

**THE
IDEOLOGICAL
WEAPONS
OF DEATH**

*A Theological Critique
of Capitalism*

Franz J. Hinkelammert
Foreword by Cornel West

FRANZ J. HINKELAMMERT

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of Capitalism*

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Contents

Foreword by Cornel West	v
Preface	viii
Introduction by Pablo Richard and Raul Vidales	xi
Overall Structure of the Work	xii
A Question Raised by History	xiv
Fetishism	xv
The Ethics of Capitalism	xx
The Realm of Freedom	xx
PART ONE	
THE VISIBILITY OF THE INVISIBLE AND THE INVISIBILITY OF THE VISIBLE: MARX'S ANALYSIS OF FETISHISM	
	1
Chapter 1	
From Commodities to Money to Capitalism	
	5
The Enchanted World of Commodities—Commodity Fetishism	5
Money, the Beast, and Saint John: The Sign on the Forehead— Money Fetishism	16
The Sorcery of Creation from Nothing: Value as a Subject— Capital Fetishism	27
Chapter 2	
The Thralldom of Capital and the Realm of Freedom	
	43
The Ethics of Capital Accumulation	43
The Realm of Freedom	52
Chapter 3	
The Harsh Face of Destiny: Fetishism in Other Traditions of Social Science	
	62
The Old Gods Ascend from Their Graves: Max Weber's New Polytheism	62
Milton Friedman's Happy Fetishism	74
Chapter 4	
The Economic Creed of the Trilateral Commission	
	98
Interdependence and the International Division of Labor	99
The New Democracy	116

PART TWO	
THE REALM OF LIFE AND THE REALM OF DEATH: LIFE AND DEATH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT	
	125
Chapter 5	
Domination and Love of Neighbor	127
The Resurrection of the Body	127
Pauline Bodiliness	129
Death, Law, Sin, Faith	133
The King Commands Because He Commands: Authority and Class Structure	144
PART THREE	
THE BODILY CONNECTION BETWEEN HUMAN BEINGS: LIFE AND DEATH IN MODERN CATHOLIC THOUGHT	
	153
Chapter 6	
Private Property and Modern Catholic Social Teaching	157
The Right of the Poor and the Right to the Use of the Goods of the Earth	157
Property Hypostasized in the Natural Right to Private Property: The Right to Life in Catholic Social Teaching	159
The Division of Labor and the Property System	171
Law, Morality, and the Human Subject	178
Chapter 7	
The Good News of Crucifixion and Death: Antiutopia in the Christian Understanding of Society	183
Three Antiutopian Inversions	184
The Human Subject Crucified	190
Domination and Crucifixion	197
Crucifixion of the Crucifiers	204
Denunciation of the Antichrist: Lucifer Returns	217
Chapter 8	
Theology Aimed at Life: Liberation Theology	226
Utopia and the Biblical God	226
Palpable Reality and Symbolic Reality: Reality Turned Upside-down	238
How Christianity Ennobles Real Life: Absolutized Values versus Historical Materialism	268
Notes	275
Works Quoted	277
Indexes	279
Index of Topics	279
Index of Names	281

Foreword

Liberation theology at its best is a worldly theology—a theology that not only opens our eyes to the social misery of the world but also teaches us to understand it better and to transform it. Academic theology in the First World, true to its priestly role, remains preoccupied with doctrinal precision and epistemological pretension. It either refuses to get its hands dirty with the ugly and messy affairs of contemporary politics or pontificates at a comfortable distance about the shortcomings of theoretical formulations and practical proposals of liberation theologians. Yet for those Christians deeply enmeshed in and united with poor peoples' struggles, theology is first and foremost concerned with urgent issues of life and death, especially the circumstances that dictate who lives and who dies.

Franz Hinkelammert's *The Ideological Weapons of Death* marks a new point of departure for liberation theology. First, it is the first product of a unique institutional setting—the renowned Departamento Ecu­ménico de Investigaciones (DEI) in San José, Costa Rica—that is intentionally interdisciplinary and explicitly political. Shunning the narrow confines of the intellectual division of labor in academic institutions, DEI rejects the compartmentalized disciplines of our bureaucratized seminaries and divinity schools. Instead DEI promotes and encourages theological reflection that traverses the fields of political economy, biblical studies, social theory, church history, and social ethics. In this way, DEI reveals the intellectual impoverishment of academic theologies that enact ostrichlike exercises in highly specialized sand—with little view to the pressing problems confronting ordinary people in our present period of crisis.

Second, Hinkelammert's book is significant in that it tries to ground liberation theology itself in a more detailed social-analytical viewpoint and a more developed biblical perspective. For too long liberation theologians have simply invoked Marxist theory without a serious examination of Marx's own most fecund analysis of capitalist society, namely, his analysis of fetishism. As Georg Lukács noted in his influential book *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), the Marxist analysis of fetishism in *Capital* brings to light the hidden and concealed effects of commodity relations in the everyday lives of people in capitalist societies. These effects result from the power-laden character and class-ridden structure of capitalist societies that make relations between people appear as relations between things. This deceptive appearance presents capitalist realities as natural and eternal. A Marxist analysis of this veil of appearance

discloses these realities to be transient historical products and results of provisional social struggles.

Hinkelammert's book takes as its point of analytical departure the three central stages of Marx's analysis of fetishism: commodity fetishism, money fetishism, and capital fetishism. The magical power people ascribe to commodities produced, money acquired, and capital expanded has idolatrous status in capitalist societies, a status not only rarely questioned, but, more importantly, hardly analyzed and understood by Christians. Too often Christians merely condemn seductive materialism or pervasive hedonism with little or no grasp of the complex relations of the conditions under which commodities are produced, the ways in which money is acquired, and the means by which capital is expanded. Positing these complex relations as objects of theological reflection is unheard of in contemporary First World theology. Yet, if theologians are to come to terms with life-and-death issues of our time, there is no escape from reflecting upon and gaining an understanding of these complex relations.

Such a monumental step requires a grounding in the history of economic thought and contemporary social theory. In this regard, working knowledge of the classical economic theories of Adam Smith and David Ricardo, the neo-classical economic formulations of Alfred Marshall and Stanley Jevons, the intricate debates between followers of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim in social theory and the present-day viewpoints of Milton Friedman, Paul Samuelson, and Ernst Mandel become requisite for serious theological engagement with the burning life-and-death issues of our day. Needless to say, the immediate intellectual risk is a debilitating dilettantism that obfuscates rather than illuminates. Yet to refuse the risk is to settle for an arid academicism that values professional status and career ambitions at the expense of trying to lay bare the richness of the Christian gospel for our time. Therefore Hinkelammert's text may seem strange to First World Christians—with his analyses of the links between Milton Friedman's thought and the economic policies of the Chilean dictator Pinochet, or his critique of the Trilateral Commission's recommendations for the Third World. In fact, many First World academic theologians may balk at such exercises that seem to fall outside tamer theological investigations. Yet it should be apparent after reading Hinkelammert's text that he simply is attempting to come to terms with the array of ideological weapons of death deployed against the wretched of the earth, and the books and blueprints of academic and political elites are not spared.

His critiques also apply to contemporary biblical scholarship in the First World. This culturally homogeneous guild of highly trained yet narrowly socialized academicians have, in many ways, yet to enter the postmodern age of epistemological disarray, cultural upheaval, and ideological contestation. This guild remains the last bastion of First World male hegemony over the methods and results of a branch of theological investigation. Most biblical scholars remain uncritically and unjustifiably wedded to sophisticated models of research, models that emerged from problematics of a bygone period. Hinkelammert boldly contests the complacency of this guild by putting for-

ward a highly controversial and provocative reading of Pauline conceptions of life and death in light of his own analysis of fetishism. Whatever one's views are on the complexity of Pauline theology, this perspective cannot but broaden the conversation in New Testament studies and thereby deepen our readings of Paul's letters.

Lastly, Hinkelammert examines the implications of his views for modern Catholic thought. Recent pastoral letters from the Catholic and Methodist Churches in the United States have alerted us to the crucial role of denominational pronouncements on social and political issues. These pronouncements cannot be understood fully without some knowledge of the history of the churches' social teachings. This is especially so in regard to the issue of private property, a cornerstone, often uncritically examined, of many of these teachings. As Hinkelammert notes, the aim is not simply to substitute socialist notions of property for earlier conceptions of private property, but rather to interrogate the very act of hypostasizing property as such. Historical questions concerning how private property became an unquestioned presupposition of Christian social ethics, the relation of churches to social systems based on slave and wage labor, and theoretical issues about the relation of conceptions of personhood to private property and the links between slaves and women to rights of property possession loom large here.

Hinkelammert's book provides neither full-fledged solutions nor panaceas to the broad range of issues it raises. Rather it is a ground-breaking work-in-progress that alerts us to contemporary forms of captivity to which most First World theologies are bound. Like the first wave of liberation theologies from Latin America, Asia, Africa, and First World women and minorities (especially Afro-Americans), his book opens new discursive space in our theological work. The seriousness with which Hinkelammert takes Marxist analyses of fetishism, biblical studies, modern Catholic social ethics, and the current shortcomings of liberation theologies indeed may initiate a second wave—I hope a tidal wave—that fundamentally transforms how we do theology and how we act out our precious Christian faith.

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Preface

The experience of political and ideological struggles in Latin America since the mid-1960s has convinced me that our perceptions of economic and social reality, both those we have and those we might have, are strongly predetermined by the theoretical categories of the framework we use for interpreting that reality. Social reality is not reality pure and simple, but rather a reality perceived from a given viewpoint. We can perceive only the reality that becomes apparent to us with the theoretical categories we use. It is within this framework that phenomena come to have some meaning.

This observation is valid not only for socio-economic phenomena in the strict sense but for all social phenomena. We perceive them—they have meaning—within, and on the basis of, a theoretical categorical framework, and only within this framework can we act upon them. Just as within a given property system only certain political aims may be achieved and not others, so the theoretical framework we use to interpret reality allows us to perceive some phenomena and not others—and similarly, to conceive of certain goals for human activity and not others.

