HISTORY OF EUROPE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BENEDETTO CROCE

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HISTORY OF EUROPE

IN THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY

by

BENEDETTO CROCE

Translated from the Italian

by

HENRY FURST

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TO THOMAS MANN

Pur mo venian li tuoi pensier tra i miei
con simile atto e con simile faccia,
sí che d'entrambi un sol consiglio fei.

Dante, *Inf.*, XXIII, 28-30

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THIS volume is the elaboration of lectures delivered before the Accademia di Scienze morali e politiche of the Società Reale of Naples in the year 1931. The present translation has been made from the third Italian edition (Bari, Laterza, 1932), substantially the same as the first two editions, except for a few minor corrections made by the author. In view of certain false statements which have found credence concerning omissions in the German version, the translator wishes to forestall all such fantasies by affirming that he has adhered as closely as possible to the text. A few words have been omitted here and there where the author, quoting an English expression (such as "Disestablishment Bill") goes on to explain its meaning in Italian. It has been obviously necessary to omit such explanations; otherwise the version is literal and verbatim. In short, the criterion has been followed of *tradurre senza tradire*. Croce employs long sentences and very long paragraphs which it would often be impossible to break up without materially altering his meaning. That is after all the tradition of Italian prose.

The translator wishes to thank Dr. Mario Einaudi, of the University of Turin, and Dr. Gaudence Megaro, of New York, for many valuable suggestions. The latter also kindly read the proof.

HENRY FURST

Camogli, 1933.

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I. THE RELIGION OF LIBERTY

WHEN the Napoleonic adventure was at an end and that extraordinary despot had disappeared from the stage where he had reigned supreme; while his conquerors were agreeing or trying to agree among themselves so that they could unite in giving to Europe, by the restoration of old régimes and the timely manipulation of frontiers, a stable organization to replace the strongly held yet always precarious empire of the French nation—then among all the peoples hopes were flaming up and demands were being made for independence and liberty. These demands grew louder and more insistent the more they met repulse and repression; and in disappointment and defeat hopes went on springing up afresh, purposes were strengthened.

In Germany, in Italy, in Poland, in Belgium, in Greece, and in the distant colonies of Latin America oppressed nations were beginning to attempt some opposition to foreign rulers and governors. There were similar attempts in nations and amputated parts of nations that had been forced into political union with states owing their origin and their form to conquests, treaties, or the property rights of princely families; and in nations that had been cut up into small states, which felt that because they were so broken up they were hampered, weakened, rendered impotent for the part they

should be playing in the life of the world, and humiliated as to their dignity before other nations that were united and great. In these nations, and in others, there were longings for many things: for juridical guarantees; for participation in administration and government by means of new or revised representative systems; for various associations of citizens for special economic, social, and political purposes; for open discussion of ideas and interests in the press; and for "constitutions," as people said at the time. And in the nations, like France, to which these constitutions had been granted in the form of "charters," there was urgent demand that these be safeguarded and made broader. In yet other nations, like England, where after a long and gradual growth the representative system was now in force, there was pressure for the removal of the restrictions and inequalities that still existed, and for a general modernization and rationalization of the system that would ensure a freer and more generous way of life and of progress.

Since the historical antecedents and the existing conditions, the spirit and the customs, of the various nations were diverse, these demands differed in the several countries, as to order of appearance, as to magnitude, as to details, and as to their general tone. In one country precedence was given to liberation from a foreign domination or to national unity, and in another to the change from absolutism in government to constitutionalism. Here it was simply a question of reform of the franchise and the extension of political power, while there it was a question of establishing a representative system for the first time, or on new foundations. In one country, which through the efforts of the preceding generations—especially during the French Revolution and the Empire—already enjoyed civil equality and religious tolerance, the people began to call for the participation in government of new social strata. In another country it was necessary to delay first to

battle with the political privileges of the feudal classes and persistent forms of servitude, and to shake off the yoke of ecclesiastical oppression. But though these demands were different in importance and in order of appearance, they were all linked in a single chain, and sooner or later one drew another along after itself, and brought to light still others that could be seen in the distance. And over all of them rose one word that summed them all up and expressed the spirit which had given them life—the word *liberty*.

To be sure, it was not a new word in history, as it was not a new word in prose and poetry, or in the rhetoric of prose and poetry. Greece and Rome had handed down the memory of innumerable champions of liberty, and of sublime deeds and tragedies in which men had given their lives magnanimously for liberty, "which is so dear." Christians and their churches had invoked liberty for centuries. Liberty was the cry of the communes against emperors and kings, and of the feudal lords and barons against those same kings and emperors, and these in turn invoked liberty against the barons and the great vassals and against communities that had usurped sovereign rights. It was liberty that the kingdoms, the provinces, the cities, solicitous for their parliaments and chapters and privileges, invoked against the absolute monarchies that were ridding themselves or trying to rid themselves of those obstacles and limits to their activities. The loss of liberty had always been looked upon as the cause or the sign of decadence in the arts, in science, in economics, in morality, whether one looked at the Rome of the Caesars or the Italy of the Spaniards and the Popes. Now of late "liberty," together with "equality" and "fraternity," had shaken to pieces and scattered in ruins, as if by the force of a great earthquake, the whole edifice of old France and almost all of that of old Europe, and the terrifying impression of that deed still lingered. It seemed as though this destruction had

snatched from that name the halo of beauty and the lure of the new. And indeed the trinity of which it had made one—the "fixed and immortal triangle of Reason," as the poet Vincenzo Monti called it—fell into disrepute and was well-nigh abhorred. But once more liberty rose above the horizon, this time alone, and men gave it their admiration as a star of incomparable splendour. And the word was spoken by the younger generation with the emotional emphasis of those who have just discovered an idea of vital importance, one illuminating the past and the present, a guide for the future.

The novelty of the idea with which that old, old word was filled did not escape either the feeling or the thought of the people of the time, as may be seen from the problem to which it soon gave rise. This concerned the difference in character between the liberty suited to the modern world and that of the ancient Greeks and Romans and the Jacobins of yesterday. This problem was propounded and discussed for the first time—or almost the first—by Benjamin Constant, in an address he gave in 1819 before the Athénée of Paris, and it has been discussed many times from that day to ours. But though the problem had its kernel of reality, it was not presented correctly when a contrast was made between the ancient and the modern, in which Greece, Rome, and the French Revolution (as following the Graeco-Roman ideals) stood on one side, and on the other the modern world—as if the present were not the point where all the streams of history flow together and history's last act, and as if a single continuous development could be broken by a static opposition. In consequence, the investigation that was based on the supposed contrast ran the risk of being lost in abstractions, separating state and individual, civil liberty and political liberty, the liberty of one man and that liberty of all other men which limits his own. It ran the risk of assigning political but not civil liberty to the ancients, and to the moderns civil but not

political liberty (or political liberty of only a low degree), or the risk of reversing these judgments and attributing to the ancients greater liberty for the individual in his relations to the state than that found among modern nations. This error of abstraction always reappears when the attempt is made to define the idea of liberty by juridical distinctions, which are practical in character and concern single and transitory institutions rather than the superior and supreme idea that embraces them all and transcends them all.

