's *History of the Florentine People* is the first great work of modern historiography.¹⁵

The political meaning of humanism is further revealed in Bruni's anticipations of Machiavelli. His work did not merely glorify, in a general way, the pluralistic values he associated with the freedom of Florence. It also celebrated specifically the relativistic political ends with which the new rhetorical culture was associated. "I confess," Bruni wrote, "that I am moved by what men think good: to extend one's borders, to increase one's power, to extol the splendor and glory of the city, to look after its utility and security."¹⁶ Like Machiavelli, he eschewed any consideration of ultimate values; his moralism depends only on the welfare and survival of the state. It was primarily in this context that rhetoric could flourish.

Two other figures, who were less closely identified with political life and therefore perhaps in a better position to consider other dimensions of rhetorical culture, will deepen this sketch of the implications of Italian humanism. Vittorino da Feltre sought to embody the ideals of humanistic culture in a new educational ideal, and Lorenzo Valla, the most penetrating thinker among the humanists of the Italian Renaissance, expounded its more profound implications.

One of the major expressions and vehicles of humanist influence was a new model for education that aimed, through classical study, to mold men into well-rounded, articulate, and therefore generally effective personalities for life in the world; and many humanists served as teachers in schools and universities or as private tutors. Traditional education was largely defective, from the standpoint of the new culture, because it was excessively specialized and professional and failed to meet general social needs. Before the end of the fourteenth century, Pier Paolo Vergerio, a professor at Padua, had advanced a new ideal of education in his treatise *Of Virtuous Life*, which proposed a curriculum based on the study of classical moral philosophy as the theory of virtue, history as its illustration through practical example, and rhetoric as the art of moving other men to virtue. Shortly afterward, these suggestions were strengthened with the translation into Latin of Plutarch's essay on education, and

above all with the discovery of Quintilian's *Education of an Orator*, which, with Cicero on the same subject, was long regarded as the supreme authority on education.

One of the earliest efforts to put these conceptions into practice was the school opened in 1423 by Vittorino da Feltre for the education of children at the court of Mantua. Vittorino was clear about the general aims of his instruction. "Not everyone," he declared, "is called to be a lawyer, a physician, a philosopher, to live in the public eye, nor has everyone outstanding gifts of natural capacity, but all of us are created for the life of social duty, all are responsible for the personal influence which goes forth from us." The curriculum he devised largely followed the conceptions of Vergerio. He focused on the Latin classics for the moral instruction of his younger students, adding Greek ethical philosophy as they became more advanced; he gave marked attention to ancient history as ethics teaching by example; and he gave a notable emphasis to rhetoric as the art by which moral principles can be made active in the world. His concern with the formation of the entire personality for a useful life in society also led him to pay a novel attention to physical education. Vittorino's influential example assisted in the spread of the humanist ideal of a general education based on the classics that would be standard among the ruling groups in Europe for several centuries.¹⁷

The achievement of Lorenzo Valla (1405–1457) reveals how philological scholarship, long associated with humanism in its concern with the meaning and power of words and the reconstruction of authentic classical texts, could, if more rigorously pursued, produce results of which earlier humanists had scarcely dreamed. A more systematic scholar and a more acute critic of scholastic method than the Florentines, who had never clearly reconciled their interest in the imitation of classical models with the growing realization that culture is bound to particular conditions of time and place, Valla undertook the exact restoration of ancient Latin on scientific principles in his *Elegancies of the Latin Language* (1444). The ultimate consequence of this achievement was to reduce Latin to a historical artifact, to the considerable shock of those humanists who still yearned for a perennial authority in the antique past. Valla did much the same in his application of more careful philological scholarship

to Roman law, whose relevance to the conditions of modern life seemed doubtful once it was analyzed in terms of its concrete meaning to its own time. And the same talents revealed that important documents long relied on for understanding the Christian past, or, as in his treatment of the Donation of Constantine, for supporting the material claims of the church, were spurious. Thus a fuller appreciation of historical change and its application even to language, which meant in effect turning humanist theory upon itself, had the most radical implications for a wide range of cherished beliefs. Indeed, Valla went even further toward the dissolution of the certainties of the new humanist culture. In *On Pleasure* he suggested that the moral philosophy of the ancients had no value as preparation for the Christian life; in this celebrated (and to contemporaries scandalous) dialogue, he implied that neither Stoicism nor Epicureanism was consistent with Christianity, which had to rest entirely on faith. Yet this position was also turned to the advantage of rhetoric. Because Valla saw Christianity as based on the will rather than on the understanding, religion too depended on oratory rather than on philosophy, for only oratory could speak to the heart, galvanize the will, and transform lives. Valla's influence was chiefly technical, but he is useful in revealing the radical implications in the humanist view of language.¹⁸

The concrete possibilities in the humanist movement may be illustrated finally with another celebrated figure, Eneas Silvius Piccolomini (1405–1464), who in 1458 became Pope Pius II, largely in recognition of the value of humanist attainments even in so traditional an institution as the papacy. For churchmen too required secretaries skilled in the new rhetoric; and as a government of a special kind, the papacy, like other governments, found the art of oratory indispensable. Born near Siena, Eneas received a classical education there and achieved some fame as a poet. He then served as secretary—a normal employment for a young humanist—to a number of cardinals at the Council of Basel, eventually becoming secretary to the council itself; meanwhile he performed numerous diplomatic missions. In due time he passed into the service of the emperor in Vienna in a similar capacity, and finally, after a reconciliation with the pope, he was appointed to a secretarial post at the Curia in Rome. His engaging commentaries, dictated toward the end of his life and themselves a notable example of rhetorical art, describe a career

of increasing success as an orator and diplomat, which found its ultimate recognition in his election to the highest post in Christendom. From this lofty position he employed his persuasive powers to stimulate Europe to wage a general crusade against the infidel. He was not a thoughtful man, and he was indifferent to those broader implications of humanist culture that were so antithetical to the old order of which the papacy was apex and guardian. But he makes clear that, as the art of effective communication, rhetoric had many uses.¹⁹

Humanism provoked vast enthusiasm in Italy during the first half of the fifteenth century, above all because it corresponded both to a new vision of man in the world and to a variety of political and social needs. But in the latter part of the century the conditions to which it corresponded were changing, especially in Florence, the capital of early humanist culture. Although the forms of republican government were preserved, the veiled despotism of the Medici steadily reduced the actual participation of citizens in Florentine political life. Before the end of the century, Italy as a whole had been converted into a battleground for the armies of France and Spain, great powers with which the smaller Italian states felt helpless to cope. By 1530 Italy, with Spain triumphant, had largely fallen under Habsburg domination; in the following decades the papacy of the Counter-Reformation embarked on an increasingly emphatic reassertion of the traditional principles against which humanism had been directed, principles that generations of insecurity had made to seem more and more attractive.²⁰

Thus, although oratory retained its value for diplomacy and propaganda, the public communication that rhetoric had facilitated steadily declined in significance. The eloquent sermons of Savonarola, which mingled civic and religious sentiment in their appeal to the people of Florence, and the republican enthusiasm, the concern with civic virtue, and the historicism of Machiavelli, suggest that the new values were slow to die.²¹ But Italians (with the partial exception of Venice) felt more and more helpless to control their own fate; they were clearly subjects again rather than free citizens, compelled to live in a world ruled only by power. And power seemed largely indifferent to eloquence. Under such circumstances humanism in Italy turned in other directions.

Valla's reduction of the classical past to a mere historical in-

terest pointed in one direction. Denied a part in public life, humanists buried themselves in scholarship, adding an increasingly expert knowledge of Greek to their Latin learning. In Rome classical studies were notably supplemented with archaeological investigation, and by the first decade of the sixteenth century, collections of ancient objects were being enthusiastically assembled in the major centers of Italy.²² Some humanistic scholars entered the service of the new printing industry, improving texts for new standard editions. Thus in Venice Ermolao Barbaro (1453–1493) edited authentic Greek texts of Aristotle, previously available chiefly through Latin translations from medieval Arabic versions and, as this complicated and indirect transmission would suggest, remarkably corrupt.

It now became possible for the first time to attempt to identify the precise meaning of Aristotle, and eventually of other authors whose texts were similarly improved. The result was greatly to improve philosophical discussion based on classical philosophical problems.²³ But the most distinguished classical scholar of the later fifteenth century was the Florentine Poliziano (1454–1494), a man of great critical and esthetic gifts. An excellent textual critic and Greek scholar, he was also the first to appreciate late classical writings: writings, it may be observed, that also reflected a postrepublican world. He had by no means lost touch with the earlier humanists' interest in literary style, but he focused it, in both his literary doctrines and his own poetry, on esthetic satisfaction rather than social utility. The result, however, was further to broaden the expressive powers of language.²⁴

Meanwhile other men were employing the broader acquaintance with ancient texts made possible by humanistic scholarship for the construction of new philosophical systems that somewhat resembled, in their renewed universalism, their pursuit of absolutes and, in their abstractness, the scholastic systems that humanism had largely repudiated. This enterprise had been facilitated by the revival of Greek learning, which not only gave a fresh impetus to Aristotelianism but also made possible for the first time in Western Europe the systematic study of Plato. Florence again led the way, above all with the labors of Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499).

Under the patronage of the Medici, Ficino employed Plato as

a guide in the philosophical interpretation of Christianity, much as the schoolmen had used Aristotle. His tendency to syncretism was carried a good deal farther by his younger disciple, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), who tried to combine Arabic, Hebrew, and even more exotic types of wisdom, with that of the Greeks and Romans, into a comprehensive system of truth that was intended to be both universal and Christian. Although both men retained something from their humanist predecessors, above all a high esteem for the freedom and the creative powers of man, their values once again were intellectual rather than active and social, and neither had a high regard for the rhetorical skills that seemed largely irrelevant to the contemplative life.

The most important form of communication again was the transmission of an abstract truth for which a technical language inaccessible to the masses of men was generally appropriate; eloquence once more presented itself as a distraction from the pursuit of philosophical certainty. This development was of special importance for the future because northern Europeans were coming into increasing contact with Italian thought in the later fifteenth century, when the rhetorical emphasis of Renaissance humanism had lost its early vigor.²⁵

Still another development in later Italian humanism facilitated its transmission northward. From its beginnings, as we have seen, humanistic rhetorical techniques had been as useful to princes as to republics, even though the latter more fully corresponded to the deeper values of the ancient rhetorical tradition; thus humanists early found patrons among the despots of Italy. And as Italy was increasingly a place of princely courts, humanism became acclimated to a new environment. Although a concern with rhetoric as an essential instrument for responsible citizenship virtually disappeared from the Italian scene, the increasing refinement of humanist expression was more and more appropriate for an aristocratic society consisting of the courtiers surrounding princes.

As Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1510) so gracefully illustrates, the concern of humanist education with the formation of all aspects of the personality and the production of a generally effective human being became the basis of a new lifestyle: a style, however, still appropriate to life in society,

although the society of the court was in major respects rather different from that of a republic. Thus the ideals of the Renaissance in Italy, as Denys Hay has suggested, were transposed "to a key in which they could be appreciated in northern Europe."²⁶

III

Yet the notion that the culture of the Renaissance originated in Italy and simply spread across the Alps no longer can be maintained. It is true that much of northern Europe was less urbanized than Italy and that even in the Low Countries, where townsmen were both numerous and prosperous, a traditional aristocratic and ecclesiastical culture retained a dominance that it had perhaps never possessed in Italy. The consequence was that classical interests outside of Italy were more likely to be pursued within a religious framework; indeed it may be that the contact of English, French, and German scholars with the circle of Ficino made Italian interests seem more consonant with their own concerns than the rhetorical emphasis of an earlier generation of Italian humanists would have struck them.

But the differences even between earlier Italy and the rest of Europe were not absolute. The movement known as the *Devotio Moderna*, which spread from the Low Countries into much of northern Europe in the fifteenth century, suggests that everywhere townsmen were discontented with the specialized and inaccessible subtleties of scholastic discourse and craved a spiritual and moral guidance that spoke directly to their condition in a language they could understand; this need found prominent expression in the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis. The schoolmasters of this movement, the Brethren of the Common Life, showed an interest in classical texts that paralleled that of the humanists in Italy.²⁷ And although northern humanism was for some time associated rather with schools and universities than with public life and courts, the developing monarchies outside of Italy eventually discovered the value of rhetorical skills for many of the same purposes they had earlier served in Italy.

This discovery, nevertheless, came only after a considerable delay. On this point the early history of humanism in France is particularly instructive because France had been the center of

both twelfth-century classicism and of the scholastic movement thereafter.²⁸ French classical study, however, though overshadowed by scholasticism, had never disappeared altogether; and, as we have noted, early Italian humanists, including Petrarch, had found both ancient texts and congenial company in France, notably at Avignon, which was a meeting ground for French and Italian scholars through the fourteenth century.

But it was characteristic of French humanists during the entire period of the Renaissance to reject the notion of any Italian cultural leadership. Early French humanism was more concerned with moral and religious problems than with philology and rhetoric, although this did not prevent some interest among the secretaries of the royal chancery in the imitation of classical style in the manner of Petrarch. But without roots in a community seeking expression in a new culture, this interest disappeared during the middle decades of the fifteenth century; humanist activity did not reappear in Paris until the latter part of the century. It was only in 1472 that Guillaume Fichet introduced the teaching of rhetoric at the University of Paris, but from this time onward humanistic learning became an increasingly important component of French culture.

Yet its larger implications were for a long while hidden by its subordination to religious purposes. Although a circle of enthusiastic humanists gathered around Robert Gaguin (1433–1501), who was an ardent Ciceronian, its ideal was largely the fusion of eloquence with knowledge for the promotion of a thoroughly traditional Christianity. This religious concern was deepened under the influence of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1450?–1536), who applied the Platonism and the philological concerns of later fifteenth-century Italy to deepen and reform contemporary religious life.²⁹

Early English humanism presents much the same picture. A few English scholars and aristocratic patrons had earlier interested themselves in classical study and the acquisition of manuscripts, but only at the end of the fifteenth century did such concerns begin to emerge as an effective movement under the leadership of John Colet (about 1466–1519). Deeply influenced by the Florentine Platonists in the course of an extended trip to Italy, Colet returned to England and in 1496 at Oxford began a series of lectures on St. Paul that ignored the scholastic com-

mentaries on the sacred texts in favor of a direct encounter, from the sacred texts alone, with the message and personality of Paul. His concern for the propagation of humanist learning as a foundation for Christian piety also was reflected in his establishment of St. Paul's School in 1510. Meanwhile Italian humanists had begun to teach at Oxford and Cambridge, and the early Tudor court had recognized the value of rhetorical skills in political life; Henry VII established the post of Latin secretary, which he filled with an Italian rhetorician. But, as in France, the larger resonance of humanism was felt only in a later generation.³⁰

Although they displayed many of the tendencies we have observed in France and England, humanistic interests had developed somewhat earlier in Germany, perhaps in the absence of a dominant courtly center that kept chivalric culture alive. Classical study, largely under Italian influence, was widespread in the fifteenth century.³¹ At the same time early German humanism generally had a more academic flavor than the humanism of Italy; it was focused rather on education than on immediate public needs, although the imperial chancery had been a center for rhetorical activity as early as the mid-fourteenth century and continued to employ humanists as secretaries, among them Eneas Silvius. A distinguishing characteristic of German humanism was also its association with patriotic sentiment. As Rudolph Agricola (1444-1485), sometimes considered the father of German humanism, made the point: "I have the brightest hope that we shall one day wrest from haughty Italy the reputation for classical expression which it has nearly monopolized, so to speak, and lay claim to it ourselves, and free ourselves from the reproach of ignorance and being called unlearned and inarticulate barbarians; and that our Germany will be so cultured and literate that Latium itself will not know Latin any better."³²

But, as elsewhere outside of Italy, humanism in Germany presented itself especially as a movement of religious renewal, an interest in which the nourishment supplied by the *Devotio Moderna* was supplemented toward the end of the fifteenth century by contact with the circle of Ficino in Florence. Agricola, like many other German humanists, had been educated by the Brethren of the Common Life as well as in the universities of

Germany; after this he had spent a decade in Italy, where he developed his enthusiasm for rhetoric. Yet the reform he envisaged as the result of its application to religious life was superficial; his Christianity was still conventional and medieval.

Under the leadership of Conrad Celtis (1459–1508), German humanism became a more coherent movement in which national patriotism, esteem for the broad culture of the rhetorician, and concern for the deepening of piety were fused into an increasingly self-conscious and aggressive opposition to scholastic culture as a primary obstacle to human improvement. Among the most prominent of the German humanists was also Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522), another admirer of the later Florentines and the leading Hebrew scholar of his age. For Reuchlin, Hebrew was the language God had chosen for communication with mankind, the language *par excellence*, therefore, for the transmission of religious truth and the reform of the faith. Renaissance preoccupation with the linguistic instruments of communication thus found a new and deeper level of application.

On first inspection, northern humanism may appear to contrast strikingly with the humanism of Italy. Yet it may be observed that the adaptation of humanistic techniques to religious purposes in France, England, and Germany also reflected, if in a somewhat different way, the concern, typical of all Renaissance humanists, with the concrete actualities of the world, a dissatisfaction with traditional cultural forms because of their failure to communicate useful illumination to the masses of men, and their resultant inability to transform a lamentably defective society. The Christian humanists of the north, and to some degree even the humanists of the later Italian Renaissance, also proposed, like Petrarch and his successors in the earlier Renaissance, to move men by means of an educational program based on the renewal of ancient languages and literature, and by an appeal developed with all the resources of the rhetorical art and directed not simply to the intellectual dimension of the human personality but to the whole man. For Lefèvre and Colet as for Celtis and Reuchlin, broad communication was the only hope for a world in crisis. But their ambitions were somewhat more grand; they aspired to move men not only with words but with the Word.

All of these tendencies may be discerned in the leading hu-

manist of the earlier sixteenth century, Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536).³³ Educated by the Brethren of the Common Life, Erasmus reflected their distaste for scholastic discourse and their preference for the Bible; but he also developed an early admiration for Italian philology and especially for the rigorous critical method of Valla, in which he saw hope for the recovery of ancient oratory. Converted to a deeper piety by Collet during a visit to England, he devoted the rest of his life to making more widely available the texts of both classical and Christian antiquity and to the reform of secular and the deepening of religious life, an enterprise in which he exhibited a high degree of rhetorical skill. Much of his scholarly activity was directed to disseminating the texts of the Gospel.

In 1516 he published the first Greek edition of the New Testament, a work that expressed humanist emphasis on the importance of direct communication through the original language of a text. In addition he produced a new Latin translation of the New Testament as well as various paraphrases of its particular books for an even wider audience, stimulated by his confidence that immediate contact with the Scriptures would stimulate a true piety of the heart. His own conception of the Christian life was conveyed above all in his *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* (1504), which stressed the inwardness of faith and at the same time insisted on the value of classical studies for kindling Christian fervor. Meanwhile a series of colloquies—typical humanist dialogues—attacked superstition and abuses in the church, and his *Praise of Folly* (1511) held up to ridicule all aspects (among other matters the irrelevance of scholastic speculation) of a world in sad disarray. His numerous eloquent writings and his enormous correspondence with the intellectual and political leaders of Europe made him a peculiarly influential figure during the first third of the sixteenth century. Thus Erasmus's facility in the handling of words was made to implement his conviction of the practical and reforming power of the Word.

A second generation of sixteenth-century humanists, particularly in the service of the English and French courts, made northern humanism more obviously like the humanism of the earlier Italian Renaissance. An aristocracy whose traditional political and social role was being steadily reduced under the pressure of expanding royal authority found some comfort in Italian

ideals of citizenship associated with civic humanism; a new species of aristocratic education, based on the classics, increasingly stressed the duties of service to community and prince and defined "true" nobility, following Italian precedent, in terms of virtuous achievement.³⁴ This conception was elaborated in such works as Sir John Elyot's *Boke named the Gouvernour* (1531) in England, where members of Colet's circle, like Thomas More, moved into the arena of public affairs. More's *Utopia* (1516) opened with a discussion of the active life reminiscent of the great Florentines of a century before, and during much of his reign Henry VIII was surrounded by humanists who not only prepared his correspondence, orations, and tracts, but also supplied him with political advice.

But in some respects France during the later Renaissance was even more clearly the heir to the political culture of the Italian Renaissance. The outstanding example of this movement at the French court was Guillaume Budé (1468–1544), who was as fervently attached to his own country as the German humanists had been to theirs. He was also devoted to philological study as an instrument of general reform. "Once an ornament," he wrote, "philology is today the means of revival and restoration." Thus his impressive scholarship was directed to practical ends, according to his view that "vast knowledge, if dissociated from practical prudence and the art of social behavior, may make the sage useless to himself and society." This sentiment would be repeated by generations of French scholars. And Budé's scholarship was regularly animated by a profound historical sense, reflecting the influence of Valla, that associated eloquence with periods of vigor in the lives of political communities. He applied this historicism particularly to legal study, with the aim of initiating legal and institutional reform by exposing the pristine sources of contemporary practice. And to train the scholars who would be able to carry on so admirable a work, he persuaded Francis I to establish a group of lectureships, primarily in ancient languages, that became the nucleus of the Collège de France. Until the end of the sixteenth century the ideals of Budé were shared by a large proportion of the major officials and jurists of France, who believed with him that power over words, developed through classical studies, would give power over the conditions of social life.³⁵

IV

Renaissance humanism was, however, specifically based on the study of *classical* languages and literatures, and the eloquence it aimed to develop was in the first instance an eloquence in Latin. In this respect its ability to communicate with large groups of men was limited. Indeed the tendency, especially among later humanists, to insist on the classical purity of Latin and on the elimination of those subsequent modifications—considered corruptions—that had kept Latin a flexible instrument of communication through the Middle Ages now threatened to make of it a truly dead language. The same tendency was also implicit, perhaps, in the growing historical perspective with which antiquity was increasingly regarded; the classical past, too, presented itself now as long dead. Yet the humanistic principle that language is above all social and that its highest use is in public communication pointed in a different direction. And while some humanist scholars seemed to be presiding over the final interment of Latin, other humanists were applying this principle to the benefit of the vernacular languages. For the perfection of vernaculars in the age of the Renaissance and the flourishing of a singularly brilliant and expressive vernacular literature in the major European languages was a phenomenon not altogether independent of the humanist movement.

The traditional notion that Italian humanism was essentially hostile to the vernacular therefore no longer can be maintained. Not only did major humanists, from Petrarch to Poliziano, owe much of their literary reputation to their Italian works. In addition, the republican patriotism represented by Bruni made a good deal of the fact that the cultural distinction of Florence had already found major expression in a distinguished vernacular literature that included the writings of Dante and Boccaccio.

First in Bruni, and then among other humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, even though much of their own literary production was still in Latin, the conviction grew that Florence possessed a vernacular literature as great as that of antiquity, and more generally that every language was equally capable of supporting a distinguished literature. In his own *Vite di Dante e di Petrarca* (1436) Bruni dealt in Italian with such subjects, previously reserved for Latin, as esthetics and history.

For Bruni's historical sense allowed him to grasp the implications of the fact that Greek and Latin once had been vernacular languages too, products of the concrete historical experience of particular peoples rather than predestined vehicles for the communication of an ultimate and unchanging wisdom. This insight was to be the starting point for the dispute about the relative merits of the ancients and moderns, and thus of the modern idea of progress.³⁶

Among the humanists who contributed to the new prestige of the vernacular was also Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), who defended the expressive utility of Italian in his treatise *Della famiglia*, a major vernacular composition of great interest for its depiction of contemporary social and economic life, matters unusually suited to treatment in Italian. Alberti also sought to broaden the range of Italian poetry by the use of classical forms; in addition he was probably the author of the first grammar of the Tuscan vernacular, the *Regole della Lingua Fiorentina*, which made its regularities explicit.³⁷

This effort was completed early in the next century by the Venetian Pietro Bembo. Although a purist in his attitude to Latin, in his *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525) Bembo attacked the alleged superiority of classical languages, promoted the Tuscan dialect as standard Italian, and established its grammatical principles. The popularity and applicability of this position elsewhere may be illustrated by the *Deffence et Illustration de la Langue françoise* (1549) of Joachim Du Bellay, which transferred the arguments on behalf of Italian to support the use of French.³⁸

Aided by this development, the vernaculars penetrated into all fields of writing in the sixteenth century, although Latin was by no means displaced. Indeed the antique classics remained of fundamental importance to this development and were employed as models for the perfecting of vernacular expression, for example in the great historical compositions of Machiavelli and Guicciardini, the modern epics of Ariosto and Tasso, and a host of works in French, Spanish, German, and English. Thus Renaissance humanism prepared the way for the great classical literatures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in which ancient example contributed to the clarity and elegance of expression in modern languages.

V

Meanwhile, just as Renaissance humanism was supplying a justification in principle for broader communication, Europe saw the birth of a major new technological instrument that was to make it immensely easier. This was the development of printing with movable type, an achievement that produced another sort of revolution in communication. The early history of the printing press was, in fact, closely bound to the humanist movement. Humanistic enthusiasms contributed to the growing demand for books, which made printing economically feasible and assisted its rapid diffusion throughout Europe; a significant proportion of the earliest works to be printed were editions of the classics, and many early publishers were themselves men with classical interests. The scholarly tendencies in later humanism can be explained in part by the needs of the printing industry for good, standard texts. By the same token, the prominence of classical interests in Venice in the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when Venice began to supplant Florence as the Italian capital of the movement, was largely the result of the fact that Venice was the center of book production in Italy. It was at Venice that scholars like Merula, employed by printers, standardized orthography and edited texts with a new methodical rigor.³⁹ Ermolao Barbaro's new Greek Aristotle owed its influence largely to its availability in editions he prepared for the press.

But there were also other elements in the growing demand for books during the centuries preceding the development of the printing press. The numbers of literate Europeans had been growing steadily, and their interests had been expanding. They required school books of every description, a broad variety of pious literature, calendars, practical manuals, romances for amusement, as well as scholarly texts. The laborious and expensive processes of manuscript-book production, even when rationally organized in large shops, had long failed hopelessly to meet the demand.

Meanwhile other conditions were ripe for the development of a new method of producing written materials in quantity. Paper, introduced into Europe from the Orient as early as the twelfth century and for some time used in making hand-copied

books, began to be produced in Italy in the fourteenth century; cheaper and lighter than parchment, its manufacture spread rapidly. In this period too the artists of the Low Countries developed oil-based paints that required only slight modification for the production of inks that would stick to metal typefaces. A device for exerting pressure had long been available in the screw-press used to squeeze grapes and olives, and it had already been employed to stamp designs on cloth, to press the water from paper, to make covers for manuscript books, and even to print block-pages. Again, the processes for cutting or casting small metal objects had been highly refined by medalists and goldsmiths. Like other complex machines, the modern printing press was developed through the combination of a number of simpler processes. What still was required was a method of producing types accurately and of a standard size so that they could be assembled, would hold together under pressure, and could be torn down again after use, to be reassembled for another job. The accomplishment of the fifteenth century lay primarily in the development of such a method.

The question of priority has long been debated, and the assignment of credit to Johann Gutenberg of Mainz sometime after 1440 is largely conjectural. Given the general circumstances described above, one would expect to find various groups attempting to develop a practical method of printing in a number of places, and efforts along these lines have been noted in the Low Countries and Avignon. What is clear, nevertheless, is that the Rhineland was the source from which printing spread into the rest of Europe, and that this happened very rapidly. The earliest printed material that can be dated with any certainty is a form for the granting of an indulgence in 1454 to those who contributed money to fight the Turks; printed by the firm of Fust and Schoeffer in Mainz, it consisted of a printed description of the indulgence with blank spaces for the name of the donor and other details. The so-called Gutenberg Bible, which was not dated but had appeared by 1456, was probably also the work of this firm, which expanded rapidly; by 1465 it had agencies in several cities, including Paris. From the Rhineland the new process was quickly carried to the rest of Europe, largely by itinerant German printers. A printing press had been set up near Rome by 1463, for example, and by 1477 a dozen

printing establishments were at work in Rome itself. In 1470 three German printers set up the first press in Paris, in the basement of the Sorbonne. The printing press reached Poland in 1474, Spain in 1475, England in 1476. And from these early presses poured a deluge of books: some thirty thousand works or editions by 1501.⁴⁰ In Venice alone it has been estimated that some two million books had been printed by this date.

Contemporaries were quick to notice the importance of the new invention. Celtis celebrated it in verse as an achievement of the German fatherland,⁴¹ and its uses for propaganda also were promptly recognized. Thus the presumably unique possession of the printing press by Christian Europe was given providential explanation: printing was an instrument sent by God for the spread of Christianity over the entire world. The French orientalist Guillaume Postel (1510–1581) suggested, for example, that “merely from the printing of the Arabic language” the religious unity of the world was at last in sight.⁴² For more secular minds printing was one of several technological devices that proved the superiority of the moderns to the ancients. Francis Bacon was only citing a standard argument when he wrote, in the *Novum Organum*: “We should note the force, effect, and consequences of inventions which are nowhere more conspicuous than in those three which were unknown to the ancients, namely, printing, gunpowder, and the compass. For these three have changed the appearance and state of the whole world.”⁴³ In any case the sense of vast new possibilities for human communication opened up by the printing press was a significant element in the more expansive European mood of the sixteenth century.