It follows that the categorial framework within which we interpret the world and within which we perceive the possible goals of human activity is present with social phenomena themselves and may be deduced from them. A given property system cannot exist without establishing in the human mind a theoretical categorial framework that makes the reality of such a property system seem to be in fact the only reality possible and humanly acceptable. This categorial framework can be found not only in the property system itself but also in the ideological mechanisms with which persons refer to that property system and the social reality that goes along with it. Therefore this same theoretical categorial framework will also be found in the religious mechanisms of society. A religion can relate to a given property system only if it structures its images and mysteries around the meaning that the categorial framework gives to social phenomena.

The analysis that follows will concentrate on this question of the theoretical categorial framework: the predetermination of the perception of reality by this categorial framework, and the determination of religious images and mysteries on the basis of this framework. The point is not that a person who uses such a categorial framework does so consciously. Normally this is not the case; persons think they arrive at their conclusions by a pure and objective perception of social phenomena. Moreover the manipulation of collective

awareness and its ideological indoctrination aim precisely at hiding as far as possible the categories with which society is interpreted. My analysis will therefore have to make an effort in the opposite direction. It will have to show how differing stances toward social reality come forth already determined by categorial frameworks.

The more that persons are unconscious of their categorial framework, the more "hypocritical" and utterly contradictory are the stances they assume toward social reality. On the level of intention they defend political goals that are totally out of the question on the level of their categorial framework. For this reason my verdict on such stances in the political realm must sometimes be quite harsh. Nevertheless, such harsh verdicts are not aimed at the intentions of others—judging intentions is no business of mine—but at the contradictions in the expression of their intentions, which are utterly opposed to the categorial framework within which they are expressed.

My analysis will take as its starting point Marx's critique of fetishism. This critique is the most thorough and explicit theory on the functioning of the categorial frameworks in question. From that point I shall go on to analyze other currents in social science, particularly those of Max Weber and Milton Friedman. They are the key writers for understanding the new ideologies that have appeared in Latin America since the mid-1960s. After making this analysis, I shall go on to interpret the categorial framework in Christian tradition. This framework includes an analysis of the Christian message itself and of some positions that can be found today in Latin American Catholicism. I want to show how close is the connection between (1) the property system in effect, (2) the categorial framework in use, and (3) the de facto configuration of religious images and mysteries. As I see it, the ideological conflicts of today are incomprehensible without an analysis of the close connection among these three elements. And unless these phenomena are understood, it will be impossible to face up to and win these conflicts. Theoretical thinking should aim not only at praxis but at victory through praxis.

To complete this categorial framework, there would have to be a historical analysis much more complete than what has been possible in this book. The key periods in the development of Christianity up to the present would have to be evaluated. Nevertheless, I can do no more than offer some perspectives that I consider somewhat more than tentative. A future work would have to go much deeper in this regard.

The present book is intended as the first volume in a series of publications in preparation at DEI (Departamento Ecu­ménico de Investigaciones) in San José, Costa Rica. This first volume is devoted to the analysis of the role of categorial frameworks in human activity. Subsequent projected volumes will be devoted more specifically to the concrete problems of Latin America. But this should not be understood simply in terms of abstract and concrete analysis. For the working group at DEI this book presents reflection that is necessary in order to lead to a more adequate and thorough concrete analysis.

The works to come will show whether this effect has in fact been fruitful. Without this abstract analysis, concrete analysis is impossible; the purpose of abstract analysis is to permit a broader and reinvigorated concrete analysis.

This book would have been impossible without the support of DEI and the many discussions on its main theses during the first half of 1976. The DEI working group provided continual help in seeking references. I especially want to mention the discussions on the concept of the transcendent dimension as existing within real life; those discussions sharpened this concept, which is a key to the whole development of my argumentation.

Finally I want to thank CSUCA (Superior Council of Central American Universities, headquartered in San José, Costa Rica) for the great understanding and support it offered by allowing me enough free time to devote myself to writing this book.

Introduction

This book is both important and difficult. In this Introduction we should like to propose an overall vision of the work, not simply to offer a summary, but to open it up for extensive, fruitful discussion.

We believe this book will have a long-range effect. It is not written in response to a particular moment and its relevance will not be short-lived. It is a book with which we shall be working for many years, not simply commenting on it, but developing and debating its contents and probably going beyond it.

Many will wonder whether this is a book of theology or of political economy. We clearly consider it to be a book of theology—but a theology that uses economics as its form of scientific rationality. Its author holds a doctorate in economics but he also engages in theology. One of the significant contributions of the book is this encounter between political economy and theology. It is now common for theologians to use sociological analysis as a scientific mediation, but it is quite original, almost unique, to see an economist doing theology or a theologian employing the scientific mediation of economics. This is a book of theology, but it assumes that the reader knows some elements of political economy. In part this Introduction is meant to supply some such elements, which are normally not found in those who engage in theology or read it or are interested in it.

A theologian once explained his method this way: “When I am doing theology I feel suspicions arise in me and I can check them only by going to sociology.” In a way this book employs the opposite kind of method: the author works at political economy, and in his reflections on economics, there arise in him suspicions that he can check only by going to theology. This book poses and answers theological problems starting with economic analysis. Therefore, although it deals with theology, it should also be of great interest to political economists and in fact it expressly seeks dialogue with them.

It has often been said that liberation theology is a “second act.” The “knowledge of faith” as it is lived and reflected on within the practice of liberation is “first-act theology.” Liberation theology, although it is a part of this practice, has a theoretical dimension, which is relatively autonomous and has its own weight and specific activity. When theology enters into dialogue with other sciences and acquires a greater degree of specialization and theoretical rigor, we could speak of “third-act theology.” This does not mean

that theology stands further away from the political practice of liberation, but that its insertion in such practice is rather more organic than immediate.

It is a theology that always has its starting point in practice and is not a response to purely intellectual concern but to the demands of this practice. But this theology, as “third act,” though always remaining liberation theology, is linked to other sciences—history, linguistics, sociology, economics. This does not mean that theology becomes academic or the private property of a few enlightened intellectuals. Theology remains organically linked to practice and to the grass roots, but it now has to respond to greater theoretical demands. There is a deepening in theory within the practice of liberation, wherein believers seek to live, communicate, express, celebrate, and reflect on their faith, hope, and love. This book would clearly find its place in this “third-act” theology, which means that it demands of the reader a greater constancy and discipline in theoretico-militant commitment, and a greater intensity in the understanding of faith, the constancy of hope, and the seriousness of love.

Overall Structure of the Work

The book is divided into three main parts: the first deals with the analysis of fetishism in Marx and other currents in social science; the second deals with life and death in the New Testament; the third part takes up the same matter (life and death) but as found in contemporary Catholic thinking: in modern Catholic social doctrine, in antiutopian thinking, and in liberation theology.

A superficial reading will not easily discover the connection between the first part and the other two. Ostensibly the first part is pure political economy and the other two are pure theology. Readers interested in theology could feel tempted to skip the first part, which deals with fetishism. From a *pedagogical* viewpoint it might be a good idea to penetrate into the first part of the book only after assimilating the other two. But from a *logical* viewpoint the book should be studied in its given order.

In order to facilitate a grasp of the overall structure of the book we shall here try to summarize in broad strokes how it unfolds, and how each of its parts is inherently related to the others. We shall do this as much as possible in the author’s own words, but without referring to particular texts.

The central theme of the book is that of *life*. Basically it is proposing a *Theology of Life*. This option for life that inspires and gives content to the whole book is in radical opposition to a system of death. What it affirms is life in its struggle against the ideological weapons of death. This frontal confrontation of death and life is what gives the book its basic inner structure. Nevertheless this confrontation takes on its full meaning only when it becomes clear that what is at stake is the life or death of the human being considered as a *body* spiritually filled with life. *Bodiliness* is thus a key

concept in this theology of life. It is not simply the bodiliness of the individual but the bodiliness of the subject in community. The community always has a bodily basis and dimension. This is the bodily connection between human beings themselves and between human beings and nature. Of necessity every relationship among human beings has a bodily, material basis. It is there that the whole ethical and spiritual dimension of the human being is played out in terms of death or life, death or resurrection.

The first part of the book, which is the most difficult but gives structure to the rest, is devoted to the analysis of fetishism. The author makes a distinction between the *material institutions* that organize modern society and the *spirit* of these institutions. Political economy sketches the anatomy of these institutions and the theory of fetishism analyzes the *spirituality* institutionalized in modern society. The fetish is the spirit of these institutions. The analysis of fetishism deals not with these institutions but with the spirit with which these institutions are perceived and experienced. This spirit is as important as the institutions. Those who violate this spirit may observe all the laws and institutions of the system but will nevertheless be condemned to death by it. On the other hand, those who submit to this spirit can go on living even though breaking all laws and destroying all institutions.

The fetish, the spirit of institutions, does not arise out of nothing, nor does it fall from heaven, but it exists in linkage to a particular form of social organization. The author speaks of the social division of labor and the coordination of the social division of labor. There is thus a particular kind of coordination of the bodily connection among human beings wherein the social relationships among them appear as material relationships—that is, as natural and necessary rules. Contrariwise, the material relationship between things is experienced as a social relationship between living subjects. Human beings are transformed into things and things into animate subjects. It is no longer the human person who has decisive power; commodities, money, and capital, transformed into social subjects, have the power of decision over the life and death of all human beings. Objects take on life and subjectivity, which is really the life and subjectivity of human beings projected onto objects. Capital lives as the lord of history to the extent that it is able to absorb into itself the life of the human being. It is capital that gives bodily existence to the fetish. Therefore the spirit of life or death in a society cannot be analyzed as a problem of individual whims or contingent events, depending on the good or bad will of individual persons; it is rather the problem of a particular *spirituality* institutionalized in a particular form of *material organization* of the relationships among human beings. Further on we will give an introduction to the theory of fetishism; at this point it is enough to note the connection between this first part and what is said about life and death in Christian thought in the subsequent parts of the book. From this point on we recognize that the orientation of humankind toward *death* or toward *life* is a *spiritual* problem, linked to the *material* organization of the bodily connection among human beings.

A Question Raised by History

The decade of the 1970s was one of the bloodiest in Latin American history. Broad popular movements arising all over Latin America confronted repressive governments. Paradoxically those governments repeatedly claimed for themselves a "religious" or "Christian" identity. How can this historical paradox be understood: governments calling themselves Christian massacre an exploited people, the great majority of whom are Christian? What is most puzzling is that the "flagrant crimes" of the people are the demand for employment, bread, health care, shelter, education—precisely the basic content of Christian tradition, closely associated with basic human needs. It is even more striking that during this period the capitalist system, especially as represented by North American leaders, has presented a religious face more than ever before.