If we look for the content of that concept in the history to which it belongs, which we call sometimes the history of thought, sometimes the history of philosophy, we find the consciousness of its novelty which existed at that time to be nothing more than the consciousness of the new thing that had entered thought and through it life, the new concept of man and the vision of the road that was opening before him, broad and well lighted as it had never been before. Men had not attained that concept by chance or suddenly, had not reached the entrance to that road in one leap or one flight; they had been brought there by all the experiences and solutions of philosophy as it laboured for centuries, experiences and solutions that were always lessening the distance and calming the dissension between heaven and earth, God and the world, the ideal and the real. By giving ideality to reality and reality to ideality, philosophy had recognized and understood their indivisible unity, which is identity.

In speaking of the history of thought or philosophy, we mean at the same time all history, whether it be called civil or political or economic or moral, since each of these feeds the first and is fed by it. Therefore we mean not only the philosophy of Plato, Aristotle, Galileo, Descartes, and Kant, but also that of the Greek world which set itself against the barbarians and that of the Rome which civilized those same barbarians by making them Roman citizens. We include the

philosophy of the Christian redemption, that of the Church which fought against the Empire, that of the Italian and Flemish communes in the Middle Ages, and above all that of the Renaissance and the Reformation, which vindicated individuality once more in its double value for action and for morality. We mean the philosophy of the religious wars, that of the English Long Parliament, that of the liberty of conscience proclaimed by the religious sects of England and Holland and the American colonies, that of the declaration of the rights of man made in these countries as well as the one to which the French Revolution gave special efficacy. We include also the philosophy of technical discoveries and the revolutionary consequences of these in industry, and all the events and creations which helped to form that conception, and to put law and order back into all things, and God back into the world.

But the latest advance that had been made at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth had disentangled the problem more clearly and almost conclusively, because it had criticized the opposition—acute in eighteenth-century rationalism and the French Revolution—between reason and history, in which history had been degraded and condemned by the light of reason. It had criticized the opposition, and had healed it by means of dialectics, which does not separate the finite and the infinite, nor the positive and the negative. It had made one the rationality and the reality of the new idea of history, rediscovering the saying of the philosopher Giovanni Battista Vico that the republic sought for by Plato was nothing but the course of human events. Man, then, no longer looked on himself as belittled by history or as vindicating himself against it and pushing the past away from him as a shameful memory. Instead, a true and tireless creator, he looked on himself in the history of the world as he looked on himself in his own

life. No longer did history appear destitute of spirituality and abandoned to blind forces, or sustained and constantly directed by alien forces. Now it was seen to be the work and the activity of the spirit, and so, since spirit is liberty, the work of liberty. It was all the work of liberty, its unique and eternal positive moment, which alone is made effective in the series of its forms and gives them their significance, and which alone explains and justifies the function fulfilled by the negative moment of subjection, with its constraints, its oppressions, its reactions, and its tyrannies, which (to quote Vico once more) seem to be "untoward events" and are really "opportunities."

Such was the thought, the philosophy, of the age that was at its beginning, a philosophy that was springing up everywhere, spreading everywhere, that was found on the lips of everyone, appearing in the stanzas of poetry and in the words of men of action no less than in the formulas of those who were philosophers by profession. This philosophy dragged along with it the dross of the past, sometimes put on clothes that no longer fitted, was tangled in and struggled with contradictions—and yet always went on its way, and kept ahead of everything else. Traces of it are to be found even among its adversaries: the retarded, the reactionaries, the priests and the Jesuits. And there is no little irony in the fact that the new spiritual attitude received its baptismal name from the least likely sponsor, the country that more than any other in Europe had been tight shut against philosophy and modern culture, a country pre-eminently mediaeval and scholastic—Spain, which at that time coined the word *liberal*, together with its exact antonym *servil*. It is therefore well to note (in order to avoid a reef on which many run aground) that the philosophy of an age must not be sought only among its philosophers or even among its great philosophers, but must instead be dug out of all the manifesta-

tions of that age. It cannot be found, or can be found but scantily, among the special philosophers, even the greatest of them. For the latter are always single individuals, and if in addition to the problems of their time they, looking forward to later times, set and solve other problems that their own age does not yet feel, does not apprehend, or does not comprehend clearly, it sometimes happens—since every man has his limitations—that in his day and generation some of the problems set and solved by a given philosopher cannot be made to fit into his system, and outworn and erroneous conceptions take their place. The great philosophers, like the rest of men of every kind, have no fixed and destined place in either the vanguard or the rearguard or the middle ranks of their contemporaries, but are found now in one, now in another, of those positions. Even the great philosophers of free Athens, the most splendid flowers of her liberty, amid the democratic turbulence that offended their sense of harmony and tied as they were to their naturalistic logic, in their theories failed to prove equal to the reality of the life that they lived. But an example fitting our case better is that of the supreme philosopher of the age of which we are speaking, Hegel. More profoundly than any other man he thought about and treated of dialectics and history, defining spirit in terms of liberty and liberty in terms of spirit. Yet because of certain of his political tendencies and theories he deserved to be called *servil* rather than *liberal*. Far above him in this respect, and far better representatives of the thought of the new age, stand minds that are philosophically inferior to his or that are not usually considered in the least philosophical—for example, a woman, Madame de Staël.

The concept of history as the history of liberty had as its necessary practical complement that same liberty as a moral ideal, an ideal that had in fact grown side by side with all the thought and the movement of civilization, and which in

modern times had passed from liberty as a complex of privileges to liberty as a natural right, and from that abstract natural right to the spiritual liberty of the historically concrete personality. And it had become gradually more coherent and more solid, strengthened by the corresponding philosophy, according to which that which is the law of being is the law of what must be. It could be denied only by those who, following the stale philosophies of transcendence, in some way separated what must be from what is, or by those who did not see that they were separating the two, yet did so in their arguments. Thus, for example, there was the objection that the moral ideal of liberty neither allows nor promises the expulsion of evil from the world, and therefore is not truly moral. Those who said this did not take into consideration that if morality should destroy the idea of evil, it would itself vanish, that only in the struggle against evil does morality have reality and life, that thanks to the struggle only is it lauded.

Again some lamented that the very affirmation and acceptance of the struggle that was always beginning anew shut man out from peace, from happiness, from that state of blessedness for which he always yearns. These did not take into consideration that the grandeur of the modern conception lay precisely in having changed the sense of life from the idyllic (and in consequence the elegiac) to the dramatic, from the hedonistic (and in consequence the pessimistic) to the active and creative, and that it had made liberty a continual reacquisition, a continual liberation, a continual battle, one in which a last and final victory is impossible, because it would mean the death of all the combatants, that is, of all then living.