Nor, in retrospect, does this immediate conviction of the importance of printing seem misplaced, although in a modern perspective it may be seen to rest on somewhat different grounds. Printing transformed many aspects of the world. It made the Renaissance revival of learning permanent, as no earlier revival had been; never again would the classical heritage be lost, nor would it again need to be rediscovered. Indeed, all data could henceforth be preserved, and the steady accumulation of knowledge could proceed without such interruptions as had occurred in the past; in addition, as books could be easily produced and rapidly transported anywhere, knowledge could

now advance simultaneously in many places rather than in a few scattered centers.

For society in general the availability of books (and notably of the Bible) lessened the dependence of laymen on clerical intellectuals and thus speeded up a process already evident in humanist culture. For governments the printing press vastly facilitated communication with subjects and their own officers; official edicts now could be multiplied rapidly in a standard form, and printed statute books made legal administration more uniform. In these ways, as well as by the standardization of vernaculars, national communities grew more centralized and better unified. The broad uses of publicity also now became apparent, as in the case of Pietro Aretino (1492-1556), a kind of early and often scurrilous journalist in Venice, who was known as "the scourge of princes," a title that suggests the new power of the printed word. And at a deeper level it may be that the cumulative experience with the standardized printed page gradually produced a collective mentality characterized by a new love of regularity and order.⁴⁴

VI

Yet, although the significance of the Renaissance for our subject lies chiefly in the adaptation of communication to a new and larger audience, for new purposes, and with new techniques, the picture presented by the age as a whole is still somewhat ambiguous. For even as communication was being broadened to meet wider social needs, a reaction was under way. Part of it was connected with a reassertion of the traditional view of truth as a system of absolutes largely accessible only through the mediation of clerical intellectuals. A source of reassurance in a world that seemed to be changing with frightening speed, this vision again was being aggressively promoted by the Papacy after it had clearly survived the challenge of Conciliarism, and well before the Protestant Reformation. The *Index of Forbidden Books* would testify to the fear of public communication in this tradition, as well as to the power of the printing press; and it was paralleled by secular censorship.

In addition, some groups of lay intellectuals, isolated and turned inward as governments became increasingly despotic and the opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship declined,

developed new theories of private and esoteric communication. These supplied a variety of satisfactions. They appealed to a new set of eternal verities based on some of the exotic sources made available by humanist scholarship in a time when, for many learned men, traditional orthodoxy had been discredited beyond any rehabilitation; thus they also offered security in a troubled world. In some forms they also promised power over the mysterious forces of the universe, whether for personal aggrandizement or the benefit of mankind. Moreover, they regularly appeared as a source of personal distinction in a period that—in frequent contrast to the earlier Renaissance—was increasingly fearful and contemptuous of the masses of men.

Some of these tendencies already were implicit in the thought of earlier humanists as they considered ancient mythology and the function of poetry. Petrarch had regarded poetry as superior to philosophy for the communication of ultimate truth, and Boccaccio had viewed it as equal to theology and indeed as performing somewhat the same function. The task of the poet, from this standpoint, was to penetrate through the veil of appearances to the ineffable reality hidden from the multitude; the poet therefore was a kind of priest. For *Salutati* anthropomorphic representations of God in Christian discourse were no more than inadequate hints of his true nature, and thus comparable to the myths of pagan poetry. Religious truth could not be communicated in ordinary language, but the poet might provide intimations of it for those whose sensibilities were sufficiently refined.⁴⁵

But this suggestion of an esoteric and elitist intellectuality was overshadowed in the earlier period by more public concerns, and it did not emerge as a major tendency of thought until the later fifteenth century, when it constituted an important strain in Florentine Platonism. It was nourished by Plato's own perceptions of philosophy as a mystical initiation for a gifted elite, as well as by growing knowledge of the esoteric strands in the thought of the hellenistic world. Thus, in describing a projected work of his own, Pico Della Mirandola declared, "It was the opinion of the ancient theologians that divine subjects and the secret Mysteries must not be rashly divulged. . . . That is why the Egyptians had sculptures of sphynxes in all their temples, to indicate that divine knowledge, if committed to

writing at all, must be covered with enigmatic veils and poetic dissimulation. . . . How that was done . . . by Latin and Greek poets we shall explain in the book of our Poetic Theology."

From his cabalistic studies he absorbed the gnostic notion of an esoteric truth that paralleled the vulgar revelation adapted to the capacities of the masses; he pointed with disdain to "the tailors, cooks, butchers, shepherds, servants, maids, to all of whom the written law was given." Then, he asked rhetorically, "Would these have been able to carry the burden of the entire Mosaic or divine understanding? Moses, however, on the height of the mountain, comparable to that mountain on which the Lord often spoke to his Disciples, was so illumined by the rays of the divine sun, that his whole face shone in a miraculous manner; but because the people with their dim and owlsh eyes could not bear the light, he addressed them with his face veiled." Thus secrecy and restriction, based on a sense of the disparity between the written word and truth, as well as on a growing belief in the inequalities of human spirituality, became a new source of authority.⁴⁶

The most concrete expression of this tendency was the diffusion of the so-called Hermetic Books, for which Pico's master, Ficino, was largely responsible. Hermetism drew its name from Hermes Trismegistus (Thrice-Great), the legendary source of that Egyptian wisdom referred to by Pico above, under whose name a large body of occult writings had circulated between about A.D. 100 and 300. Typical examples of Hellenistic syncretism, these works mingled Neoplatonic, Stoic, Jewish, Persian, and perhaps even native Egyptian elements; but for Renaissance thinkers they were the pristine source of all later forms of wisdom.

Their first direct contact with this tradition came after the arrival of a manuscript of the *Hermetica* in Florence about 1460. Cosimo de' Medici set Ficino to translate it immediately, even ahead of Plato, as it was considered an earlier form of the wisdom Plato had transmitted. Ficino's translation, entitled *Pimander* from its first book, was widely reproduced, and the vogue of Hermetism was soon reflected in a large body of other works and commentaries. Notable in this literature was a concern with the creative and mystical (rather than the social and

broadly communicative) value of the Logos and of words in general, the association of holiness with remoteness in time, an astrological framework coordinating man with nature, and a radical intellectual elitism.⁴⁷

For many of the devotees of such wisdom, esoteric communication conveyed only private insights and values. But for others it merged into a species of magic in which words were combined with ritual acts for the manipulation of the occult properties of nature—another peculiarly Renaissance use of communication (and a testimony to the sense of its enormous power) that has remote connections with the origins of science. Thus the esoteric sage became at times a magician, whose secret insights into the mysterious relations and properties of the universal order of the world could be converted into a fearful power for good or evil. As Francis Bacon, who owed something to this tradition, was to say of the scientist, the magus was "master and possessor of Nature."⁴⁸ The medical theory of Paracelsus, the philosophical speculations of Giordano Bruno, and the enterprises of a host of intellectual alchemists and astrologers of the later Renaissance were all dependent on such views.

On the other hand mystery was useless unless its keeper could convey some hint of what he possessed to others, if only to leave an impression of his own distinction. Hence men like Pico consciously cultivated cryptic modes of expression that would, tantalizingly, both communicate and refuse to communicate. Yet precisely this element in the esoteric attitude to communication also made it fruitful both for poetry and for painting, as it justified an attempt to hint at far more than could be made explicit. This chapter has largely ignored nonverbal communication; but at least it should be recalled that the Renaissance was one of the great ages in Western history for painting and the plastic arts.

As instruments of communication, these can be seen to exhibit much the same expressive concerns and transformations that we have observed in attitudes to verbal communication, from the representation of the ultimate values of the Gothic world through the humanized and public art of the early Renaissance to the often mysterious and puzzling works of the later fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Italians. Like literary compositions of Platonic or Hermetic inspiration, such masterpieces as Botticelli's *Primavera* and *Birth of Venus*, Raphael's

Graces, Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love*, and Michelangelo's *Bacchus* make a paradoxical effort to convey mystery without revealing and thus destroying it. Yet it is to this effort that they owe their haunting allusiveness, and perhaps one can only conclude that a theory that led nowhere as a basis for discursive communication had demonstrable validity for the simultaneity that characterizes visual expression.⁴⁹

For the notion of esoteric communication, which came close to being a contradiction in terms, proved a dead end. By the beginning of the seventeenth century it had largely run its course, though the perennial impulse behind it continued to find isolated expression in a variety of occult and theosophical groups. The future was to lie with the movement toward broader, more flexible, steadily more accessible forms of communication that had been given so original and fruitful a theoretical basis by Renaissance humanism, and such a massive impetus through the development of printing.

NOTES

1. Daniel Waley, *The Italian City-Republics* (London, 1969), pp. 72-73.
2. On the *ars dictaminis* in the background of Renaissance humanism, see Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains* (New York, 1961), pp. 11ff., 100ff.
3. Jerrold E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: Ciceronian Elements in Early Quattrocento Thought and Their Historical Setting* (Princeton, 1968), pp. 69-70. On the general point, see also Myron P. Gilmore, *Humanists and Jurists: Six Studies in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), and Lauro Martines, *Lawyers and Statecraft in Renaissance Florence* (Princeton, 1968).
4. See Peter Herde, "Politik und Rhetorik in Florenz am Vorabend der Renaissance," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 47 (1965).
5. Roberto Weiss, *The Spread of Italian Humanism* (London, 1964), pp. 14-17.
6. Quoted by Marvin B. Becker, *Florence in Transition* (Baltimore, 1967-1969), vol. 1, p. 42.
7. B. L. Ullman, "Some Aspects of the Origin of Italian Humanism," *Philological Quarterly* 20 (1941):20-31; Franco Simone, *The French Renaissance*, trans. H. Gaston Hall (New York, 1970), pp. 46ff.
8. Especially in *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*, trans. Hans Nachod,

in Ernst Cassirer et al., eds., *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (Chicago, 1948), pp. 47-133.

9. Siegel, pp. 3ff.; for the quotation from Cicero, p. 7. See also the fine essay of Hanna H. Gray, "Renaissance Humanism: The Pursuit of Eloquence," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24 (1963):497-514.

10. T. E. Mommsen, "Petrarch's Conception of the Dark Ages," *Speculum* 18 (1942): 226-242.

11. Cf. Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Sienna after the Black Death: The Arts, Religion and Society in the Mid-Fourteenth Century* (Princeton, 1951).

12. On this point and much else in the present chapter, see the by now classic work of Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, rev. ed. (Princeton, 1966), pp. 291ff.

13. Quoted in Siegel, pp. 76-77. On Salutati, see also B. L. Ullman, *The Humanism of Coluccio Salutati* (Padua, 1963); Ronald G. Witt, "The *De Tyranno* and Coluccio Salutati's View of Politics and Roman History," *Nuova Rivista Storica* 53 (1969):434-474; and Eugenio Garin, "I cancellieri umanisti della Repubblica Fiorentina da Coluccio Salutati a Bartolomeo Scala," *Revisita Storica Italiana* 71 (1959):185-208.

14. From the funeral oration on Nanni degli Strozzi, quoted by Baron, p. 419.

15. In addition to Baron, see Donald J. Wilcox, *The Development of Florentine Humanist Historiography in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969).

16. Quoted by Wilcox, pp. 88-89.

17. William H. Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators* (Cambridge, 1897).

18. On Valla, see, in addition to Siegel, Donald R. Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Law, and History in the French Renaissance* (New York, 1969), pp. 19ff.; and Hanna H. Gray, "Valla's *Encomium of St. Thomas Aquinas* and the Humanist Conception of Christian Antiquity," in *Essays in History and Literature Presented to Stanley Pargellis* (Chicago, 1965), pp. 37-51.

19. The most recent studies of this figure are Berthe Widmer, *Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Papst Pius II* (Basle, 1961), and R. J. Mitchell, *The Laurels and the Tiara: Pope Pius II* (London, 1962). For the *Commentaries*, see G. Berneti, "Ricerche e problemi nei *Commentarii* di E. S. Piccolomini," *La Rinascita* 2 (1939):449-475.

20. Rudolph von Albertini, *Das florentinische Staatsbewusstsein im Übergang von der Republik zum Principat* (Bern, 1955); William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley, 1968).

21. Donald Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence: Prophecy and Patriotism*

in the Italian Renaissance (Princeton, 1970); Felix Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth Century Florence* (Princeton, 1965).

22. Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity* (Oxford, 1969).

23. W. Theodor Elwert, *Studi di letteratura veneziana* (Venice, 1958), pp. 11ff.; Vittore Branca, "Ermolao Barbaro e l'umanesimo veneziano," *Umanesimo europeo e umanesimo veneziano* (Venice, 1963), pp. 193-212.

24. Aldo Scaglione, "The Humanist as Scholar and Politician's Conception of the *Grammaticus*," *Studies in the Renaissance* 8 (1961):49-70.

25. Eugene F. Rice, *The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), pp. 49ff.; Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, trans. Mario Domandi (New York, 1964), p. 61; George Holmes, *The Florentine Enlightenment (1400-1450)* (London, 1969), p. 243; Quirinus Breen, "Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola on the Conflict between Philosophy and Rhetoric," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 13 (1952):384-426.

26. In the *New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1958), p. 377.

27. Hans Baron, *New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1957), p. 55ff.

28. For what follows, see Simone, pp. 39ff.

29. On Lefèvre, see Augustin Renaudet, *Préréforme et l'humanisme à Paris pendant les premières guerres d'Italie (1494-1517)* (Paris, 1916).

30. Roberto Weiss, *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1941); Baron, *New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. 1, pp. 55-56.

31. For what follows, see Lewis W. Spitz, *The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963).

32. Quoted by Spitz, p. 25.

33. For Erasmus, see Augustine Renaudet, *Études érasmiques* (Paris, 1939); and, more recently, Roland Bainton, *Erasmus of Rotterdam* (New York, 1969).

34. Cf. Michael Walzer, *The Millennium of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.), p. 237.

35. Hans Baron, "Secularization of Wisdom and Political Humanism in the Renaissance," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 21 (1960):131-150; Kelley, pp. 53ff.

36. Cf. Baron, *Crisis*, esp. pp. 273ff., 338ff., 438-439; and his "Querelle of Ancients and Moderns," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20 (1959):3-22.

37. Joan Gadol, *Leon Battista Alberti: Universal Man of the Renaissance* (Chicago, 1969), pp. 217ff.

38. Hay, *New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. 2, pp. 377-378.

39. On this figure, see Pier Giorgio Ricci, "Umanesimo filologico in

Toscana e nel Veneto," *Umanesimo europeo e umanesimo veneziano* (Venice, 1963), pp. 169-170.

40. Douglas C. McMurtrie, *The Book* (New York, 1937); Lucien Febvre and H. J. Martin, *L'apparition du livre* (Paris, 1958).

41. Spitz, p. 84.

42. William J. Bouwsma, *Concordia Mundi: The Career and Thought of Guillaume Postel* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), pp. 240-241.

43. Quoted by Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, "Some Conjectures about the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought," *Journal of Modern History* 40 (1968):1.

44. In addition to the work just cited, see, by the same author, "The Advent of Printing and the Problem of the Renaissance," *Past and Present* 45 (1969):19-89.

45. Becker, vol. 2, pp. 8-10; Baron, *Crisis*, p. 296.

46. Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance* (New Haven, 1958), pp. 18-26; for the quotations from Pico, p. 24, 25.

47. Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London, 1963), pp. 2ff.

48. Charles G. Nauert, *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought* (Urbana, 1965), pp. 234-238; see also Paolo Rossi, *Francis Bacon: From Magic into Science*, trans. Sacha Rabinovitch (London, 1968).

49. See, in general, the work of Wind cited above.

2

THE IMPACT OF THE REFORMATION ERA ON COMMUNICATION AND PROPAGANDA

NANCY L. ROELKER

THE REFORMATIONS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Sixteenth-century Europe experienced a series of upheavals in religious belief, practice, and institutions which, because they were inextricably linked with fundamental changes in secular spheres, made the Reformation era a watershed in European history. The age-old notion of Western Christendom under a single church persisted, periodically animating new attempts to revive it, but it lost historical reality in the middle decades of the sixteenth century when several rival establishments came into existence, thus replacing a theoretical if loose religious unity with an actual, structured diversity.

This first and most basic change did not soon bring about religious toleration for dissenting groups or individuals—quite the reverse, as will be seen. A very fundamental change had nevertheless occurred: before the breakup of the “universal” Roman Catholic hegemony such dissenters, “heretics,” were always condemned to a position of dangerous isolation comparable to that of outcasts from a tribe; afterward there existed alternative options, at least for some people in some places, and the way had been opened for further challenges, other new formulations of Christian doctrine and other ways of organizing Christian society. From the beginning there was a proliferation

of small independent groups, usually radical in both the religious and the secular spheres, and in the intervening centuries the fragmentation process has continued with a seemingly endless diversity, until we find in the second half of the twentieth century more than three hundred kinds of organized Protestantism recognized in the world.

These now exist, however, in a basically secular society, which has come into being in the last two hundred years; the spiritual and intellectual climate of the twentieth century should not be projected into the sixteenth. Similar caution should be exercised with regard to the extrareligious factors in the Reformation revolution, such as the nation-state, the capitalist economy, and the individualistic orientation of culture in the modern world, all of which began to take shape in the sixteenth century. Some historians have been so impressed by these new factors from which our "modern" society and culture have since evolved, that they have overlooked or neglected the persistent remnants of earlier patterns; others, in their anxiety to redress the balance, have swept aside the new and insisted that modernity can be meaningfully defined only in such terms as the triumph of science or industrialism. This historiographical controversy has embraced both the Renaissance and the Reformation, which were virtually simultaneous—and inseparable—in northwestern Europe.¹

Attempts to put neat labels on the Reformation era as a whole in terms of medieval versus modern distort the complex reality. Old patterns were entirely destroyed or basically altered in some places; new ones developed rapidly here, slowly there; some Reformation phenomena took root, became institutionalized, and have changed relatively little since, as in Spain or Scotland; others have since been greatly modified or lost their vitality. Yet when all necessary qualifications have been made, the Reformation era still can be seen as truly revolutionary and "modern" in some respects. If the beginning of rival church establishments is the first of these, the impact on education, communication, and propaganda is surely the second, for the very existence of rival confessions created competition for members and heightened the importance of persuasion, argument, literacy, and publicity.

Hindsight after four hundred years inclines twentieth-century

minds to regard the Reformation as a single if many-faceted phenomenon, with more explicit links between religious and secular factors than appeared to sixteenth-century minds, whose vocabulary and conceptual scheme were predominantly religious. Sixteenth-century Europeans thought as Christians; they sought to reform the contemporary church and restore Christianity to its pure and uncorrupted state, believed to have existed in the "primitive church" of the earliest generations, from Jesus' lifetime through the era of the "Church Fathers." In historical terms this means the late Roman Empire and early Middle Ages, approximately the first six hundred years of the Christian era, prior to the rise of a centralized church organization under the direction of the papacy.²

The idea of reform was not new in the sixteenth century. There had been recurrent reform movements in the medieval church; some led by the popes themselves, like the struggle of Gregory VII against the lay investiture of bishops in the eleventh century; others by lesser religious leaders like the abbots of Cluny in the twelfth century; still others by private individuals more concerned with the spiritual life of every Christian than with institutions, like the Italian Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century, the Englishman John Wycliffe in the fourteenth, and the Czech John Huss in the fifteenth. Reforms whose leaders were highly placed in the power structure generally were successful, at least in part, whereas reforms from below usually failed to modify the church in any important way except to provoke repressive measures and bring about increased rigidity and more elaborate machinery for control. Reforms that failed were consigned to the category of heresy and often became important continuing movements in themselves, like those of the Lollards in England and the Hussites in Bohemia.

The history of the Franciscan movement after the death of its founder provides an instructive case history in the complex relationship between heresy and reform in the later Middle Ages. Owing to the statesmanship of Pope Innocent III, the order had been incorporated into the structure of the Roman church and the friars accorded priestly functions, but success in official terms and the ensuing prosperity created tensions within the order. Those who felt that the original spiritual thrust had been blunted or lost sought in successive generations to revive it, with

the result that they often ended up as "heretics." A significant number of the earliest sixteenth-century reformers, especially in Italy, had been associated with dissident Franciscan groups.³

Conversely, it may be said that central doctrines of all important medieval heresies implied reform of some kind in the contemporary church, if only to modify the relations or lessen the differences between the priesthood and the laity, a theme common to them all. Indeed, the specific content of Martin Luther's original reform program repeats and summarizes the criticisms and goals of earlier reformers to a striking degree. Belief in the Bible as the sole authority for Christians, with concomitant attacks on the powers and claims of the papacy, the special powers of priests, and the sacramental system are among the most important.

These continuities are significant, yet they should not obscure the fact that the sixteenth-century movement was so different in scope and outcome that it differs from all others, not merely in degree but in kind. To account for this, or to explain why it became a full-scale (and largely successful) revolution that changed European history instead of one more item in a long line of abortive movements, one must consider the context in which it occurred, its "causes."

The point has already been made that the movement was primarily religious, and it cannot be repeated too often as a reminder to skeptical moderns that in the sixteenth century, religious issues were "real," that is, always taken seriously, usually given priority, and seldom used as a cover for other matters such as economic status or political power. These were also regarded as real, of course, in their different, lesser sphere. The religious causes of the Reformation, basic to the men of the sixteenth century, can be classified in two categories, "negative" and "positive."

A very large proportion of the propaganda to be considered in this chapter reflects the negative religious causes, that is, conscious criticism of the existing church and documentation of its defects and lapses from the "pure" primitive church. There is a long catalogue of evils to be eliminated. Some are usually described as "abuses," such as the sale of indulgences, by which the time of souls in purgatory was supposed to be shortened;⁴ the commercial exploitation of saintly relics and places of pil-

grimage; the plurality of benefices held by bishops, who thus had the use of vast revenues and sometimes did not perform their spiritual duties; inadequate qualifications in both character and training of much of the lower clergy—the list is long and all too familiar. These dishonorable abuses outraged all conscientious Christians, including the most orthodox. More significant is their longevity. They had been the staple of medieval satirical literature in every European country—one has only to remember Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*—and the great Renaissance satirists like Erasmus and Rabelais carried the genre to perfection. Chronic opposition to the abuses had neither diminished them nor caused a revolutionary upheaval.

The same is true of an even larger and less clear-cut category of beliefs, practices, and institutions developed in the course of the Middle Ages that may be called "encrustations." In the Gospels one finds no privileged priesthood distinct from the laity, no sacramental system on which the priestly status depends, no bishops, no pope, no purgatory, no saints, no relics—one finds, in fact, only Jesus and his disciples, living and praying according to a few fundamental teachings, concerned with doing God's work in the communities of which they were a part. Perhaps the most important means by which the Renaissance (as an intellectual movement) gave rise to the Reformation was that increased familiarity with the text of the New Testament, first among the educated and then filtering down through all classes, greatly heightened perception of differences between apostolic Christianity and the contemporary Roman church, so that many practices formerly taken for granted came to be seen as man-made additions, or adulterations of God's word.

Even with the desire to remove the encrustations added to the outcry against abuses, these "negative" factors did not by themselves cause the sixteenth-century reform movement, although they provided most of its fuel. More powerful were the "positive" religious forces, stronger than in earlier times, together with certain secular forces that favored religious change and helped to implement it.

The positive religious cause par excellence is described as "lay piety." Beginning in the fifteenth century, there were numerous manifestations of and impressive spiritual revival among the laity of northern Europe. One can note especially, first, the hu-

manist revival of Biblical texts in the original languages and later in the vernacular translations; second, the *Devotio Moderna*, which combined an emphasis on inner spirituality with practical Christ-like morality, spread by the Brethren of the Common Life through their schools in the Netherlands and the Rhine Valley, whose students included Erasmus, Luther, and many less-known men whose lives and works bore the mark of the Brethren.⁵ Finally, there was a marked spiritual concern in the princely courts and nobility, especially conspicuous among noblewomen. This third thrust usually was combined with the humanist one in its outstanding representatives, such as Marguerite de Navarre, sister of François I of France and a leading patron of the humanist reformers. The characters of her *Hep-tameron* begin and end each day with scripture reading and prayer, and a high moral tone marks their conversations, in keeping with the "Christian humanism" of the north and in contrast to the characters in Marguerite's Italian models, Castiglione's *Courtier*, and Boccaccio's *Decameron*.⁶

Among the secular forces that successfully exploited the desire for religious reform and fostered the new culture, the most important was the drive of secular rulers to gain control over subjects whom they could not reach because of clerical immunities and privileges, especially in fiscal matters. This was matched on the part of their subjects by a sharp rise in national feeling, that is, an increasing tendency to identify themselves with a government and culture transcending their locality but excluding fellow Europeans whose allegiance was given to a different government and culture. This was a major factor in the spread of Lutheranism ("Germans" against "Rome") early in the century and in the identification of Protestantism with their independence from Catholic Spain by Englishmen and Dutchmen later in the century.

In addition, new groups in the middle and lower classes, especially urban merchants, lawyers, and artisans, found their personal and professional goals more in harmony with the morality and practices of one of the new Christian confessions than with Roman Catholicism. An increase in geographical and social mobility and the pressures of demographic and economic change caused tension and discontent, as well as rising expectations. We shall see that representatives of many different social

and professional groups responded to the new ideas, from one end of Europe to the other.

The diversity in causes of the religious upheavals was matched by the variety of religious doctrines and ecclesiastical institutions they produced. Of the several reformations, those which developed new, rival churches are collectively described as "Protestant,"⁷ whereas the Roman church itself experienced two phases of reform. Each wave of reformation showed the influence of its predecessors, and its leaders were obliged to differentiate sharply the issues that separated them from others, a necessity that greatly stimulated both debating and propaganda techniques as well as scholarly documentation and argument. Each new Christian formulation made its appeal to particular groups of believers in particular regions, and its institutional development reflected regional or national political, socioeconomic, and cultural patterns.

Three major new confessions were implanted and institutionalized in the middle third of the century: Lutheranism in northern Germany and Scandinavia, Calvinism in parts of the Continent and Scotland, and the Church of England. While differing markedly from each other, they share the characteristics of a centralized ecclesiastical organization with administrative, regulatory, and judicial powers and with some kind of relationship to the secular state. One scholar therefore has described them as "magisterial," in contrast to the various manifestations of the "Radical Reformation," none of which share these characteristics.⁸

Although Martin Luther began as a rebel challenging the old church, and the earliest explosion in communication and propaganda to be explored belongs to that phase of his movement, the Lutheran church when fully institutionalized was the most conservative of the new confessions, with an episcopal hierarchy of its own and rigid theological doctrines enforced in an authoritarian manner. The founder's insistence that the priesthood should have power only in spiritual matters, leaving administration, even of church property, in the hands of secular rulers whose authority also came from God, made it possible for the Lutheran princes to gain control of the church.⁹

Some of the reformed churches that followed the lead of John Calvin, on the other hand, became associated with limitations

on secular authority in the name of individual spiritual rights, although the original Calvinist theology is a much more tightly structured and authoritarian system than Luther's.¹⁰ This double paradox stems from historical circumstances: Lutheranism was adopted by the north German princes who held the real power in their states and could use Lutheranism as a support for that power, whereas Calvinism was the religion of minority groups in France and the Netherlands (and later in England), forced to defend their right to exist against secular rulers in a position to repress them. Thus authoritarian Calvinism spawned civil rights theories for dissenters and constitutional theories of government—material for another surge of propaganda—while the church launched with the slogan "every man his own priest" sometimes became the bastion of and apologist for absolute government.

The nature of the Church of England was also partly determined by secular factors inherent in its context. England's earlier native reformist heresy, Lollardy, stemming from Wycliffe, had prepared the soil for later reform in certain areas and social groups, but the official break with Rome was accomplished by Henry VIII for political reasons.¹¹ He subsequently confiscated the wealth of the monasteries, but the Henrician church retained the doctrines of the old church—minus the special powers of the "Bishop of Rome." Not until after his death did this national church become Protestant in doctrine; that is, allowing the cup to the laity, abolishing celibacy for and denying miraculous powers to the clergy, and shifting the emphasis from the sacraments to the Bible, especially to preaching "the Word." This moderate Protestantism, a "middle way," challenged from the right by Roman Catholics and from the left by Calvinists (especially during the "Puritan" revolution of the seventeenth century), survived all the successive crises and has maintained itself down the centuries as a peculiarly English institution. From the beginning the Anglican church has been a department of the state, under crown and Parliament, supported by taxation. It is one of the more conservative Protestant confessions but with a considerably greater degree of internal flexibility than the Lutheran.¹² Although each of the Tudor monarchs imposed a particular religious settlement on the country, we shall see that Englishmen too exploited every

avenue of communication and produced floods of polemical literature. Propaganda from the opponents of Anglicanism at either extreme of the religious spectrum was countered by official propaganda skillfully promulgated by the crown and its ministers.¹³

Whereas secular forces in the regions of their appeal often favored the establishment and consolidation of the three magisterial confessions, the reverse was true of the "Radicals," a term that embraces a wide variety of splinter groups ranging from Dutch and German Anabaptists to Italian "Free Spirits," whose diversity is matched by their originality and ingenuity.¹⁴ They can be grouped together only as dissident, nonmagisterial (repudiating centralized church institutions and any sharing of functions between church and state), and radical in the true etymological sense of the word, going to the root of a matter. Thus the Anabaptists rejected the very notion of a church coterminous with society, which is implied by infant baptism, and insisted on personal commitment by each individual at the time of baptism, when he is old enough to assume and understand his Christian responsibility, while the more sophisticated and better-educated Radicals, like Michael Servetus, repudiated doctrines like the Trinity.¹⁵ Whereas the Italians tended to be radical only in religious and philosophical spheres, the Germans often held radical views in the secular sphere also, specifically the repudiation of established authority and private property. This explains the last of the common characteristics that can be attributed to all the Radicals: they held the distinction of being consistently and savagely persecuted by the magisterial Protestant churches as well as by Rome, usually with devastating success.