Is this a clumsy manipulation of religion or a well-organized and well-planned utilization of religious elements in the service of the interests of the capitalist system?

Without meaning to deny completely these possibilities, we have been forced to recognize that the answer to this question, which arises from within the processes of history, would be found only in areas of greater complexity and depth.

The suspicion was that if the capitalist system appears to be enveloped in a "religious aura," it is precisely because of its ability to produce and reproduce not only surplus value and social classes, but also its own symbolic universe, its own spirituality, its own religion.

This religion, and none other, is what becomes the religion of states, the official religion, with its own mysteries and virtues, its own ethics, its own rewards and punishments. But this process does not become obvious to us simply by taking a look at it; a special effort to unmask it is required, an effort that demands patience but is fascinating. This is just what the "theory of fetishism" in political economy undertakes.

What matters most for the theory of fetishism is that the analysis of institutions not be of their parts (a school, a business, etc.) but of the whole (such as the social division of labor, the property system)—not, however, in terms of their visible elements but insofar as they are totalities that are expressed in global concepts and as such are invisible. Nevertheless they are perceived: persons have an *experience* of them and they "see" them. But it is precisely as fetishes that they see them.

In every particular case and for each person there will be many conditioning factors. But there is one conditioning factor that is imposed on everyone: the social division of labor. Quite apart from human will, this is a conditioning element that has decisive power over the life and death of human beings. The interrelationships it establishes are a matter of mutual necessity, not simply a matter of dividing up activities. It is the social division of labor that

has the power to decide whether or not the human being will be enabled to live within the overall institutional framework. Hence it is that in undertaking an overall analysis of institutions it is essential to take into consideration the social division of labor.

The theory of fetishism accordingly takes as its starting point an analysis of the social division of labor and of the criteria by which the many human activities necessary for producing what is needed for the survival of all are coordinated. The theory of fetishism is directly aimed at answering the question: How is the social division of labor organized and coordinated, and how do institutions come into play within this organization and coordination? In order to answer this question one must know about the possibilities for the life and death of human beings, and hence for the unrestrained exercise of their freedom.

The theory of fetishism is not concerned with just any system of the social division of labor but rather with the kind that tends to hide, to make invisible, the effect of the division of labor on the life and death of human beings. This is the sphere of commodity relationships.

Commodity relationships in fact make it seem as though the relationships between human beings and the effects of the division of labor on human life were two totally independent and unconnected issues. Moreover, in contrast to other social factors, there is something specifically different about the invisibility of commodity relationships: the invisibility of their results in the lives of human beings.

The theory of fetishism unmask, unveils, uncovers this invisibility and makes it visible, conscious, obvious. The theory of fetishism is aimed at the way commodity relationships are "seen," "experienced," "lived."

By way of this analysis it is possible to discover that once commodity relationships have been developed, commodities become commodity-subjects—that is, they acquire the qualities of persons; they receive "life." If human beings do not become aware that this apparent life enjoyed by commodities is nothing but their own human life projected onto them, they will lose the unrestrained exercise of their freedom, and ultimately their very life.

Here we have arrived at a key point: the link between real life and the religious world is precisely the commodity seen as a person.

Fetishism

It is only at this point that we can finally ask, "What is the fetish?" It is the "personification" of commodities (and money and capital) and the reification or "commoditization" of persons.

The process of fetishism in the course of capitalist production follows this sequence: commodity fetishism, money fetishism, capital fetishism.

These may be taken either as historical stages within the capitalist revolution or as existing juxtaposed in present-day capitalist society.

Commodity Fetishism

The analysis of commodity relationships reveals that any kind of relationship that may be found among human beings is in fact found among commodities.

Of necessity the commodity is a product that has its origin in human labor and is produced in order to obtain some benefit. The problem of commodity fetishism arises when, on the basis of private property and in the context of the division of labor, one product becomes a means to obtain another through exchange. From the moment when use-values (products that satisfy basic needs) are compared with one another (exchange value) these products seem to be bewitched. That is, they begin to develop social relationships among themselves. As the forces of production and commodity relationships progress, the social relationships among commodities become more developed, to the point where their roles are reversed, and instead of the producer dominating commodities, what happens is exactly the opposite—the producer is dominated by commodities.

This is not because of someone's whim or a chance effect. On the contrary, it is a necessary adaptation to conditions that the commodity producer cannot anticipate. Why? Because capitalist labor is of a "private" nature and therefore producers cannot work out a prior agreement over the makeup of the total product over how each one will share in it.

This means that in the commodity form of production there comes a moment when there is a break between producer and product of such a nature that the product gets beyond the control of the producer. This may not be seen but it is felt, experienced, and lived. It is the moment when social relationships between commodities, and material relationships between producers, are forged.

This all happens through commodity relationships, independently of other aspects of the economic process. Here we find the root of fetishism.

From the moment when commodities begin to become "personified," the human being (the producer) has to become subordinated to them in order to live. This is where the corresponding religious spirit of the capitalist system takes root. The personification of commodities as they interrelate leads to the creation of an "other world," which intervenes in this one, but whose essence it is to reproduce in religious fancy the social relationships that commodities establish in the commodity world. This is the polytheistic world of commodities. It becomes monotheistic to the extent that human beings become aware that, underlying the totality of commodities and their movements, there is a unifying principle: the collective labor of society. It will later appear mediated by money and capital.

It is at this point that Marx refers to the way a particular kind of Christianity is presented. It is a projection toward a beyond, on the basis of which the arbitrary nature of the movement of markets is interpreted: the market becomes a Holy of Holies! From this moment religious images have as their

very essence the negation of human beings and of their possibility for survival.

Religion becomes the form of social consciousness that characterizes a society in which persons have delegated decision-making power over life and death to a commodity mechanism for whose results they have relinquished responsibility.

Money Fetishism

In the process of commodity circulation there arises a special commodity that is not meant to be consumed; it functions as a general equivalent or common denominator of all commodities: money. With the appearance of money the process of commodity personification intensifies.

The destiny of commodities is determined not by the will of human beings but rather by the logic implicit in exchange, which suggests that there should be some general equivalent. But once money makes its appearance, it goes beyond the narrow limitations of exchange and begins to play the role of intermediary between the price of commodities and the system of social labor. In this fashion money appears as the bearer of the value of commodities and hence expresses that value. In order to fulfill such a function money has to be the measure of value for all commodities that can be converted to it.

What we now have is, on the one hand, money as the supreme symbol of the commodity. Human beings, for their part, engage in a conscious action to organize the production of commodities as a function of collective work through mutual agreement. On the other hand, we have money as a being endowed with subjectivity, at the top of the heap, perched over all commodities, exercising an omnipotent will. Marx presents it as the beast of revelation, as the Antichrist and therefore as the antihuman. From this point on it is the impulse toward commodity exchange through money that has decisive power over relationships among human beings; commodity logic is what now dictates the social values that rule human behavior. Moreover, alongside labor considered as value, there appear other ethical values that go along with commodity production.

These norms and values do not have as their criterion the human need to survive, but rather private property and mutual respect among property owners. From this norm there follows another fundamental norm: the contract as a means for transferring commodity ownership. In this way human life itself has to be subordinated to the life of commodities. Legal relationships and the values involved in human behavior are not to be defined by human beings exercising their freedom, but by the exigencies of subsistence and the dynamism of commodity relationships. Even more seriously, commodity relationships become the starting point for interpreting human destiny itself, because commodity production predetermines the framework that limits the possible aspirations in human wills.

Money becomes the fountain through which all commodities have to pass

in order for their value to be confirmed. Hence from the angle of vision of its owner, money is the gate through which all commodities have to pass.

Qualitatively, money seems to have an infinite power, but quantitatively any sum of money is limited.

Thus the money owner has to make an option, and indeed makes it, for the transcendental nature of money; this option is of a religious character. In order to facilitate the acquisition of money, greed changes the image of infinity, and aids in formulating appropriate behavior patterns for pursuing money. Assuming that money is infinite leads the hoarder to recognize a whole catalog of virtues that are necessary for the dynamism of commodity relationships. Religion becomes the sacralization of these virtues. When the necessary conditions are present, the hoarder's virtues become the impulse for the transformation of the production system, a change which the capitalist welcomes with rejoicing.

Behind all this Marx uncovers another contradiction: while commodity relationships are creating goals infinitely far off, the producer hopes to reach them with finite steps. The human being becomes a conqueror who only conquers ever new frontiers in an eternal repetition that converts into its supreme values the behavioral norms appropriate for such a race. One thus chases after a goal that is only the externalizing of one's own interiority. One formulates goals in such a way that each step toward them takes one farther away.

Pursuing money becomes a work of devotion. The fetish of money is now an object of devotion. Piety dictates that human beings take on themselves the values appropriate to the activity involved in pursuing money.

Capital Fetishism

With the advance of the capitalist system money is transformed into capital until it comes to have the characteristics evident in its present phase of development. In the transformation of money into capital it becomes obvious that commodity relationships in their very operation have the power of decision not only over the proportions of material goods to be produced but even over the life or death of the producer.

From the Viewpoint of the Poor

When large industrial capital buys its labor force, workers do not directly face capitalists but rather machines converted into capital. Capital-machines in themselves are mortal; to live they need the life of the exploited. Hence they need to keep the workers alive. But although it is capital that guarantees the life of workers, it is concerned only to the extent necessary to make sure that there will be workers available. It is by calculating how many are needed that the number of workers who can be maintained and the means of life assigned to them are calculated.

The survival of the exploited now depends on a decision of capital made in accordance with its needs. The misery of unneeded workers is of no concern

to capital. Hence it is that every time the production process is changed, the result is a martyrdom for those at the base of the social pyramid: more and more work is expected of them and their life is continually threatened by the machine.

This is the struggle between capital and labor that is inseparably connected to the struggle of commodities among themselves and between commodities and their producers. Within this kind of logic workers suffer the effects of aggression from capital in the form of a growing tendency toward unemployment, which today is reaching frightful levels even in the countries at the center of the world economy.