In view of all this, it is easy to see what value should be given to the other objections that were propounded at the time and have been repeated many times and are still repeated,

such as this: The ideal of liberty, just because it is excellent, should be for the few and not for the common people, who need coercion from above, coercion by authority and the lash. This objection would find its exact counterpart in the statement—whose absurdity is obvious—that truth should be for the few and non-truth and error are suited to the many; as if truth were not such because of its intrinsic power of expansion and vitalization and transformation in every way that opens to it. There are other objections that are even more extravagant, for example: Liberty belongs properly to certain nations that have achieved it under unusual conditions, as insular England has done; or to generous-blooded nations like the Germanic, which have cultivated it in the wilds of their forests. This objection in its turn humbles spirit before matter and subjects it to mechanistic determinism. Moreover, facts give it the lie, for these show that though England taught the Continental nations much concerning liberal conceptions, she also learned not a little from them; and that for a long time Germany amid her forests forgot liberty and set up the idols of authority and subjection.

It was, then, quite obvious that to the question, What is the ideal of the new generation? the answer must be that word *liberty* without any qualification, since any addition would cloud the concept. And those cold and superficial observers were wrong who wondered at it or made it a jest and, accusing the concept of empty formalism, asked in irony or sarcasm: "What is liberty anyway? Liberty of whom or of what? Liberty to do what?" Liberty could not accept adjectives or empiric delimitations because of its intrinsic infinity; but none the less it set its own limits from time to time, by free acts, and so it became particularized and acquired content. The distinction, made many times, of two liberties—the singular and the plural, liberty and liberties—is a contradiction of two abstractions, since liberty in the singular exists

only in liberties in the plural. But it never coincides with or is exhausted by these or those of its particularizations in the institutions it has created, and therefore, as has been noted, not only can it not be defined in terms of its institutions, that is, juridically, but also there is no need to connect the one with the other by the bond of conceptual necessity, since the institutions, being historical facts, are bound to and unbound from liberty by historical necessity.

The political demands that we have enumerated above under their main headings formed at this time, more or less, its historical body, and in a certain sense, its body flourishing in beauty and renewed youthful vigour, combined with the audacity and recklessness that belong to youth. Incarnate spirituality, and because of that fact, spiritualized corporality, its significance lay solely in the goal at which it aimed—that human life should draw breath more freely, should grow deeper and broader. In opposition to the humanitarianism of the preceding century and the blindness even of men like Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe to the idea of nation and fatherland, in opposition to the scant (where there was any at all) repugnance felt for foreign intervention, the promotion of nationalism strove to promote humanity in its concrete form, that of personality: individuals as well as the human groups bound together by common origin and common memories, by customs and attitudes, nations already existing and active or nations to be roused to activity.

And intrinsically it placed no barrier against the wider and more comprehensive organization of nations, for "nation" is a spiritual and historical concept and therefore in the act of becoming, not a naturalistic and fixed concept like that of race. The very hegemony or primacy claimed for this or that people—by Fichte and others for the Germanic peoples, by Guizot and others for the French, by Mazzini and Gioberti for the Italians, and by still others for the Poles and the Slavs

in general—was theorized as the right and the duty of that people to take its place at the head of all the nations in order to act as their leader in the movement towards civilization, towards human perfection, towards spiritual greatness. The German nationalists of that time said that the German people was the chosen people, but they added that this was because it was cosmopolitan and not purely national. And almost all of the other hegemonists said the same. Constitutions and representative governments must bring to efficacy and political activity men of greater ability and greater goodwill than those who had been active before, or rivals of these. A free press was an open forum for the exchange of ideas, for the clash and measurement of passions, for the elucidation of situations, for disputes and agreements; and, as someone has cleverly said, it attempted to take the place in the great states of Europe and of the world that the agora had held in the small cities of ancient times.

The favour in which men held the two great parties that made up the parliaments—conservative and progressive, moderate and radical, the left and the right—betrayed the intention to slow up the impetus of the social movement and avoid the havoc and bloodshed of revolutionary explosions, by making the struggle of interests mild and humane. In the face of the centralization and the administrative despotism of Revolution and Empire and that of the absolute monarchs who had been restored to their thrones, the anxious hopes and desires of local autonomies were troubled by the fear that centralization, by putting all on one level, would impoverish and sterilize the fulness of life in the very places where those autonomies were carrying on the best administrations and cultivating the best nurseries of political ability. Constitutional monarchies after the English model took a middle position between absolute monarchy (which was too historical) and the republic (which was too little historical),

and were declared to be almost the only form of republic suited to the times. (After her Revolution, of course, statesmen of the old school considered England a republic, and not a monarchy.) Likewise, in general all the resumption of historical traditions was animated by the desire to collect and use whatever was still alive and adaptable to modern life, whether it was found in local institutions and customs, among the nobility or among the peasants, or in naïve religious beliefs. The breaking of the chains that had weighed down or still weighed down industry and commerce was in obedience to the necessity of giving an impulse to invention, to individual ability, and to competition, in order to increase the wealth that, no matter who produced it or who owned it, was always the wealth of society as a whole and contributed to its welfare and its moral elevation in one way or another, sooner or later. And the same was true of all the aspects and special purposes of these varied demands.

It might happen—and in the later course of history certainly would happen—that some or many of these liberal institutions would die, when the conditions that made them possible had disappeared. Others would become inefficient, powerless, or unadaptable, and these would have to be modified, or discarded and replaced. But that is the lot of all things pertaining to man; they live and die; they change and take on new life; or they become mechanical and have to be cast aside. And in every case the agent of that modification, readaptation, or destruction is always liberty, which by this method is taking on a new body, one endowed with fresh youth or grown to adult strength. So there is nothing to keep men from thinking, with the rigid and forward-looking logic that belongs essentially to the liberal concept, that when the contrasts which had given it life had grown antiquated, the two-party system would be changed into one of varied and mobile groups concerned with particular problems. Self-government

would yield to the necessity for greater regularity and centralization, constitutional monarchies to republics; and national states would be combined into states of many nations, or united states, when a wider national consciousness (for example, European) had come into being. Economic freedom would be weakened and reduced to narrow confines by federations of industrialists and the nationalizing of various services. Certainly few of these liberals of the first generations believed in such possibilities; sometimes or even habitually they denied them. But nevertheless those possibilities were implicit in the principle they proclaimed, and they must be borne in mind now that we can perceive them after more than a century of manifold experiences and mental toil. This warning applies to all that we have been saying of this germinal period, in which we see, as we must see, in the germ the tree of which it was the germ and which alone could have made it capable of growth and not an aborted cell.

And it might also happen (and that is the reason that the new and Goethian figure of progress was drawn no longer as a straight line, but as a spiral) that in the crises of rejuvenation the liberal régimes would be subject to reactions and returns to authority, of different origins, of lesser or greater extent and longer or shorter duration. But liberty would continue to work within these and to eat them away until at last it would emerge once more, wiser and stronger. To be sure, even then the corporality that we have called spiritualized would be accompanied now and then by another that was not spiritualized, and was therefore unhealthy. The cult of nationalism gave signs, in some of its confused apostles, of being given over to vainglory and the insolence of material dominion, or of shutting itself off from the other nations in a sombre lust of race. And the cult of history and the past gave signs of perversion into inane idolatry; the reverence for religion, those of pseudo-religious fervour; the devotion

to existing institutions, those of conservative timidity; the observance of constitutional forms, those of lack of courage to face the necessary modifications; economic freedom, those of the protection of the interests of this or that group; and so on. But these weaknesses, these errors, these omens of evils to come, were inseparable from the very value of the demands that were being made and the institutions for which they asked, and they did not lessen the substantial nobility of the liberal movement, its potent moral efficacy. This was irradiated by poetry, armed by logic and by science; it turned early to action and prepared for conquest and dominion.