Since they were few in number and lacked the resources of political and economic power, the Radicals suffered grave disadvantages in the competition for the instruments of communication and propaganda, with the result that their pamphlets and manifestoes, turned out by clandestine printers often under assumed names and always on the run, were produced in small editions and were exceptionally vulnerable to censorship and even total destruction by the persecuting authorities. The Radicals were necessarily more dependent on personal contact and oral communication, but what has survived is rich in interest.

The old church too called upon every force available, especially in the latter part of the century when it mobilized the most impressive of all systems to promulgate its doctrines—redefined and newly formulated at the Council of Trent—control its members, and suppress dissent. Its major instruments in this “Counter-Reformation” phase, which followed the failure of a liberal reform movement, were the preaching and missionary activities of the Society of Jesus, the Inquisition, and the *Index*. Where it had the support of the secular authorities, the Roman church was brilliantly successful in reinforcing orthodoxy and putting an iron curtain between the protected regions and the dangerous outside world that had gone over to heresy.¹⁶ Leaders of all the rival confessions tried every means to convince people of their own version of the truth and developed ingenious ways of discrediting that of others.

COMMUNICATION

Some means of persuasion that had been used for centuries not only persisted into the Reformation era but were refined and elaborated to increase their effectiveness. Since many people could not read and hand-written materials were always scarce and expensive, communication in earlier centuries had been primarily oral. This continued to be the case in the sixteenth century, especially in some regions, and the advent of the most revolutionary means of communication in history prior to broadcasting—the printing press—served in many ways to stimulate such oral means as preaching and teaching. The most important spheres of oral communication in the Reformation era, where a good many new developments can be discerned, were religion, education, entertainment, commerce, and migration.

The religious sphere itself is particularly rich in new oral techniques. Protestants everywhere, from Martin Luther to the Anglican bishops, believed that the core of Christianity was the Word, that is, the teachings of Jesus; they held that to proclaim it was the prime function of the ministry. Sermons took the central position in church services, and the shock troops of each succeeding wave of reform were self-proclaimed interpreters of the Word. Even the newer access to it, in private Bible reading made possible by the mass production of vernacular Bibles and rising literacy, resulted in large part from its publicizing by

preachers who emphasized "the idea that the Holy Spirit speaks directly to whom it will from the pages of the sacred book . . . and as it happened their effort . . . fell in with the great advance of the popular language as the chief instrument of information and of printing and the book trade."¹⁷

This linkage between preaching and the printed Word distinguishes the various Protestant reformations from the Catholic, where the failure to encourage biblical humanism by the Council of Trent is described by one scholar as "the great refusal of 1546," which had permanent effects; ". . . in no field did fear of Protestantism leave deeper marks on the development of the Catholic religion."¹⁸ The chief argument of the Dominicans who blocked the liberal Catholic move to favor lay reading of the Bible in the vernacular was that it would mean victory for the Protestants.

In England Hugh Latimer was the most influential preacher of the early Reformation, "the prime evangelist of the book." He began under Henry VIII like an ancient prophet denouncing the spiritual decadence of the times and eventually attacked the mass itself, during a career that saw him ride high in royal favor under Edward VI and die a martyr's death under Mary. The standard plan of Protestant sermons was simple: the application of a scriptural text to particular concerns of the congregation present. The effectiveness of the Reformation preacher is brought out by William Haller in his study of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*:

[He] taught people to see themselves, their own predicaments, the predicaments of their time, mirrored in the scriptural saga of spiritual striving. He demonstrated . . . the way of escape from frustration, doubt and confusion. . . . The preacher set forth an enthralling drama of self-examination leading to the resolution of uncertainties and inhibitions and so to a life of positive endeavour and a sense of achievement. . . . There could be no question but that salvation was written plain in the Bible for all to read about and hope for, and what men hope for ardently enough, they do not as a rule expect to be denied.¹⁹

Secular rulers committed to some form of Protestantism, like the Lutheran princes, the town councils of many Swiss and German cities, or Queen Elizabeth, were dependent on their

preachers to support their regime and stand for law and order. In the case of Elizabeth, whose reign began with the threat of a civil war when she succeeded her half-sister Mary who had restored Catholicism, "she had not been many days on the throne" before her astute advisor, William Cecil, "was drawing up lists of preachers having the strongest personal reasons for loyalty to the new regime, many of them returned exiles, to be called to address the people at Paul's Cross." On all significant occasions there was preaching from this most important of all English pulpits, but it took place also at court, in Parliament, in the Inns of Court and on market days and days of assizes throughout the country. The leaders "made haste to ordain and license as many recruits as they could find capable of preaching, and if a man lacked academic learning, it could be enough if he knew his Bible and had the gift of expounding it. Study groups known as 'prophesyings' were presently formed in various places for the discussion of scripture texts and the training of such persons in the art of the pulpit."²⁰

Eventually the prophesyings of more radical Protestants—Puritans—were to create problems for the Anglican crown and hierarchy, for this was an instrument of communication not confined to the Establishment, though its resources made fuller exploitation possible than for dissidents. Where the authorities were bent on suppressing heresy, there was widespread incidence of clandestine preaching, outside the towns and often at night. In the Netherlands in the 1560s, when the government of Philip II was determined to stamp out reformed ideas, the authorities were unable to eliminate what was called "hedge-preaching" by unauthorized persons in unlawful gatherings.²¹

In France, the reformed congregations met at night in private houses. One of the first important events in the history of French Protestantism occurred when one such meeting was discovered and disrupted by the authorities, with the consequent arrest of about one hundred and thirty persons, including thirty-seven women; this was *l'affaire de la rue St. Jacques*, in the Latin quarter of Paris on 5 September 1557. Many of the provincial churches originated with secret nocturnal preaching, such as that of Poitiers, founded in this manner by John Calvin himself before he fled to Geneva. After he had established himself as the spiritual leader in that city he sent a steady stream of

pastors into France to serve the multiplying French reformed congregations.²² In addition, we know that large numbers of humble people in the countryside and in some trades gathered together in secret to listen to the Bible read aloud, as the great enamelist Bernard Palissy reports in Poitou; and in England, illiterate Lollards memorized long biblical passages that they recited to each other.²³

Music also was used in new ways by the reformed groups. Luther's hymns, while fitting into the medieval German tradition of choral singing, provided a new medium for reformed expression, and wherever the Calvinist movement spread there arose the practice of singing the Psalms as a central feature of worship. The Psalms had been translated into French by Clément Marot in the first phase of the evangelical movement. The Lyonnais printer, Antoine Vincent, then built up a flourishing business by publishing successive editions in that city and later in Geneva. The printing workers of Lyon, to give but one example, were noted for assembling in large groups to sing the Psalms. Many of them were foreigners or transients, and this activity provided them with "a feeling of warmth and acceptance." The Psalms were "their badge and also their invitation to the unlettered"; they "made their music propaganda—to attract others to their damnable sect"—as it was put by one who feared it. The considerable success of the Psalms as instruments of conversion and builders of morale has been widely recognized, and it was to remain a notable feature of Huguenot life, in their worship and in moments of crisis: "The Psalms were powerful agents of conversion, they inspired the soldiers of Coligny to attack and later those of the Béarnais" [Henry IV].²⁴

In addition to the revolutionary effects of vernacular printing, education was deeply affected by the Reformation through oral communication. The establishment of presses near universities like Wittenberg, Paris, and Cambridge meant that students and teachers fraternized with booksellers anxious to sell their wares. As we shall see, this was a milieu intimately connected with the reform. The graduates later would become teachers in *collèges* (secondary schools) usually in another part of the country, which often then became centers of religious ferment and sometimes of violent upheaval. Barthélemy Aneau, regent of the Collège de la Trinité in Lyon, headed a professori-

al staff deeply penetrated by the new ideas in the 1550s. The authorities were disturbed and tried to check the trend by such means as requiring attendance at mass three times a week and banning the teaching or use of any books containing doctrines that "cast doubt on the authority of our Holy Mother Church." The heretical reputation of the institution was such that when a Catholic procession turned into an anti-Protestant riot in June 1561, the crowd forced its way into the *collège*, dragged Aneau into the street, and murdered him. Schools in Dijon, Tournon, and Nîmes also were disseminators of heresy in their respective towns, and there were many others. The prominence of high-ranking university men in the English Reformation is well known. Many of the Marian exiles who returned to lead the Anglican establishment under Elizabeth had been converted in their student days at Cambridge, where certain colleges were known as "Little Germany." This had also been the case of prominent martyrs, including Hugh Latimer himself.²⁵

Any large gathering of people was a seedbed for the communication of religious messages. Religious processions might erupt into violence against unpopular dissidents, as in Lyon, or they might be used to reinforce Catholic loyalty and intimidate potential heretics. Examples could be drawn from every Catholic city in Europe, with Paris almost certainly in the lead. The volatile population of the French capital was repeatedly aroused to emotional expression of ultra-Catholic sentiment, especially at the height of the Holy League, the French arm of the Counter-Reformation, which assassinated Henry III, last of the Valois kings, in 1589, and refused to recognize his successor for four years because he was a Calvinist.²⁶

Theatrical productions, especially those of itinerant performers in marketplaces and town squares, offered a fertile field for oral communication. In Germany, reformist ideas would be ad-libbed into medieval morality plays and traditional dramas performed at carnival time, satirizing the pope and the clergy and contrasting their behavior (notably in sexual and financial matters) with that of simple illiterates who followed the Gospels. In one example, a cardinal is calculating how to increase his revenues, a bishop thinks of nothing but rich food and fine clothes, a parish priest curses his parishioners for quoting the New Testament while his concubine curses the bishop for laying taxes on

their illegitimate children, a monk mocks his vows of celibacy, and a noble castigates his ancestors for having endowed churches and monasteries instead of leaving their money to the family. In later scenes the simple piety and gullibility of illiterates who respond to a crusading appeal are exploited by papal agents, and the spirits of St. Peter and St. Paul denounce the temporal power of the pope, disclaiming any connection with the alleged successor of Peter, whose real name, they say, is Antichrist. Old Testament scenes also were frequently dramatized in such a way as to contrast simple piety with contemporary Catholicism. In the England of Mary Tudor, the government resorted to suppression of all stage plays for some months toward the end of the reign because so many had attacked both the church and the queen.²⁷

In the commercial centers of northwest Europe that experienced an explosive growth in the sixteenth century, London, Antwerp, Amsterdam, and all the Atlantic ports, men of widely differing origins and languages mingled on the docks and in the taverns, exchanging views on religious (as well as other) matters, arguing and often coming to blows. Taverns commonly served as meeting places for suppressed groups and as key points on the transmission belts for forbidden books. Itinerant peddlers carried small devotional books under bundles of cloth or household wares from German and Swiss cities, especially Geneva, into France and through the Alpine valleys into northern Italy. Some were conscious carriers of the faith and died as martyrs if they were caught. In other cases they revealed under questioning that they had been paid for their dangerous work, and begged leniency on the grounds that their poverty compelled them to accept such missions because they would otherwise starve. Still others claimed no knowledge of the contraband goods, which they declared to have been planted in their baggage. Rumors with a propagandistic intent were also carried this way, some false, such as the "news" of 1549 that the Republic of Venice was about to give financial and military aid to the Lutheran princes in Germany. This undoubtedly was the work of papal agents seeking to discredit the Venetians, who were always ready to flout the will of the Holy See.²⁸

Other itinerant carriers of the Word included the shepherds of southwestern France. The upsurge of heresy in that region in

the second quarter of the century can be traced on a map along their routes between the plateaux of Gascony where they wintered to the high mountains of Béarn and Spanish Navarre to which they led their flocks each summer.²⁹ Most important of all the oral carriers of reformist heresy were of course the refugees, who fled from persecution and formed migrant communities elsewhere, German Anabaptists in eastern Europe, Italian radicals in Switzerland or England and eventually in Poland, French Huguenots in England or the Netherlands—and seventeenth-century English Puritans in North America.

The Word carried by refugees was communication with serious intent, proselytizing, but scurrilous or obscene jokes and irreverent popular songs about the mass and the clergy also abounded. As Henry VIII said in a proclamation to Parliament in 1545, "The most priceless jewel, the Word of God, is disputed, rhymed, sung and jangled in every alehouse and tavern."³⁰

The overlap between oral and printed communication and the interplay of personal contact with the new book culture were considerable in this period of fluctuating opinion that every faction wished to capture. One amusing anecdote, from southeastern France in the 1530s, must suffice as an example. A certain M. Aloa, a notary of Sisteron, was deeply impressed by the arguments of his cousin, the reformer Guillaume Farel, during a visit of the latter on one of his frequent journeys between France and Switzerland. The whole Aloa family seemed well on the way to conversion. In his enthusiasm the notary bought a copy of Lefèvre d'Étaples's translation of the New Testament and carried it conspicuously upon emerging from the bookstore. Within a few minutes, however, a passerby told him it was heretical, whereupon he returned to the bookstore and exchanged it for a copy of a standard medieval work, *The Shepherd's Calendar*.³¹

However great the sixteenth-century increase in evangelical preaching, commerce, and geographical mobility, the concurrence of the religious upheavals with the full development of the new technology of printing was responsible for the quantum leap in communication and propaganda represented by the Reformation era in comparison with all the previous centuries. Protestants naturally felt that the press was providential, invented by God's inspiration to facilitate the promulgation of

the Word, and their characteristic emphasis on literacy and education meant that they would exploit it fully. The Roman church, even at the height of the Catholic revival in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, failed to take maximum advantage of the new medium through opposition to lay Bible reading. The very basis of the Protestant printing explosion—to bring the Word directly to every Christian and demystify the role of the clergy—was the basis for the Catholic opposition. Persecuted Protestants like Anabaptists, Huguenots, and Puritans were particularly ingenious and prolific. As the dangers of oral communication increased and as repression prevented open assembly and preaching, the printed Word became ever more important because it was easier to transmit in secret or to keep anonymous, and harder to trace. Materials in print have possibilities of exactitude and permanence lacking in oral or handwritten ones, and the reproductive process endows them with the advantages (and sometimes disadvantages) of speed and quantity in dissemination. If the printing industry played a determining role in the creation of our modern culture, characterized by “mass literacy, mass education, mass government and mass participation in a highly organized economy,” it is to some extent, as one historian puts it, “a consequence of certain peculiarities in the Christian religion that have dominated the western ethos,” specifically its emphasis on the Word.³²

Printers therefore operated at the core of every heretical movement, scarcely less central than the religious leaders themselves and largely responsible for the range and impact of the latter’s influence. Inevitably printers, at least the masters, were literate and their principal clientele would consist of educated people. In the context of the Renaissance, this meant chiefly members of the clergy, lay scholars and their patrons, lawyers, and businessmen.

Within a few years of the actual invention in Germany, presses were founded near the University of Paris, traditionally the training ground of clerical scholars from all over Europe. By 1500 there were 181 Parisian print shops and 95 in Lyon, the great commercial and banking center of southeastern France. This was a generation before the incidence of printed heresy would so alarm the authorities that constraints would be put on French use of the revolutionary invention. During this time

families of scholar-printers were creating in northern cities successful businesses similar to those long characteristic of Italian cities, especially Venice. The Frobens of Basel, the Estiennes of Paris and Geneva, and the Plantins of Antwerp were outstanding examples. Along with the humanist-printer, there appears the printer who is personally connected with reformers, like Thomas Aushelm of Tübingen (a friend of the great German humanist Johannes Reuchlin), his son-in-law Setzer (a friend of Reuchlin's nephew Philip Melanchthon, sometimes called the "humanist of the Reformation"), or the leaders of the Geneva printing industry who were close associates of Calvin and Beza.

The fact that printing was usually a family business, with marked generational continuity, reinforced both the ideological commitment and the business incentive—failure of the movement could mean loss of the family fortune and possibly persecution. An important study of printing as a historical force underlines the special vulnerability of printers arising from their connections with reformers. "The first to read the manuscripts, they were often the first to be converted and the first to fight for the ideas."³³ The scholar-printers have their own special martyr in Etienne Dolet, burned at the stake in 1546 for heresy, though his concerns were philosophical and scholarly rather than directly religious.

Princely patrons like Marguerite de Navarre supported the printers along with the scholars whose work was to be printed. Thus in 1529, Simon du Bois moved his press from the Latin quarter of Paris to the Norman town of Alençon, one of Marguerite's domains. There, in the following five years, he printed twenty-eight clandestine publications in French, destined *pour les simples et les rudes* which included eight books of scripture and twenty small "manuals of Christian devotion," among which were translated excerpts of Luther, Erasmus, and Lorenzo Valla and two editions of Marguerite's own contribution to evangelical literature, *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul*.³⁴

The fact that this book, from the pen of the king's own sister, was condemned as heretical and that she was obliged to stop writing in this vein is an indication of the risks incurred by less highly placed disseminators of the reform. Du Bois himself dropped out of sight after 1534 and scholars have found no trace of his whereabouts, while Clément Marot, translator of the

Psalms who had been a member of Marguerite's household, and her protégé John Calvin—among others—were forced to flee France entirely. Twenty years later, at least seven printers figure among the Marian exiles from England.³⁵

The religious leaders themselves were highly conscious of the value of the printers and their products to the cause. Even before it had become certain that the church would not reform as he wished and that the emperor would support the church, Luther embraced the printing press as his most valuable ally. In a very short space of time he wrote several enormously influential pamphlets that mark the crossing of his personal Rubicon in that they were incontrovertibly heretical. *The Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, for example, called on the territorial princes to reform the church in their lands; *The Babylonian Captivity* attacked the sacramental system; *On Monastic Vows* denounced the regular clergy and the whole notion of celibacy. While a refugee in the Wartburg, after his condemnation by the Diet at Worms and rescue by the Elector of Saxony (1521), Luther began his translation of the Bible that virtually created the modern German language and has profoundly influenced German culture.

As early as 1520 Luther was the most widely read German author and had produced thirty devotional works, including slim editions of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. The Wittenberg presses turned out more than six hundred works between 1518 and 1523, including fifteen editions of *The Address to the German Nobility* (the first edition of four thousand was sold out within a week). Meanwhile his enemies were not idle, and some of his would-be followers went off at tangents of their own. Hundreds of pamphlets poured from the presses of fifty German cities. Vernacular publications in 1524 numbered about nine hundred, as compared with one hundred and fifty in 1518. One scholar says that in his anxiety to spread the truth and correct misinterpretations Luther "organized a veritable press bureau." He sought out and attracted to Wittenberg the ablest pamphleteers and propagandists. By carefully studying both the content and the stylistic and polemical devices of his opponents he was able to outbid them with the most important groups of readers by his own vigorous argument, forceful style, and colorful language. One result was that he became a new au-

thority throughout Germany, "the Pope of Wittenberg," taking the place of the old authority. This influenced the future development of the movement in ways not predictable at the outset that might not have occurred if the controversies, both religious and political, had not been blown up and carried to every German-speaking area by the printing press. It is to be noted that this flood of German pamphlets receded abruptly after 1525, when the peasant uprisings were repressed by the princes, with Luther's support, and they gained control of the movement for all practical purposes.³⁶

In England the phenomenon is even more striking in that it continued in ever-increasing volume from the 1530s through the Puritan revolution of the mid-seventeenth century, and embraced every religious current. At the height of the Marian persecutions, Nicholas Ridley, bishop of London, who was a prisoner in the Tower, devoted his energies to writing and securing the publication of a number of tracts on the sacraments, on church-state relations, and on persecution and martyrdom. Although the Protestant leaders were in prison, the government was unable to prevent these from being published in Protestant continental cities like Strasbourg, Frankfurt, and Geneva, because of the existence of an extensive and efficient network of sympathizers both in England and abroad who risked their lives to transmit the manuscripts and the resulting books. Mary's proclamation against sedition reflects the situation accurately. It condemned those who took it upon themselves

to preach and to interpret the word of God after their own brain in churches and in other places both public and private, and also . . . by printing of false-found books, ballads, rhymes and other treatises in the English tongue . . . touching the high points and mysteries of the Christian religion, which . . . are chiefly by the printers and stationers set out to sale to her grace's subjects of an evil zeal for lucre and covetous of vile gain.³⁷

The martyrdoms of the three bishops in the Tower, Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer, with those of numerous lesser men and women, were to be enshrined in the reign of Queen Elizabeth in a book considered so important that in 1570 a copy was placed in every church beside the Bible, and so influential in English history that it has been compared to English seapower.

This was John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, to use the abbreviated title. The Foxe phenomenon owes its unique importance to its usefulness to the Elizabethan regime, but the English Cardinal William Allen was no less ready to use the press as his chief instrument against Elizabeth, and Puritan publications number in the thousands.³⁸

Geneva was the spiritual home of English dissenters, although the more radical of them would not have been tolerated there, and from the Genevan presses came the flood of publications that sustained the reform movements in France, Scotland, and the Netherlands. Leading Parisian printers like the Estiennes, and Lyonnais like Pierre de Vingle and Jean de Tournes moved some part of their business to "the Protestant Rome" when forced to flee France. With the exception of Robert and Henri Estienne, whose publications were primarily classical, these presses were devoted to serving the Reform militant.

The largest publishing business in Geneva was that of Laurent de Normandie, a childhood friend of Calvin's in Noyon, who has been called the Calvinist "minister of propaganda." He owned four printing shops in Geneva but also provided work for other presses. At his death in 1569 his estate contained twenty-five thousand plates, including ten thousand of the works of Calvin. His accounts show about two hundred distributors in his employ, operating in a large number of northern cities. Although most of them were booksellers by profession, the roll also includes ministers, merchants, artisans, and some nobles.³⁹

The list of Laurent de Normandie's outlets and customers is one indication of a significant factor in the impact of the Reformation on communication: by mid-century the enterprising printers had created a single European market for their goods, with a regular and efficient system for transacting business, and Frankfurt am Main, with its annual book fair, was its hub. Writers, booksellers, printers, and businessmen of all kinds flocked to Frankfurt from every corner of Europe each autumn. For some it was a convention, professionally essential; for others, who might be called tourists, it was a distraction, a sight to be seen. Deals of all sorts were negotiated and production for the next year planned. The occasion was also a great generator of rumors and news.⁴⁰

Because of its location and the entanglement of the book trade with the reform, the Frankfurt fair was an important source of and outlet for Protestant propaganda. In a country like France, where by mid-century heresy was severely repressed, the printers had another, subordinate and clandestine, means of communication, described by one authority on the subject as "a veritable network of subversion." Its headquarters were a Parisian bookshop called *L'Ecu de Bâle* because it had originated with the printer-sellers of Basel. As early as 1483 the Basel booksellers had a permanent agent in Lyon; by 1500 there were agents also in Strasbourg, Avignon, Toulouse, Châlons, and Paris. The Paris branch grew in importance and the bookstore known as *L'Ecu de Bâle* was established in 1516. It did a flourishing business in reform literature until the repression of the late 1520s, printing some works on the spot and importing others. In 1519, for example, six thousand copies of Luther's works were imported and sold. The joint censorship of the crown and the Sorbonne obliged the owners to give up printing heretical works in Paris, but they continued to import and sell them at considerable risk to themselves.⁴¹

In Paris the book trade was right under the eyes of the authorities and it was bound to be seriously crippled, but Lyon was far from Paris and near Geneva. Moreover, many Lyonnais printers were natives of or had connections with Germany and Switzerland, while an upper-class Protestant clientele created a demand for Protestant works. Lyon therefore became the center of French intellectual activity, of reform propaganda, and of the printing industry in France.⁴²

It would be a mistake to attribute the persistence of printing and bookselling in situations made dangerous by persecution exclusively to religious zeal or a taste for martyrdom, though these undoubtedly existed. The new book-oriented culture and especially the religious revival made it a very promising business, and one may assume that economic motives quite honestly predominated with a considerable proportion of businessmen in the sixteenth as in any other century.

The London book trade was organized for the first time in 1557 when the crown established the Company of Stationers, granting its members certain privileges, imposing regulations, and claiming a share of the profits. Two years later when the

Marian exiles returned, they were prepared to apply techniques they had learned in Frankfurt and Geneva, while English Catholics, exiles in their turn, began plying their compatriots with books printed abroad or secretly at home. "The result was that book-production in England soon became not only a flourishing trade but in its effects a major factor and a major problem in public life." John Day, who had been excluded from the Company of Stationers by Mary as the printer of Latimer's sermons and other subversive works, became the leading Establishment printer, with Archbishop Parker as his patron and John Foxe as his editor. Among his religious publications were the works of Ridley, sermons, letters and manifestoes of the martyrs, and, of course, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* itself. He also held exclusive rights to the English service book and ABC books.⁴³

Reformation publications can be classified in a number of ways. Bibles, editions of the church fathers, theological treatises, sermons, and letters of religious leaders and martyrs constitute the most impressive category. For our purposes, other publications can be described as either directly and explicitly polemical or indirectly polemical, that is, those that ostensibly inform or instruct the reader in some secular subject, or entertain him, in such a way as to persuade him to adopt a particular religious position.

Purely religious works of devotional instruction, *livres de piété*, were produced in the greatest volume by Protestant presses everywhere and scholars are unanimous in emphasizing their influence. Issued in small format, easy to transport and conceal, inexpensive, they carried the lessons of personal piety into the homes and workshops of the middle and lower classes. "Expositions" of the Lord's Prayer, the Sermon on the Mount, the Parables, and the Ten Commandments were typical subjects. Another approach was to offer a Protestant substitute for some rejected Roman practice. An anonymous pamphlet of forty pages, called *Brève instruction pour soy confesser*, printed by Simon du Bois, is a good example. After proving that confession and penance in the Catholic manner are man-made innovations, that is, they are not found in the Gospels, it goes on to expound the doctrine of justification by faith, with the corollary that only God's grace can procure forgiveness for the truly repentant Christian. Advice and comfort for the persecuted con-

stitute another theme, as in du Bois's clandestine publication, *Le Combat Chrestien*, where the various kinds of battle to be fought by the Christian against particular dangers are catalogued and prescribed for from the Epistles of St. Paul.⁴⁴

Pamphlets, or *libelles*, were similar in form to devotional books and almost as numerous, but their content is better described as ecclesiastical or political than as spiritual, even if they deal with religious matters. Luther's famous pamphlets mentioned above are good examples, as are the Huguenot pamphlets of the wars of religion, at least three of which are considered of major importance to the development of constitutional theory: François Hotman's *Franco-Gallia*, Theodore Beza's *Du Droit des magistrats sur leurs sujets*, and the *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos*, of disputed authorship but now generally attributed to Philippe DuPlessis-Mornay. All three were written and published after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew (1572) and addressed themselves to relations between church and state, and the issues of religious toleration and right of resistance, which were of great importance to French Protestants at the time—and later to Catholics when the Calvinist Henry IV became king. A striking feature of the political theory of the Reformation era is the use of identical arguments by Protestants in some circumstances and by Catholics in others, each claiming the right to resist when they were persecuted and advocating obedience when the government was on their side.⁴⁵ More ephemeral polemical publications included manifestoes, proclamations of governments and opposition parties, and broadsides or handbills. These were constantly pouring from the press throughout the Reformation era and some had considerable historical importance. The appearance of placards attacking the mass (and asserting that the administration of the sacraments was a commemoration) in France in October 1534 marked the end of the relatively tolerant phase of François I's policy toward the reform and the beginning of severe repression. In the light of developments later in the century, it is seen as a turning point in the fate of Protestantism in France.⁴⁶

A characteristic of much polemical writing in the sixteenth century was dissimulation, the use of fictitious names and false places of publication to avoid detection, or of outright deceit by the attribution of opinions to a person or group, distorting or

even directly contradictory to their true opinions, to serve the purposes of the real—as opposed to the alleged—author. The French were particularly gifted in this respect. The printer-bookseller Pierre de Vingle, whose publications include the famous placards, was an outstanding practitioner of the art, and the unscrambling of some of his aliases and imaginary presses required extensive detective work by an expert. Productions of this kind, often satirical or obscene, reached a peak in the struggles of the Holy League against Henry IV in the 1590s. A priceless collection made by the Parisian diarist Pierre de l'Estoile can be found in the fourth volume of the complete edition of his *Mémoires-Journaux*.⁴⁷

An interesting case of serious false attribution to a well-known person on a religious theme is *La Confession de M. Noel Bêda*, also printed by Pierre de Vingle. The real Noel Bêda was the spokesman of the ultra-Catholic faculty of theology at the University of Paris and chief persecutor of the humanist-reformers in the 1520s. Having overstepped the bounds of propriety and incurred the wrath of the king, he was in disgrace in the early 1530s. The confession of the false Bêda is a statement of pure reformed doctrine, denouncing the sacraments and clergy of the Roman church—an ostensible plea for pardon for the error of the real Bêda's known ways. This particular example was so flagrantly out of character that it was quickly detected as false and heretical, but the volume and popularity of such works demonstrate two significant features of the Reformation era: great familiarity with the Bible and the church tradition, and "the intense desire of religious publicists to bring about the triumph of their own version of the faith, by no matter what means. Conscious of the importance of spreading the Word in print, they devoted their full energies to [doing so] without respect to persons . . . even without scruples, one might say."⁴⁸ There were always violent denunciations and repudiations by the person or group misrepresented, but the method continued to be popular and effective with all the sects, and the perpetrator's defense was always the same: any means toward the end of God's truth is justified.