Those on the bottom are led to believe that unemployment is the result of a "capital shortage" that prevents the creation of new sources of employment. Workers who manage to get a steady job congratulate themselves; the others continue to belong to capital but it does not need them for its own subsistence. Capital now seems to be the great fount of life.

From the Viewpoint of Capitalists

In classical economics the owners of capital are nothing but machines for converting surplus value into new capital. But now massive capital appears to be the great creator of value, as were commodities and money before. Value, moreover, is shown as having the property of multiplying itself.

Out of the midst of the commodity world there raises its head the great subject-value (capital) that has the power to acquire further value and to multiply itself. Absolutely everything depends on it; it is the miraculous subject of the religion of everyday life.

The climax of capital fetishization comes in the form of interest-bearing capital. The procreation of value by value now seems to be a potency inherent in capital-value, so much so that it takes the place of labor power. (In reality, profit is nothing but a surplus value of capital, taken from labor, and interest from capital is nothing but a share in the overall profit—but here everything appears backward.)

Nevertheless, from capitalists' viewpoint it is necessary to maintain full employment especially in times of crisis because movements of rebellion on the part of the exploited cannot be managed within the traditional patterns of capitalist society. These movements are denounced as "messianic movements"; the Antimesiah is enthroned as Messiah. It is no longer the "day of judgment" (the day when interest rates drop to zero) that threatens capital but these messianic movements, which have the audacity to rise up against the "supreme being." The Antimesiah as Messiah is perhaps to this day the highest expression of the reflection of religion emanating from capital fetishism. It arose during the 1930s in Europe and is reappearing today among the military dictatorships of Latin America.

But capital fetishism goes even further. It claims for itself the highest human dreams and does so by projecting the process of technology toward an infinite future. Capital now comes to be the "guarantee of human infinity."

The Ethics of Capitalism

Capital now determines the ethics of both capitalists and workers.

In risking their capital in order to gain surplus value, capitalists must make an act of faith in the conditions that guarantee the circulation from which their capital must return augmented. Each element of the productive system demands an act of faith on the part of capitalists, who in turn lay down norms for workers' behavior. The capitalist is willing to be a personification of capital and demands that workers consume in order to carry out the reproduction necessary for the service of capital. The central virtue of capitalist ethics is humility.

For workers this means not rebelling but accepting the fact that capital accumulation has decision-making power over their life and death.

Parallel to capital accumulation there now appears the value-virtue of thrift: the need to minimize consumption and maximize accumulation spurred by the economic motive of receiving interest. The contradiction here is only apparent. Because they consume in abundance but do not enjoy it, capitalists arrive at the notion of their own "poverty"—"to have as though not having"—a curious impoverishment of the person and ostentation of wealth at the same time, so much so that consuming seems to be the way to arrive at abundance and human well-being.

Nevertheless, this logic of capitalist accumulation brings destruction both for those whom it enriches and for those whom it impoverishes. Although some engage in unrestrained consumption, this logic counsels abstinence and so shows itself cynical toward those who have been impoverished.

The exploited who rebel against the imposition of abstinence are seen as "proud" and so accused. When they turn against capital—the spirit of capitalist society—the rebellion of the exploited is considered to be a sin against the "holy spirit." Hence what is viewed as legitimate repression is employed to impose the practice of humility.

The Realm of Freedom

The process by which the "spirit of capitalist society," its religion, its ethics, comes into being has now been sketched. The essence of this religion and the practice of this spirituality and ethics entail submission, the renunciation of the full exercise of freedom, the personification of capital to the point where it is able to decide on the life and death of human beings, and the abandonment of aspirations for any free utopia.

The analysis would remain incomplete, however, if we did not take note of an essential element in the method of fetishism theory—namely, what commodity relationships are not. There is a screaming *absence* in commodity relationships, an absence not revealed by the appearance of commodities. Nevertheless this absence offers a clue for understanding all human history.

It is on the basis of this absence that changes and revolutionary struggles in history take place. This is the other "spirit," the other "religion," the other "ethic"—that is, the *spirituality of liberation*.

This all points toward something beyond history, which is "the beyond" vis-à-vis any of its stages. Human beings consciously or unconsciously see, pursue, and struggle toward the infinite horizon of freedom. Marx conceptualizes it in the notion of the "realm of freedom."

In the analysis made by the theory of fetishism this concept appears under two forms. There is reference to it insofar as it is absent in an order of things where commodities prevail, and in the delineation of social relationships beyond commodity production.

On the one hand, the theory maintains that commodity relationships and machines repress human vitality, and hence human physical and spiritual forces are not given a chance to come into full play. The capitalist production process excludes freedom and individual independence from the labor processes.

On the one hand, starting from these absences, the theory of fetishism analyzes how a transition may be made from commodity relationships toward the realm of freedom. This future is neither illusory nor is it described as fully realizable. It is a continual process of "anticipations" of utopia; it breaks away from the "realm of necessity" step by step. These concrete realizations are what show the horizon to be possible. The "realm of necessity" may not be utterly eliminated. However, it can be brought under the collective control of human exchange, and the laws of necessity may be regulated so that they cannot destroy human beings.

The point is to guarantee life, employment, and the satisfaction of needs, within the framework of a collective agreement on how work tasks and their economic results are to be distributed. This can be achieved by going beyond commodity relationships.

The kingdom of freedom will be firmly established within labor when labor is experienced as the free play of physical and spiritual forces, and it is therefore "directly social labor." This is the basis for the decisive importance given to shortening the workday.

The realm of freedom has two dimensions: on the one hand it is a transcendent, teleological self-projection that goes beyond possible concrete realizations; on the other hand it is embodied in concrete historical self-projections, which make it concrete. The relationship between the two is logical. The transcendent projection is not at the end of the road; it accompanies historical projections, from stage to stage, as their transcendent dimension, their utopian horizon. Those who live in this spirit do not destroy life; they foster life.

PABLO RICHARD
RAUL VIDALES

Part One

THE VISIBILITY OF THE INVISIBLE AND THE INVISIBILITY OF THE VISIBLE: MARX'S ANALYSIS OF FETISHISM

The analysis of fetishism is the element in Marx's political economy that has been least noticed in the tradition of Marxist thought. Nevertheless, it constitutes a central element in his overall analysis.

The object of the theory of fetishism is the visibility of the invisible and it deals with the concepts of collective entities in the social sciences. These collective entities are partial wholes—a business, a school, an army—or a totality of partial wholes—the social division of labor, which is the focal point for the formation of the concepts of the relationships of production and of the state.

All these objects of social analysis (whether partial institutions or total institutions, such as the ownership system or the state) may be analyzed in theoretical terms and then brought into focus from the viewpoint of how they function. This sort of theoretical analysis will always focus on them as parts within a social division of labor, although analysis does not stop there.

What has just been said does not refer to the analysis of fetishism. This kind of analysis does not seek to explain such institutions but rather treats them as invisible collective entities, whose existence is perceived in a special way.

Strange as it may seem, no one has ever seen a business, a school, a state, or an ownership system. What one sees are the elements of such institutions—that is, the building where the school or business operates, or the persons who carry out the particular activities of such institutions. The concept of these institutions nevertheless points to the whole of their activities and therefore points toward an invisible object. Even though these objects are invisible, human beings “see” them. They see them as fetishes. Not only do they see them but they have an experience of them. They perceive them as existing.

Collective entities—institutions—are totalities and the human eye cannot see totalities even though experience may perceive them. The human eye cannot see anything but persons and objects—that is, natural phenomena that are parts of wholes. Nor can it see all objects or all persons. It sees only those within eyesight.

However, the objects or persons within eyesight are by no means the totality of the objects and persons who by their human activity condition the life of each person. The elements that condition each person derive ultimately from all existing human beings, whether or not they are within eyesight. These conditionings are of the most varied kind. But there is only one type of conditioning that is utterly inescapable—that which results from the division of labor.

In order to live, human beings have to consume at least what they need for physical subsistence. They can free themselves from other kinds of conditionings simply by coming to a mutual agreement. In the case of the division of labor, however, such an agreement is not enough. All such agreements are under definite restraints. The laws of nature lay down the material conditions for life and so determine what distribution of activities may be feasible. Quite apart from the human will, the conditioning resultant from the division of labor is decisive for the life and death of human beings in their interrelationships.

Whether one or another school or business exists, or one or another type of thinking or form of the state predominates, in themselves are not of utter importance: they do not involve the issue of life or death. But things are different when such institutions are viewed within the machinery of the social division of labor. The effect on the division of labor does in fact link such institutions, and decisions about them, with the issue of the life and death of human beings. It is the division of labor that determines, in conjunction with such institutions, whether persons may live or not. And if being able to live is itself the basic problem for human beings and the exercise of their freedom, then the division of labor is the key reference point for the overall analysis of institutions.

The theory of fetishism is not applied to the analysis of specific institutions. It arrives at a judgment on the freedom of human beings on the basis of their possibility for life or death: the exercise of freedom is possible only within a framework where human life is made possible. As the starting point for its analysis, this theory takes up the social division of labor and the criteria used in coordinating the many human activities needed in order to carry out the material production that will enable all to survive. Therefore, this theory does not turn to an analysis of partial institutions (schools, businesses, and the like), or of institutions that are totalities (ownership systems, states), but rather of the forms of organization and coordination of the social division of labor in which those institutions are situated. These forms are of course intimately related to the institutions of the ownership system and the state. But the issue is not the analysis of these institutions as such but rather how they serve the organization and coordination of the social division of labor, for it is these functions that give them decisive power over human life and death, and therefore over any possible human freedom.

Marx does not hesitate to call all this the very phenomenon that philosophy traditionally dealt with in terms of ideas:

The sum of productive forces, capital funds, and social forms of intercourse which every individual and every generation finds existing is

the real basis of what the philosophers have conceived as "Substance" and "essence of Man," what they have apotheosized and attacked, that is, a real basis which is not in the least disturbed in its effect and influence on the development of men by the fact that these philosophers revolt against it as "Self-consciousness" and the "Unique" [German Ideology, 432].

If this is the starting point for the theory of fetishism, it is still not the specific theory. More specifically, the theory of fetishism does not deal with any analysis whatsoever of collective entities or institutions, nor does it deal with all ways in which the social division of labor may be coordinated.