Poets, theorists, orators, publicists, propagandists, apostles and martyrs bore witness to the profound seriousness of that ideal; and since they arose and multiplied around it, and not (or more rarely and less resolutely) around other ideals, they bore witness that its vigour would prevail, that the victory which awaited it was certain. And not only the facts but also the doctrine forbade any separation in the future—a separation that would be a grave sign of degradation and decadence—between theory and practice, science and life, public life and private life; as if it were possible to search for and find the truth without at the same time feeling it and living it in action or the desire for action, and possible to separate the man from the citizen, the individual from the society that forms him and which he forms. The mere scholar and philosopher, pacific and given to dreams, the intellectual and the rhetorician who treated of the images of the sublime but fled from the fatigue and danger of the duties those images evoked and imposed, and were prone to servility and the adulation of the courtier—these became objects of scorn. And all writing to order, getting oneself supported by courts and governments instead of looking only to the approval of the public for favour and the very means of livelihood, the compensation for one's work—this became an object

of reproach. There was a demand for sincerity of faith, for integrity of character, for agreement between word and deed. The concept of personal dignity was revived, and with it the feeling for true aristocracy, with its code, its rigidity, and its exclusiveness, an aristocracy that had now become liberal and therefore wholly spiritual. The heroic figure that appealed to all hearts was the poet militant, the intellectual man who can fight and die for his ideas—a figure that was not confined to the ecstasies of the imagination and pedagogical illustrations, but appeared in flesh and blood on battle-fields and barricades in every part of Europe. The "missionaries" of liberty had as companions the "crusaders" of liberty.

Now he who gathers together and considers all these characteristics of the liberal ideal does not hesitate to call it what it was: a "religion." He calls it so, of course, because he looks for what is essential and intrinsic in every religion, which always lies in the concept of reality and an ethics that conforms to this concept. It excludes the mythological element, which constitutes only a secondary differentiation between religion and philosophy. The concept of reality and the conforming ethics of liberalism were generated, as has been shown, by modern thought, dialectical and historical. Nothing more was needed to give them a religious character, since personifications, myths, legends, dogmas, rites, propitiations, expiations, priestly classes, pontifical robes, and the like do not belong to the intrinsic, and are taken out from particular religions and set up as requirements for every religion with ill effect. Such a process is the origin of the somewhat numerous artificial religions ("religions of the future") that were devised in the eighteenth century; they all met ridicule, which they deserved, since they were counterfeits and caricatures. But the religion of liberalism showed itself to be essentially religious in its forms and institutions, and since it was

born and not made, was no cold and deliberate device. Therefore at first its leaders even expected to be able to live in harmony with the old religions, and to bring them a companion, a complement, an aid. As a matter of fact, it set itself up against them, but at the same time summed them up in itself and went further. Beside philosophical motives it set the religious motives of the near and the remote past. Next to and above Socrates it set the human and divine Redeemer Jesus. And it felt that it had undergone all the experiences of paganism and Christianity, of Catholicism, Augustinianism, Calvinism, and all the rest. It felt that it represented the highest demands, that it was the purifying, deepening, and power-giving agent of the religious life of mankind. Therefore it did not point to the chronological dates of its beginnings, nor to new eras that cut it off sharply from the past, as the Christian Church and then Islam had done, and as the National Convention, in imitation of them, had done by its decree expressing the abstract concept of liberty and reason—a concept that lived for a brief moment a life as abstract as itself, and was first forgotten and then abolished.

On every side rang out the cry of a new birth, of a "century that is being born again," like a salutation full of promise to the "third age," the age of the Spirit, which Gioacchino da Fiore had prophesied in the thirteenth century, and which now opened out before the human society that had prepared for it and waited for it.

VII. THE REVOLUTIONARY REVIVAL AND THE GENERAL LIBERAL-NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF EUROPE (1851-1870)

THERE was in Europe, as we have seen, a small state, Piedmont, in which the liberal and national movement had not suffered any interruption, and indeed in the midst of the reactionary hurricane seemed, as it were, to be cleansed and purified, to become clearer in its concepts and surer of the path it was to tread. Elsewhere, liberalism was hiding in the catacombs; and in free countries, where it spread openly and without obstacles, it lacked the pungent stimulus of war and revolution to be prepared and provoked and faced. But independent and liberal Piedmont was at the same time living the life of enslaved and oppressed Italy, from whom, long before such a word re-echoed in official speeches, she had received the "cry of sorrow." And so, making use of what she possessed and preserved and increased as a means towards a loftier end, she was the only country in Europe that was actively revolutionary. This possibility for action was certainly partly owing to her geographical situation, which had permitted her to live and grow amid the wars of France and the Empire, and now had concurred to protect her from being crushed or subdued to vassallage by triumphant Austria.

But just as in the dangers of her long history she had been strengthened by the virtues of her princes and her peo-

ple, now she was guided towards her present condition, to the honour of being the vanguard of *Italianità*, by the wisdom of her statesmen. They assisted and directed her in her new life of liberty in such a way as to win fame and esteem for moderation among all the other countries in revolution, we may say after her first constitutional cabinet of 1848, under the presidency of Balbo, which included men of radical bent and conservatives and moderates, men like Pareto with men like Thaon de Revel and Sclopis. Moderate was the cabinet that was formed in 1849, that of D'Azeglio, who was conscious of the revolutionary flame that Piedmont enclosed in her heart and which must not be allowed to die out but had indeed to be encouraged, and who succeeded in bearing himself with firmness towards the impatient and the foolhardy, or the democrats, as they called themselves. He caused the King to issue to his people the severe proclamation of Moncalieri, he did not hesitate to remind the voters that civilization is sometimes saved by military force and courts of justice, and he obtained a chamber with a conservative and moderate majority, which approved the treaty of peace with Austria. With this chamber he undertook a courageous process of reform, notably in the ecclesiastical field, in which he gradually removed all that remained of clerical privileges and subjection of State to Church, with the result that he rendered the Roman curia hostile, but entered resolutely upon the projected actuation of a free church in a free state.

The work of innovation, which in a few years carried old Piedmont to the rank of a country absolutely modern and truly civilized, and therefore capable of higher destinies, was pursued and introduced into every branch of the administration by Cavour, the man of genius whom Italy had produced from her midst, and who, after a long preparation of political studies and practical life, and after having participated in

the events of 1848-49 as a publicist and journalist, now felt that his hour had arrived and came forward to assume the post of command, not, to tell the truth, "*pensif et pâlissant,*" like the man called by God to be the leader of peoples of whom the poet speaks, but active and gay like one who knows what he is called upon to do and knows that he is able to do it, and flings himself without reserve into the task and the fray. He truly loved liberty, from the depth of his soul, as much as he had always hated absolute power, and he loved it not in an idyllic dream, but with the clear consciousness that liberty meets and always will meet with difficulties and dangers, and always asks for struggle, but a struggle "in which men meet face to face" and in which "a man of powerful intellect does not fear to fight," diversely from what happens in the absolute governments, in which a minister must forever defend his shoulders from little cabals, a thing that is not only irksome but intolerable for a man of honour. Fundamental was the formation, to which he then devoted himself, of an orderly parliamentary activity, with parties that represented needs and collected their forces, and were able if necessary to unite for certain common ends, as he did by forming with Rattazzi and his men of the left the so-called Connubio. The debates in the subalpine chamber and senate, the legislative and political activity that was carried on there, the speeches of Cavour, the parliamentary combinations, the resolutions of the crises, offered examples of a correct and fruitful constitutional life, and served as a model and a school to the rest of Italy, towards whom Piedmont, during the ten years between 1850 and 1860, exercised a function analogous to that which, as we have seen, was performed for continental Europe by France during the fifteen years of the restoration with her charter, her constitutional struggles, her parliamentarians and Doctrinaires.