A good many scholarly works of the Reformation era are indirectly polemical, presenting serious argument or accurate information with a certain interpretation that it is hoped the reader

will adopt. National histories were an especially suitable vehicle, as can be seen from the great Tudor chronicles of Camden, Stowe, and Holinshed, and from Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* in the later, expanded editions, as well as the works of the French Huguenot historians during the wars of religion. With the notable exception of Foxe's book, these were less accessible because scarcer and more expensive than the other kinds of polemical literature, and their impact was more likely to be restricted to the educated classes.

By contrast, most of the indirect polemical literature was popular, addressed to the man in the street, small in format, inexpensive, and simplistic in style and argument. Its purpose tended to be information, instruction, or entertainment. Almanacs and calendars were very popular. The Reformation input was to replace Catholic, or merely superstitious or astrological, "days," practices, biblical verses, and parables. The same new trend is to be found in the Books of Hours and emblem-books made for the aristocracy. The overriding purpose of all is to lead the reader to the scriptures. A good example is the *Almanach spirituel et perpetuel, nécessaire à tout homme sensuel et temporel*, printed by du Bois in Alençon, probably in 1531, which shows the influence of several German writings inspired by Luther. Fragments of the Old Testament and the Gospels are inserted in the usual subject matter, such as the dates of new and full moons, eclipses, and important fairs.⁴⁹

Manuals of instruction in everyday activities like ploughing, planting, and harvesting also were used by reform publicists, but the most significant instructional use was in alphabet books and primers. One that met with great success has been traced to the pen of Robert Olivétan, Calvin's cousin and translator-editor of the Huguenot Bible. It is entitled *L'instruction des enfants costenant la matière de prononcer et écrire en françois*, and printed by Pierre de Vingle in Geneva in 1533. It teaches the alphabet, grammar, the use of accents, and simple arithmetic, but also the basic articles of the reformed faith.⁵⁰

An example from Lyon later in the century bears the title ALPHABET OU INSTRUCTION/ *chrestienne, pour les petits enfans/nouvellement reveue et augmentée/ de plusieurs choses/ MAT. X/ Laissez les petis enfans venir à moy, et ne/ les empeschez, car à tels est le/ Royaume de Dieu/ EPHES. VI/*

Père, nourrissez vos enfans en la discipline et correction de nostre Seigneur. The first section takes up the Ten Commandments, followed by some Psalms, in Marot's versification, and then come prayers for every hour of the day and every activity of the child's life, but none of them is addressed to the saints or the Virgin. Heavy emphasis is placed on God the Father and obedience to the child's father as His deputy. Prayers are included for the conversion of secular rulers to the true faith and for its protection against the "ravenous wolves" who would devour it. A leading scholar of the French Reformation remarks, "Here is a little book, very inoffensive in appearance, a simple primer designed for children; the peddler who transports it can easily conceal it, the teacher can slip it into his pupil's hand without attracting attention. Yet this little booklet is an awe-inspiring weapon of war, it is a résumé in brief and popularized form of Calvin's *Institutes*—it is the whole religious revolution ready to explode in the classroom."⁵¹

The penetration of reformed ideas into popular drama has already been mentioned, and the oral impact here undoubtedly was more important, especially with those who could not read. But the volume of popular reform literature produced and sold indicates that literacy was more prevalent in the lower classes, at least in some areas, than is commonly supposed, and it was increasing rapidly under the pressure of reformed teaching and emphasis on the Bible, even as vernacular writings multiplied.⁵² Poetry and fiction were infiltrated by Reformation polemics, especially in Germany, were allegorical subject matter in metrical verse to be recited or sung grew naturally out of a strong medieval tradition. One popular poem, called *The Triumph of Virtue*, is in reality a long commentary on the engraving that serves as its frontispiece, showing Luther, "the nightingale of Wittenberg," with his allies standing before the throne of God. His enemies are on the other side. Appropriate praise for the former and condemnation of the latter are set forth in the text, much of it put in the mouths of Old Testament prophets or Christian martyrs. The identification of Luther with the nightingale, who gives the signal that night is over and dawn about to break, stems from a famous allegorical drawing of Hans Sachs. The nightingale is singing in the branches of a huge tree; the moon has not yet faded from the sky and the wolves are still

devouring innocent lambs under cover of the darkness, but one lamb toward the east bears the cross and the malicious animals all show fear. The accompanying text makes sure that the reader will get the point. The opening verse bids him awake, and further on he is enjoined, "Know that the blessed nightingale who hails the dawn is Dr. Martin Luther, Augustin of Wittenberg, who draws us out of the night where we have been led astray by the moon [Roman Catholicism] and become prey to the lion [Pope Leo X] and other evil creatures [the clergy]; he will give us instead the lamb [Gospel]." ⁵³

With few exceptions, principally the masterpieces of Albrecht Dürer, the illustrations in Reformation books are more important as propaganda than as art. Yet the *livres de piété* put out by the Lyonnais printers were as much sought after for their illustrations as for their texts, and Haller remarks the "reportorial effectiveness" of the woodcuts in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, which were "designed . . . to illustrate a memorable scene and to score a point off the adversary in the manner of a satirical cartoon." In the 1570 edition, greatly enlarged, volume I ends with twelve full-page illustrations of the decline and corruption of the papacy, including one of King John humiliated, kneeling before the pope, as he is forced to accept his kingdom as a papal fief. This contrasts strikingly with one in the second volume, where Henry VIII sits in council holding his sceptre, his foot on the neck of Clement VII, while Cranmer hands him the Bible. Haller comments, "The latter picture expressed the dominant theme of the work from this point on. Everywhere . . . in its account . . . up to this point has been planned to lead up to Henry VIII. Everything on was intended to lead to Elizabeth." ⁵⁴ The *Book of Martyrs* is thus a prime example of the mobilization of every means of communication in the service of the Reformation and its affiliated political regime, combining Renaissance development in language and learning with religious fervor to bring the desired message to every reader.

PROPAGANDA

So many different messages were transmitted that one needs some general guidelines to avoid being overwhelmed and bewildered by the conflicting streams of Reformation propaganda on the one hand or long study of the various movements on the other. Despite their many divergences, two generalizations can

be applied to all the Protestant movements: first, their propaganda had two objects, a negative one, to exploit sources of discontent with the old religious order, and a positive one, to build on desires, aspirations, and expectations by associating their fulfillment with a new religious order. Second, their propaganda, like their motives, includes both spiritual and secular elements.

Little as the Church of England and the Kirk of Scotland appear to have in common with each other or the Radicals, their propaganda shares many themes of the negative sort that reflect widespread resentment against the Roman Catholic church of the sixteenth century. Every form of polemical writing and graphic illustration of the Protestant sects drew heavily on the "abuses." The papacy was attacked not only for its worldliness, wealth, and ostentation, but for having usurped authority and substituted itself for the true authority of the Gospels, and for creating a temporal state with a fiscal bureaucracy. The entire clergy was attacked for lack of spirituality and for temporal pre-occupations, the priests especially for ignorance and the monks, most virulently of all, for immorality and as parasites on society. The very notions of the privileged priesthood and the sacramental system were denounced and celibacy universally rejected. Practices like the sale of indulgences and doctrines like the intercession of saints were only the most conspicuous of those attacked.

The entire secular order of government and society was at least indirectly implicated because the officers, privileges, and institutions of the church were so deeply embedded in it. Rulers like the German princes and powerful nobles everywhere responded to these themes on the level of their interests—desire to consolidate power and secure revenues—and, in many cases, on the spiritual level also, as devout Christians seriously persuaded that the church had gone astray. The educated classes were deeply penetrated by the Christian humanist doctrine that the essence of Christianity lay exclusively in the Gospels and all else was false, superstition, or mercenary exploitation. In addition, their business or profession involved them with the secular powers; they served as officers in the growing bureaucracies or depended on the state for markets and other business advantages.

Artisans who often were the victims of clerical exploitation

might be attached to old industries or trades suffering from competition, dislocation, unemployment, or inflation, or to new ones like printing and metallurgy, which required patronage and protection from the newly aggressive secular rulers. Unskilled workers, peasants, and the underprivileged generally resented centuries-old injustices that seemed less tolerable in an age of rising geographical mobility and economic opportunity, when persuasive voices were proclaiming that although all men might be fully equal only in the sight of God, they were not therefore required to accept particular traditional forms of inequality in the sight of man.

These negative factors could stir up repeated unrest, even in some circumstances rebellion, but only the promise or prospect of fulfillment of men's positive aspirations could lay the foundation of a new order that would capture the imagination, command allegiance from all classes, and provide a new cohesion to replace that which was felt to be lost. There was a conscious need for personal commitment in religion and for participation at the level where it really counts. The old church, even though many clerics from village priests to cardinals were devout, was so overburdened with institutional complexities that the layman felt impotent, unimportant, a mere follower, trapped by the rules and requirements.

The initial phase of lay piety had been a response to the German mystics and the *Devotio Moderna*, a conception of religion that was simple and personal, strongly emotional but at the same time practical in its application to daily life. The new thrust of sixteenth-century piety responded to the evocation of the pure apostolic age combined with the intellectual appeal of straightforward doctrine, cut to the bone, which did not strain the bounds of reason. The Renaissance had flowered with the maxim "back to the sources," and the new religious leaders confined their teachings—at least at first—to the ancient texts purified of all additions. One was required to take on faith only the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul. The living Word was thought to speak directly to each Christian soul providing only that he had faith, though his access would be more complete, and more satisfactory to him, if he could read it for himself in his own language. Solace for every burden and predicament lay as close as the nearest New Testament.

Moreover, in the most dynamic of the new forms of Christianity, that of Calvin, the Christian was in large part relieved of responsibility for his personal salvation, which was in God's hands. He was given instead a responsibility he could really assume and nobody else could take his place: a direct share in God's work, in "the world," either in his present place and activity or in one he could attain through his own efforts. Every kind of constructive work was regarded as part of the Lord's Plan, so that the peasant at his plough, the artisan at his bench, the merchant in his shop, the housewife in the kitchen, and the child in the schoolroom each had a "calling" with a spiritual dimension, and could feel that his work was sanctified because it was done for the glory of God and in obedience to His will. Every man was in this sense a priest. If, through hard work, education, or the grasping of opportunity he could "rise in the world," this was approved as a proper use of his talents and pleasing to God. Resignation was an appropriate response to suffering sent by God, including persecution, for this is how faith is tested, but in earthly matters work to help or improve oneself was the sign of the true believer (although "works" in the traditional Catholic sense were repudiated).

The theme of restoration, or "back to the Gospel," was the single most powerful unifying theme of all the Protestant reformations. As soon as it became necessary to institutionalize new beliefs and practices, to go beyond the assertion of faith and the Word, they inevitably became divided into the "magisterial" forms and, for those who rejected these, into the various radical groups.

A second positive theme was very powerful in some areas, depending on secular historical circumstances. This was the rise of consciously formulated new allegiances resulting from identification with a territorial or national government and culture. "Christendom," which had been the political counterpart of the universal Roman church, was no longer realistically united, and the small localities where most men lived all their lives had been or were becoming absorbed in larger units with a character of their own, usually centered around a ruling dynasty and a common language. *Res christiana* faded into memory, leaving *cuius regio eius religio* as the compelling reality.⁵⁵

By its very nature this theme created new cohesion within

each of the new centers of allegiance but heightened differences between them. There certainly were greater differences (and greater consciousness of difference) between the subjects of Queen Elizabeth and those of Henry IV than between Englishmen and Frenchmen a century earlier, although then they had recently waged war against each other for several generations (the Hundred Years War). For the great majority in either nation who were not associated with the levers of power, this greater consciousness stemmed from an increasingly differentiated culture and national history. The particular religious doctrines and institutions adopted by each in the Reformation era became embedded in the national culture. In Germany, Lutheranism stimulated the growth of a unified culture but it was not accompanied by political unification, and "the Germans" remained fragmented until the nineteenth century. The national character of the Scots was institutionalized by the Kirk of Scotland, and the United Provinces of the Netherlands came to birth as a nation in this era through a struggle that was both religious and national.

The propaganda formulated by the victorious parties in the Reformation era has colored their respective national histories and self-images for four hundred years. There also exist some minority images, the heritage of the losers, such as English Catholics and French Protestants. England is the most clear-cut case for the dominant view, possibly because national religion and culture were indigenous and developed together, whereas in France the ultimately triumphant religion was after all doctrinally Catholic, and the variants of Gallicanism involve areas of administration that overlap with the secular power rather than spiritual issues.

The fact that Henry VIII carried out the establishment of a national church quite rapidly, through acts of Parliament, and that the only rebellion of his reign was confined to one area and was short-lived, had led historians to underestimate the opposition, according to Geoffrey Elton, the leading twentieth-century constitutional historian of the reign. In a recent book, *Policy and Police*, he has set the record straight with abundant documentation of the extent and various manifestations of opposition, followed by a detailed analysis of the means by which Thomas Cromwell, the king's chief minister, overcame it. Elton

believes that to Cromwell's "propaganda staff," especially Richard Morison, a gifted pamphleteer, belongs much credit for persuading the nation to accept Henry's divorce, the break from Rome, and the subsequent Henrician settlement.⁵⁶

In a pair of particularly effective pamphlets of 1539, Morison produced "a mixture of Protestant religion and patriotic fervor" that was to become characteristic of English polemics. *An Invective against the great and detestable vice of treason* attacks prominent Catholics who oppose Henry and concludes that they and the pope are bound to fail "because the King has seen the light [of Protestantism]." *An Exhortation to stir all Englishmen to the defence of their country* predicts defeat of the wicked bishop of Rome and his allies; with the Lord's help English hands and English hearts will win even if they are outnumbered. The ad hoc purpose of these pamphlets was to make preparations for war against the French more palatable, but the long-range message was England's good fortune and the dangers threatening her through Catholicism. The conclusion was that all Englishmen should rally to support the king who had broken the yoke of Rome and would make England's future safer and even more glorious than her past.⁵⁷

When the Marian exiles returned at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, this theme of England's special position and virtue assumed its fullest and most exalted expression in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, through an extension of the Christian philosophy of history formulated by St. Augustine in the fifth century. The great determining events are the Creation, the Fall, and the life of Christ, whose resurrection carries the promise of redemption for believers. But that promise will not be fulfilled until the Last Judgment, and in the meantime human history is the story of the struggle of the City of God against His enemies. The Hebrew notion of the Chosen People is thus transferred to Christians. The sixteenth-century reformers, especially Calvin, who was much influenced by the Old Testament, elaborated the concept of the "elect," those predestined by God for salvation, and the Radicals also held the millennium to be their goal.

The idea of the elect as peculiarly English was first articulated by John Bale, who saw history as "the age-long contention of English rulers and people against intruders forever seeking to subvert the English state and corrupt the English church by

open violence or by false doctrine." The story began when Joseph of Arimethea brought the pure Gospel to Britain. In later centuries agents of Rome and the Normans corrupted it, but there were always some good native kings and spiritual teachers to keep the true faith alive even in the darkest times.⁵⁸

John Aylmer, writing in 1559, by dramatizing Elizabeth's sufferings and exemplary behavior during Mary's reign, established her as the latest and greatest of the godly rulers who defended His chosen realm. Englishmen should thank God that they were not born Italian, French, or any other nationality because not only does England abound in all good things, such as beef, beer, and wool, but "God and His angels fight on her side against all enemies." "God is English," the writer exclaims in the margin. Haller points out that Aylmer "spoke for a highly articulate group of intellectuals with a common grievance, a common purpose, a common body of ideas, a common vocabulary for making their ideas known, and a vital stake in the security of Elizabeth's person and the success of her regime."⁵⁹

Such is the context in which Foxe took up the theme and perfected it, in successive editions of the *Book of Martyrs*, each with richer detail from past centuries and recent decades concerning "the Elect Nation." Where earlier editions had covered the history of England before Wycliffe in one hundred pages, the 1570 edition has five hundred, and the increase of space devoted to contemporary history is even greater. The significance of this expansion and incorporation of legends about the national past can hardly be exaggerated, according to Haller:

It was for its own time and for several succeeding generations a comprehensive history of England based upon a conception of human nature and of the meaning and course of history which few of its readers were in any state of mind to do anything but accept as universally true.⁶⁰

Simultaneously, English chroniclers like Camden, Stowe, and Holinshed were creating a secular national legend that made the English people "aware of themselves as a people having a common past full of meaning for the present."⁶¹ And indeed for the future as well. Down to the twentieth century, Englishmen have carried this special sense of righteousness and

moral mission as they traded, colonized, and conquered in every corner of the world. Transplanted Englishmen adapted it to their new nation in North America, alleged to be even more elect because it was free from the taints of the old, with a manifest destiny to fulfill.⁶²

A third positive theme in Protestant propaganda is the thirst for justice, supposed to be the business of rulers, for which they are accountable to God. This is a complex theme with many components. In addition to the obligation of governments to protect the true faith and suppress heresy, it embraces the idea of greater equality—matching the spiritual liberation of the laity—the claim to rights, beginning with those of conscience and broadened by some into a whole series of civil rights, and consequently in many cases a demand for autonomy. Lutheran princes, French Huguenot nobles, Dutch provincials, and English Puritans are among those who expressed some of these aspirations during the Reformation era. The striking initiative of women in the Protestant reformations may be an expression of their (unconscious) feeling that where the laity was on a par with the ministry they would be less completely subordinated to men than in the predominantly male Roman church. (Their conscious motives were wholly spiritual and moral, however.)

We know for certain that the peasants in Germany rose in rebellion in the 1520s believing that if Luther proclaimed every man his own priest, he would support their challenge to the lesser, secular authority. We also know how bitterly disappointed they were, and that he lost much peasant support even as he consolidated his following among the nobles and the princes—whose aspirations against the emperor and the pope he had encouraged. The German situation is a good example of a typical pattern: where social aspirations or demands for rights suited the secular powers they were achieved, at least in part; otherwise they were largely frustrated. Anabaptists who wanted a real social revolution were doomed to fail, while Cambridge intellectuals who were willing to identify their cause with the stability of Elizabeth's regime succeeded. Catherine de Medici would grant to Huguenot members of the great nobility a degree of religious autonomy denied to their humbler coreligionists, unless they had powerful protection. Seventeenth-century Puritans in New England (Massachusetts Bay) had de-

fied the king and left their homeland in the name of religious liberty, but refused to grant it to Independents in Plymouth or Rhode Island.

The egalitarian message of the reform thus often aroused expectations and demands beyond what those who proclaimed it or their powerful supporters were ready to concede, a pattern not unusual in revolutions, as can be seen from the ultimate results of the two great liberal revolutions of the late eighteenth century in America and France.

Students of the Reformation era have struggled in vain to distinguish neatly between religious and secular elements in sixteenth-century propaganda. Sometimes when one thinks a particular case is clearly pinned down to an obvious secular motive, such as peasants' resentment of landlords and desire for their own land, or the demands of printing workers on their masters, one is forced to qualify it by the discovery that much of the social criticism in popular English literature "ends up in criticism of the church," or that their economic conflict did not prevent Protestant *compagnons* from closing ranks on religious issues with their Protestant masters in Lyon.⁶³

By attempting to separate religious and secular concerns in the sixteenth century too sharply, historians often have been trapped into contradictions or mired in confusion. This happens especially when they are simultaneously trying to label the period as "medieval," when religion is alleged to have predominated, or "modern" and secular. This is a false dilemma, based on erroneous assumptions. In a perceptive and influential essay entitled "Factors in Modern History," J. H. Hexter suggests that the century is best understood in terms of "polar-pairs" between which "there is tension, the issue is *never* one of either-or; it is *always* more-or-less." Elaborating the point further on, he says, "[O]nce we realize that the religious and the secular, though polar to one another, *can* both at once rise to higher levels of intensity, we will recognize that they both *did* so rise in the sixteenth century."⁶⁴ Moreover, it should always be remembered that the natural idiom of the times was religious, unlike the Western world of the twentieth century, although the continuation of confessional bitterness in Northern Ireland to the point of civil war should remind us that some sixteenth-century patterns persist today as did medieval ones in the early modern period.

The Catholic Reformers obviously could not use any of the three positive themes in precisely the same way as did Protestants. Roman propagandists had to resort to counterarguments in each case. They countered the appeal to the Gospels and the primitive church by emphasizing the venerable and continuous Roman tradition. Against national aspirations they set the universality of the one true church, heightening its splendor and glorifying its uniqueness. The desire for justice presented the greatest difficulties, because the Tridentine Church Council was not prepared to modify the hierarchical principle, as we have seen in the test case of lay access to and interpretation of the Bible. Despite the educational successes of the Jesuits, the Roman church could win the educational competition with Protestants only where the contest was made unequal through repression of Protestantism by the secular authorities. Fear of subversion often led the church to oppose scientific or medical advances and social change, so that in the four hundred years between the Council of Trent and Vatican II the religious life of Catholics was increasingly compartmentalized and set apart from their secular lives.

One weapon was handed to the Roman propagandists by the Protestants themselves—their ever-proliferating divisions. The ablest Catholic polemicists used it very effectively, ridiculing the hair-splitting doctrinal differences among Protestants and pouring scorn on the presumption of man-in-the-street authority substituted for the accumulated wisdom of the vicars of Christ, successors of St. Peter, whose power was delegated by Jesus himself. The church also developed a unique weapon of its own in the exploitation of the visual arts. Protestants of every stripe deplored the characteristic decoration of Catholic churches with painting and sculpture, and the use of rich vestments and vessels. All but Anglicans and Lutherans condemned what they called “images,” and the Radicals often attacked them physically. Music also was banned in many of the new churches. By contrast, a conspicuous feature of the Catholic Reformation at its height was an artistic flowering, often called the baroque, that ranks among the greatest in modern history. Although scholars do not agree about the extent to which religion inspired such works as the paintings of Caravaggio or the architectural style known as “Jesuit,” some use of the arts was demonstrably propagandistic, like the frescoes of the Massacre of St.

Bartholomew in the Vatican by Vasari, commissioned by Pope Gregory XIII.⁶⁵

The unprecedented impact of the Reformation era on propaganda resulted, on the one hand, from the intensity of religious sentiment and, on the other, from the competition for converts between religious and political leaders of rival factions who knew how to use new forces of language, learning, and technology. In isolation any one of the waves of reform might have effected only limited changes, but all of them together made a revolution that affected every sphere of Western European society by a sort of chain reaction through the communication networks, oral, visual, and in print.

In the chapter in this volume on Renaissance communication, William Bouwsma points to the change from a medieval conception of reality as universal, objective, and relatively unchanging, above man's earthly life, to a conception oriented to everyday experience, "a series of unpredictable and novel events . . . dominated by laymen . . . increasingly well educated and assertive." The new culture such men brought to birth, he demonstrates, made more practical demands on communication, which "became an essential bond among men in society," requiring greater flexibility of language.⁶⁶ The Reformation sprang directly out of this new culture, inspired in its spiritual content by the revived ancient languages, especially the Greek of the New Testament, and then transmitted its message through the developing vernacular languages and the printing press. The Reformation impact on the conception of reality went beyond that of the Renaissance in that the reformers' concern with ultimate Christian truth required the redefinition of transcendent, eternal reality and some new explanation of its relationship to earthly experience. The post-Reformation era thus inherited a conception embracing three quite different spheres, one eternal-Christian, much revised as compared to the medieval, another from the classical world as revived by the Renaissance, in addition to that of practical experience.

Knowledge also had to be redefined: it was necessary to differentiate the kind of knowledge man could aspire to, concerning matters of faith, from information that could be demonstrated by reason or tested by experience. The simultaneous appearance of so many new conceptions of eternal truth—

Christianity—with the explosion of worldly knowledge in many areas explains some of the contradictions of the era that led to the futile attempts, already mentioned, to decide whether it was “medieval” or “modern,” an aspect of the Renaissance or a reaction against it.

If the Reformation is judged by Puritan echoes of Old Testament prophets, Anabaptist iconoclastic violence, and the aridity of much Protestant thought, it appears to be a movement directly in conflict with the Renaissance—an effective, though largely temporary, setback to the flowering of the human spirit. But if one also looks at the constitutional bulwarks against tyranny and the (ultimate) achievement of individual dignity through civil rights, or the extraordinary incidence of spirituality and courage in every group from the Anabaptists to the Jesuits, or the works of genius it inspired in men like Dürer and Milton, the Reformation is seen as a particular expression of the Renaissance—the Christian Renaissance.

As such, it was probably the most widely influential of all the various manifestations of the Renaissance. It certainly reached more people in more places, especially in the lower classes, than did the scholarly and artistic works of the fifteenth-century Italians. And it affected them on a fundamental level, restructuring their self-image and conception of the meaning of life. The ideas and institutions produced by the several reformations have shown an astounding durability and, in some cases, flexibility, proving themselves historically functional by meeting the needs of pluralistic Western society. The effective use of communication and propaganda was the central and indispensable instrument in this achievement.

NOTES

1. Space does not permit even minimal bibliography; the interested reader can find preliminary guidance in historiographical aids prepared for students: R. Dannenfeldt, ed., *The Renaissance, Medieval or Modern?* (Heath series, Problems in European History, Boston); W. Stanford Reid, ed., *The Reformation, Revival or Revolution?* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, European Problem series, 1968). Both contain excerpts of important interpretations and good bibliographical suggestions from recent historical literature.

2. The first pope who could exercise real authority over all other Western bishops was Gregory I (the Great, 590–604); the full machinery of the papal

monarchy dates from Innocent III (1198–1216). Certain influential theologians of the eastern Roman Empire are known as the Greek Fathers; the major "Latin" Fathers were St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, editor of the Roman Catholic Bible (*Vulgate*), and St. Augustine, author of *The City of God*, who died in A.D. 430. The influence of the latter was especially important in the Reformation era.

3. See, for instance, Gordon Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages: The Relation of Heterodoxy to Dissent* (Manchester, 1965), and John R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from Its Origins to 1517* (Oxford, 1968).

4. For the background and historical development of the indulgence controversy, see standard histories of Lutheranism (note 9), and for definitions of doctrinal and ecclesiastical terms consult F. L. Cross, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, 1957).

5. Wallace K. Ferguson, *Europe in Transition* (Boston, 1962); chaps. 11 and 15, give an excellent general account of the *Devotio Moderna* and the Brethren. For more detail, see Albert Hyman, *The Brethren of the Common Life* (Grand Rapids, 1950), and *The Christian Renaissance* (Hamden, Conn., 1960).

6. Unfortunately there is no biography of Marguerite in English. The standard work is Pierre Jourda, *Marguerite d'Angoulême*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1930). Brief discussion in Nancy L. Roelker, *Queen of Navarre: Jeanne d'Albret, 1528–1572* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 11–15. On French noblewomen, see Nancy L. Roelker, "The Role of Noblewomen in the French Reformation," in *Archive for Reformation History*, Autumn 1972, and "The Appeal of Calvinism to French Noblewomen in the Sixteenth Century," in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Spring 1972. On German women: Roland Bainton, *Women of the Reformation* (Minneapolis, 1971); on English noblewomen: D. K. McConica, *English Humanists and Reformation Politics* (Oxford, 1965), chap. 7.

7. When the Emperor Charles V tried to reassert his authority over the German princes who had converted to Lutheranism in 1529, they drew up a protest declaring that they could not be compelled in matters of conscience. This is the origin of the term Protestant, later extended to all non-Roman Catholics in the West.

8. George H. Williams, leading authority on the Radicals and author of several books and articles. See especially, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia, 1962).

9. Two good general introductions that have helpful bibliographies on each of the major reform movements are recommended: Roland H. Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (Boston, 1966); A. G. Dickens, *Reformation and Society in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London, 1966).

10. In addition to works on Calvinism in Bainton and Dickens, see, for a

fuller account, John T. McNeil, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York, 1954).

11. The best general introductory work is A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London, 1965).

12. Some English Protestants preferred a more conservative service, with vestments, chanting, and a sacramental emphasis. Their interpretation of communion was also similar to the Roman Catholic, although denying the miraculous power of the priest to transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (Transubstantiation). This tendency within the Anglican church came to be called "high." "Low-church" Anglican services resemble those of other Protestant sects in their simplicity; their interpretation of communion is commemorative and the sermon is the core of their worship. The Prayer Book prescribed for all in Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity allows for either alternative.