Some systems of the social division of labor are transparent in the way they affect human life or death. Such was the case both in primitive societies, where the division of labor was organized around the survival of all, as well as in precapitalist societies, where it was organized on the basis of the legalized right of a dominant class to divide society into masters and slaves (or serfs), a right that often went far toward making it legitimate to kill. In both cases the process of institutionalization is transparent; in other words, the way the social division of labor is set up in terms of human life or death is quite plain to see.

The specific term "fetishism" does not refer to these forms of coordination of the division of labor. Rather, the theory of fetishism analyzes a form of the coordination of the division of labor that tends to make invisible the effect of the division of labor over human life and death: commodity relationships. These commodity relationships make it seem that interpersonal relationships are independent of how the division of labor affects human survival. They appear to be the "rules of the game," taken for granted by everyone, whereas in reality they are the rules of a life-and-death struggle between human beings, a catch-as-catch-can. Or they appear to be the workings of nature itself, dealing out life and death according to its own laws, with no allowance for protest from human beings. In reality, they are the work of human beings who must be made responsible for their results.

The theory of fetishism does not deal with all the problems of the visibility of the invisible. Even if all human institutions are invisible, their effects are visible. A university is not visible, but its effects are. A business as a whole ensemble of production is not visible, but its effects are.

However, in the case of commodity relationships there is a specific kind of invisibility: the invisibility of their effects. The theory of fetishism deals with the visibility of this invisibility. Commodity relationships appear to be something other than what they are. The commodity producer is aware of this appearance; ideology interprets it. The fact that the "rules" are those of a life-and-death struggle, and hence of a conflict between human beings, is camouflaged. Instead ideology makes them seem to be the "rules of the game"; human deaths that result from them are seen as comparable to natural accidents.

The analysis of fetishism is aimed at the ways that commodity relationships are seen and lived, and not at analyzing commodity production as it functions

in coordinating the division of labor. This latter kind of analysis is a starting point for the analysis of fetishism, but not its object.

The analysis of fetishism inquires into the way that commodity relationships are seen and the way they are lived. These are social relationships that bring about the coordination of the division of labor. Nevertheless they are experienced and seen as a social relationship between things or objects. Hence it is that Marx calls commodities "physical-metaphysical" objects, considering that to be their elemental form. On the one hand commodities are objects, but on the other hand they have the dimension of being themselves subjects in the economic process. Insofar as they are subjects, however, they appear in competition with human life itself. They arrogate to themselves the decision over life and death, and leave human beings subject to their whims.

In a way Marx's theory of fetishism is a transformation of Plato's myth of the cave. Once commodity relationships have been developed, commodities become commodity-subjects, which act among themselves and upon human beings, taking on themselves the decision over human life or death. They make possible an unprecedented complexity in the division of labor but at the same time they seize upon human beings to strangle them. And if human beings do not become aware that this apparent life in commodities is nothing but the life that human beings have projected onto them, they will come to lose their freedom and eventually their very life.

It is on the basis of the analysis of the commodity-subject as a physical-metaphysical object that Marx comes to formulate his critique of religion. At this point it is no longer the Feuerbach-inspired critique of his youth, which began with the content of religion and went on to find in it the elements of real human life transformed. Now he starts with real life in order to explain how the images of a religious world make their appearance. The link between real life and the religious world is the commodity seen as a subject. Marx therefore interprets this apparent subjectivity of objects as the real content of religious images. Behind commodities, whose world has the power to decide over human life and death, he discovers religious images as projections of this subjectivity of commodities. Marx describes his method as follows:

It is, in reality, much easier to discover by analysis the earthly kernel of the misty creations of religion than to do the opposite, i.e., to develop from the actual, given relations of life the forms in which these have been apotheosized. The latter method is the only materialist, and therefore the only scientific one [Capital, I, 494, n. 4].

The religiousness that Marx uncovers in pursuing this inquiry is that of the sacralization of the power of some persons over others, and of the commodity relationships among persons, in whose name some assume power over others. It is the religion that canonizes the right of some to decide over the life or death of others, and projects that kind of power onto the image of God.

And Marx discovers another aspect of religion—the protest against such a situation. But that religion is destined to disappear and be surpassed by a praxis that overcomes commodity relationships and returns to human beings the subjectivity they have lost to the objects they have produced.

Chapter 1

From Commodities to Money to Capitalism

The Enchanted World of Commodities—Commodity Fetishism

The basis of the whole analysis of fetishism is the analysis of commodity fetishism. To the extent that commodity relationships develop in the direction of the form of money or capital, commodity fetishism also develops, and money fetishism and capital fetishism make their appearance. These are the three central stages of the analysis developed by Marx. They may be looked at either as historical stages of fetishism or as juxtaposed in a capitalist society. Marx analyzes them in both senses, emphasizing more their historical sequence. In point of fact, a later stage in commodity development presupposes that earlier stages have already taken place. Capital cannot appear unless there has been a prior development of money, and money can appear only after the development of exchange. But when capital appears there still continue to be money and exchange without money. Let mathematics provide an analogy; infinitesimal calculus cannot appear until basic mathematics has arisen, but once it appears it does not replace previous mathematics.

Commodity as Subject: Social Relationships among Commodities

Commodity fetishism unveils a world that is bewitched. We behold an immense panorama of interaction among commodities. They struggle among themselves, make alliances, dance, and fight, with one winning and the other losing. All the kinds of relationships that can exist among human beings arise also among commodities. However, the spell does not affect commodities in their use-value. Wheat is for eating and the shoe or the clothes are for wearing. The clothes may also be work clothes and as such may be a means of production for producing wheat. But there is no special relationship between wheat and a shoe, or between a shoe and clothes. The commodity question

arises only when, in the context of a division of labor based on private property, the shoe becomes a means of acquiring wheat through exchange. At this point there is a new relationship between use-values, which is quantitatively expressed as exchange-value. In this context Marx quotes Aristotle:

For twofold is the use of every object. . . . The one is peculiar to the object as such, the other is not, as a sandal which may be worn and is also exchangeable. Both are uses of the sandal, for even he who exchanges the sandal for the money or food he is in need of, makes use of the sandal as a sandal. But not in its natural way. For it has not been made for the sake of being exchanged [*Capital*, I, 179, n. 3].

With exchange, use-values come to be compared with one another. For Marx, it is in this comparison that the contingent and bewitched character of the commodity emerges:

The form of wood, for instance, is altered if a table is made out of it. Nevertheless the table continues to be wood, an ordinary, sensuous thing. But as soon as it emerges as a commodity, it changes into a physical-metaphysical object [that which transcends the sensory—Hinkelammert]. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than if it were to begin dancing of its own free will [*Capital*, I, 163].

Commodities now set up social relationships among themselves. For example, artificial nitrate battles natural nitrate and defeats it. Oil fights with coal, and wood with plastic. Coffee dances on world markets while iron and steel get married. After a long war copper and plastic make peace but it is probably no more than an armistice. Trains battle with trucks and factory-made bread challenges bakery bread. Other commodities make alliances and business firms contract marriage.

This transformation of objects into subjects is the result of a commodity form of production, which in turn is a consequence of the private character of labor: “Objects of utility become commodities only because they are the products of the labor of private individuals who work independently of each other” (*Capital*, I, 165).

This private character of labor does not allow producers to work out any prior agreement on the makeup of the total product or on each one’s share in it. On the other hand, the private character of labor has permitted the development of productive forces beyond the limits of previous society:

We see here, on the one hand, how the exchange of commodities breaks through all the individual and local limitations of the direct exchange of

products, and develops the metabolic process of human labor. On the other hand, there develops a whole network of social connections of natural origin, entirely beyond the control of the human agents [*Capital*, I, 207].

Nevertheless the very progress of commodity relationships and of productive forces along with them intensifies social relationships among commodities. The commodity producer comes to be dominated by the social relationships that commodities establish among themselves. When commodities “do battle,” their owners and producers also begin to do battle. When they “dance,” so do their owners. When they get “married,” so do the producers. Human beings are now attracted to each other depending on the “attractions” between commodities, and their hates derive from the “hates” among commodities. There emerges a bewitched and topsy-turvy world.

This is not just an analogy. Even if the commodity character of production is a human product, it is a product that gets beyond the control of human beings. Commodities begin to move although no one wanted or intended them to do so, and even though any movement on their part comes from some movement of human beings. The effects are completely beyond all human intention. If a commodity “battles” another, it is not because its owner wants it that way. When the owner produces the commodity, the battle begins. Similarly, coffee does not begin to “dance” on world markets because coffee producers want it to.

A series of conditions leads to such a situation; no one had the intention of bringing it about. Even if someone did have such an intention, that is not why such an effect was produced. And if observers want to explain why it happened, they turn to a fetishistic expression: it was the frost in Brazil that made coffee “dance.” The frost has no owner.

Although no commodity can move unless human beings move it and none can be produced except through intentional production by human beings, all commodities taken together “establish relationships” among themselves that go beyond the intentions of human beings, both collectively and individually. They “move” as though by telekinesis, where the medium is not aware of being the medium or, even when so aware, cannot have any influence on the fact: “One may recall that China and the tables began to dance when the rest of the world appeared to be standing still—*pour encourager les autres*” (*Capital*, I, 164, n. 27).¹

Although it is indeed possible to make incursions into this “enclosed world” of social relationships among commodities (for example, with monopoly strategies) these incursions amount to taking advantage of the situation but not dominating it. Even in the case of monopoly strategies, the final decision is made by the sum of the commodities, which make up the “general assembly.” They react in a friendly manner toward someone who knows how to gain their friendship. But the decision is theirs. “The capitalist knows that

all commodities, however tattered they may look or however badly they may smell, are in faith and in truth, Jews circumscribed within" (cf. *Capital*, I, 256):

The decision to continue to produce commodities is always at the same time the decision to accept being determined by the sum of commodities. Marx describes this phenomenon as follows:

The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labor as objective characteristics of the products of labor themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things. Hence it also reflects the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labor as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers. Through this substitution, the products of labor become commodities, sensuous things which are at the same time supra-sensible or social [*Capital*, I, 165].