The monarchy of Savoy, that of the most ancient sovereign

house left in Europe, which had accepted the modern ideals of liberty and nationality; the royal army, admirable for its constant fidelity, discipline, and valour, become national by the national war recently waged; the mediaeval tradition and that of the era of absolute monarchies, which offered their ancient and well-tested strength to the new Italy and developed as it were a youthful vigour—all these seemed to assert in fact that historical continuity the lofty significance of which had been discovered by the minds of the century and of which political sages well knew the serious and beneficent effect, and over which poetry and literature had spun so many of the pleasant fancies of their historical dramas and romances. The land of Piedmont, with the epic memories of its feudal and royal past in its scattered castles and its cities, and its capital, Turin, with the peculiar character of order and regularity given to it by its dukes and kings, now animated by the lively activity of the ministries, the parliament, the newspapers, held up before the eyes of all the confluence of the past with the present, the harmony of the present with the past.

And in Piedmont, who from local importance had risen to represent the entire nation, Italy was present not only ideally but also with many of her sons gathered together there, in an exile that had none of the bitterness of exile because it was no longer undergone in a foreign country but on Italian soil, rich in promise. And there were in great numbers, besides the Lombard refugees, the Southerners, some of them officers who had directed the defence of Venice, mainly men of culture, economists, men of letters, philosophers, critics, historians, hostile to the Bourbons and persecuted by them, audacious spirits that contributed greatly towards the invigoration of Italian studies and Italian culture. After 1848 was renewed in Turin what had happened towards the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century in Milan, in the

Cisalpine Republic, among the refugees from the South, when that gathering of men from the various parts of Italy had produced the first sparks of a national political consciousness. Among those Italians, the neo-Guelph idea of a few years back had been completely forgotten and seemed to belong to a remote past; the republican idea appealed no longer; nor was a great need felt, as had been the case before 1848, to form plans for the future organization of Italy, for truly, in certain cases, "the movement is an end in itself and the end does not matter," that is, the movement itself contains the end, which in its time will choose the practical paths that are open to it and concerning which it is useless to hazard prophecies. So completely did the end lie in the movement itself that when a project was put forward which, it was thought, might obtain the support of Louis Napoleon, and of which Cavour himself did not show any disapproval, for the liberation of Naples from the Bourbons, to be replaced by a King Murat, even from the Southern exiles issued a voice of reprimand, giving warning that the path of salvation and honour was one alone, to proceed in close union with Piedmont and her policy. And the Piedmontese policy was adhered to, about the same time, by the republican and former dictator of Venice, Manin; and the defender of republican Rome in 1849, Giuseppe Garibaldi, who had returned to Italy in 1854, saw and declared that the unity of Italy was not to be reached in any other way.

So that he who keeps his eyes on the development of the moral history of the time cannot but perceive in the activity of Piedmont after 1848 the continuation and at the same time the resumption of revolutionary action in Europe. Nor is this statement irreconcilable with the other that, if we look instead upon the equilibrium and disequilibrium of the great political forces and the effects that arise from them, we must look for the origin of this revival in the Crimean War—a war

that upset existing relations, weakened the conservative union, and by force of reaction raised the hopes of the innovators and supplied them with opportunities of which before they had not dreamed. The Crimean War was, in fact, a political event, dictated by England's interest in preventing Russia from extending her dominion or protectorate over Constantinople and the Balkan peninsula, to the detriment of commerce and with danger to England's sea-power; and, correlatively, by Louis Napoleon's interest to break the union that had been formed against France in 1814 and to restore her to a place in European politics, winning for himself and his dynasty a prestige that was still lacking. Moral idealism was found, if at all, in the opposite camp: in Czar Nicholas, highly religious, as we have said, and a zealous defender of the faith, who considered a disgrace to Christianity what still remained in Europe of Turkish rule, and was sincerely convinced of the justice and sacredness of his mission and of his undertaking. He set out on a sort of crusade; he was overcome by equally sincere indignation when he beheld the Western powers take up arms against him in alliance with the enemy of Christianity, and was wounded in his feelings of chivalry when Austria (who had no choice of any other policy) not only did not give him assistance but showed hostility and addressed him with threatening intimations—that Austria to whom he had, out of fidelity towards the monarchical cause and to keep a promise given many years before, granted such effective aid in 1849 against the Hungarians. He was a moral idealist in his own way to such a degree that when the war went badly, despairing of victory and saddened by what seemed to him desertion and treason, he died or perhaps took his own life in tragic fashion. England obtained her ends; Louis Napoleon acquired that splendour and authority which he desired; and far more than he gained in prestige was lost by Russia, who had been considered invincible, who still en-

joyed the glory won in the campaigns of 1812-14, and who for more than forty years had weighed on all Europe.

The group of the three conservative powers was broken up, for full light was now cast upon the incurable divergence of interests in the Balkans between the Russian and the Austrian empires, a divergence poisoned by ill feeling and turning into hatred, which dominated their history during the following sixty years. Men like Windischgrätz and Radetzky might weep over this breaking-up of their brotherhood at arms; but the thing was irreparable. Turkey, whom Czar Nicholas had been the first to define as the "sick man," showed enough vitality to merit the support and alliance of the civilized powers, and men like Cobden and Bright wearied themselves in vain in their efforts to remind the world what it knew perfectly well concerning the barbarism of that country, but which it wanted not to know or to forget. And it succeeded, just as it had succeeded several times in centuries when the conflict between Christianity and Islam had been more alive in men's consciousness. Even the progressives and democrats wanted to forget and did forget, for they wanted to give the interpretation of a crusade to this war, but in a sense opposed to the Czar's crusade, that of one for the liberty and independence of the nations. That is, they presented as its goal what was only a probable and ulterior event, and therewith they inserted their own goal and meanwhile regarded the war favourably. This explains the circular of Mazzini, in union with Ledru-Rollin and Kossuth, to the republicans of the world, asking them to operate in this sense, and other such manifestations, even that on the part of the communist Barbès, who was still in prison. Palmerston, once more in power, anxious to serve the interests of his country but including among these interests the communication to the other nations of the institutions that were England's pride,

contributed with indefatigable audacity to the strengthening of this interpretation, and to the inflaming of these hopes.