13. See two excellent studies: Geoffrey R. Elton, *Policy and Police: The Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge, 1972); and William Haller, *The Elect Nation: The Meaning and Relevance of Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (New York, 1963).

14. Williams's *Radical Reformation* is the outstanding work; see also Bainton, *Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, chaps. 7, 11.

15. Williams, *Radical Reformation*, chap. 23, section 4 and passim; Roland H. Bainton, *Hunted Heretic: The Life of Michael Servetus* (Boston, 1953) is a readable biography.

16. On the Catholic Reformation, see A. G. Dickens, *The Counter Reformation* (London, 1969); H. O. Evenett, *The Spirit of the Counter Reformation*, ed. J. Bossy (Cambridge, 1968).

17. Haller, p. 50.

18. Dickens, *Counter Reformation*, p. 115.

19. On Latimer, Haller, pp. 26-27; on preaching, Haller, p. 97.

20. Haller, pp. 92, 103.

21. No study of this movement exists in English. Like all Netherlands phenomena it must be examined in each province. For Utrecht, I am indebted to the doctoral dissertation of Sherrin Wyntjes, "The Lesser Nobility in the Netherlands Revolt in Utrecht" (Tufts University, 1972).

22. The sources (French) for the *affaire* are listed in the article cited in note 6, by Roelker, in *Archive for Reformation History*; Robert M. Kingdon, *Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France* (Geneva, 1956).

23. Henri Hauser, *Etudes sur la Réforme française* (Paris, 1909), pp. 91-93; Dickens, *English Reformation*, p. 13.

24. Eugénie Droz, "Antoine Vincent: la propagande par le Psautier," in *Aspects de la propagande religieuse*, ed. H. Meylan (Geneva, 1957), no. 28 of *Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance* (hereafter cited as *Aspects*), pp. 276-293; Natalie Z. Davis, "The Protestant Printing-Workers of Lyon in

1551," *Aspects*, pp. 247–257; Henri Hauser, *La Naissance du protestantisme*, 2d ed. (Paris 1962), p. 61.

25. Georgette Brasart-de Groër, "Le Collège, agent d'infiltration de la Réforme," *Aspects*, pp. 167–175; Dickens, *English Reformation*, p. 79.

26. For a lively account of the climate of opinion in Paris, see Nancy L. Roelker, ed., *The Paris of Henry of Navarre: The Mémoires-Journaux of Pierre de L'Estoile* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958).

27. Maurice Gravier, *Luther et l'opinion publique* (Paris, 1942), pp. 175–190; Dickens, *English Reformation*, p. 273.

28. On the taverns and other places of business or trade as agents of reform propaganda, see *Hérésies et sociétés dans l'Europe pré-industriel, du 11^{ème} au 18^{ème} siècles* (a symposium of the VI^e Section of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Paris, 1968), pp. 278–285, 401–405; on the spread of the reform among the common people in France, see Hauser, *Etudes*, pp. 83–103; on the reform carriers to northern Italy, see Edouard Pommier, "Propagande protestante dans la République de Venise," *Aspects*, pp. 240–246.

29. Charles Dartigue, *Le Vicomté de Béarn sous le règne d'Henri d'Albret* (Paris, 1934), pp. 478–480.

30. A. G. Dickens, *English Reformation*, p. 190; for examples, see p. 28.

31. Eugénie Droz, "Pierre de Vingle, imprimeur de Fatel," *Aspects*, pp. 38–78.

32. On the importance of printing to the Reformation in general, see Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, "L'Avènement de l'imprimerie et la Réforme," in *Annales; Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* (1971), pp. 1355–1382, which has many valuable references as well; A. Tricard, "La Propagande évangélique en France," *Aspects*, pp. 1–37; Robert M. Kingdon, "The Business Activities of Printers Henri and François Estienne," *Aspects*, pp. 258–275; Robert M. Kingdon, "Patronage, Piety and Printing in Sixteenth-Century Europe," in D. H. Pinkney and T. Ropp, eds., *Festschrift for Frederick B. Artz* (Durham, N.C., 1964), pp. 19–36, citation, p. 26; Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *L'Apparition du Livre* (Paris, 1958), *passim*.

33. Febvre and Martin, pp. 28–29.

34. Tricard.

35. On Marguerite, see the references in note 6; on the Marian exile printers, see Dickens, *English Reformation*, p. 283.

36. Louise W. Holborn, "Printing and the Growth of a Protestant Movement in Germany, 1517–1524," *Church History* 11 (1942):123–137; Gravier, pp. 217–221; Henri-Jean Martin, *Le Livre et la civilisation écrite* (Paris, 1968), pp. 162–163.

37. Haller, pp. 39–40; Mary's Proclamation, Haller, p. 24.

38. Haller, p. 14, citing Gordon Rupp, "Foxe's *Book* counted in English history as much as Drake's drum"; on Cardinal Allen's use of the press, see Garrett Mattingly, "William Allen and Catholic Propaganda in England,"

Aspects, pp. 325–339, and Thomas B. Clancy, *Papist Pamphleteers: The Allen-Persons Party and the Political Thought of the Counter-Reformation in England, 1572–1615* (Chicago, 1964); Robert M. Kingdon, "William Allen's Use of Protestant Political Argument," in C. H. Carter, ed., *From the Renaissance to the Counter Reformation: Essays in Honor of Garrett Mattingly* (New York, 1965), pp. 164–178. Muriam Chrisman, of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, has analyzed all Strasbourg publications of the Reformation era, as yet unpublished.

39. Heidi-Lucie Schlaepper, "Laurent de Normandie," *Aspects*, pp. 179–230; Kingdon, "Patronage, Piety and Printing."

40. Kingdon, "Business Activity"; James W. Thompson, *The Frankfort Book Fair* (Chicago: Caxton Club, 1911).

41. Martin, *Le Livre*, pp. 164–165. Peter G. Bietenholz, *Basle and France in the Sixteenth Century: The Basel Humanists and Printers in Their Contacts with Francophone Culture* (Geneva, 1971).

42. Droz, "Pierre de Vingle"; the forthcoming major study of the Lyon printing workers by Natalie Z. Davis, *Strikes and Salvation* (Stanford University Press) deals with this subject extensively.

43. On English book production, Haller, p. 111; on John Day, Haller, pp. 114–115.

44. Tricard, pp. 24–25, 29–33.

45. These have been translated and edited by Julian H. Franklin, *Constitutionalism and Resistance in the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1969). See also William F. Church, *Constitutional Thought in Sixteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, Mass., 1941).

46. Robert Hari, "Les Placards de 1534," *Aspects*, pp. 79–142.

47. Droz, "Pierre de Vingle," p. 56; Brunet et al., eds., *Mémoires-Journaux de Pierre de l'Estoile*, 12 vols. (Paris, 1888–1896).

48. Gabrielle Berthoud, "Livres Pseudo-catholiques de contenu protestant," *Aspects*, pp. 143–154, citation, p. 153.

49. Tricard, pp. 33–37.

50. Droz, "Pierre de Vingle," pp. 66–67.

51. Hauser, *Etudes*, pp. 274–286; citation, p. 281.

52. Holborn, "Printing," pp. 136–137.

53. Gravier, pp. 191–192; Martin, *Le Livre*, p. 146.

54. The illustrations of Lyon analyzed in Martin, *Le Livre*, pp. 156–159; citation in Haller, pp. 123, 173.

55. The formula "to whatever prince one is subject one belongs also to his religion" was adopted by the Lutheran princes; at the Peace of Augsburg (1555), which ended the religious war in Germany, it was embodied in the settlement. This was a victory for Luther's idea and a defeat for the Holy Roman emperor, but Catholic princes also could exploit it to their own advantage.

56. Elton, *Policy and Police*.

57. Ibid., pp. 202–210.

58. Haller, p. 69.

59. Ibid., pp. 87–88; citation, p. 88.

60. Ibid., p. 142.

61. Ibid., p. 149.

62. The French have a considerably older and more complex sense of themselves as an elect nation, dating from the Middle Ages, which has assumed many (secular) forms in modern history. It is not discussed here because it is not a product of the Reformation era, though some aspects of the argument appear in both Huguenot and Ligueur propaganda. See Joseph R. Strayer, "France: The Holy Land, the Chosen People and the Most Christian King," in Theodore K. Rabb and Jerold E. Seegal, eds., *Action and Conviction in Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of E. H. Harbison* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 3–16; Miriam Yardeni, *La Conscience nationale en France pendant les guerres de religion, 1559–1598* (Paris, 1970).

63. Helen C. White, *Social Criticism in Popular Religious Literature of the Sixteenth Century*, 2d ed. (New York, 1965), pp. 31–35; Davis, *Strikes and Salvation*, chaps. 7, 8.

64. J. H. Hexter, *Reappraisals in History* (New York, 1961), pp. 26–44; citations from pp. 34, 42. Other "polar-pairs" include church-state; court-country; dynasty-region; and Catholic-Protestant. The last is atypical in that it called for "mutual exclusion, indeed, mutual extermination."

65. Dickens, *Counter Reformation*, pp. 165–170, especially the illustrations. See also Carl J. Friedrich, *The Age of the Baroque* (New York, 1952).

66. See chapter 1 in the present volume.

3

THE ENLIGHTENMENT AS A COMMUNICATION UNIVERSE

PETER GAY

THE LITTLE FLOCK OF PHILOSOPHES

I

There were many philosophes in the eighteenth century, but there was only one Enlightenment. A loose, informal, wholly unorganized coalition of cultural critics, religious skeptics, and political reformers from Edinburgh to Naples, Paris to Berlin, Boston to Philadelphia, the philosophes made up a clamorous chorus, and there were some discordant voices among them, but what is striking is their general harmony, not their occasional discord. The men of the Enlightenment united on a vastly ambitious program, a program of secularism, humanity, cosmopolitanism, and freedom, above all, freedom in its many forms—freedom from arbitrary power, freedom of speech, freedom of trade, freedom to realize one's talents, freedom of aesthetic response, freedom, in a word, of moral man to make his own way in the world. In 1784, when the Enlightenment had done most of its work, Kant defined it as man's emergence from his self-imposed tutelage, and offered as its motto *Sapere aude*—"Dare to know": take the risk of discovery, exercise the right of unfettered criticism, accept the loneliness of autonomy.¹ Like the other philosophes—for Kant only articulated what the others had long suggested in their polemics—Kant saw the Enlightenment as man's claim to be recognized as an adult, responsible being. It is the concord of the philosophes in staking

this claim, as much as the claim itself, that makes the Enlightenment such a momentous event in the history of the Western mind.

Unity did not mean unanimity. The philosophic coalition was marked, and sometimes endangered, by disparities of philosophical and political convictions. A few—a very few—of the philosophes held tenaciously to vestiges of their Christian schooling, while others ventured into atheism and materialism; a handful remained loyal to dynastic authority, while radicals developed democratic ideas. The French took perverse pleasure in the opposition of church and state to their campaigns for free speech and a humane penal code, and to their polemics against “superstition.” British men of letters, on the other hand, were relatively content with their political and social institutions. The German *Aufklärer* were isolated, impotent, and almost wholly unpolitical. As Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, essayist, wit, physicist, and skeptic, wrote in the privacy of his notebooks: “A heavy tax rests, at least in Germany, on the windows of the Enlightenment.”² In those Italian states that were touched by the new ideas, chiefly Lombardy and Tuscany, the reformers had an appreciative public and found a sympathetic hearing from the authorities. The British had had their revolution, the French were creating conditions for a revolution, the Germans did not permit themselves to dream of a revolution, and the Italians were making a quiet revolution with the aid of the state. Thus the variety of political experience produced an Enlightenment with distinct branches; the philosophes were neither a disciplined phalanx nor a rigid school of thought. If they composed anything at all, it was something rather looser than that: a family.³

But while the philosophes were a family, they were a stormy one. They were allies and often friends, but second only to their pleasure in promoting the common cause was the pleasure in criticizing a comrade-in-arms. They carried on an unending debate with one another, and some of their exchanges were anything but polite. Many of the charges later leveled against the Enlightenment—naïve optimism, pretentious rationalism, unphilosophical philosophizing—were first made by one philosophe against another. Even some of the misinterpretations that have become commonplace since their time were originated by

philosophes: Voltaire launched the canard about Rousseau's primitivism, Diderot and Wieland repeated it; Hume was among the first to misread Voltaire's elegant wit as sprightly irresponsibility.

To the delight of their enemies, the philosophes generated a highly charged atmosphere in which friendships were emotional, quarrels noisy, reconciliations tearful, and private affairs public. Diderot, generous to everyone's faults except Rousseau's, found it hard to forgive d'Alembert's prudent desertion of the *Encyclopédie*. Voltaire, fondest of those who did not threaten him with their talent gave Diderot uneasy and uncomprehending respect, and collaborated on an *Encyclopédie* in which he never really believed; in return, Diderot paid awkward tributes to the literary dictator of the age. He honored Voltaire, he told Sophie Volland, despite his bizarre behavior: "Someone gives him a shocking page which Rousseau, citizen of Geneva, has just scribbled against him. He gets furious, he loses his temper, he calls him villain, he foams with rage; he wants to have the miserable fellow beaten to death. 'Look,' says someone there, 'I have it on good authority that he's going to ask you for asylum, today, tomorrow, perhaps the day after tomorrow. What would you do?' 'What would I do?' replies Voltaire, gnashing his teeth, 'What would I do? I'd take him by the hand, lead him to my room, and say to him, 'Look, here's my bed, the best in the house, sleep there, sleep there for the rest of your life, and be happy.'"⁴ There is something a little uneasy beneath this charming fable: Diderot thought well of Voltaire's writings and Voltaire's humane generosity, but he somehow never quite trusted him, and the two men did not meet until 1778, when Voltaire came back to Paris to die. For their part, the Germans, like Lessing, had distant, correct, or faintly unpleasant relations with the French: they admired them judiciously and from afar. Rousseau, at first indulged by all, came to reject and to be rejected by all, even by David Hume. Only Hume, corpulent, free from envy and, in society, cheerfully unskeptical, seems to have been universally popular, a favorite uncle in the philosophic family.

The metaphor of a philosophic family is not my invention. The philosophes used it themselves. They thought of themselves as a *petite troupe*, with common loyalties and a common

world view. This sense survived all their high-spirited quarrels: the philosophes did not have a party line, but they were a party. Some of the harshest recriminations remained in the family, and when they did become public, they were usually sweetened by large doses of polite appreciation. Moreover, harassment or the fear of harassment drove the philosophes to remember what they had in common and forget what divided them. The report of a book burned, a radical writer imprisoned, a heterodox passage censored, was enough. Then, quarrelsome officers faced with sudden battle, they closed ranks: the tempest that burst over Helvétius's *De l'esprit* in 1758 and the prohibition issued against Diderot's *Encyclopédie* in the following year did more to weld the philosophes into a party than Voltaire's most hysterical calls for unity. Critics trying to destroy the movement only strengthened it. In 1757 the journalist Fréron denounced Diderot to the chief censor, Malesherbes, as the "ringleader of a large company; he is at the head of a numerous society which pullulates, and multiplies itself every day by means of intrigues,"⁵ but Malesherbes continued to protect the philosophes to the best of his considerable ability. In 1760, Palissot, a clever journalist with good political sense but doubtful taste, wrote a meager comedy entitled *Les philosophes*, in which he lampooned Rousseau as an apelike savage and brutally satirized Helvétius, Diderot, and Duclos as an unprincipled gang of hypocrites who exploit idle, gullible society ladies with pretentious schemes. Palissot took it for granted that "everybody knows that there is an offensive and defensive league among these *philosophic* potentates."⁶ Obviously, the potentates survived this assault: Horace Walpole, who did not like them, had no hesitation in identifying the little flock when he reached Paris in 1765. "The *philosophes*," he wrote to Thomas Gray, "are insupportable, superficial, overbearing, and fanatic: they preach incessantly. . . ."⁷

Walpole's characterization is too bilious to be just. In fact, the philosophes tolerated a wider range of opinions than fanatical preachers could have: Voltaire was happy to admit that while atheism is misguided and potentially dangerous, a world filled with Holbachs would be palatable, far more palatable than a world filled with Christians, and Holbach, who thought little of deism, returned the compliment. There was one case, to be

sure, that seems to shatter the unity of the movement: the philosophes' persecution of Rousseau. But the persecutors did not see it that way. They rationalized their ruthlessness by arguing that Rousseau had read himself out of the family to become that most despicable of beings, an ex-philosophe. "No, my dear," wrote Diderot reassuringly to his Sophie Volland in July 1762, shortly after Rousseau's *Émile* had been condemned and burned, "no, the Rousseau business will have no consequences. He has the devout party on his side. He owes their interest in him to the bad things he says about philosophes. Since they hate us a thousand times more than they love their God, it matters little to them that he has dragged Christ in the mud—as long as he is not one of us. They keep hoping that he will be converted; they're sure that a deserter from our camp must sooner or later pass over into theirs."⁸ While, in general, arguments among philosophes were conducted in the tones Voltaire used about Holbach rather than the tones used by Diderot about Rousseau, Diderot's rhetoric in this letter—"we" against "they," the military metaphors, and the virulent hatred of the opposition—reveals at once the anxiety concealed behind the confident façade and the cohesion achieved by the men of the Enlightenment by the 1760s.

The Enlightenment, then, was a single army with a single banner, with a large central corps, a right and left wing, daring scouts, and lame stragglers. And it enlisted soldiers who did not call themselves philosophes but who were their teachers, intimates, or disciples. The philosophic family was drawn together by the demands of political strategy, by the hostility of church and state, and by the struggle to enhance the prestige and increase the income of literary men. But the cohesion among the philosophes went deeper than this: behind their tactical alliances and personal fellowship there stood a common experience from which they constructed a coherent philosophy. This experience—which marked each of the philosophes with greater or lesser intensity, but which marked them all—was the dialectical interplay of their appeal to antiquity, their tension with Christianity, and their pursuit of modernity. This dialectic defines the philosophes and sets them apart from other enlightened men of their age: they, unlike the others, used their classical learning to free themselves from their Christian heritage, and

then, having done with the ancients, turned their face toward a modern world view. The Enlightenment was a volatile mixture of classicism, impiety, and science; the philosophes, in a phrase, were modern pagans.

II

To call the Enlightenment pagan is to conjure up the most delightfully irresponsible sexual license: a lazy, sun-drenched summer afternoon, fauns and nymphs cavorting to sensual music, and lascivious painting, preferably by Boucher. There is some reality in this fantasy: the philosophes argued for a positive appreciation of sensuality and despised asceticism. But these preachers of libertinism were far less self-indulgent, far more restrained in their habits, than their pronouncements would lead us to believe. Rousseau had masochistic tastes which he apparently never gratified; Hume had an affair in France; young Benjamin Franklin "fell into intrigues with low women" and fathered an illegitimate son; Diderot wrote a pornographic novel to keep a mistress in the style to which she hoped to become accustomed; La Mettrie, a glutton, died at the Prussian court shortly after eating a spoiled game pie, thus giving rise to the delicious rumor that he had eaten himself to death; Voltaire had a passionate, prolonged affair with his niece—one of the few well-kept secrets of the eighteenth century. But this rather scanty list almost exhausts salacious gossip about the Enlightenment. Generally, the philosophes worked hard—made, in fact, a cult of work—ate moderately, and knew the joys of faithful affection, although rarely with their wives. When Diderot found his Sophie Volland in middle age, he found the passion of his life. His disdain of prostitutes or "loose women," which is such a curious theme in his correspondence, was not motivated by mean fear of venereal disease: it was the cheerful acceptance of obligation, the self-imposed bond of the free man. David Hume testified in 1763 that the French "Men of Letters" were all "Men of the World, living in entire or almost entire Harmony among themselves, and quite irreproachable in their Morals."⁹ As a group, the philosophes were a solid, respectable clan of revolutionaries, with their mission continually before them.

In speaking of the Enlightenment as pagan, therefore, I am

referring not to sensuality but to the affinity of the Enlightenment to classical thought.¹⁰ Words other than pagan—Augustan, Classical, Humanist—have served as epithets to capture this affinity, but they are all circumscribed by specific associations: they illuminate segments of the Enlightenment but not the whole. "Augustan" suggests the link between two ages of literary excellence, mannered refinement, and political corruption. "Classical" brings to mind Roman temples, Ciceronian gravity, and Greek myths translated into French couplets. "Humanist" recalls the debt of the Enlightenment to Renaissance scholarship, and a philosophy that places man in the center of things. Yet I do not think that any of these terms makes, as it were, enough demands on the Enlightenment; they have about them subtle suggestions of parochialism and anemia of the emotions: "Augustan" properly applies to Great Britain in the first half of the eighteenth century; "Classical" is the name for a noble, artificial literary style and for a preference for antique subject matter; "Humanism" in all its confusing history has come to include an educated piety. The Enlightenment was richer and more radical than any of these terms suggest: Diderot's plays, Voltaire's stories, Hume's epistemology, Lessing's polemics, Kant's Critiques—which all belong to the core of the Enlightenment—escape through their meshes.

III

For Walpole or Palissot, as for most historians since their time, a philosophe was a Frenchman. But *philosophe* is a French word for an international type, and that is how I shall use it in these pages. To be sure, it is right that the word should be French, for in France the encounter of the Enlightenment with the Establishment was the most dramatic: in eighteenth-century France, abuses were glaring enough to invite the most scathing criticism, while the machinery of repression was inefficient enough to permit critics adequate room for maneuver. France therefore fostered the type that has ever since been taken as *the* philosophe: the facile, articulate, doctrinaire, sociable, secular man of letters. The French philosophe, being the most belligerent, was the purest specimen.

Besides, Paris was the headquarters and French the lingua franca of European intellectuals, and philosophes of all nations

were the declared disciples of French writers. In Naples, Gaetano Filangieri, the radical legal reformer, acknowledged that he had received the impetus for writing his *Scienza della Legislazione* from Montesquieu. Beccaria, Filangieri's Milanese counterpart, told his French translator, Morellet, that he owed his "conversion to philosophy" to Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*, and that d'Alembert, Diderot, Helvétius, Buffon—and Hume—were his "constant reading matter," every day and "in the silence of night."¹¹ Hume and Gibbon attributed much of their historical consciousness, Adam Ferguson and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, most of their sociological understanding, to their delighted discovery and avid reading of Montesquieu's works. D'Alembert's *Discours préliminaire* to the *Encyclopédie* was widely read in Scotland and on the Continent. Adam Smith, without being a physiocrat himself, learned much from the physiocrats during his French visit from 1764 to 1766. Bentham derived his utilitarianism partly from Helvétius; Kant discovered his respect for the common man by reading Rousseau; while Voltaire's campaigns against *l'infâme* and on behalf of the victims of the French legal system had echoes all over Europe. Even Lessing, in rebellion against the French neoclassical drama of Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire, assailed it with weapons supplied to him by Diderot. And it is significant that monarchs like Catherine of Russia and Frederick of Prussia, who forced themselves on a movement to whose ideals their policies owed little, incessantly proclaimed their indebtedness to French models.

But while Paris was the modern Athens, the preceptor of Europe, it was the pupil as well. French philosophes were the great popularizers, transmitting in graceful language the discoveries of English natural philosophers and Dutch physicians. As early as 1706, Lord Shaftesbury wrote to Jean Le Clerc: "There is a mighty light which spreads itself over the world, especially in those two free nations of England and Holland, on whom the affairs of all Europe now turn."¹² Shaftesbury himself, with his optimistic, worldly, aesthetic, almost feminine Platonism, exercised immense power over his readers: over the young Diderot; over Moses Mendelssohn, Wieland, and Kant; over Thomas Jefferson; all in search of a philosophy of nature less hostile to the things of this world than traditional Christian

doctrine. The propagandists of the Enlightenment were French, but its patron saints and pioneers were British: Bacon, Newton, and Locke had such splendid reputations on the Continent that they quite overshadowed the revolutionary ideas of a Descartes or a Fontenelle, and it became not only tactically useful but intellectually respectable in eighteenth-century France to attribute to British savants ideas they may well have learned from Frenchmen. In an *Essai sur les études en Russie*, probably by Grimm, we are told that ever since the revival of letters, enlightenment had been generated in Protestant rather than Catholic countries: "Without the English, reason and philosophy would still be in the most despicable infancy in France," and Montesquieu and Voltaire, the two French pioneers, "were the pupils and followers of England's philosophers and great men."¹³

Among scientists, poets, and philosophers on the Continent, this admiration for England became so fashionable that its detractors coined a derisive epithet—Anglomania—which its devotees applied, a little self-consciously, to themselves. Skeptics like Diderot and Holbach, who ventured at mid-century to find some fault with British institutions, were a distinct minority. In the German-speaking world the poets Hagedorn and Klopstock and the physicist Lichtenberg confessed to *Englandsehnstucht*, while Lessing discovered Shakespeare and patterned his first bourgeois tragedy, *Miss Sara Sampson*, on an English model. In the Italian states, reformers idealized the English constitution and the English genius for philosophy: Beccaria's friends could think of no more affectionate and admiring nickname for him than *Newtoncino*—little Newton. But *Anglomanie* was practiced most persistently and most systematically in France. Montesquieu constructed a fanciful but influential model of the British government for other, less favored nations to imitate; Voltaire, well prepared by his early reading, came back in 1728 from his long English visit a serious deist and firm Newtonian and in general a lifelong worshipper of England: "A thousand people," he wrote in 1764, "rise up and declaim against 'Anglomania.' . . . If, by chance, these orators want to make the desire to study, observe, philosophize like the English into a crime, they would be very much in the wrong."¹⁴

For all of Voltaire's earnest claims, it must be admitted that this cosmopolitan dialogue was not always conducted on the

highest level. Hume's influence on the French and the Germans is a study in missed opportunities. Kant, for all his much-advertised debt to Hume, seems never to have read the *Treatise of Human Nature*. Except perhaps for d'Alembert and Turgot, the Parisian philosophes, whom Hume greatly liked and who gave him a rousing reception during his stay in the 1760s, neither shared nor fully understood his skepticism; Voltaire, who told an English visitor in his quaint accent that "I am hees great admeerer; he is a very great onor to Ingland, and abofe all to Ecosse,"¹⁵ appears to have been as ignorant of Hume's epistemology as he was amused by Hume's quarrel with Rousseau. Still, not all philosophic intercourse was gossip and triviality. British empiricism transformed French rationalism; French scientific and political propaganda transformed Europe.

The philosophe was a cosmopolitan by conviction as well as by training. Like the ancient Stoic, he would exalt the interest of mankind above the interest of country or clan; as Diderot told Hume in an outburst of spontaneous good feeling, "My dear David, you belong to all nations, and you'll never ask an unhappy man for his birth-certificate. I flatter myself that I am, like you, citizen of the great city of the world."¹⁶ Rousseau's intense patriotism was exceptional. Wieland, with all his pessimism, still thought *Welibürgertum* a noble ideal: "Only the true cosmopolitan can be a good citizen"; only he can "do the great work to which we have been called: to cultivate, enlighten, and ennoble the human race."¹⁷ Gibbon explained in his magisterial tones that "it is the duty of a patriot to prefer and promote the exclusive interest and glory of his native country; but a philosopher may be permitted to enlarge his views, and to consider Europe as a great republic, whose various inhabitants have attained almost the same level of politeness and cultivation."¹⁸ As products of the best schools, with a solid grip on classical culture, the philosophes, the most privileged citizens in Gibbon's great republic, spoke the same language—literally and figuratively.

The typical philosophe, then, was a cultivated man, a respectable scholar and scientific amateur. The most distinguished among the little flock were academics like Kant, Lichtenberg, and Adam Smith, or men of letters like Diderot and Lessing and Galiani, who possessed an erudition a professor might en-

vy. Some of the philosophes were in fact more than amateurs in natural philosophy. Franklin, d'Alembert, Maupertuis, Lichtenberg, and Buffon first achieved reputations as scientists before they acquired notoriety as philosophes. Others, like Voltaire, advanced the cause of scientific civilization with their skillful popularizations of Newton's discoveries.

At the same time, learned as they were, the philosophes were rarely ponderous and generally superbly articulate. It was the philosophe Buffon who coined the celebrated maxim, *Le style est l'homme même*; the philosophe Lessing who helped to make German into a literary language; the philosophe Hume who wrote the most elegant of essays as well as the most technical of epistemological treatises. Rigorous Christians found it a source of chagrin that practically all the best writers belonged to the philosophic family. Even men who detested Voltaire's opinions rushed to the bookseller for his latest production. This concern with style was linked to an old-fashioned versatility. The philosophes remained men of letters, at times playwrights, at times journalists, at times scholars, always wits. Adam Smith was not merely an economist, but a moralist and political theorist—a philosopher in the most comprehensive sense. Diderot was, with almost equal competence, translator, editor, playwright, psychologist, art critic and theorist, novelist, classical scholar, and educational and ethical reformer. David Hume has often been accused of betraying his philosophical vocation for turning in his later years from epistemology to history and polite essays. But this accusation mistakes Hume's conception of his place in the world: he was exercising his prerogative as a man of letters qualified to pronounce on most aspects of human experience, and writing for a cultivated public in which he was consumer as well as producer.