A fetish is something that can be seen, not with the eyes, however, but through experience. Hence Marx goes on:

In the same way, the impression made by a thing on the optic nerve is perceived not as a subjective excitation of that nerve but as the objective form of a thing outside the eye. In the act of seeing, of course, light is really transmitted from one thing, the external object, to another thing, the eye. It is a physical relation between physical things. As against this, the commodity-form and the value-relation of the products of labor within which it appears, have absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material . . . relations arising out of this. It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things [ibid.].

He concludes this point by saying:

I call this the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labor as soon as they are produced as commodities, and is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities [ibid.].

Commodity Enchantment and the Social Division of Labor

The fetish appears as soon as products are produced by private expenditures of labor independent of one another. A social relationship arises between products and a material relationship between producers. And the fetish hides what the commodity really is and what its true value is. They are

both the product of abstract human labor in the form of concrete labor. The apparently spontaneous movements of commodities derive from the fact that each concrete product must maintain its position within the collective labor of society, within the basic system of the social division of labor (cf. *Capital*, I, 166).

Because commodities can never perfectly maintain their position, due to the private nature of labor, they move in an uncontrolled fashion. This movement is necessary in order to equate products with each other on the basis of the abstract labor contained in them. But commodity producers do not need to know that such equating is taking place. They compare commodities in their value for exchange purposes without having to know that the ups and downs of the market are caused by a noncorrespondence between the total product and the necessary sharing of the collective labor of society. This collective labor, however, is imposed by the movement of the market:

By equating their different products to each other in exchange as values, they equate their different kinds of labor as human labor. They do this without being aware of it. Value, therefore, does not have its description branded on its forehead; it rather transforms every product of labor into a social hieroglyphic [*Capital*, I, 166–67].

Therefore the movement of commodities is not due to magic. What gives the appearance of being a magical movement is in fact a necessary adaptation to conditions that commodity producers cannot anticipate, simply because their labor is private labor:

The determination of the magnitude of value by labor-time is therefore a secret hidden under the apparent movements in the relative value of commodities. Its discovery destroys the semblance of the merely accidental determination of the magnitude of the value of the products of labor, but by no means abolishes that determination's material form [*Capital*, I, 168].

Commodity fetishism therefore does not disappear simply because persons realize that behind the ups and downs of exchange values there is the process whereby products seek to maintain their position in the overall system of the social division of labor. Fetishism is a fact to the extent that these movements take place via commodity relationships, whether or not persons are aware of the reason for market movements. If human beings are to manage to live with commodity production, they have to learn to adjust to it without attempting to make it adjust to them. But not all can really manage to live within commodity production even when they try to adapt to it, and it is important

to see what it means for them. Dealing with commodity production for them is a problem of life or death. But *all* are faced with the same problematic:

The social relations between their private labors *appear* as what they are, i.e., they do not appear as direct social relations between their work, but rather as *material . . . relations* between persons and *social relations* between *things* [*Capital*, I, 166; italics added].

The Religious Projection of the Subjective Character of Commodities

The religious images that Marx connects with such commodity fetishism come from awareness and experience of the social relationships between commodities. In the analysis, the subjectivity of commodities that interact with each other leads to the projection of another world that intervenes in this one, a polytheism of the commodity world:

In order, therefore, to find an analogy we must take flight into the misty realm of religion. There the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands [*Capital*, I, 165].

This would be the world of the gods, represented by individual commodities. The gods repeat in religious fancy the social relationships enacted by commodities in the commodity world. This polytheistic world becomes monotheistic to the extent that persons become aware of the fact that beneath the sum of commodities and their movements there is a unifying principle, which is ultimately the collective labor of society, or the basic system of the social division of labor, which becomes evident through the intermediary role of capital. This more developed form of commodity production Marx relates to Christianity:

For a society of commodity producers, whose general social relation of production consists in the fact that they treat their products as commodities, hence as values, and in this material . . . form bring their individual private labors into relation with each other as homogenous human labor, Christianity with its religious cult of man in the abstract, more particularly in its bourgeois development, i.e., in Protestantism, Deism, etc. is the most fitting form of religion [*Capital*, I, 172].

Thus the magical caprice of commodities is connected with the form of polytheism, and the development of a commodity world organized by one unifying principle—capital—is connected with a kind of monotheism. In

both cases there is a projection toward a beyond from which the arbitrary movements may be interpreted, and the market itself becomes a sacrosanct sphere. Although these arbitrary movements in fact testify to the failure of the market to make human life secure, this failure is transformed into the will of an arbitrary God, who demands respect for this sacrosanct commodity world. The essence of such religious images is therefore the negation of humankind and its possibilities for life. They are bearers of death. This image of God is antihuman.

Marx's analysis of fetishism implies an analysis of the creation of a society that has overcome this situation. This is deduced from the reasons Marx gives for fetishism itself. He explains it in positive terms as a result of the private character of human labor, and he analyzes it in negative terms as due to the lack of directly social relations between persons in their work (cf. *Capital*, I, 38). The two explanations coincide: the first speaks of what is and the second of what is not but should be.

Societies without Commodity Fetishism

Marx asks to what extent the phenomenon of fetishism is common throughout history, questioning therefore to what extent it might be overcome. He answers:

The whole mystery of commodities, all the magic and necromancy that surrounds the products of labor on the basis of commodity production, vanishes therefore as soon as we come to other forms of production [*Capital*, I, 169].

He then mentions four types of societies that do not have commodity fetishism: (1) the Robinson Crusoe model as developed by bourgeois economics; (2) the form of production in the Middle Ages; (3) the production of rural and patriarchal industry in a peasant family; (4) the model of a socialist society, derived from the bourgeois Robinson Crusoe model. He speaks of the labor of a social Robinson Crusoe.

The first type corresponds to a particular way that bourgeois society interprets itself; the second and third are descriptions of structures taken from past history; the fourth is the transformation of a bourgeois ideology aimed at projecting a future socialist society. Marx proposes the first description of the socialist alternative in *Capital*.

Marx attributes the absence of commodity fetishism in precapitalist societies to their low level of development:

Those ancient social organisms of production are much more simple and transparent than those of bourgeois society. But they are founded either on the immaturity of man as an individual, when he has not yet

torn himself loose from the umbilical cord of his natural species-connection with other men, or on direct relations of dominance and servitude. They are conditioned by a low stage of development of the productive powers of labor and correspondingly limited relations between men within the process of creating and reproducing their material life, and hence also limited relations between man and nature. These real limitations are reflected in the ancient worship of nature, and in other elements of tribal religions [*Capital*, I, 172-73].

Elsewhere Marx develops this idea more fully:

In earlier forms of society, this economic mystification comes in principally in connection with money and interest-bearing capital. It is excluded by the very nature of the case, firstly, where production is predominantly for use-value, for the producers' own needs; secondly, where, as in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, slavery or serfdom forms the broad basis of social production. In the latter case, the dominance of the conditions of production over the producers is concealed by the visible relations of domination and servitude, which appear as direct mainsprings of the production process [*Capital*, III, 970].

Marx thus limits his concept of fetishism to that associated with commodity relationships, calling it "economic mystification." This mystification is specifically related to the commodity form and does not occur in precapitalist society.

There is another kind of fetishism in such societies, however, one that takes its origins in the natural conditions of production that dominate the producer. This natural mysticism is due to the lack of domination over nature. Such a mysticism, however, does not conceal the social relationship that is clearly connected to the social division of labor, which is the criterion for decisions made affecting the life and death of the individual, and inequality and dominion in society. If these societies are ignorant of commodity fetishism, it is because they have not developed to the point where the conditions of production have mastery over the producer. Being antecedent to fetishism, they are of no use for describing the kinds of conditions that might lead to overcoming it.

The Individual Robinson Crusoe and the Social Robinson Crusoe

Marx begins his discussion of the possibility of overcoming fetishism by analyzing the Robinson Crusoe model found in traditional economic theory:

As political economists are fond of Robinson Crusoe stories, let us first look at Robinson on his island. . . . Despite the diversity of his produc-

tive functions, he knows that they are only different modes of human labor. . . . All the relations between Robinson and these objects that form his self-created wealth are here so simple and transparent that even Mr. Sedley Taylor could understand them. And yet those relations contain all the essential determinants of value [*Capital*, I, 169–70].

Inasmuch as there are no commodity relationships, there cannot be any commodity fetishism. Robinson exchanges with no one and hence the Robinson Crusoe model of necessity will describe a kind of production without fetishism. Robinson by definition is alone and obviously has no social relationships.

Marx nevertheless concludes that this model is useful for explaining “the essential determinants of value.” He is able to show that different kinds of human labor are manifestations of abstract human labor and that treating different kinds of concrete labor as the manifestation of abstract human labor eliminates the possibility of commodity relationships. Therefore it is useful for discovering the essential determinants of value, but not for understanding changes of exchange-value or prices. It can nevertheless explain the reality underlying prices.

But this Robinson Crusoe model is still an ideological one. If this model is used for interpreting bourgeois society, it will abstract from precisely what is specific to that society—namely, the development of commodity relationships. Thus market prices will be presented as direct manifestations of equilibrium, and the existence of commodity relationships will be made to seem insignificant and neutral. Bourgeois society will be presented as a kind of society that in fact can be achieved only by socialism. This is an issue that has remained relevant up to the present; it is developed in theories of perfect competition. According to Marx, such theories describe something that bourgeois society is incapable of achieving. This society pretends to be something that it cannot be as a capitalist society. In fact this is how it avoids analyzing what it really is. Such theories describe what bourgeois society is *not*. Nevertheless, in order to know what it is, it is important to know what it is not. Bourgeois society is not a socialist society—that is, a society where concrete labor is a direct manifestation of social labor, and this point is what must be grasped and made known.

Marx can transform the Robinson Crusoe model into a description of the socialist alternative:

Let us finally imagine, for a change, an association of free men, working with the means of production held in common, and expending their many different forms of labor-power in full self-awareness as one single social labor force. All the characteristics of Robinson’s labor are repeated here, but with the difference that they are *social* instead of individual. All Robinson’s products were exclusively the result of his

own personal labor and were therefore directly objects of utility for him personally. The total product of our imagined association is a social product. . . . The social relations of the individual producers, both towards their labor and the products of their own labor, are here transparent in their simplicity, in production as well as in distribution [*Capital*, I, 171–72].