Now, to take up our thread again, where do we once more see the independent, uninterrupted tenacious and guiding activity of a moral conscience, if not precisely in Piedmont? Among the other peoples and states of Europes, she was the first and the readiest to profit, for the national cause, from the new condition produced by the Crimean War.

Piedmont—or rather the kingdom of Sardinia—in 1855 had, through the sure intuition and resolution of Cavour, made an alliance with England and France "against the colossus of the North, the worst enemy of civilization," so said the author of the treaty in the subalpine parliament, adding that this participation in the battles of the East would serve the future destinies of Italy far better than speeches and literature; and, indeed, his expeditionary forces gained glory on the Tchernaya. And although the hopes of a continuation of the war and of a manipulation of the Austrian states by the acquisition of Danubian principalities and the corresponding cession of Lombardy were not fulfilled because after the fall of Sebastopol the business world urged for the conclusion of peace, Cavour, in the Congress of Paris, succeeded in carrying, if not into open discussion and deliberation, at least into an exchange of ideas and declarations all that concerned Italy: the foreign domination in Lombardy-Venetia and the foreign garrisons maintained in the lands of the Pope; what the Bourbon government in Naples and the papal government in Rome really were, qualified by Lord Clarendon as a "disgrace to Europe"; and, in short, the pressing urgency of the Italian problem in relation to the peaceful settlement of Europe. Over the protests of the Austrian minister against such interference in the affairs of independent states and the reservations of the Prussian and Russian ministers, who objected that they had no instructions dealing with such matters, he

VIII. THE UNIFICATION OF GERMAN POWER AND THE CHANGE IN THE PUBLIC SPIRIT OF EUROPE (1870)

THE formation of the German Empire and that of the kingdom of Italy are generally placed side by side as two parallel cases of the general national movement, which with these two new states was supposed to have reached its principal aim and to have rested there. This common judgment is due to the consideration of certain generic and extrinsic resemblances and to the prevalence of the chronological vision of contemporaneity over the truly historical vision, which on the contrary discerns what is peculiar and characteristic in the two events, and leads us to consider them as two distinct forms or ideal epochs, the one closing, the other opening. Certainly, as has been noted, a more intimate affinity between the two peoples and between their ideals was suggested in 1848 and outlined itself in the so-called new era about 1860; and that explains why Italian patriots were stirred by a feeling of brotherhood for what the Germans were demanding and seeking, and why they did not look too closely at the imperialistic tone of the Frankfort Parliament itself. But the affinity was submerged in the process that actually developed from 1862 to 1870 and which, diversely from the Italian, was not a movement for liberty nor for independence from foreign rule, and not even one for compact national unification. On the contrary, it consisted in driving out of the union of Ger-

man states the state that throughout a long and venerable historical tradition had represented the entire Germanic nation before the world, and in regrouping the others under one of them of more recent origin and importance, thus constituting the German Empire. It was, therefore, rightly speaking, the formation of a power, or, which comes to the same thing, the potentiation of powers scattered and feebly joined together thanks to a unitary process of soldering, and the acquisition in this way of the capacity to exert a political efficacy or preponderance in Europe by means of one great state placed at the centre of this union.

The man who laboured at this task, diversely from Cavour, was a purely political genius, caring nothing for ideals of any kind, a "hard realist," "man of reality," "man of will-power," "dominator," "titanic," as his compatriots hailed him; a man prone to scoff and mock like one who always is and always wants to be practical, with a sneer of contempt and scorn on his lips like one who deals with arguments of force: a physiognomy utterly different from that of Cavour, who counted on the irresistible force of truth and liberty, and who, with none of the "titanic" in his make-up, half man of affairs, half gentleman, was none the less a great man. The very devotion that Bismarck professed to monarchical authority, as we see if we look at it closely, did not express a moral ideality but was the affection for his working instrument, for he found in the Prussians' attachment to their King, in their disciplined readiness to fulfil their duties as subjects, in the army that the first Frederick William and old Fritz had prepared, the means that he needed and which would not fail to serve his end. If it had been a moral ideality, it would have manifested itself as it had in the romantic Frederick William IV, or as in certain respects it still manifested itself in William I, as consciousness of divine grace, a religious link with

the historical tradition of the princes and of the German people, invincible revulsion from innovators and democrats and revolutionaries and liberals, a pledge of chivalresque purity that, upon occasion, might even disregard political utility.

Bismarck knew nothing but this utility, although he certainly understood it in no mean fashion—on the contrary, with grandeur and far-sightedness. The name of Austria inspired him with no holy reverence, and he made the use of Austria that suited him according to the times and the events; now he maintained that German affairs should be regulated in constant agreement with her, and now he called her an enemy and treated her as one. He liked the feudal lordlings and they liked him, but he also knew how to displease them and how to be rid of their company. Now he disapproved of liberal institutions and assemblies and wanted to trample on them, even going so far as to call the press and the newspapers "arms of Antichrist," and now he came to terms with them with compromises and half-way measures. He defined any alliance whatsoever with democracy as "shameful," and gave the German people universal suffrage and lent an ear to Lassalle's socialism; and he loathed rebels and revolutionaries, but in no wise objected to conspiring with them, whether they were Hungarian refugees or Garibaldian republicans from Italy, or to instigating insurrections and upheavals against the monarchical principle in Europe. He wanted to make an end of the "dangerous idea of solidarity among all conservative interests"; and legitimate rights and treaties and sworn oaths he deemed old rubbish of paper defences that could offer no resistance to the onslaught of force.

From all this arose also the conflicts between him and his King, who was moved by a sentiment different in origin and quality from his own, often proposed plans of action that did not agree with his, from time to time shrank from committing

certain acts and reluctantly consented to others, and wanted to go further than or not so far as his minister. Even the little consideration in which Bismarck held liberalism and parliamentary discussions and deliberations, and the intellectuals, and savants and men of letters, was due to nothing but his conviction of the tactical and political impotence of such procedure, of such assemblies and such men, principally because of his experience of the Frankfort Parliament, which had so ridiculously (so he said) fooled itself that its deliberations might preserve any efficacy in the face of the orders that the King of Prussia might issue to his subjects. But when by this liberal and revolutionary method a form was developed that created or transformed a state, he changed his judgment and remarked, of the kingdom of Italy for instance, that even revolutions can generate a state, and that the Italian state was there and was a fact. He did not understand how England could have given the Ionian Islands to Greece, and judged that she was an exhausted power "because she gave away instead of taking." For his part, he wanted to make and did make politics and nothing else but politics, just as Von Moltke made war and nothing else but war; and he carried on his politics with sure calculation, bold and cautious, knowing how to give up a lesser for a greater profit, what was momentary for what was lasting, profiting from all opportunities and changing with the changing of conditions, without ever losing sight of his goal, which was, as we have said, the creation of a centre of power. Not that he bore a clear design in his mind, one gradually carried out and completed in 1870, as some fancied, for that is contradicted by his words and by his acts and by historical documents. Such imagination of preconceived designs, however it may strike the fancy of the crowd, does not correspond to reality. For the poet has, to be sure, his inspiration but does not foresee the work it will lead

up to and which comes even to him as something quite new and which he himself can contemplate; and the philosopher has a glimpse of truth and does not know whither it will lead him until he has reached the end of his research and his system is born and he is its first hearer and disciple; and in the same way the politician follows an incoercible tendency and through obstacles and pauses and deviations and concessions attains to the political achievement that incorporates this tendency.