Such a type could flourish only in the city, and in fact the typical philosophe was eminently, defiantly, incurably urban. The city was his soil; it nourished his mind and transmitted his message. His well-publicized visits to monarchs were more glittering than the life of the coffeehouse, the editor's office, or the salon, which was often little more than a gathering of congenial intellectuals. But they were also less productive. The philosophe belonged to the city, by birth or adoption; if he was born in the country he drifted to the city as his proper habitat. "The

Town," observed David Hume in his autobiography, is "the true Scene for a man of Letters."¹⁹ What would Kant have been without Königsberg, Franklin without Philadelphia, Rousseau without Geneva, Beccaria without Milan, Diderot without Paris, or for that matter, Gibbon without Rome? When the philosophe traveled, he moved from urban society to urban society in a pleasant glow of cosmopolitan communication. When he retired to the country, as he often did with protestations of his love for the simple life, he took the city with him: he invited like-minded men of letters to share his solitude, he escaped rural boredom by producing plays, he lined his walls with books, and he kept up with literary gossip through his correspondents in town—his letters were almost like little newspapers. For many years Holbach gathered an international company around his dinner table: Diderot and Raynal were regular visitors, joined from time to time by Horace Walpole, David Hume, the abbé Galiani, and other distinguished foreigners who would sit and talk endlessly about religion, about politics, about all the great forbidden subjects. In Milan, Beccaria, the Verri brothers, and other like-minded *illuministi* founded a newspaper, *Il Caffè*; it was short-lived, but its very existence documents the alliance of sociability and reformism in the Enlightenment everywhere. The leaders of the Scottish Enlightenment—a most distinguished society—were personal as well as intellectual intimates: Adam Smith, David Hume, Adam Ferguson, William Robertson, Lord Home—political economists, aestheticians, moralists, historians, philosophers and philosophes all—held continuous convivial discussions during the day and often through the night in libraries, clubs, coffee-houses, and when these closed, in taverns. Voltaire presided over a literary government-in-exile at Ferney. He stayed away from Paris for twenty-eight years in succession, but that did not matter: where he was, *there* was Paris. The best of the urban spirit—experimental, mobile, irreverent—was in the philosophes' bones.

But this urbanity was colored and sometimes marred by a sense of mission. The philosophes were threatening the most powerful institutions of their day, and they were troubled by the nagging anxiety that they were battling resourceful enemies—for one, a church (as Voltaire said ruefully) that was

truly built on a rock. That is why the philosophes were both witty and humorless: the wit was demanded by their profession, the humorlessness imposed on them by their belligerent status. Obsessed by enemies, not all of whom were imaginary, they were likely to treat criticism as libel and jokes as blasphemy. They were touchy in the extreme; Diderot's correspondence and Rousseau's *Confessions* record bickerings over matters not worth a moment of a grown man's attention. David Hume, who saw through the press a polemical pamphlet directed against himself, was quite uncharacteristic; far more typical were d'Alembert, who petitioned the censors to stifle his critics, or Lessing, who pursued scholars of opposing views and inferior capacities with his relentless, savage learning. This is what Goethe had in mind when he called the Berlin *Aufklärer* Nicolai a "Jesuitenfresser"; and this is why Horace Walpole observed in 1779 that "the *philosophes*, except Buffon, are solemn, arrogant, dictatorial coxcombs—I need not say superlatively disagreeable."²⁰ No doubt Walpole, the fastidious spectator of life, saw the philosophes clearly, but what he did not see is that this intensity and self-assurance (which often make men disagreeable) are occupational hazards which reformers find hard to avoid.

IV

In drawing this collective portrait, I have indiscriminately taken evidence from the entire eighteenth century, from Montesquieu to Kant. This procedure has its advantages: it underlines the family resemblance among the little flock. But it may obscure the fact that the Enlightenment had a history. Its end was not like its beginning precisely because the last generation of philosophes could draw on the work of its predecessors.

It has been traditional to delimit the Enlightenment within a hundred-year span beginning with the English Revolution and ending with the French Revolution. These are convenient and evocative dates; Montesquieu was born in 1689 and Holbach died in 1789. To be sure, these limits are not absolute, and there have been repeated attempts to move the boundaries, to demote the Enlightenment by calling it the last act of the Renaissance, or to expand it by including Bayle, or even Descartes, among the philosophes. But while these attempts have thrown

much light on the prehistory of eighteenth-century polemics, I intend to stay with the traditional dates: I shall argue that while characteristic Enlightenment ideas existed long before, they achieved their revolutionary force only in the eighteenth century. Hobbes, and even Bayle, lived and wrote in a world markedly different from the world of Holbach or Hume.

The Enlightenment, then, was the work of three overlapping, closely associated generations. The first of these, dominated by Montesquieu and the long-lived Voltaire, long set the tone for the other two; it grew up while the writings of Locke and Newton were still fresh and controversial, and did most of its great work before 1750. The second generation reached maturity in mid-century: Franklin was born in 1706, Buffon in 1707, Hume in 1711, Rousseau in 1712, Diderot in 1713, Condillac in 1714, Helvétius in 1715, and d'Alembert in 1717. It was these writers who fused the fashionable anticlericalism and scientific speculations of the first generation into a coherent modern view of the world. The third generation, the generation of Holbach and Beccaria, of Lessing and Jefferson, of Wieland, Kant, and Turgot, was close enough to the second, and to the survivors of the first, to be applauded, encouraged, and irritated by both. It moved into scientific mythology and materialist metaphysics, political economy, legal reform, and practical politics. Criticism progressed by criticising itself and its own works.

So the Enlightenment displays not merely coherence but a distinct evolution, a continuity in styles of thinking as well as a growing radicalism. The foundations of the philosophes' ideas did not change significantly: between the young Montesquieu's essay on ancient Rome and the aging Diderot's defense of Seneca there is a lapse of half a century, and interest in ancient architecture and sculpture had risen markedly during the interval; yet for the two philosophes, the uses of antiquity remained the same. Similarly, the devotion to modern science and the hostility to Christianity that were characteristic of the late Enlightenment as well. The dialectic which defined the philosophes did not change; what changed was the balance of forces within the philosophic coalition: as writer succeeded writer and polemic succeeded polemic, criticism became deeper and wider, more far-reaching, more uncompromising. In the first half of

the century, the leading philosophes had been deists and had used the vocabulary of natural law; in the second half, the leaders were atheists and used the vocabulary of utility. In Enlightenment aesthetics, in close conjunction with the decay of natural law, the neoclassical search for the objective laws of beauty gave way to subjectivity and the exaltation of taste, and especially in France, timid and often trivial political ideas were shouldered aside by an aggressive radicalism. Yet the scandal the later books caused was no greater than that caused by the pioneering efforts: had Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* been published in 1770, the year of Holbach's *Système de la nature*, rather than in 1721, it would have seemed tame beside that materialist tract, and would have offered nothing new to a world long since hardened to cultural criticism.

One reason the educated world of eighteenth-century Europe and America had come to accept these polemics, or at least to read them without flinching, was that the hard core of the Enlightenment was surrounded by an ever-growing penumbra of associates. The dozen-odd captains of the movement, whose names must bulk large in any history of the European mind, were abetted by a host of lieutenants. Some of these, little read today, had a considerable reputation in their time. They were men like the abbé de Mably, precursor of socialism and propagandist of the American cause in France; Jean-François Marmontel, fashionable, mediocre playwright, careerist protégé of Voltaire and d'Alembert, elected to the Académie française and chosen Royal Historiographer despite his participation in the *Encyclopédie* and his pronounced views in favor of toleration; Charles Duclos, brilliant and widely respected observer of the social scene, novelist, and historian; the abbé Raynal, ex-priest turned radical historian, whose *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, first published in 1770, and immediately proscribed, went through several editions, each more radical than its predecessor; the abbé Galiani, a Neapolitan wit who became an ornament of the Parisian salons and a serious political economist; Moses Mendelssohn, Lessing's friend and Kant's correspondent, aesthetician, epistemologist, and advocate of Jewish emancipation; Baron Grimm, who made a good living purveying the new ideas to monarchs and aristocrats rich enough to af-

ford his private news service; Louis-Jean-Marie Daubenton, a distinguished naturalist whose contributions to science were eclipsed by Buffon, with whom he collaborated; Freiherr von Sonnenfels, a humane political economist, professor at the University of Vienna and, for all his advanced ideas, advisor to the Hapsburgs; Nicolas-Antoine Boulanger, who died young, but left behind him two unorthodox scientific treatises on the origins of religion for his friend Holbach to publish. These men were philosophes of the second rank. Beyond them were the privates of the movement, the hangers-on, consumers and distributors rather than producers of ideas: men like Étienne-Noël Damienville, Voltaire's correspondent in Paris, who basked in borrowed prestige or secondhand notoriety by running humanitarian errands, smuggling subversive literature through the mails, hiring theatrical claque, or offering disinterested friendship in a harsh world. As the century progressed, these aides grew in number and influence: to embattled Christians, they appeared to be everywhere, in strategic positions—in publishers' offices, in government posts, in exclusive salons, in influential university chairs, near royal persons, and even in the august Académie française. By the 1770s and 1780s, precisely when the philosophes had grown intensely radical in their program, they had also achieved a respectable place in their society.

APPEARANCES AND REALITIES

I

In 1784, in the essay in which he tried to define the Enlightenment, Kant expressed some skepticism about his century. "If someone asks," he observed, "are we living in an enlightened age today? the answer would be, No." But, he immediately added, "we are living in an Age of Enlightenment."²¹

Kant's observation is penetrating and important. Even late in the eighteenth century, for all their influence and palpable successes, the philosophes had reasons for uncertainty and occasional gloom. Voltaire, down to his last days, insisted that his age was an age of cultural decline, and other philosophes deplored what they considered the public's willful resistance to them, its greatest benefactors. "People talk a lot about Enlightenment and ask for more light," Lichtenberg wrote. "But my God, what good is all that light, if people either have no eyes,

or if those who do have eyes, resolutely keep them shut?"²² Diderot, in a moment of depression, exclaimed to Hume: "Ah, my dear philosopher! Let us weep and wail over the lot of philosophy. We preach wisdom to the deaf, and we are still far indeed from the age of reason."²³ And David Hume himself thought that beyond the world of Enlightenment and its cultivated supporters, there lay a large desert of darkness, of stubborn indifference, of illiteracy and superstition, a realm he described with obvious distaste as the realm of "Stupidity, Christianity & Ignorance."²⁴

But then—and this was the other side of Kant's Delphic pronouncement—in their optimistic moods the philosophes liked to think of themselves as the potential masters of Europe. Surveying the cultural scene from Königsberg, Kant discerned a "revolt against superstition" among the civilized countries and civilized classes, and called this revolt the *Aufklärung* and its leaders the *Aufklärer*. The British did not naturalize the name "Enlightenment" until the nineteenth century, but even in the eighteenth, British philosophes thought that they were living in, and dominating, a civilized, philosophical age. The French philosophes liked to speak of a *siècle des lumières* and were sure that they were the men who were bringing light to others; with sublime self-satisfaction (for what can be more self-satisfied than to name a century after yourself?) they praised their age as an Age of Philosophy.

Both of these moods were grounded in reality, but there was more ground for hope than for despair. The Enlightenment of the philosophes was embedded in an enlightened atmosphere, a pervasive and congenial cultural style which supplied them with some of their ideas and much of their vocabulary. At once the gadflies and the representatives of their age, the philosophes preached to a Europe half prepared to listen to them.

Evidence for this enlightened climate is profuse. In 1759—to offer but one instance—Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* appeared nearly simultaneously with Voltaire's *Candide*, and Johnson himself, Boswell reports, remarked on the resemblance between these two Stoic tracts: had they "not been published so closely one after the other that there was not time for imitation, it would have been in vain to deny that the scheme of that which came latest was taken from the other."²⁵ Boswell insisted, sensi-

bly enough, that the intentions of the two authors had not been the same, but the crosscurrents of the eighteenth century made this famous conjunction into something more than a coincidence. Samuel Johnson called Voltaire a villain, Voltaire called Samuel Johnson a superstitious dog, but the political, literary, and even philosophical ideas of these two bore a striking resemblance. Voltaire took pride in the culture he was trying in his witty way to improve out of all recognition, while Johnson, who detested the philosophes as unprincipled infidels, accepted much of their program: he had the Enlightenment style. Anti-philosophe and archphilosophe were yoked together as improbable and unwitting allies. All manner of men—even clergymen—claimed to possess light. Even Berkeley, it seems, advanced his outrageous epistemological paradoxes in the name of good sense. William Magee, archbishop of Dublin, voiced his concern over the pernicious influence of Hume's writings on even "the most enlightened"—that is, on modern Christians like himself.²⁶ And when Johnson and Boswell visited the Hebrides, a Scottish divine proudly told his visitors that the world was wrong to take the local clergy to be "credulous men in a remote corner. We'll show them that we are more enlightened than they think."²⁷ It is in this sense that the age of Montesquieu was also the age of Pope, the age of Hume also the age of Mozart.

The philosophes discovered influential friends everywhere. A king who tried to abolish the financial privileges of the clergy, a duke who expelled the Jesuits, a censor who winked at materialist tracts, an Anglican bishop who taught that good will was enough to get a Christian into heaven or a Tuscan bishop who prohibited pilgrimages and closed roadside shrines, an aristocrat who protected a proscribed atheist, a scrupulous or sensitive believer (like Albrecht von Haller, say, or Samuel Johnson) who was haunted by religious doubts, and perhaps best of all, a devout scholar who discredited religious mysteries with his philological or historical criticisms—none of these accepted all of the philosophes' program, or even much of it, but each of them was doing the philosophes' work. One of the most significant social facts of the eighteenth century, a priceless gift from the enlightened style to the Enlightenment of the philosophes, was the invasion of theology by rationalism: Jesuits gave fair and

even generous hearing to scientific ideas, Protestant divines threw doubt upon the miraculous foundations of their creed, and churches everywhere tepidly resisted the philosophy of the philosophes with their own bland version of modern theology.

This treason of the clerks had its secular counterparts. Revolutionary innovations in science, psychology, economic and social ideas, education, and politics, most of them produced by serious and often by devout Christians, by men like Haller and Euler and Hartley and Priestley, aided the efforts, and consolidated the advanced positions, of the radical Enlightenment. So did the activities—the very mental style—of solid citizens who endowed schools and hospitals, supported humane causes, railed against superstition, and denounced enthusiasm. Ideas and attitudes generally associated with subversive, atheistic philosophes—the disdain for Gothic architecture and for Dante, the condemnation of feudal institutions, the rejection of metaphysics and of Scholasticism—were the common property of most educated men in the eighteenth century. The philosophes did not lack courage, and their place in history is secure, but the war they fought was half won before they joined it.

II

These brilliant prospects, linked to their belligerent status and bellicose ideology—their uneasy coexistence with their world—obscured for the philosophes the complexity of their situation. Much like other combatants before and after them, the philosophes found it convenient to simplify the welter of their experience, to see their adversaries too starkly, and to dramatize their age as an age of unrelenting warfare between the forces of unbelief and the forces of credulity—that is, between good and evil. Diderot's facile separation of the men of his century into philosophers and "enemies of philosophy"²⁸ was characteristic, but, in truth, both parties were made up of coalitions, both had affectionate ties with their adversary—the course of battle was beclouded by unstable treaties, cowardly retreats, inadequate intelligence of the enemy's strength and movements, moments of low morale, and treason within the ranks. The philosophes themselves were divided by differences over modes of religious thought and political tactics; there was never an end to debate within the little flock, and the triumph of the materialists and

utilitarians was never complete. And on the other side, Anglicans, Lutherans, Catholics, were often hostile to one another. And so at times the philosophes, linked to their culture by their cultivation, were friendlier with Christians than with one another.

In their moments of calm reflection, when they discarded the naïve dichotomies that usually served them so admirably, the philosophes did recognize their age as something other than a perpetual bout between critics and Christians. Diderot amicably corresponded with père Berthier, the editor of the Jesuit *Journal de Trévoux*; Hume noted that Bishop Butler, the formidable apologist of Anglican Christianity, had recommended his essays; and even Voltaire, who publicly denounced the Jesuits as power-mad, sly, and as a lot, revolting pederasts, privately conceded that his old Jesuit teachers had been decent men and respectable scholars. But such moments were rare, partly because there were many times of real crisis when the philosophes stood against the rest, when the faithful squared off against unbelievers; besides, in the long run the issues between the secular world the philosophes wanted and the religious world in which they lived could not be compromised. But for all that, the philosophes were tied to their civilization—at least to the enlightened segment of it—by subtle, fine-spun ties. It is ironic to see the philosophes, as overworked ideologists, reluctant to acknowledge these ties: devoted though they were to piercing the veils of appearance, they often took appearances for realities. They were right to think of themselves as modern, secular philosophers, wrong to claim that they owed their Christian culture nothing.

In politics, their false consciousness took rather a different form. Far from dividing their age into two hostile camps, the philosophes cultivated their connections with power, and their cozy fraternizing with the enemy cost them heavily. It distorted their tactics, long circumscribed their freedom of action, sometimes seduced them into intellectual dishonesty, and blurred their radicalism, not only for others but for themselves as well. True, not all their protestations of innocuousness need be taken seriously: they knew they were more subversive than they admitted to being—their constant evasions testify to that. They were too familiar with the history of martyrs to wish to join

them. At the same time, it is clear that the philosophes often misread the drift of their age and the consequences of their ideas. Voltaire's insensitive reading of Rousseau's *Contrat social* and Diderot's equally insensitive reading of Rousseau's *Émile* are symptomatic: here are two of the most intelligent men of the century face to face with two of its prophetic masterpieces—books that came out of the philosophes' world and took some of the philosophes' ideas to their logical conclusion. The intellectual revolution over which the Enlightenment presided pointed to the abolition of hierarchy as much as to the abolition of God. But most of the philosophes found much to cherish in the existing order. It is revealing that Rousseau (and we must always come back to Rousseau when we wish to emphasize the complexity of the Enlightenment), perhaps the only Encyclopedist with moods in which he totally rejected his civilization, was treated as a madman by other philosophes long before his clinical symptoms became obtrusive.

All this does not mean that the philosophes were merely opportunists. They were radicals, even if they were not nihilists: for all the pretentious philosophizing the marquis de Sade injected into his tedious novels, he was never more than a caricature of the Enlightenment whose heir he claimed to be. The philosophes' comfortable sense that they belonged to the Establishment and the Enlightenment at the same time was not solely a symptom of self-deception: there was no conflict in their dual allegiance—not even in France, where the tension was strongest and the rhetoric most extreme. The philosophe Voltaire was royal historiographer and was succeeded in that post by the philosophe Duclos. The philosophe Buffon, aristocratic and self-protective, was the distinguished curator of the *Jardin du Roi*. Turgot cut short his career by preaching toleration of Protestants and by infuriating vested interests with his free-trade policies, but he always considered himself a conscientious servant of the French state. Even d'Alembert, who lived modestly and gave away half he earned, was not wholly detached from the old order: in a letter in which Hume praises his independence he adds that d'Alembert "has five pensions: one from the King of Prussia, one from the French King, one as member of the Academy of Sciences, one as member of the French Academy, and one from his own family."²⁹ Such a man, and others like him,

were hardly alienated revolutionaries. After all, they prized wit, admired elegance, and craved the leisure essential to the cultivated life. When they denounced civilization, they did so urbanely: even Rousseau confessed that he had adopted his bearish mode of conduct only because he was too awkward to practice the manners of good society. Seeking to distinguish themselves, the philosophes had little desire to level all distinctions; seeking to be respected, they had no intention of destroying respectability. Their gingerly treatment of the masses, which became less patronizing as the century went on, reveals their attachment to the old order and their fear of too drastic an upheaval.

It is at this critical point of contact—between philosophe on the one hand and the “lower orders” on the other—that the problem of communication arises in its most acute form. The men of the Enlightenment found no difficulty communicating with the elite except perhaps that of offending the powerful and the vindictive. They masked blasphemy and carefully avoided insulting a minister’s mistress. Their principal difficulty in communicating with the middle levels of society—with small merchants, lesser officials, or literate craftsmen—was purely a tactical one: the philosophe who, in Diderot’s famous formulation, wished to “change the general way of thinking,” had to be blunt enough to make his point, not blunt enough to arouse the vigilance of censors. But what of the workman or the illiterate peasant? In their complacent (though, for their century, perfectly comprehensible) liberalism, the philosophes were inclined to treat the poor as objects of concern rather than as full-fledged participants in the political public. In short, the men of the Enlightenment spoke for the masses, not to them.

In drawing the traditional Platonic analogy between society and the individual, the philosophes cast the poor in the role of unchecked and unmanageable passion; the “lower orders” were, in this analysis, incapable of steady conduct, deliberate choice, rational decision. Far from being simply incapable of receiving the philosophes’ message, the poor and the ignorant were thought likely to misread and misuse it. This pessimistic view was at the heart of Voltaire’s injunction to keep the truth, especially the truth of religion, from the *canaille*: once a mere artisan learned that there is no eternal vengeance in heaven, he was likely to feel no compunction in launching into a career of

crime. "We have never pretended to enlighten shoemakers and servants," Voltaire wrote, rather flippantly, to d'Alembert. "That is the job of the apostles." It is no accident that it should have been the philosophes who impressively advanced the study of political manipulation: from Montesquieu to Hume, from Voltaire to Gibbon, the men of the Enlightenment took a vigorous interest in the arcana of government and in the popular uses of religious threats and religious promises. They studied, with interesting results, the way that the ancient Romans withheld or distorted information for the sake of rule.

The stories exemplifying this disdain are familiar, though many of them are the malicious inventions of later critics. Yet, as Voltaire's comment to d'Alembert makes plain, not all of these stories were fictions. "The populace who have only their arms by which to live," were, in Voltaire's considered judgment, unfit to think, and hence unworthy of receiving any but the most rudimentary communications from those who were ostensibly, and actually, devoting themselves to making society a more reasonable, more humane place—for everyone, including the poor. Yet at the same time the liberalism of the Enlightenment contained within it elements that allowed it to expand its aims and widen its political base. The central ideal of the Enlightenment, after all, was improvement through education, and, as the century progressed, the philosophes increasingly recognized the possibility that the circle of effective communication could profitably be enlarged. They all wrote clearly in any event; they came to write yet more clearly for the sake of reaching the new audience that was lurking in the wings of politics. Voltaire, the greatest master of communication the eighteenth century possessed, in his later years deliberately repeated his arguments, gave his abstract reasoning a popular touch with well-chosen anecdotes, and kept up the interest of his readers with his biting wit. Others followed his lead.

The younger generation of philosophes, in particular the group centered around the materialist Holbach, were perfectly ready to address anyone who could conceivably listen. Holbach and his friends were certain that there is never any justification for lying to the masses—inventing, say, a God who sees all and avenges all. And in the 1760s even the most celebrated practitioner of disdain, Voltaire himself, came to discriminate in his judgments of the populace and to moderate his aristocratic lib-

eralism. In May 1767, after he had enjoyed close intercourse with all manner of Genevans—with local patricians, merchants, and artisans—he wrote a significant reply to Linguet, who had told him that once the *peuple* learns that it, too, is intelligent, the social order is lost. Voltaire answered:

In what you call *people*, let us distinguish the professions that demand a respectable education from those that only demand manual labor and daily toil. The latter class is the more numerous. All it will ever want to do for relaxation and pleasure will be to go to High Mass or to the tavern—there is singing there, and it too can sing. But the more skilled artisans who are forced by their very profession to think a great deal, to perfect their taste, to extend their knowledge, are beginning to read all over Europe. . . . The Parisians would be astonished if they saw in several Swiss towns, and above all in Geneva, almost all those who are employed in manufacture spending in reading all the time that they cannot devote to work. No, monsieur, all is not lost when one puts the people in a state to see that it has intelligence. On the contrary, all is lost when one treats it like a herd of cattle, for sooner or later it will gore you with its horns.³⁰

The causes that prompted Voltaire's extraordinary shift to the left are too complex to be explored fully here; they included his willingness to learn from experience, and his experience with Genevans, especially of the disfranchised, articulate, responsible artisans, was very instructive indeed. It helped him to recognize that he, and with him the other philosophes, might safely cast their net more widely than they had thought possible in the early years of their campaigns, and to make allies with groups in the populace who had, in the 1740s and even the 1750s, seemed beyond the pale of rational and candid communication.

In this fluid situation, in which neither collaboration nor enmity appeared irrevocable, philosophes and the forces in power made frequent alliances. Montesquieu defended the French *parlements* against the king; Voltaire later defended the king against the *parlements*. This forced Montesquieu into a common front with the Jansenists, who deplored his deism, and Voltaire into a common front with chancellor Maupeou, who hated all philosophes. On the other side, Malesherbes, in charge of censorship from 1750 to 1763, often acted like an agent of the little flock rather than like a repressive government

official; and the Parisian attorney and diarist Barbier, who was no philosophe, was still anticlerical enough to seek out prohibited secular propaganda and applaud Voltaire's efforts in behalf of Louis XV's program to tax the clergy. Barbier, as his intelligent diary shows, was more articulate than many of his fellow attorneys, but he was typical of educated men all over Western Europe, alert and critical beneficiaries of their social order, ready to be titillated and half converted by radical propaganda. There were many men like Barbier, nominal Christians who quoted the *Dictionnaire philosophique*, cried over the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, objected to the imprisonment of Diderot, welcomed Lessing's Masonic writings, applauded the banishment of the Jesuits, practiced the new empiricism, embraced the new critical spirit, and in general found something attractive in the philosophes' paganism and something exciting in the philosophes' hopes. Thus, the philosophes were simultaneously at peace and at war with their civilization, and much of their revolutionary ideology was pushed forward by men who were hostile to its spokesmen and blind to its implications.

The philosophes, then, lived in a world at once exhilarating and bewildering, and they moved in it with a mixture of confidence and apprehensiveness, of shrewd understanding and ideological myopia. They never wholly discarded that final, most stubborn illusion that bedevils realists—the illusion that they were free from illusions. This distorted their perception and gave many of their judgments a certain shallowness. But it also lent them the aggressor's *élan* at a time when the defense was paralyzed by self-doubt, inner divisions, and costly concessions: as usual, the price the defense paid for misreading its situation was far greater than the price paid by its radical adversaries. Kant had admitted that his was not an enlightened age, but he could claim, after all, and with justice, that his was an age of Enlightenment. History was on the philosophes' side: it was a good thing to know.

NOTES

1. "Beantwortung der Frage: Was Ist Aufklärung?" *Werke*, vol. 4, p. 169.
2. Aphorism I. 88. *Aphorismen*, 1793–1799, ed. Albert Leitzmann (1908), p. 26.
3. Since I have already used, and shall continue to use, the word "philo-

sophe" as a synonym for the men of the Enlightenment all over the Western world, I have naturalized it and dropped the awkward italics.

4. 27 January 1766. *Correspondance*, vol. 6, p. 34.

5. 21 March 1757. Quoted in Diderot, *Correspondance*, vol. 1, p. 239.

6. Quoted in F. C. Green, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A Study of His Life and Writings* (1955), p. 115.

7. 19 November 1765. *Letters*, ed. Mrs. Paget Toynbee, 16 vols. (1904–1905), vol. 6, p. 352.

8. 18 July 1762. *Correspondance*, vol. 4, p. 55. Another, rather less tragic case involved Beccaria. After he had acquired a European reputation in the mid-1760s with his treatise *Dei Delitti e Delle Pene*, his good friends the Verri brothers, who had encouraged Beccaria (often indolent and depressed) to write it, began to gossip about him from sheer envy. But later there was a reconciliation.

9. Hume to Hugh Blair (? December 1763). *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 419.

10. It is worth emphasizing that the philosophes did not lay claim to all possible varieties of paganism. Before the eighteenth century was over, the philosophes were under severe pressure from a Germanic ideology, a strange mixture of Roman Catholic, primitive Greek, and folkish Germanic notions—a kind of Teutonic paganism. Its inspiration was the *Nibelungenlied*, not Vergil's *Aeneid*; German folk songs, not Horace's *Odes*. Sometimes the benevolent critic, more often the implacable adversary of the Enlightenment, this Teutonic paganism (quite as much as traditional Christian doctrine) was to become a formidable rival to the Mediterranean paganism of the philosophes.

11. Beccaria to Morellet (26 January 1766). *Illuministi Italiani*, ed. Franco Venturi (1958), vol. 3, p. 203. In return, the young Montesquieu had greatly admired, and hoped to emulate, the Neapolitan historian Pietro Giannone.

12. 6 March 1706. *Life, Unpublished Letters, and Philosophical Regimen*, ed. Benjamin Rand (1900), p. 353.

13. In Diderot, *Oeuvres*, vol. 3, p. 416.

14. "To the *Gazette littéraire*" (14 November 1764). *Oeuvres*, vol. 25, pp. 219–220.

15. Ernest C. Mossner, *The Life of David Hume* (1954), p. 487.

16. 22 February 1768. *Correspondance*, vol. 8, p. 16.

17. *Gespräche unter vier Augen*, in *Werke*, vol. 42, pp. 127–128.

18. *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 4, p. 163.

19. *My Own Life*, in *Works*, vol. 3, p. 4.

20. Walpole to Horace Mann (7 July 1779). *Letters*, vol. 10, p. 441.

21. "Beantwortung der Frage: Was Ist Aufklärung?" *Werke*, vol. 4, p. 174.