This association of free human beings—and only in association can human beings be free—is what leads to the end of commodity fetishism. It means the end of nature mysticism and of the domination of nature over human beings. Marx is not thinking of a return to precapitalist society in any of its forms: he has already analyzed such societies in precisely noncapitalist terms. Overcoming their nature mysticism leads to the economic mysticism of commodity fetishism; both mysticisms can be overcome only through the association of free human beings. Ideologically, this overcoming is already present in bourgeois economic theory: bourgeois society claims to be already what socialist society will be. This point has consequences for the way history is conceived.

This concept of the association of free human beings and of concrete labor as the manifestation of social labor comes to have two meanings that are closely interrelated and ultimately identical. It is the key reference point for analyzing all human societies because it describes what they are *not* and so opens the way to an analysis of what they are and what they will be. Hence it makes history intelligible. It also describes a specific future society—socialist society—that achieves in a positive way what was present in a negative form in all preceding societies. Marx cannot conceive of the kind of movement there would be in such a society in terms of what it is not—that is, in terms of a point of arrival and progression; he rather views its movement exclusively as that of use-values serving to satisfy human needs. Change would come from new technological knowledge, not from social negation. He calls the history of such a society true history.

Regarding religion Marx comes to this conclusion:

The religious reflections of the real world can, in any case, vanish only when the practical relations of everyday life between man and man, and between man and nature, generally present themselves to him in a transparent and rational form. The veil is not removed from the countenance of the social life-process, i.e., the process of material production, until it becomes production by freely associated men, and stands under their conscious and planned control [*Capital*, I, 173].

This conclusion comes from what was said previously. Marx had explained religious images as projections toward the infinite coming from the subjective character of commodities. Beneath the arbitrary movements of commo-

dities there is a projection that makes them seem to be subjects, true subjects that provide the basis for such projections. It is from these religious subjects that the sacrosanct character of commodities and their world is derived. Religious images are reflections that make their appearance insofar as the commodity world is viewed naively. The “beyond” that they seem to inhabit is really the here-and-now of human beings, who project their own essence onto commodities. For human beings, recovering the freedom that has been lost to the usurpation of the commodity world means claiming this beyond as really being their own interiority. The association of free human beings is the real basis for making this claim.

The Fetish: The Result of Human Activity That Refuses to Accept Responsibility for the Consequences of What It Does

Religion is not a kind of superstructure. It is a form of social consciousness that corresponds to a situation in which human beings have delegated the decision-making power over their own life or death to a commodity mechanism for whose results they do not accept responsibility—even though this mechanism is the work of their own hands. This lack of responsibility is then projected onto a God who enjoys an infinitely legitimate arbitrary power, who is the God of private property, the God of hosts (armies), and of “history.” But the real essence of this God is the refusal of humankind to take responsibility for the results of its own handiwork.

It is obvious that this is a variation on Plato’s myth of the cave. Religious images are seen as reflections of the social relationships among commodities, and therefore among objects, that result from the fact that human beings have renounced their capacity to master their own products. In contrast to Plato, however, what humankind perceives beyond the things of this world is not the Idea underlying them, but its own (human) interiority floating “out there.” Because its interiority is infinite, so also are the images created in this reflection process.

From all this may be derived what for Marx was the central question regarding the explanation of commodity relationships. He has already explained them as “products of the labor of private individuals who work independently of each other” (*Capital*, I, 165). He now criticizes bourgeois political economy for having avoided this question and so for having failed to explain commodity relationships:

Political economy has indeed analyzed value and its magnitude, however incompletely, and has uncovered the content concealed within these forms. But it has never once asked the question why this content has assumed that particular form, that is to say, why labor is expressed *in value*, and why the measurement of labor by its duration is expressed in the *magnitude of the value* of the product [*Capital*, I, 173–74; italics added].

If they had asked the question, this is what they would have discovered:

These formulas, which bear the unmistakable stamp of belonging to a social formation in which the process of production has mastery over man, instead of the opposite, appear to the political economists' bourgeois consciousness to be as much a self-evident and nature-imposed necessity as productive labor itself [*Capital*, I, 174–75].

This is a key point in Marx's whole line of reasoning and it is ultimately decisive for the nature of an alternative proposed for the future. He rightly criticizes bourgeois economics for not having dealt with the problem. After Marx there is a basic shift in bourgeois political economy, a shift largely due to his critique. Bourgeois political economy is now devoted almost exclusively to theories of the optimal use of resources and it reaches conclusions that cast doubt on Marx's position. These conclusions are moreover confirmed by the history of present socialist societies. The point may be summarized in Marx's language in the following terms: if commodity relationships are due to the fact that labor is private labor, this private character is not due to private property. It results from the fact that human knowledge of factors relevant for economic decision-making is inherently limited. Therefore socializing private property does not basically change the private character of labor. Indeed all socialist societies have continued to coordinate their division of labor on the basis of commodity relationships. This is proof that even in socialist societies labor continues to be "private labor" in Marx's sense.

Even if this development does not change the central theses of the analysis of fetishism, it profoundly changes the meaning of the alternative proposed for the future. I shall discuss these issues at the end of this chapter.

Money, the Beast, and Saint John: The Sign on the Forehead—Money Fetishism

To highlight his concept of money fetishism Marx quotes Christopher Columbus: "Gold is a wonderful thing. Its owner is master of all he desires. Gold can even enable souls to enter Paradise" [*Capital*, I, 229].

Money is a commodity. But it is not a commodity like the rest; it is the commodity that stands out above all the rest. It is the commodity that serves as a common denominator for all the rest, and into which they must be converted in order to have their value confirmed. Money is the intermediary between the price of commodity and the social labor or the elementary system of the division of labor. Converting a commodity into money makes it clear to what extent its price is in agreement with what the division of labor objectively demands. In this sense money serves to express the value of commodities. It fulfills this function even when it ceases to be a commodity and becomes a pure symbol. Nevertheless, as commodity-money it is the only commodity that does not have to be converted into money: it *is* money.

Use-Value: A Mirror of Value

The enchanted world of commodity fetishism may exist without money. In any case commodities make up a closed world wherein they are compared one with another and a dictate is laid down for the owner:

If commodities could speak, they would say this: our use-value may interest men, but it does not belong to us as objects. What does belong to us as objects, however, is our value. Our own intercourse as commodities proves it. We relate to each other merely as exchange-values [*Capital*, I, 176].

Commodities reflect each other and each commodity is the mirror of value of the other:

In a certain sense, a man is in the same situation as a commodity. As he neither enters the world in possession of a mirror, nor as a Fichtean philosopher who can say "I am I," a man first sees and recognizes himself in another man. Peter only relates to himself as a man through his relation to another man, Paul, in whom he recognizes his likeness. With this, however, Paul also becomes from head to toe, in his physical form as Paul, the form of appearance of the species man for Peter [*Capital*, I, 144, n. 19].

Thus the bodiliness of the commodity serves as a mirror in which the value of commodities may be expressed under the (fetishist) appearance of arbitrary exchange-values.² In reality (and a posteriori) these values are determined by collective labor and by the need to reproduce the lives of the producers.

Commodity owners see the value of their commodities in terms of what other commodities may be bought with them. One's entire livelihood is derived from this relationship. But because this is true for everyone, there is no "shared equivalent": there is no commodity that may serve as a general equivalent and in terms of which all commodities may be given a value. Without such an equivalent one may sell only to the extent that one is buying, and the seller of a commodity may sell only by buying in the same transaction the product that the buyer is selling. Buying is limited to barter.

This narrow limitation of exchange, and hence of the potential development of the division of labor, may be overcome only by designating a specific commodity as money. Then there appears a commodity that is a depository of value. It allows for a separation between acts of buying and selling. When a product is sold, its value is preserved in money and when it is used for buying it returns as the value of a needed commodity. Money is not exchanged as in barter: one who receives it does not need someone else to give it

to. It is a depository of value; it allows for storing value in a form in which it is of no other use to anyone.

To carry out this function money has to be the measure of all the products that are converted into it. All commodities have to be converted into money; when they are bought they have their value confirmed. The need for such a means of exchange is the result of the very increase of commodity exchange. However, the creation of money is a social act; society determines that a particular commodity will be money. Nevertheless, this social act of constituting money is at the same time one of renunciation and accordingly a loss of freedom:

In their difficulties our commodity-owners think like Faust: "In the beginning was the deed." They have therefore already acted before thinking. The natural laws of the commodity have manifested themselves in the natural instinct of the owners of commodities. They can only bring their commodities into relation as values, and therefore as commodities, by bringing them into an opposing relation with *some one other commodity*, which serves as the *universal equivalent*. We have already reached that result by our analysis of the commodity. But only the *action of society* can turn a *particular* commodity into the universal equivalent. The social action of all other commodities, therefore, sets apart the particular commodity in which they all represent their values. The natural form of this commodity thereby becomes the socially recognized equivalent form. Through the agency of the social process it becomes the specific social function of the commodity which has been *set apart to be the universal equivalent*. It thus becomes—money [*Capital*, I, 180–81].

Commodity Owners and the Laws of Commodities

Marx describes the creation of money as resulting from the fact that "the natural laws of the commodity have manifested themselves in the natural instinct of the owners of commodities." In order to progress commodity exchange has to create a universal equivalent. It is not the will of commodity owners that charts the course they are to follow.

The case is rather that the logic implicit in exchange hints at the creation of a universal equivalent; commodity owners perceive the hint and carry it out. In their own relationships among themselves commodity owners are owned by commodities. What has decisive power over relationships between human beings is the impetus toward commodity exchange and the refusal to organize the production of goods as a function of collective work by common agreement. Here what seems to be a social act is the a posteriori confirmation of a refusal to act. Money is the supreme symbol of this refusal of human beings to take responsibility for the results of their actions.

This analysis of money leads Marx once more to the critique of religion. Now it is money that appears as a being endowed with the attributes of a conscious subject. But in contrast to the subjectivity of commodities, among which there is no hierarchy, money appears as something more eminent, as the king of the commodity world. It is not any commodity whatsoever but the one that stands above the rest, although any commodity may be converted into money. It is the gateway to commodities, through which their value is confirmed. Seeing this lordship on the part of money as derived from the refusal of human beings to put production at their own service, Marx continues with a reference to the book of Revelation:

Then they will come to agreement and bestow their power and authority on the beast [Rev. 17:13].