The intimate impulse that Bismarck obeyed had as its instrument the force, as we have said, of the Prussian state of the Hohenzollerns, and as its immediate material the Austrian Empire, which he had to take apart and put together again in a different way, and France, against whom he had to defend his own political creation and, during the struggle, to augment and strengthen it. When he rose to power in 1862, he had for many years gone back to Frederick II's anti-Austrian line of politics, which the French Revolution, Napoleon, and the Restoration had interrupted. He saw clearly that the aggrandizement and rounding out of the Prussian state in Germany, and with it the new condition of the minor states and the establishment of a hegemony, could not be obtained and settled without Austria's resigning all interference in German affairs, and so, since such a renunciation was not in the field of possibilities, without a defeat of Austria. And he immediately expressed this conviction of his to the Austrian ambassador and when the latter objected, gave him the first hint of his idea that Austria would do best to transfer her centre of gravity to the East. Soon after he spoke of "blood and iron," by which alone, and not with parliaments, the problem of German unity would be solved. He therefore refused to let his King take part in the assembly, summoned by Austria, of German princes in Frankfort, and answered their plans with another, which also never became more than

a plan, of a re-formation of the federal council with Prussia on a footing of absolute equality with Austria—the right to declare a federal war exclusively in the hands of these two powers—and with a parliament by direct popular election.

With such a state of parity, with Austria at his side, and excluding the military contingents of the German Confederation, he conducted the war of 1864 against Denmark, who, in defiance of the London Protocol of 1852, had annexed Schleswig. But even while he was waging the war and winning it with Austria as an ally, and occupying the two duchies in common, he meant to win them for Prussia in one way or another; and the final outcome of a long series of negotiations, provisional compromises, postponements, concealed provocations, menaces, was—amid the almost general opposition that Bismarck encountered in Prussia and even among the members of the royal family—the war of 1866. In this war Prussia was left quite alone in Germany, for the majority of the other states and the most important of them took sides with Austria. The German population was hostile to Prussianism because of affection for their old native dynasties and for their independent states, because of suspicion of Prussian tyranny, and also in part because of the repugnance of Catholics for the hegemony of a Protestant state and dynasty. But Bismarck had obtained, on the other hand, the alliance of that liberal kingdom of Italy which, as he had said, it would in the interests of Prussia have been necessary to invent if it had not already existed.

Austria beaten, he effectuated the North German Confederation with a parliament elected according to his wishes, and formed alliances with the South German states; but the attitude of France during this war, her threat of military intervention, the obstacles that she placed in the way of the South German states' entering the Confederation, the compensations

in the way of Rhenish territories and military assistance for the annexation of Belgium that she asked for in return for further unification and for a Franco-German alliance, the excitement of French public opinion, which considered the victory of Sadowa as a French defeat, made him foresee a war with France as inevitable, and made him even consider it as desirable because of the position that it would confer on the new Germany in Europe. So that while he was making his military preparations, he displayed consummate ability in isolating the enemy politically. In Italy he aroused the Garibaldian expedition against papal Rome which ended in Mentana, setting Italian feeling against France, thereby rendering impossible a triple alliance between her, Italy, and Austria. As to the last, he entrusted her to the hostile vigilance of Russia, with whose chancellor Gorchakov he cultivated a close understanding, which permitted Russia to obtain the opening-up of the Black Sea, forbidden by the Peace of Paris. The war of 1870, which was an almost uninterrupted series of military triumphs, effected the union of the North German Confederation with the South German states under the new title, covered with glory because of its mediaeval memories, but not understood by Bismarck in its mediaeval sense, of Empire.

Thus rose German power and, in the place of the French, German leadership on the European continent; and since the German Empire was a formation of power that aimed at leadership, Bismarck did not think it was worth while to show any consideration for French feelings, which, as he explained to the cabinets of Europe during the course of the war, would always, in any case, be full of hatred and plans for revenge. And so, not satisfied with having obtained a free hand for the arrangement of German affairs without any further menaces and chicanery on the part of the French, not satisfied with a

IX. THE LIBERAL AGE (1871-1914)

DURING the period that followed 1870 Europe beheld no more revivals of old absolute monarchies or explosions of new Caesarisms. There were not many attempts at such things and not even many who dreamed of them, and a few threatening clouds that appeared were scattered, leaving the skies clearer than before.

The country that, in common opinion and judged by the facts of its last eighty years of history, was held to be that of extreme happenings and incapable of the orderly life of liberty, France, established and confirmed her republic, born from military disasters, with firm resolution and supreme shrewdness. From these eighty years, during which she had experienced the most varying and opposed régimes and had vainly sought for the point of equilibrium, France derived not the final perdition that many feared and that her enemies hoped, but the experience that placed her on the right path, upon which she entered as though by force of events—another sign that it was the right path. The Third Republic, the "conservative" republic or the republic "without republicans," as Thiers (with the authority of his long and personal experience) defined it, that is, without that kind of republicans of 1848 who had led to the ruin of the Second, entered upon the scene with all the appearance of being temporary, but in

fact proved that it was lasting and not to be replaced by any other form. During its first period, it had to overcome the insurrection of the Commune of Paris, a convulsive movement of men who were conquered but armed and not resigned, in which absurd federalistic ideas rose again to the surface, as well as tendencies towards a social republic that were in travail. Then it had to avoid the monarchical restoration, which would have brought back unstable and intolerable conditions and the repetition of evils already overcome. France was saved from this danger by the legitimist pretender, the Comte de Chambord, who through his obstinacy in demanding as a condition for his return to the throne of his fathers the white banner of the Bourbons, made it quite clear what such a return would have implied, and helped to measure the abyss that had opened between the past and the present.

But the Republic had also to overcome the other danger of becoming too conservative and rigid because of the fear of the "radicals," as they were called, and because of the overhanging images of 1793, 1848, and 1871, and therefore constitutional and not parliamentary—to conquer it with monarchical authority conferred on its president and with power actually in the hands of the military and the clericals. That is how MacMahon tried more than once to establish it during his presidency and with the various cabinets that he called into the fray, until he himself gave way and left a free course to what could not be avoided, and at last resigned (1879). Great was the disappointment of all those who had hoped for a *coup d'état* from him; whereas the new president, Grévy, declared in his first message that he was "sincerely obedient to the great parliamentary law" and in order to prove that there was no longer any cause to fear radicalism or revolutions, transferred the parliament from Versailles back to Paris.