22. Aphorism L 469. *Aphorismen, 1793–1799*, p. 90.

23. 17 March 1769. *Correspondance*, vol. 9, p. 40.

24. Hume to Hugh Blair and others (6 April 1765). *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 498.
25. *Life of Johnson* (under 1759), vol. 1, p. 342.
26. John Rae, *The Life of Adam Smith* (1895), p. 429.
27. James Boswell, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*, 1773, ed. Frederick A. Pottle and Charles H. Bennett (1961), p. 189.
28. Diderot to d'Alembert (about 10 May 1765). *Correspondance*, vol. 5, p. 32.
29. Hume to Horace Walpole (20 November 1766). *Letters*, vol. 2, p. 110.
30. I have explored this issue in considerable detail in *Voltaire's Politics: The Poet as Realist* (1959), chap. 4. For the quotations I have used here, see esp. pp. 222–223.

4

THE MODERN HISTORY OF POLITICAL FANATICISM: A SEARCH FOR THE ROOTS

ZEV BARBU

Since both *modern history* and *political fanaticism* are expressions with a highly elastic connotation, it would be profitable, even at the risk of appearing pedantic, to introduce the subject matter of the present chapter by discussing some problems of definition and classification. This is all the more necessary as some events under consideration have been and are taking place under our eyes.

Fanatic is a term that is being applied equally to individual and group behavior. Our concern here is mainly with the latter use of the term. In this sense it connotes a type of political action and an organization (a party, a movement, or goal-oriented group) rooted in or motivated by strong feelings and rigid convictions. This type of group may exhibit one or more of the following three features. First, the participants may share in common a general conception, a project of society, or a certain political program that they experience and represent not only as the sole and ultimate purpose of their political activities but also as a supreme value for their community as a whole. This admittedly is best illustrated by revolutionary groups or social movements dedicated to the idea of a new society or a social order in the making. But it may equally apply to political organizations and movements dedicated to an existing and past social order; fanatic conservatism nowadays is not as rare a phe-

nomenon as it may appear at first sight. Second, the participants may experience feelings of admiration and devotion to their leader or their organization as such, feelings that they express by unconditional obedience and total involvement. This applies to a great variety of political behavior motivated by beliefs in the charisma of an individual leader, a ruling group, a movement, or a party. Third, the participants may experience strong feelings and compulsive needs for (political) action and demonstration *tout court* within a loose and spasmodic form of organization, and with a vague, if any, long-range purpose. The mystique of action is a subtle but nonetheless distinctive form of political fanaticism.

Brief as it is, the above characterization provides some basic insights into the meaning of the phenomenon under consideration. One is dealing with an overmotivated form of action and organization analogous to a religious type of action and organization in that a series of terms such as intemperate zeal or enthusiasm, credulity, bigotry, intolerance, can be applied to both. Moreover the analogy is not only a formal one; a whole range of phenomena dealt with in the following pages seems to be both political and religious in character. In political form, these organizations display such features as belief in the supernatural origin and prophetic gifts of their leader and the sacred nature of their mission, as well as strong needs for perfection, purity, and salvation motivating their participants. One hastens to add, however, that fanatic political action can be purely secular and even antireligious in intention. As the relationship between political and religious phenomena is a complex and subtle one, it suffices for the moment to emphasize the general idea that in certain specific social and psychological circumstances political fanaticism is closely associated with dissacralizing attitudes and intentions, which is the very opposite of religious fanaticism.

Another notion frequently occurring in this context is that of irrationality. As applied to political behavior and action, this has a variety of meanings. At this early stage it should be enough to refer briefly to Weber's distinction between a rational and a nonrational type of action, on the obvious assumption that political fanaticism belongs to the latter. As is well known, Weber is strongly inclined to an instrumentalist definition of

rationality, that is, rationality as fitness between ends and means. This is obviously an ideal type of definition, meaning that a concrete instance of action, individual or collective, is rational when it fulfills in various degrees the following main conditions: (1) It is carried out at the conscious level; more precisely the actor or the actors involved are conscious of the goals of their action as well as the means by which to achieve it. (2) It is a deliberative type of action, meaning that the actors are free, both to choose from the available means those that are more suitable to the achievement of their goal, and able to adjust their goals, at least temporarily, to the means available. In addition—and this is admittedly a somewhat free interpretation of Weber's definition—one can say that this is what has more recently been described as action at the reality level, or simply a realistic type of action in the specific sense that the actors are able to take into account, to assess, combine, and even to compromise over, a great variety (Weber would be inclined to say the totality) of conditions affecting their situation. Now, as political fanaticism lies at the very opposite of this, it is tempting to compare it with other major types of social action defined by Weber—notably with affective action or with a subdivision of rational action, namely, value-oriented action. The exercise, however, may be less rewarding than it would appear at first sight, for the main reason that the notion of political fanaticism includes a series of phenomena cutting across Weber's categories of social action. Nonetheless, before leaving Weber it would be useful to make a general remark regarding the opposition between a rational and a fanatic type of action, namely, the former can be described as a goal-oriented, whereas the latter is a goal-glued, type of action. As to the nature of the goal pursued by the two types of action, one can hardly say anything definite at this stage. The dichotomy of rationality versus nonrationality has only a limited classificatory value. One can easily find instances not only of fanatic action perpetrated on behalf of reason but also of political groups and organizations fighting fanatically for what they describe as, and appears to be, the very embodiment of reason in human society. Weber is only dimly aware of the irrational ingredients of rational organization and of bureaucracy in particular. In this respect we seem to know better. It is not only that pure science, the epitome of rational knowledge, has its fans,

but that the scientific organization and control of human action, including political action, have become a dominant creed in our contemporary civilization. A distinction between rationality and rationalization would be perhaps useful in this context. But more about this later.

One last point about the concept of political fanaticism: namely, its relationship with the concept of (political) democracy and especially political liberalism. This is all the more relevant as the connotation of the two concepts is normally established in dichotomic terms. In contrast to the former, the latter refers to a type of action and organization that can be described as flexible and deliberative, and tolerant of ambiguity of purpose and diversity of points of view. But, needless to say, neat as it is, a theoretical distinction such as this has in our case only a limited operational value. It should be enough to mention the word *Montagnard* in order to realize that some phenomena falling within the scope of the present inquiry may display in various proportions and at various levels both democratic and fanatic features. Later on it may be necessary to accommodate, modify, or refine our conceptualizations. In the meantime, we can proceed to the discussion of the most important aspects and stages in the recent history of political fanaticism. For reasons which we hope will become gradually apparent, we shall focus the present inquiry mainly on the formative stage of the phenomenon. In doing so, however, our purpose will be a twofold one, first, to trace the common roots, and second, to point out the mainstreams in the more recent development of political fanaticism, such as, fanaticism of the left, fanaticism of the right, and the fanaticism of actions characterizing contemporary student movements.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF POLITICAL FANATICISM

In a certain essential sense, modernization means secularization, that is, transition from a social order based on tradition and consecrated by religious beliefs to a social order based on, or adjustable to rules and principles derived from, human experience and reason. As far as the political aspect of social life is concerned, this implies separation of politics from religion, or to use more fashionable terms, dissacralization of authority and

power in society. A bold expression of this broad and diffuse process can be found in Machiavelli's thought, another one in the political ideas of the Enlightenment and of the philosophes in particular. According to the former, politics, like science, has and should have nothing to do with religion: power and authority, that is, in the capacity and the right to rule, are secular virtues, skills resting on a more or less flexible constellation of psychological traits, such as cunning, intelligence, ambition, generosity, determination, and toughness, to mention only the most obvious ones. Although full of inconsistencies in their political thought, the philosophes were in fundamental agreement on the main idea that "the prince derives from his subjects the authority he holds over them, and this authority is limited by the laws of nature and of state";¹ in other words, that the only legitimate authority was the authority of the law, which needless to say was an expression of human reason. Admittedly Machiavelli's prince could easily give way to his emotions and feelings, be they appetite for power or love of glory. But however far he might go in this direction, he could not be a fanatic. He could be a crafty cynic, even an impulsive, cruel "lion," but not a fanatic. Fanaticism would have been a disqualifying attitude for a kind of role in which success depended so much on cool reasoning and subtle calculation. This qualification applies even more to the political man conceived by the philosophes, who could be even a despot provided that he was an enlightened one, that is, open-minded or, in the language of the period, guided and limited in his decisions and actions by the universal rules of human reason or by a set of principles shared and consented to by the majority of his subjects. That this excludes fanaticism hardly needs explaining. And yet political fanaticism is essentially a modern phenomenon.

This situation is not only because fanaticism appeared more frequently and at an increasing rate during the modern period of our history, but also because it was closely related, embedded, one would say, in a secular humanistic civilization of the type developed in Europe since the Renaissance. Although this may appear to be a paradox, the main reasons for it are relatively easy to grasp. There was first the separation of politics from religion, the differentiation of political roles in society, and above all the gradual autonomy of political values. One could say that Machiavelli gave an early expression to the pro-

cess by formulating the ideal type of political man with his own hierarchy of values, *raison d'état* at the top, the implication being that the political action has or should have a structure of its own requiring specific skills and interests as well as goals and values of its own that under certain circumstances may create in their possessors a state of mind of total involvement and personal identification. But this alone cannot explain such a complex phenomenon as political fanaticism. For this purpose one has to take into account two other main outcomes or concomitants of the process of secularization, humanism and rationalism.

Unlike the ancient Greek and Chinese humanism and rationalism, modern humanism and rationalism were structurally bound with what may be called a radically anthropocentric vision of the world. Whereas the classical Greek and Confucian humanism and rationalism had obvious ethical roots (the personal and communal spheres of human existence were never rigidly divided), modern humanism and rationalism had such a decisive individualistic and subjective orientation that community, ethical or political, was almost entirely constructed out of the individual's mind as a categorical imperative, as a quantitative majority or a qualitative entity, that is, the people or the nation. Furthermore, Greek humanism and rationalism were intrinsically bound with an epic vision of human life in that man perceived himself not only at the center, but also, and primarily, as a part of the world, of "the great design," of the great "rhythm of life" that included nature and the gods. On the other hand, modern humanism and rationalism were essentially dramatic in character, that is, rooted in and contributive to a world view according to which man's awareness of himself, and indeed his self-realization, was so closely related to his differentiation and separation from the world that the process led inevitably to a stage at which he felt trapped into his unique destiny as *unum contra mundum*. Although the social and cultural expression of this tense relationship between man and the world is unusually rich, it can be seen as gravitating around two dialectically related themes underlying the development of Western civilization, namely, the Faust theme (confidence, dominance, and acquisition) and the alienation theme (anxiety and withdrawal).

For our present interest, namely, the formative context of po-

litical fanaticism, the following more specific points are relevant. There is, first of all, the historical fact that in Western Europe the development of a humanistic and rationalist culture was almost equivalent with secularization. This is not the place to discuss the many and varied circumstances contributing to this development. It is enough to stress the idea that in no other civilization known so far has the death of God constituted such a necessary condition for the assertion of human values and of human reason in particular. Although there is much to be said about the significance of the Promethean motif in ancient Greek civilization, it would be relatively easy to demonstrate that in this particular case a prolonged conflict between man and the gods resulted in a progressive humanization and rationalization of the latter. In modern Europe, the conflict soon developed into a total war, or, to use a more appropriate analogy, a liberation war in which man had to prove himself not only strong enough to drive God out of the world but also to rule in his absence. The extent to which he was successful is a moot point. What really matters is that the enterprise itself—and here the analogy with a war of liberation is particularly suggestive—contained the seed of new forms of fanaticism, political fanaticism included.

As this complex and often paradoxical psychohistorical phenomenon constitutes the chief concern of the present study, its meaning has to be revealed gradually. To grasp its rationale, however, it is necessary to outline a prototype situation in which it occurred. That secularization in Europe required and stimulated a rapid increase in man's awareness of and confidence in himself as a natural being is a self-evident truth. Withdrawal of God meant the advance of man, and every particular act of dis-sacralization was allowed and indeed performed by an act of humanization. Thus human reason began to chase the divine agencies from the realm of nature; the authority of the law, of man-made rules, and the prestige of talent and personal achievement were gradually replacing divine authority and sacred tradition in the sphere of political and social life. Even in the sphere of religious life, rational living, and personal effort and worth were contending for priority in matters of salvation, and human initiative began to challenge divine guidance in earnest. But the point is that one should make a distinction be-

tween actions, motives, and intentions on one side, and goals, ideals, and values on the other. No revolution, however violent it may be, has the slightest chance of succeeding unless and until it generates its own morality, that is, its own values and norms, which are as a rule more rigid and severe than those it destroyed. This was precisely what had happened in the case of secularization, the only revolution that fully deserves to be called a Copernican revolution.

As man's ambitions had to be justified and his growing self-reliance bolstered up, new values and beliefs emerged that for a certain period were even more fascinating and sacrosanct than the traditional religious values and beliefs had ever been. To give an example, "nature," a vague notion defined in opposition to everything that was however remotely related to the so-called supernatural order, including the traditional order of society, became the source of all values, the basic frame of reference for human life. To put it bluntly, what was natural was good, true, and beautiful; what was unnatural was bad, false, and ugly. This should suffice to grasp the emotional potential and hence the irresistible appeal of such a notion, but there was much more to it. Nature was a vague, mainly negative concept and for this reason likely to be employed as a sheer value concept. Indeed, this was the case with the main representatives of the Enlightenment. More precisely, starting in their social, philosophical, and scientific thought from the feeling—a sort of primary intuition—that the order of existing society was neither natural nor rational, they built up an idea of nature that included approximately everything that in their opinion was missing but desirable in their society, culture, and perhaps personal lives. Thus nature was rational and orderly, yet the epitome of spontaneity and freedom; it was savage and at the same time noble, mysteriously complex and yet shining through its simplicity. The point is admirably made by P. Hazard when he writes:

Nature was too rich in its composition, too complex in its attributes, too potent in its effects to be imprisoned in a formula and the formula gave way under the strain. Despite all their efforts to elucidate it by analysis, to get possession of it through science, to reduce it to some easily intelligible concept, those same wise and learned men

who should have been basking in the warmth of certitude, still went on giving the world all manner of different and sometimes directly contradictory interpretations. Conscious of all this, they began to behold in Nature the reappearance of that Mystery which they were bent on banishing from the world.²

Mystery is certainly the right word, for soon after, that is, during the French Revolution, nature acquired sacred and even cultic connotations. Thus, owing to its inner dynamics, the process of secularization had reached a stage at which feelings, beliefs, and myths were more important than reasoning for its maintenance. This is yet another way of saying that "man as a rational being" was to a certain extent a projection of belief.

Now, we do not want to dwell on the obvious. The eighteenth-century secular rationalists were unique in that they combined in their intellectual activities the role of abstract thinkers with that of social analysts and social reformers. They were, or at least they wanted to be, both interpreters and makers of their society and of human history. That man was born free and that society was the result of conscious rational arrangements between free individuals were for them not simply theoretical, but also political statements. Even highly abstract concepts, such as reason, rationality, materialism, theism, and atheism, let alone human perfectability, were in essence program ideas, the assumption being that ignorance, prejudice, reliance on established authority and divine intervention, constituted the main obstacles against social progress. As to the question whether the philosophes were fanatics, the answer cannot be either a simple or a single one. They certainly believed in human freedom and human reason as fanatically as their opponents believed in the absolute authority of the king or in divine providence. But in saying this it is necessary to distinguish between fanaticism of ideas and fanaticism of action. Granted, the philosophes were highly committed intellectuals. Furthermore, they were conscious in a high degree of the unity of their group and so cohesive and conspiratorial in their activities that they were often compared to a religious sect. But even when they invested their ideas with moral and social imperatives, they believed that such imperatives were essentially rational and rationality was a natural condition of man. Intolerance and oppres-

sion were so closely associated in their minds with the society in which they lived that it would be hard to imagine Diderot or Rousseau terrorizing people to make them free or to accelerate the work of reason in society. And yet the cultural climate in which they lived and which they helped create produced the first example, an almost ideal type, of modern political fanaticism. What the philosophes allowed themselves to do only in dream, Robespierre and Saint-Just did in reality.

**THE PATHOS OF FREEDOM AND REASON:
THE TWIN SOURCES OF MODERN POLITICAL
FANATICISM**

The Regime of Terror is commonly considered a highly if not the most significant and, at the same time, incongruous episode in the French Revolution. The more one knows about it the more one becomes aware not only of its complex nature but also and above all of the infinite variety of accidental, emotional, and irrational factors entering into its composition. If an expression such as "total fact" or "total event" has any warranty, this is the place to use it. What follows is a brief examination of the most salient features of this event in terms of political fanaticism.

The first and most general point refers to the obvious connection between revolutionary zeal and political fanaticism. The Montagnards were a product of the Revolution, that is, a more or less voluntary association of people or self-recruiting group organized and functioning (a) in opposition to an anti-social background, and (b) in conflict with other revolutionary organizations and groups. One could say therefore that an initial commitment to the aims of the Revolution and a growing involvement in the revolutionary process constituted their *raison d'être*. But although a constellation of circumstances such as this may throw considerable light on the nature of political fanaticism, it does not explain the Montagnard phenomenon. After all, the same or similar circumstances gave birth to many other revolutionary groups and factions. The revolutionary zeal of the Girondins, not to mention the *enragés* or the *sans culottes*, a loosely organized but clearly oriented group, was not less real than that of the Montagnards. To grasp the specific nature of the Montagnard phenomenon it is therefore necessary to

make a distinction between revolutionary zeal and political fanaticism. By comparison with the former, the latter type of behavior and action requires a more enduring motivational structure, a more articulate and better-integrated belief and cognitive system, and, needless to say, a high degree of compatibility between motivational structure and belief system. Now, the suggestion is that the Montagnards, at least their leaders, Robespierre and Saint-Just, came very near to fulfilling this requirement. Lest someone is inclined to believe that the *enragés* came even nearer, it would be useful to specify that despite, or because of, their left-wing radicalism their belief and cognitive framework was neither coherent enough nor compatible or integrated enough with their motivational system. They were predominantly angry people and because of this inclined to be spasmodic and fragmentary in their revolutionary project and political action in general. This applied even more to the *sans culottes*. Granted they were strongly motivated people, but in the context of the Revolution their motives were both diffuse and relatively nonspecific. Their economic aspirations were too vague and subjective to provide them with a coherent project of political action. If the term *fanatic* could be mentioned in this context—and a case could be made for the *enragés*—this means fanaticism of action. However, more about this later.

Although the Montagnards shared many features with other revolutionary groups, they distinguished themselves through their consistency and single-mindedness. This was not only because they were strongly motivated people in terms of revolutionary action, but rather and above all because they identified themselves as individuals and as a group with an ideational structure—the word *ideology* was coined a few decades later—which was not only consistent with their motives but appeared at least for a certain period to give a coherent expression to the revolutionary situation as a whole. This was the ideational structure of the Enlightenment. As a result of this, the Montagnard leaders and notably Robespierre and Saint-Just were able not only to legitimize their position in terms of a relatively coherent system of beliefs and ideas but also to rationalize their personal inclinations to a degree verging on the absurd. Space allows for but a brief and selective illustration of this curious process, which could truly be called the fanaticism of reason.

Robespierre and Saint-Just had been pushed into political prominence in the winter of 1792 by a double set of circumstances, reverses of war and intensified internal conflicts. This was, therefore, a typical situation that objectively speaking demanded urgent and strong measures and above all unity of command. In this respect most revolutionary activists would have reacted in a similar manner. But the Montagnards did something more. Not only did they establish order and authority, but in a relatively short time they managed to create such a degree of cohesion in the revolutionary situation and, to a certain extent, in the country at large that every individual event, every concrete political item, every member of society, could be and exclusively was seen and assessed in terms of a relatively simple structure of meanings or constellation of symbols, such as, for example, fatherland, the Revolution, reason, liberty. As to the ideological proclivity of the Montagnards, it is important to emphasize that it was not sheer exegetic exercise but a many-sided process growing less and less articulate from a firm base of symbolic interpretation of reality through political action into an institutional framework. But as the latter stage, the much talked about Institution was far away in the future, if ever to come; all that was achieved was an excessively fluid and malleable situation, that is, a present dominated by the future, social reality dominated by a dream.

The first revealing situation for the political behavior of the Montagnards was supplied by the circumstances surrounding the fate of the monarchy and the final trial of the king in 1792. To be sure Robespierre and Saint-Just always had held radical views regarding the nature of revolutionary authority, which they believed should rest entirely with the people. "I have always held," wrote Robespierre, "that equality of rights belongs to all the members of the State."³ It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that their unequivocal rejection of the monarchy and their uncompromising attitude during the trial of the king was consistent with their inclination to identify the Revolution with the people and in doing so to identify themselves with the people. But however strong their inclination might have been, it could not sufficiently account for their language and particularly their reasoning in the circumstances, which was highly revealing for their subsequent political development. One point stands out in this respect, namely, most of what they say and

think sounds glaringly evident, a sort of impeccable conclusion drawn from obvious premises. For instance, when, following the insurrection of August 1792 the Convention considered it necessary to decide once and for all the fate of the king, Robespierre presented the case by making the following staggering points: he reminded the delegates that the king was not on trial, that the insurrection of August 1792 had already decided his fate, and consequently, the candidates were not his judges. While both Robespierre and Saint-Just stated the case categorically, that is, Louis was king and France was a republic, the latter added the significant point that the king was no longer a citizen but an enemy and that the duty to punish him was implicit in the right to dethrone him. In other words, deliberation and judgment, the very meaning of the trial, were replaced by evident rights and duties.

This was only the beginning, the foundation stone of one of the most grandiose masterpieces of Gothic imagination in modern politics. In the months to come, Saint-Just continued to argue that the king was condemned, not for any particular crime he or his ministers had committed in the past, but simply because he was a king and monarchy, moreover the ancien régime in itself, was a crime. This marked the first major stage in the development of Montagnard fanaticism, that is, their total rejection of the past, of anybody and anything representing it, including libraries, streets, and place-names. The process reached a peak toward the end of 1792 with the de-Christianization movement and the new calendar according to which September 22 (the proclamation of the Republic) was the beginning of a new era.

A difference between Robespierre and Saint-Just may be suggested here. While the former tended to take, at least as far as de-Christianization was concerned, a more tactical view, in other words, to preserve for the time being and for political reasons certain aspects of religion, the latter condemned the past in toto, not only because the past was evil but also and mainly because it was the source of injustice and corruption in the present. Here Saint-Just forcefully expressed a characteristic common to all sectarians, namely, the perception of the present as unbearable and the consequent identification with the future. "Believe me everything that exists around us must change and

come to an end, because everything around us is unjust." Then Saint-Just symptomatically continues, "Obliged to *isolate himself from the world and from himself*, man drops his anchor in the future and presses to his heart the posterity which bears no blame for the evils of the present."⁴

But as a visionary is not necessarily a fanatic, the question arises of how to explain that Saint-Just and Robespierre can be described as such? The shortest and the most common type of answer to this question is a situational one. That is, the Montagnards were driven by the very logic of a deteriorating political situation into a dictatorial position that was a combination of authoritarian emotionalism (politics of despair) and authoritarian strategy of the kind used, a century and a half later, by Stalin with his recurrent reference to the threat presented by the class enemy, inside and abroad. But although there is a great deal to be said about this type of approach, it has one important limitation. As just suggested, it accounts mainly for the authoritarian features of the Montagnards. More precisely, it explains political terrorism rather than political fanaticism, and in doing so it makes little of the fact that some of the most successful terrorist regimes were the work of political cynics rather than of political fanatics.

Another type of answer given to the question of the Montagnard fanaticism is a psychological one. As is well known, a great deal has been said about Robespierre's quasi-pietistic background, his narrow prudential morality, and, above all, his obsessional paranoid personality. Similarly, frequent references have been made to Saint-Just's adolescent moral rigor, his identification with an ideal ego structure, and his exalted quasi-maniacal personal traits. However, while admitting the usefulness of such an approach, it is necessary to note that much more research is needed before something definite can be said about personality structure and above all about forms of abnormality and madness in eighteenth-century France.⁵ In addition, for reasons that will become apparent at a later stage, the thesis put forward in the present chapter is that political fanaticism is essentially a cultural phenomenon. To demonstrate this it is necessary to go back to a point made earlier regarding the relationship between the Montagnards and the Enlightenment.

One thing should be made clear from the very outset. It con-

cerns the intellectual status of the Montagnards and of their leaders in particular. That most revolutionary clubs were intellectually active and that the ideological awareness of their members, including those of humble origin, was astonishingly high is an undeniable fact.⁶ But not less undeniable is another fact, namely, that Robespierre and Saint-Just were and wanted to be political activists and their concern with the political writings of the philosophes and of Rousseau in particular was basically determined by this. In saying this the intention is, to be sure, not to minimize the ultimate impact of the Enlightenment on the political thought of the Montagnards but rather to establish a point of analytical priority, that is, a vantage point from which one can see the main outline of their political vision.

To start with, it was in their capacity as political activists that Robespierre and Saint-Just fully grasped the relevance of Marat's intuitive formula, "it takes an absolute regime to overthrow another absolute regime," which became in fact a cornerstone of their political praxis. We are introducing rather abruptly the term *praxis* to delineate as quickly as possible an area of phenomena that occupies an intermediary position between political thought and political action, and that has a particular analytical value in the present context. To remain within the same example, any close examination of the principle involved in Marat's formula shows that it cannot be meaningfully related to or derived from the political thought of the Enlightenment, no matter how radically and at times emotionally toned this might have been. A formula such as "il faut tout examiner, tout remuer, sans exception et sans menagement . . ." should not obscure the basic assumptions and tenets of this thought, such as reliance on human reason, and man's natural inclination and ability to assert his moral, political, and even inner freedom as an individual. At the beginning of his political career, Robespierre himself defended the freedom of the press, and opposed the death penalty as well as censorship in the theater. Nor could Marat's formula be compatible with the basic requirements of political action, on account of its irrationally destructive implications. (The "total war" phase of Hitler's regime ceased to be a political action despite the fact that it is sometimes referred to as the "scorched earth policy.") But the same formula made perfect sense as a link, a mediator between

political theory, or simply ideology, and political action. It made sense to the extent that it referred to and combined an action-patterning type of theory and a value-patterning type of action, to use an ad hoc definition of the term *praxis*. A century and a half later, but in a similar context, the communists used the expression "living dialectics," that is, an interpretive or rather heuristic device by which Marxist political doctrine was considered as little more than a code, a system of signs and meanings that could and should be adjusted and derived from the concrete circumstances and requirements of political action, and, conversely, the meaning of political action should be derived from the Marxist doctrine so interpreted. This is, of course, praxis in an advanced form, and the reason for mentioning it here is to bring into focus the general principle underlying the function fulfilled by the Montagnard leaders within the context of the French Revolution. One has to bear in mind, however, that we are dealing here with an incipient if not rudimentary form of an historical process. More precisely, at a later stage, the so-called praxis had become a more consciously organized process. Following Lenin's example, communists all over the world claim that the relationship between (political) ideology and action is a matter of scientific knowledge and technical expertise. This may be an exaggeration; on the other hand it is difficult to deny the emergence of specific institutions and organizations as well as differentiated roles—whether they be called party men, ideologues, or technocrats—fulfilling this function.

There is nothing farther from the truth than to describe Robespierre and Saint-Just as political technocrats, and yet their role position was basically the same. As political activists working in a revolutionary situation their most significant task was to code political action in terms of ideology and decode ideology in terms of political action. It is only that their role style was remarkably different from that of the so-called political technocrats. Briefly, Robespierre and Saint-Just can be truly called the "primitives" of political praxis, in that not only did they play their roles mainly by ear, but there was no specific institution in their environment, no systematic theory of revolutionary action, not even an established structure of experience to supply a stable frame of reference for their political insights and action.

To grasp this one should bear in mind that the question is of the real beginning of political modernization, or more precisely the first modern revolution in Europe. In addition, the Montagnards were a deliberating society rather than a political, let alone revolutionary, party, and so were all other revolutionary and counterrevolutionary groups and factions. "Debating" is in fact a suggestive unifying verbal symbol for a political situation dominated by an assembly type of decision making and very often of political action too. The revolutionary leaders and notably the Montagnards were prototypical in this respect, and often found themselves in a situation analogous to that of ancient Greek demagogues relying mainly on their rhetoric and even more so on their personal enthusiasm and power of persuasion as a means by which to sustain a course of action and legitimize their position. Paradoxically enough, while the spirit of the age was becoming increasingly dominated by reason, political authority was becoming increasingly a matter of belief and make-believe. The paradox lies at the very core of Montagnard fanaticism.

The purer expression of Montagnard fanaticism was not the Regime of Terror as such, but the rationalization of terror, or simply terror conceived as the most adequate means for the achievement of a rational social order. This ought to be stressed because terror as a political means can be and often is an expression of cynicism. Moreover, terrorist regimes are normally self-maintaining and self-propelling systems in that terror produces more terror.⁷ As this seems to be to a lesser degree true of the Montagnards and particularly the Thermidorian regime, it is necessary to discuss briefly the specific manner in which this regime rose and developed. This is all the more relevant as we may be able to throw light on some important problems of communication involved in this type of political fanaticism.