Twice again the danger of, or the tendency to, a reac-

tionary *coup d'état* was renewed in France, and both times it was frustrated. The first was between 1886 and 1889, with Boulanger, the general who was acclaimed by the masses, who looked to his success for the "*revanche*" against Germany and for that redemption from political and all other evils that the crowd is always hoping for. In the uncertainty of his concepts and plans, it would seem that Boulanger more or less consciously, and pushed rather than pushing, tended to something not unlike the Second Empire; and the old philosopher and politician, Jules Simon, who remembered the disgrace of that Second Empire, was quick to remind the forgetful people of France in a book that he called *Souviens-toi du Deux Décembre* (1889). Although in 1888 Boulanger obtained a clamorous electoral success and in January of the following year was elected in Paris, the statesmen of France flung their disdain and contempt in his face, terming him a "music-hall Saint-Arnaud" (the general of the Second of December) and a "Bonaparte without the Italian campaign." He himself lacked the spirit to march with his fanatics against the seat of government, so that he ended by undergoing trials and convictions and was obliged to seek refuge in Belgium, where he took his own life. The second time was ten years later, in the long struggle over the case of Captain Dreyfus and the justice or injustice of his condemnation. This struggle, under the appearance of a juridical or moral question, included a new offensive and defensive of republican institutions. For the ranks of the anti-Dreyfusards and anti-Semites were strengthened, and their political party was supported, not only by Boulanger's old adherents, but also by reactionaries, royalists, and great numbers of priests and monks and all the clericals, who by cheering the army thought they could excite it against the Republic. But they were nobly opposed by the union of all the republican and socialist forces; and when Dreyfus had been freed from imprisonment and his

innocence had been recognized by law, the reactionary movement was repressed and the liberal order issued from the fight not only intact but strengthened and combative, as could be seen from the work to which the victorious party now set their hands and which was not so much a labour of revenge for the past as of wise precaution for the future.

In rival Germany, the abolition or restriction of liberty was borne in mind by the very creator of the empire, Bismarck, who did not regard as definitive the constitution that he had given her with a national parliament and universal suffrage. These were political expedients to which he had resorted and not things in sympathy with his ideal, which was still monarchical absolutism, with the addition of his own omnipotence as chancellor. At every obstacle or hindrance or annoyance that he encountered in the parliament, his mind ran, as to its immediate remedy, to the extreme measure of a *coup d'état:* this can be seen in his letters, especially in those written between 1878 and 1882, in which he speaks of the Germans who are unable to handle the "Nuremberg toy" that has been given to them and are spoiling it, and in which he says of the German constitution that the moment will come when it will be necessary to apply the phrase uttered by Schwarzenberg at Olmütz concerning the Austrian constitution of 1849, that it was "an institution that had not shown up well." He is forever insisting that the one thing in Germany that is substantial and able to stand firm is the German princes, and that it will eventually be they who must one day decide whether it is not better to make an end once and for all and to return to the ancient federal diet, preserving the customs and the military union, but getting rid of the parliament.

During the last years of his chancellorship, he placed his hopes in the youth who was to become William II, who, diversely from his father, Prince Frederick, manifested an ex-

treme intolerance of parliamentary régimes, like a true "soldier of the Guards," the "*rocher de bronze*" of which Germany stood in need. But when this youth, the symbol of such great hopes, came to the throne, and when in 1890 Bismarck, once more irritated with the parliament, to his mind not sufficiently docile, set forth his ideas to the Emperor, namely, to present new demands to this assembly for army expenditures and a harsher law against the socialists, and, upon their easily foreseen refusal, to dissolve it two or three times, to deprive the socialists of electoral rights by abolishing the secret ballot, and in the last resort to turn to the cannon—he was not listened to by the new sovereign, who was at the time striving for the favour of the parliament and the people. And so Bismarck fell after thirty years of uninterrupted government. He had no party, no current of opinion, to support him; and this plan of his was the divagation of a solitary, capable of great things in diplomacy and war but not in the interpretation of the human soul and of the demands that it expresses according to the difference of the times. And when, in his retirement, hearing the words and studying the acts and gestures of the second William, he changed his opinion and his concept and took to saying and repeating that the path of salvation lay in "strengthening the efficacy of the parliament," that it was necessary that the parliament should "criticize, verify, admonish, and in certain cases guide the government," that in the past there had been "too much dictatorship" and too much repression of the national representation—with these belated reflections he showed what his robust mind had been lacking in and what had made him, the founder of the state, unadapted to the rôle of educator of peoples, and, first of all, of his own people, of which in this respect he was rather an un-educator.

For indeed, even if he did not get so far as to carry out his coup against universal suffrage and the parliament, he

did succeed in keeping Germany in the constitutional phase, preventing her from passing into the parliamentary one. The liberal party, which during the first years of his ministry had got on its hind legs and attempted to withstand his domination, consented after the war of 1866 to support his foreign policy for national ends, hoping to obtain in return a different direction in his home policy. This support of the national liberals, who formed the strongest part of the parliament, continued after 1870, still encouraged by this hope, and allowed him to obtain the seven years' military service, to accomplish financial reform, and to combat the Catholic centre. Even Crown Prince Frederick did not hide his inclination towards the parliamentary method with ministerial responsibility, and judged that the present constitution of the Empire was "an artificially produced chaos." But when Bismarck turned to protective tariffs, and for these and for the repression of socialism counted on the support of the conservatives and made friends once more with the centre, his former allies were no longer of any use to him and stood in his way. He would not hear of the condition advanced by them for further collaboration, which was the entry into the Prussian cabinet of some of the liberal right and others of the left, or progressives, for he was irrevocably resolved not to take a step that might lead to party cabinets.

This would have been, moreover, impossible for him, since the old Prussia had not been merged in a liberal Germany, but on the contrary a more or less liberal Germany had been aggregated to Prussia, who preserved intact the character she had received in the reaction after 1848 of a monarchy that had merely granted a few constitutional concessions and of a parliament elected by the class system. This was the opposite process to what had happened in Italy, where a liberal Piedmont annexed an Italy that turned liberal and was fused with her. The base of the German Empire always remained

Prussia, and as late as 1898 one of Bismarck's successors, Chancellor von Hohenlohe, wrote in his diary that when he sat among the "Prussian Excellencies" he clearly discerned the contrast between South German liberalism and the feudalism of North Germany. The former was incapable of holding its own with the latter, "too numerous, too powerful, and having on its side the King, the army, and also the Catholic centre." In vain, and only by way of rhetorical vagueness, did some speak emotionally of the idyllic marriage or the friendly disagreement between the "two souls" of the Empire, that of Prussia and that of Germany, that of Potsdam and that of Weimar, whereas in fact only one soul was supreme, that of Prussia and Potsdam; and the statements of Bismarck, during the first years of the empire, that it was necessary not to "Prussianize" Germany but to "Germanize" Prussia, were simply fleeting fancies or expedients of the moment.

The detachment of the liberals from Bismarck, after the passage of the special laws against the socialists, marked the decadence of the party, which split into various fractions and was considerably reduced as to the number of its deputies. It did not, moreover, make up for its lack of numerical strength in the country by the vigour, the depth, the firmness, of its liberal faith. For not a few of its components were, rather than liberals in politics, free-traders, and expressed the needs of the German economy of their day; others among their more prominent representatives continued to assign the primacy to the state (that is, to one of the two terms of a single relation) and to conceive liberty in the form of rights granted or recognized by the state, and they exorcised parliamentarism as the Evil One, limiting the right of the chamber to administrative criticism and to opposition. Modest as the German parliament was in its activity, none the less Treitschke, one of the pre-1870 liberals who had gradually