It should be remembered that the Montagnards came into the limelight of political life at a time (winter 1792) when the three-year-old Revolution was on the brink of total collapse. Add to this the chronic weakness of the revolutionary regime, that is, its instability and factionalism, and one can easily understand why Robespierre perceived the situation in terms of "now or never" and consequently projected himself and the Montagnards into the role of savior. Theoretically speaking one

can distinguish between two main routes leading to the Regime of Terror, corresponding on the whole to two types of situations and two types of reactions characterizing the Montagnard leaders. Let us romanticize the issue—perhaps not altogether inappropriately—and call them the route of the heart and the route of the head. The first refers to situations of mass gatherings, crowds, and popular demonstrations as well as to the corresponding aspects of more formal gatherings, such as assemblies, clubs, committees, and many other forms of encounter eliciting an emotional, direct, and, in this case, symbolic type of communication. To be sure, eloquence and rhetoric were the order of the day. Nor was there a shortage of outstanding public figures and political leaders. Nonetheless the case easily could be made for the superiority of the Montagnard leaders, not so much on account of their rhetoric—although Saint-Just outshone most other revolutionary leaders in this respect—as on account of their deep awareness of the main features of the situation and their more systematic exploitation of it. In a period in which the main emphasis seemed to be put on spontaneity, affluence, and novelty of expressions—behavioral, linguistic, and symbolic—the Montagnard leaders excelled through their systematic and manipulatory grasp of the situation. First of all, they showed an astonishingly clear awareness of the basic principles characterizing human reaction to situations of stress, that is, the tendency to see the world in black and white, to perceive things and feel about most situations in dichotomic terms: good-bad, love-hate, safe-dangerous, friendly-inimical, all this superimposed on the dichotomy “us-them.” The manner in which the Montagnard leaders reacted to this kind of situation supplies us with an almost classical example of communication in terms of emotional logic. To start with they were extremely alert and persistent in handling and reinforcing the feeling aroused by the imminent danger facing the Revolution. And needless to say they did this not in general rhetorical terms but by pointing out, identifying, and defining the enemies (individual or groups) of their supporters and of “the people.” In this respect Robespierre presents a fascinating case that deserves a study of its own. To say that he had a suspicious mind or a paranoid disposition is to confuse the real issue, for what really matters in this respect is the specific manner in which he reacted

to and manipulated circumstances presented to him. Even at an early stage of his career, at the outbreak of the war, he, unlike most other leaders, examined the situation lucidly and in detail to identify not only the obvious external but particularly the internal, as yet not visible enemy, that is, the counterrevolutionary danger involved in such an adventure.

No wonder that the first major setback in the conduct of the war (winter 1792) brought him into political prominence, for, to put it crudely, in his opinion, which later on was shared by many others, this was entirely the result of the fact that the power as well as the subtlety of the enemy had been underestimated. From this early stage to the end of his life, one of the principal tasks of Robespierre, closely seconded by Saint-Just, consisted of identifying and sometimes inventing the enemies of the Revolution. As mentioned earlier, this had been carried out under various and subtle forms starting from the person of the king and growing in larger and larger circles to include monarchy and the idea of monarchy, from the traditional ruling class to the ancien régime as a whole, from clergy and the church to religion and God, from the odious past to the corrupted present. Granted this may look like a *catalogue raisonné* of the enemies of the Revolution, but Robespierre went far beyond it into the dark, often inarticulate world of human feelings, private and collective, relentlessly unmasking and denouncing any hesitation and weakness, any form of deviation even in his closest associates, so as to make sure at every particular moment who were the enemies and who were the friends of the Revolution.

FROM PATHOS TO ETHOS

This basic polarization was reinforced at various levels and finally shaped into a veritable Manichaean vision of the world. First came the moral level, at which the Montagnard leaders projected themselves and their followers as models of virtue, and in so doing they worked out and imposed one of the most rigid codes of sectarian ethics ever known. As this is one of the best-known aspects of the Thermidorian regime, it should be enough to point out some of its most subtle and original features. The famous Weberian thesis regarding the origins of ethic may be relevant here, as the Montagnard leaders endea-

vored and succeeded in doing something more than just identify themselves with an idea of virtue and morality defined in conventional terms, such as industry, dedication, conscientiousness, honesty, and incorruptibility, to use some of their favorite terms. They redefined the idea, moreover, and created a new morality in terms of prevailing feelings, beliefs, goals, and aspirations. One kind of evidence, perhaps the most direct one, can be drawn from a series of semantic processes characteristic of the time. Take, for instance, the growing association and final amalgamation of the notion of virtuous man with the notion of dutiful citizen, or citizen *tout court*. Granted, the intellectual origins of the process can be traced back to the Enlightenment, and notably to Rousseau's writings. On the other hand it would be difficult to imagine how a series of abstract notions, such as "Spartan," "patriot," or "citizen" could have acquired a concrete moral connotation had it not been for the climate of opinion created by the Montagnard regime, or for the living examples set up by Robespierre and Saint-Just. Briefly, what the Montagnards did was to politicize morality in the sense that they superimposed, and almost reduced it to, a normative system of behavior strictly derived from revolutionary praxis, or, according to an earlier definition of the term *praxis*, from a dynamic contextual interpretation of the goals of the Revolution. Thus, virtue or, simply, being moral came to connote the fulfillment of the demands placed on you by your community in its effort to attain the goal of the Revolution.

To go back to Weber's thesis, the emergence of a new ethic was intrinsically bound with the rise of a new prestige group, or elite. As Robespierre and Saint-Just were almost ideal types in this respect, it would be helpful to point out the most salient features of their referential belief and value system, for this may supply us with a first insight into the nature of the phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, Robespierre consistently identified the Revolution with the people and in so doing identified himself with the people. One can say, therefore, that at least as the formative stage is concerned the new elite group can usefully be compared with what has lately been defined as populist elites, that is, a more or less cohesive group of people who claim and obtain prestige and authority on the basis of their dedication to and identification with "the people" or the community at

large. To grasp the point one has to bear in mind the specific manner in which the vague notion of "the people" was worked out and its meaning reinforced by clustering with two other emotion-laden words "nation" and "fatherland," all this being closely associated with the key concepts of democracy, such as freedom, liberty, fraternity, equality, justice, and many others. This strong concentration of *idées forcées*, dream words, or *mots d'illusion*, as Brunot very aptly puts it, reveals a basic aspect of the new elite.⁸ Briefly, they consisted of a group of people bound together through their love of the nation, a sentiment that in their own as well as in the opinion of many others justified their claim for superiority.

Although it may seem slightly contrived to mention the word *charisma* in a historical context such as this, one can hardly fail to notice that some essential features of the situation are highly suggestive in this sense. After all, the Montagnards came to power in a situation of crisis that affected not only the fate of the Revolution but also, and in a far more visible sense, the future and survival of the nation as a whole. This should be enough to understand why concepts such as fatherland, nation, and even liberty had acquired new meanings and an incantational resonance that only objects of veneration usually have. Brunot speaks in this context about the sacralization of such notions by their persistent association with biblical words, such as *évangile*, *credo*, *martyrologe*, *Bonne Nouvelle* *dea* *liberté*. However, as we are still concerned with a specific aspect in the political development of the Montagnards, the position can briefly be described as follows: in their struggle to attain the goal of the Revolution, that is, a rational democratic social order, a number of political activists underwent a process of radical change amounting to a conversion. Whether this can be accounted for in terms of their inner dispositions or external circumstances, or both, is for the moment a moot point. The important fact is that they reached a stage at which they perceived themselves and were perceived by some other members of society as exceptional people, singled out by *nature*, which bestowed upon them the great mission of saving their nation and fatherland. That this has a great deal to do with Montagnard fanaticism is self-evident. But the Montagnards present us with another problem that is considerably more characteristic of

modern political fanaticism. To grasp this we have to turn our attention to the other route to the Regime of Terror followed by the Montagnard leaders, the route of the head.

The Montagnards were highly dedicated revolutionaries who pledged themselves to the task of creating a new society modeled on the ideas of the main representatives of the Enlightenment. Reason, individualized reason in a Cartesian sense, occupied a key position in their conception of man and society. Reason was the source of freedom, tolerance, and equality, the supreme guarantee of the new democratic society. How can one then account for their fanaticism?

The first type of answer, and one which is frequently voiced, refers to their intellectual background. For reasons that will become apparent presently, it is convenient to examine the question under two aspects, one concerning the Enlightenment in general, the other, the special position occupied in this respect by Rousseau. With regard to the first aspect it is generally held that while the philosophes expressed the need, moreover, totalized the multiple aspirations of the masses for a drastic change in their society, they themselves were not revolutionaries; more precisely, they were inclined to believe that such a change could be achieved consensually as a result of progressive enlightenment. In other words, the philosophes would not and did not allow human reason to overstep itself by becoming impatient and overconfident, hence turning into its very opposite. Now, although this is true, there is another side of the Enlightenment that ought to be borne in mind when trying to assess its impact on the Revolution and the Montagnards' leaders in particular.

The philosophes, and indeed most representatives of the Enlightenment in France, filled a complex, non- or rather pre-differentiated cultural role normally referred to as men of letters. This included practically all forms of expressive, interpretative, and creative activities falling between the extreme of abstract systematic thinking, on one side, and that of imaginative, purely fictional writing, on the other. But the main point is that this constituted a coherent whole, and that the French men of letters in the eighteenth century perceived themselves and were perceived by others as an identifiable occupational group fulfilling a well-defined role. Moreover, most of them were aware that diversity of interest and performance was a basic

requisite for the fulfillment of such a role. Although they hated the word "system," there is little doubt that Diderot and Rousseau, to give two outstanding examples, were almost obsessively concerned with the same kind of problems and fought the same battle in all their major works, philosophical, political, literary, and even autobiographical. Further, it would be reasonable to maintain that impressive as it might have been, their diversity of interests and activities was not as much a matter of natural endowment—Diderot's literary talents were moderate—as of an explicit need and determination to express their role fully, to say everything they had to say, and to say it variedly and emphatically.

Of paramount importance is the part played by the literary writings of the men of letters in relation to their work as a whole. Without a clear understanding of this it is difficult to make a balanced and adequate judgment on their historical significance. To go back to a point made earlier regarding their impact on the Revolution, it is true that in their theoretical writings the philosophes and the men of letters in general were daringly and even aggressively progressive without being revolutionary, that is, without pleading for radical and violent changes in their society. Most of them expressed views according to which the desired changes could take place within the existing system. Thus, like Montesquieu, Voltaire expressed his faith in an "enlightened absolutism and constitutional monarch," and even in "traditional aristocracy." While pleading for freedom and equality, and while thundering against the evils of ignorance and prejudice, including religion, Helvetius and Holbach sincerely believed that all the desired changes could be brought about by the monarch within the framework of conventional morality: they were explicitly against involving the people in such an enterprise. Diderot refrained from encouraging anyone to break the laws, even the bad laws, "because this may authorize everyone else to break the good ones."⁹ The examples can easily be multiplied, but the more one does so the more one feels the need to raise the following critical questions: How and to what extent does this express their perception of themselves, their role image, and, finally, their conception of man, society, and history? Where does the other side of their intellectual activity come in?

In tackling the above questions it is not enough to take into account that the people referred to included the authors of famous fictional works, such as *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, *La Religieuse*, *Les Bijoux indiscrets*, *Le Neveu de Rameau*, *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*, to mention only a few. Equally essential is that they lived in, and to a certain extent represented, a period and a sociocultural climate in which the so-called *littérature licencieuse* reached a peak, and which produced or inspired the work of Chaderlos de Laclos and de Sade as well as the beginning of the so-called *roman intérieur*. Briefly, before anything definite is said about the historical significance of the men of letters, it is necessary to consider their fictional vision of man in general and of society in particular. Although the point has a more general application, we have to confine ourselves to a brief, mainly illustrative discussion of Diderot's literary work. Apart from being one of the most if not the most outstanding representatives of the period, Diderot also was highly aware of the substantial unity of his work.

Diderot's persistent preoccupation as an author and critic with *la littérature licencieuse* can be interpreted in a great variety of ways, that is, as an expression of a slightly abnormal trait in his personality, as a disguised manifestation of a quasi-scientific interest, of a unique insightfulness into the lower depth of the human mind, or simply as a contribution to a fashionable if not dominant literary trend. But useful as they may be, these and other similar kinds of interpretations touch only the surface of the question with which we are concerned here, which is one of meaning rather than origins. For this reason it is necessary to place Diderot's *littérature licencieuse* in the totality of his work, and derive its meaning from the general intention of his intellectual activities and the specific manner in which he perceived his role as a man of letters. This is admittedly a difficult task, but fortunately Diderot himself supplies us with a first insight. He confesses that whenever he saw someone, and particularly a member of the upper classes, buying his *Bijoux indiscrets*, he had the feeling that he had caught him red-handed, the feeling that in dropping the mask of conventional sexual morality the purchaser was on the way to freeing himself from all conventions and becoming a man like all others. There is, therefore, little doubt that *la littérature licencieuse* was for him neither a

form of entertainment nor a therapeutic exercise, but a constituent part of his strategy as a man of letters, a powerful weapon in his total war of liberation. As in his philosophical and political writings he led a systematic campaign against any form of oppression, so did he, in his literary writing, fight against any form of repression, prejudice, and convention, in a word, anything that prevented the individual from a genuine contact with his inner self.

But while the campaign was the same, the tactics and particularly the achievements were considerably different, and in this lies the specific significance, historical and existential, of Diderot's fictional writings, which we in the twentieth century have only just begun to realize. In his philosophical and political works Diderot was vigorously critical, cynical, and fearless in his attack, but he would not and could not use the "knock out" technique. To be sure he had little doubt that in order to demolish the existing social order and to build a new one it was necessary to be free. But, at the same time, he distinctly felt that in this case freedom should operate within a definite, normally moral framework, that social change should be guided by common sense, by reason and persuasion rather than by force. Like Holbach and many other representatives of the period, Diderot was inclined to conceive of reason ontologically, as a powerful autonomous agency that cures the evils of the world and finally establishes the reign of liberty. In the realm of social life, freedom, reason, and ethos should go hand in hand.

The position is considerably different when one looks at Diderot's literary vision of the world, and particularly of human existence. Here spontaneity and freedom reign absolutely. Moreover, one can confidently say that Diderot was one of the greatest iconoclasts of all times, the first fully fledged modern artist, that is, one who felt and hammered home his feeling that art should be and is a direct manifestation of man's inner life, the most authentic—Diderot used the word "honest"—contact that an individual could have with himself. In art as in dream, man makes himself whatever he wishes to be. The term *whatever* is used deliberately to underline this surprisingly modern, almost Pirandellian, aspect of Diderot, namely, his awareness that beneath the mask of convention and social identity there lies in each individual a series of other, far more authentic iden-

ties. Consider, for example, his reaction to his own portrait by Michael van Loo, "Mais que diront mes petits enfants, lorsqu'ils viendront à comparer mes tristes ouvrages avec ce riant, mignon, efféminé, vieux coquet-là? Mes enfants, je vous préviens que ce n'est pas moi. J'avais en une journée cent physionomies diverses selon la chose dont j'étais affecté. . . . J'ai un masque qui trompe l'artiste."¹⁰

So much for the literary side of Diderot's work. The main points emerging from what has been said so far may be formulated briefly as follows: in his theoretical writings, Diderot was not a revolutionary either in a Montagnard sense or in the sense in which a writer such as Marx was. The main reason for this was that he did not and could not establish a close, unmediated, unreflexive, and compulsive connection between radical criticism and vision, on the one hand, and radical action, on the other. His notion of revolutionary praxis remained undistinguishable from the notion of human action, moreover, of human nature in general. Nature, morality, and action constituted an existential trinity. However, the same Diderot may and does appear considerably different if one takes into account the view of the world and man emerging from his literary writings. What a contemporary apostle of revolution, Jean-Paul Sartre, considers to be the hallmark of eighteenth-century literature as a whole is glaringly true of Diderot's fictional work: it does indeed constitute a model of "protest literature," a fact that enhances the historical significance of his work as a whole.¹¹ In the present context the following two points are exceptionally relevant: First, in his literary work, Diderot presents a revolutionary image of man in that most of his characters lead an endless battle not only against the conventions and institutions of their society but also against the encroachment of society in general. The kind of freedom they aspire to is the freedom "to sleep with their own mother and kill their own father." Second, and this should be regarded as a necessary positive conclusion from the first point, in these writings Diderot makes a bold attempt to establish the value of the individual's inner life, of his interiority. To be sure this has a multiplicity of aspects, not all of them clearly articulated in Diderot's writing. But what clearly emerges from these writings is his effort to show not only that the individual has the ability as well as the right to pull off the

mask put on him by society and thus establish his true identity from within, but also, and above all, that consultation with oneself, self-consent or, as the existentialists would have it, coincidence with oneself constitutes the safest basis for any authoritative decision regarding one's own existence, personal or social.

The extent to which Diderot and other representatives of the Enlightenment had succeeded in legitimizing the value of interiority, to translate inner freedom in terms of social freedom, is a big question that cannot be discussed here. We suggest, however, that this aspect of their view of man had a great deal to do with the Revolution. In brief, Diderot contributed to the creation of a cultural climate that enabled Robespierre and Saint-Just to form the conviction that their own ideas, intuitions, and aspirations constituted in themselves sufficient guidance for their (revolutionary) action, moreover, that their conscience constituted a supreme authority. To be sure, the process involved here was one of diffuse cultural refraction rather than one of direct influence. Although we have reasons to believe that the Montagnard leaders were highly introspective—Robespierre had conspicuous artistic inclinations—the manner in which they perceived and dealt with their inner life differed considerably from that of Diderot's characters. Whereas the latter were inclined to accept, and sometimes to identify with their inner drives and feelings, the former tended to control them, unconsciously, of course, by projecting them onto the external world, onto dominant values, ideas, and cultural symbols in general. As will be shown presently, they were strongly inclined to equate pathos, that is, inner mobilization and consultation, with ethos. In the meantime, however, it is necessary to examine another aspect of their cultural background.

Both Robespierre and Saint-Just took Rousseau as their first model, and consequently they were strongly inclined to a romantic conception of human reason. Particularly relevant is Rousseau's concept of "the general will," a mysterious notion or, rather, assumption according to which the individual members of a community can, under certain circumstances, make political decisions that are not only self-evident but also morally binding for everyone and in equal measure. Moreover, as expressions of universal reason such decisions are not only accessi-

ble but evident to the legislator. This clumsy equation between human nature, reason, and political society, which has sometimes been described as an early expression of a totalitarian form of democracy, can certainly be considered an important ingredient in the political outlook of the Montagnards. Their identification with the people and their firm belief that they were acting on behalf of the people as an abstract monolith testify to this. But in saying this there still remains a formidable question to be faced. Rousseau was a theoretician, and as such he could hardly conceive of the problems with which the political activists would be faced. To put it bluntly, how could the Montagnards act upon the assumption that there was a general will, a rational, and hence evident, formula for the interests of all, when all the appearances were to the contrary? More precisely, when and how did they arrive at the conclusion that they were the right interpreters of the general will and consequently the representatives of the people *tout court*?

While laying no claims for possessing a definite answer we should like to conclude the present chapter by discussing the main issues involved in, and the main types of approach made to, such questions.

The argument put forward here has on the whole been organized around two main points, one referring to the sociocultural features characterizing the period under consideration, the other to the specific nature of a revolutionary situation. Regarding the first, one can briefly state that the Montagnards belonged to a period of incipient nationalism and of confident, even virulent, rationalism. As to the historical significance of the phenomenon, it suffices to point out that we are dealing with the formative stage of what was soon to become one of the most powerful sociocultural trends in modern history and one that found its most adequate expression in the so-called romantic period and, notably, the philosophical thought of Hegel and Herder. Now, the main contention of the present chapter is that the Montagnards constituted an early, mainly political expression of this particular sociocultural cluster. Furthermore, we suggest that their political fanaticism can be seen as an ideological and behavioral syndrome of a period and sociocultural climate characterized by incipient nationalism and virulent rationalism.

As the part played by the so-called nationalistic motif in the political behavior of the Montagnards has been discussed at some length elsewhere, it can briefly be summed up as follows: as the Montagnard leaders perceived themselves as patriots, impeccable and sacrosanct patriots, it is reasonable to assume that in this respect they represent an early but nonetheless distinct articulation of demotic nationalism with both messianic and nativistic features. Saint-Just's dichotomic conception of morality—self-centeredness as the source of all evil and community-centeredness as the source of all good—as well as his romantic imagery about rural agrarian society and style of life, contains a strong element of what may be called fanaticism of the right.

Not so obvious was the other side of Montagnard fanaticism, which was closely related to the main tenets of late eighteenth-century rationalist thought and particularly to the impact that this had on Robespierre's and Saint-Just's views of man and of themselves as political activists. As much of what was said at an earlier stage when we discussed the relationship between the Montagnards and the Enlightenment bears on this, it remains only to conclude the argument by making a series of points of a more specific character. A point of emphasis should come first, namely, the conception of reason as a moral and social force. Although the idea can be found, implicitly or explicitly, in many writers of the Enlightenment, Robespierre and Saint-Just stand nearer a romantic, especially Hegelian and early Marxian, version of this basic theme in modern rationalist thought. Sometimes this seems to be so obvious that it would be hardly an exaggeration to consider them as a prefiguration of the romantic concept of totality, that is, a human condition of perfect unity between reason, will, and feeling, between knowledge, morality, and politics. But in saying "prefiguration" an important point of qualification should be made at once. For one thing, there is the objective fact that Robespierre and Saint-Just lived before such a vision of man was conceptualized by Hegel and, shortly after, by Marx. But even more significant in the present context is that they were neither abstract thinkers nor visionaries in a romantic sense of the word, the implication being that they had arrived at and expressed this view of man neither conceptually nor simply intuitively, but in a more concrete way, through their style of life, or, to use another existentialist ex-

pression, through their chosen mode of being. As this is obviously both a complex formulation and a complex phenomenon, we suggest that, if for analytical purposes one factor has to be isolated, that factor should be the role structure and style of the two Montagnard leaders. The reason for this is twofold: first, this aspect of their existence expresses in the most concrete manner possible their chosen mode of being, and second, it throws direct light on their inclination to perceive ideas in terms of rights and duties, to believe that what is rational is equally desirable and realizable, and, consequently, to conceive of man as a maker of history.

Of the many and varied ways in which the above view of man was expressed by the Montagnard leaders, only those will be mentioned here that have a direct bearing on their political fanaticism. Most revealing in this respect was their anxiety to achieve and maintain that state of inner cohesion and total harmony on the (unconscious) assumption that totality means inner totality *tout court*. We confess that owing primarily to lack of more detailed empirical study in this area, we are unable to deal adequately with this phenomenon. All we can do is outline a manner of approach that may be rewarding for future research. One aspect that commands particular attention in this context is Robespierre's famous "withdrawals" on the eve of important decisions, such as before the liquidation of the Hebertists and Dantonists (February 1794), and just before the fate of the Terror and consequently his own fate was decided (July 1794).¹² These ritualistic inner consultations constituted so many efforts toward reaching a state of perfect consensus between his judgment, feeling, and will, and consequently to arrive at an unambiguous formulation of his position. A series of useful insights can be gained if one compares the case with other, better-known experiences of this sort, such as, for instance, the retreats of early Christians, medieval mystics, seventeenth-century pietists and puritans, not to mention a well-known case in contemporary history, that of Hitler. The most obvious characteristic of this type of situation briefly can be described as a mental state of total mobilization, a heightening of inner life to the degree of eliminating any resistance, from within or from without, of superseding all contradictions, all doubts and hesitations. The normal outcome is that inner

spark, that state of certitude and confidence that are unmistakable signs of a ceaseless drive toward the autonomy of inner life and, often, total internalization of reality. As a result of this kind of experience, Jacob Böhme found out that God dwelt inside the soul of man, more precisely, inside himself, or, to paraphrase Angelus Silesius, that God without him cannot exist for a moment. In his "Psychologie des Deutschen Pietismus," H. R. Günther makes this point particularly clearly.¹³ In their anxiety to relate their wishes to the will of God, the minds of the Pietists moved in smaller and smaller circles until the two points, their wish and God's will, met. The result was that God often agreed with their wish. Similarly Robespierre often came to the conclusion that his reasons were reason itself.

One point of qualification is necessary. It is not suggested here that increased inner awareness and extension of the boundaries of the self are and necessarily should be related to the practice of seclusion and inner examination. It is quite possible, and the case of Saint-Just may be suggestive in this respect, to reach a similar state of intense contact with others, by (collective) situations of interstimulation, as Durkheim would have it. At any rate it was this kind of mental condition, this permanent inner mobilization that accounted to a great extent for Robespierre's and Saint-Just's voluntarism, or, if the above analogy can stand the strain, for their feeling that since one wills it is willed. As to the question who or what the *it* was, the Montagnard leaders had more than one answer, or rather a colorful variation that included "the people," fatherland, man, humanity, reason, and, above all, the Revolution with its obvious connotation of posterity and history.

What has just been said sheds light on another cluster of psychocultural traits characteristic of the Montagnard leaders that more than anything else may account for their political fanaticism. For lack of a better expression we call it the "activist cluster," its origins lying, obviously, in the same condition of permanent inner mobilization referred to above. One expression of this consisted in their readiness to equate passivity, neutrality, and indifference with guilt. Another one consisted of their all too obvious tendency to equate freedom with order, or, better said, freedom with control, for in this way we point to the very root, the deep motivation of the feeling and vision of order in human existence, namely, control over the self. That the Spar-

tan ideal of man is relevant here hardly needs mentioning. Equally familiar is Robespierre's compulsive manner of justifying the Regime of Terror, that is, the despotism of freedom. On this point Saint-Just presents us with a broader, more imaginative, and for this reason a more symptomatic expression of the situation and of the human condition involved in it. Even his notion of terror appears more punctuated than that of Robespierre: "We rule by iron those who cannot be ruled by justice," with more paternalistic rather than sheerly repressive connotations, and on the whole more distinctively future-oriented. His well-known concern with institutions, which he conceived of as an alternative to terror, bears witness to this. As he aptly put it, "They [institutions] are the substitution of the power of morals for the power of men," or, in another place, "They make man what he wishes to be."¹⁴ One can hardly doubt that by alternative he meant rational control and inner authority as opposed to coercion.

It is this broad vision of revolutionary task that places Saint-Just in a category of his own. His emotional ethic, his exalted vision of future society, and, above all, his bucolic imagery of rural life, "la volupté d'une cabane, d'un champs fertile cultivé par vos mains, une charrue, un champ, une chaumière . . . voila le bonheur"—all this makes it sometimes difficult to brand him a fanatic. On the other hand, dream makes reality unbearable; nothing can more readily justify man's impatience, intolerance, and repression of present reality than his dream of a free and happy future. As an old French proverb says, "Par requirre de trop grande franchise et libertés chet-on en trop grand serveigne." Saint-Just's fanaticism even more than that of Robespierre was the fanaticism of Freedom. No one had a deeper understanding of this paradox than Hegel when he saw in the French Revolution an expression—*incarnation* would be a better word—of man's tragic vision of the world, and in Saint-Just the quintessence of a tragic hero. The springboard of tragedy lay in his abstract concept of freedom, that is, in that inner dreamlike vision of human freedom that could not and would not compromise with the concrete circumstances of life, with history. And here lay also the very source of Saint-Just's fanaticism, for, as Hegel says, "fanaticism is the voice of abstraction and the refusal of structuration . . . a blind claim of liberty."¹⁵ Saint-Just casts a long shadow over our own time.

NOTES

1. From the article "Autorité politique," *Encyclopédie*.
2. *European Thought in The Eighteenth Century* (London, 1954).
3. *Textes choisis*, ed. Jean Popereu (Paris, 1956), vol. 1, pp. 89-94.
4. *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, p. 494. Italics mine.
5. For a recent, highly valuable contribution, see F. Weinstein and G. M. Platt, *The Wish To Be Free: Society, Psyche and Value Change* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969). For an earlier, similar treatment of the subject, see Z. Barbu, *Dictatorship and Democracy* (London and New York, 1956), pp. 55-56; *Problems of Historical Psychology* (London and New York, 1960), esp. pp. 205-218; and "The New Intelligentsia," in J. Cruikshank, ed., *French Literature in Its Background* (Oxford, 1968), vol. 3.
6. George Rude, *Crowds in History* (New York and London, 1964).
7. This point has been developed in some detail by E. G. Walter, *Terror and Resistance* (New York and Oxford, 1969).
8. F. Brunot, *Histoire de la langue française*, vol. 9, p. 623.
9. *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*, ed. Dieckmann (1955), p. 65.
10. *Essais sur la peinture* (posthumously published in 1795).
11. Sartre, *What Is Literature?* (New York, 1965).
12. In the same order of ideas it is relevant to note that, during the period immediately preceding his decision to increase the pressure of the Terror, Robespierre was preoccupied with the introduction of the cult of the Supreme Being and arrangements for the great fête of 8 June 1794.
13. In *Persönlichkeit und Geschichte* (1947).
14. *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, p. 422.
15. "Introduction," *Philosophy of Right*.