Moreover, it did not allow a man to buy or sell anything unless he was first marked with the name of the beast or with the number that stood for its name [Rev. 13:17].

Money now appears as the beast that has caused humankind to lose its freedom. Marx's full text in fact makes two references to Christianity: at the end, the reference to the beast of Revelation; at the beginning, a reference to the first line of John's Gospel but changed as in Goethe's *Faust*. Both references are surprising.

The first line of John's Gospel reads, "In the beginning was the Word"; in Goethe's *Faust* it was changed to "In the beginning was the deed." Marx takes Goethe's shift from the original and notes that it thus exactly describes what happens with commodity producers. They act before thinking; the commodity world does the thinking. Producers carry out the orders of commodities. The refusal of freedom is at once a refusal to think about one's actions, a refusal to accept responsibility for the consequences of those actions, and the acceptance of a situation in which the unintended effects of one's activity set limits to the possibility of intentional activity. If "in the beginning is action," freedom is lost, and a false world is created. In this way Marx justifies, with regard to Goethe, the original meaning of John's statement "In the beginning was the Word"—that is, conscious action for which the agent assumes responsibility with all its consequences.

The other reference to Christianity in the text links the commodity world, and specifically money, with the apocalyptic tradition of the beast and therefore of the Antichrist. Marx sees the religious world, which appears as a reflection from behind the commodity world, as the world of the beast, the Antichrist—that is, the antihuman. The reference is not coincidental but returns at other key points in his analysis, especially when he analyzes value and capital, at which point there is another reference to the sign on the forehead. About value he says: "Value, therefore, does not have its description branded on its forehead; it rather transforms every product of labor into a social hieroglyphic" (*Capital*, I, 167). Of capital he says, "As the chosen

people bore in their features the sign that they were the property of Jehovah, so the division of labor brands the manufacturing worker as the property of capital" (*Capital*, I, 482).

This reference to the brand on the forehead appears at all the crucial points in the analysis of commodities: value, money, capital. In the analysis of money, Marx connects this illusion directly with the beast of Revelation, the Antichrist.

Obviously Marx is seeking to defend human beings against the religious fetishization of their own works. But the logic of his argument leads him to denounce the antihuman created by fetishization as an Antichrist and to present his defense of humankind as also a vindication of Christ the Son of Man. He affirms as his own the Christian tradition of denouncing the Antichrist. He even goes so far as to make his own the interpretation of the Jewish law as the transformation of the chosen people into the property of Jehovah and of Christianity as liberation from this law. But he adds a new fall on the part of Christianity into another law, which makes it the property of the commodity world, money, and capital.

Marx thus situates himself in a particular Christian tradition. The many quotes from Luther in *Capital* prove that he is aware of what he is doing. He obviously knows that Christianity sees itself as negating—and never as affirming—the Antichrist. Marx also sees his own critique of fetishism as a negation of the Antichrist but not of the Christ. His analysis of commodities nevertheless leads him to state that the negation of the Antichrist is not the Christ—as the religious consciousness sees him—but rather humankind living with human relationships under its conscious control. He accordingly concludes that the negation of the Antichrist as the affirmation of humankind had to be at the same time the negation of religious existence and any sort of transcendence.

But the critique of money fetishism is not just the denunciation of money as an antihuman force. By reason of this critique Marx's theory of value becomes a theory of values. Alongside labor-value there appear the ethical values that go along with commodity production. This kind of production comes into being because it permits a division of labor more complex than that possible in a division of labor without commodities, based simply on a common agreement over the production and distribution of goods. However, commodity production implies a loss of human freedom in the sense that it is a refusal to accept responsibility for the consequences of human activity. In order for there to be commodity production, commodity logic has to dictate the social values that will direct human behavior. Human beings cannot tell the world of commodities what the laws of their behavior should be; rather they have to deduce their own laws from the laws governing the behavior of commodities:

Commodities cannot themselves go to market and perform exchanges in their own right. We must, therefore, have recourse to their guard-

ians, who are the *possessors of commodities*. Commodities are things, and therefore lack the power to resist man. If they are unwilling, he can use force; in other words, he can take possession of them. In order that these objects may enter into relation with each other as commodities, their guardians must place themselves in relation to one another as *persons* whose *will* resides in those objects, and must behave in such a way that each does not appropriate the commodity of the other, and alienate his own, except through an act to which both parties consent. The guardians must therefore recognize each other as owners of private property. This *juridical relation*, whose form is the contract, whether as part of a developed legal system or not, is a relation *between two wills* that mirrors the economic relation. The *content* of this *juridical relation* (or relation of two *wills*) is itself determined by the economic relation. Here the persons exist for one another merely as representatives and hence *owners, of commodities* [*Capital*, I, 178–79; italics added].

Commodities and the Laws of Social Behavior

Commodities not only think for human beings but dictate to them the laws governing their behavior: commodities think up money and human beings confirm the thought by creating money; they think up capital and human beings confirm it by creating capitalist relationships of production. It is always by picking up hints from the commodity world that human beings find out what their behavior should be. If the commodity world is to exist, persons have to accept a basic norm: private property and mutual respect among persons as property owners. But private property is only the basis for another basic norm: the contract as the medium whereby the ownership of commodities changes hands. The validity of a contract does not depend on whether the two owners survive its fulfillment but simply on its legal validity. Human life itself is subordinated to the life of commodities.

The text just quoted is especially interesting inasmuch as it contains a key formulation of historical materialism, prescinding from the concept of the superstructure. It interrelates commodity production, the property system, the legal system, and values relating to human behavior, taking as its starting point the necessity of commodity production. This is the precondition for the development of the division of labor and as such it becomes the determining factor for the other elements. Inasmuch as it is the precondition for the development of the division of labor, it becomes the determining element; as it does so, human beings have to subject themselves to the conditions of commodity production. They receive orders from outside by interpreting how commodity relationships are developing. Legal relationships—therefore the state—and the values governing human behavior will not be defined from person to person but by the exigencies of life and the dynamic of commodity relationships. These latter point the way: as commodity producers they have

no choice but to follow. Human beings become “representatives . . . of commodities.”

Between productive forces, the division of labor, legal relationships, and norms of behavior, there is what may be called a relationship of implication. The dynamism of productive forces implies the necessity of commodity relationships as a precondition for the greater complexity of the division of labor; and from commodity relationships and their state of development are derived legal relationships and norms of behavior. Commodity relationships are the crucial factor for determining the property system, the legal and state system, and the system of behavioral norms. Religious systems could also be added. Commodity relationships are likewise the reference point for the formulation of a human life in which the will of producers is not focused on commodities but on a human way of relating to one another.

To designate this relationship of implication Marx uses the term “reflection.” The legal relationship reflects the economic relationship. He obviously does not mean reflection in the sense of a pure reflection, as the word “superstructure” might suggest. It is rather an implication that is decisive for commodity production itself. The point is not that one is more important than the other but that commodity production predetermines the framework that limits what can enter into human wills. It is human beings who make commodity relationships work; but as they do so they absorb the norms governing their own relationships among themselves from the relationships existing between commodities.

Commodity relationships not only set down the rules for social relationships between human beings. Dating from the appearance of money at the very latest, human destiny itself is interpreted on the basis of commodity relationships. The values that propel commodity development are seen to come from money. It is precisely money that paves the way for a change in human perspectives. Columbus said it clearly in the letter quoted by Marx: “Gold is a wonderful thing. Its owner is master of all he desires. Gold can even enable souls to enter Paradise.” If this is true, human destiny clearly becomes a matter of “seeking gold.” Marx describes such a person: “As the hart pants after fresh water, so pants his soul after money, the only wealth” (*Capital*, I, 236).

Earlier in his analysis Marx had shown money to be the master of the world of commodities because money confirmed them as commodities. It is the gate through which all commodities have to pass. From the viewpoint of the money owner, however, it is the gate through which one may arrive at all commodities, and may convert everything into a commodity:

Since money does not reveal what has been transformed into it, everything, commodity or not, is convertible into money. Everything becomes saleable and purchaseable. Circulation becomes the great social retort into which everything is thrown, to come out again as the money crystal. Nothing is immune from this alchemy, the bones of the saints

cannot withstand it, let alone more delicate *res sacrosanctae, extra commercium hominum*. Just as in money every qualitative difference between commodities is extinguished, so too for its part, as a radical leveler, it extinguishes all distinctions [*Capital*, I, 229].³

The Infinite Instinct for Hoarding and Its Finite Possibilities

Money makes it possible to break the unity between buying and selling in barter. In order to do this money must become the depository of value as such, which can be changed into any other use-value or service-value. (The fact that value is always the value of the product that has been produced, and nothing more, goes unperceived.) What money can buy seems infinite. However, this infinity is continually frustrated and has an inherent limit:

The hoarding drive is boundless in its nature. *Qualitatively* or formally considered, money is independent of all limits, that is, it is the universal representative of material wealth because it is directly convertible into any other commodity. But at the same time every actual sum of money is limited *in amount*, and therefore has only a limited efficacy as a means of purchase. This contradiction between the quantitative limitation and the qualitative lack of limitation of money keeps driving the hoarder back to his Sisyphean task: *accumulation*. He is in the same situation as a world conqueror who discovers a new boundary with each country he annexes [*Capital*, I, 230–31].

Money as wealth takes on the nature of “autonomous embodiments and expressions of the social character of wealth” (*Capital*, III, 707). Marx continues: “This social existence that it has thus appears as something beyond, as a thing, object or commodity outside and alongside the real elements of social wealth” (*ibid.*).

It is in this aspect of transcendence, of being something beyond, that Marx finds a physical-metaphysical reflection relating to money. He states that “from the standpoint of simple commodity production,” the vocation of bourgeois society was “the formation of permanent hoards, which neither moth nor rust could destroy” (*Contribution*, 158). “But since in bourgeois production, wealth as a fetish must be crystalized in a particular substance, gold and silver are its appropriate embodiment” (*ibid.*, 155).

There is an aspect of limited infinity here: “The appropriation of wealth in its general form therefore implies renunciation of the material reality of wealth” (*ibid.*, 128).

Accordingly, “the perishable content is thus sacrificed to the nonperishable form” (*ibid.*, 129). “The hoarder of money scorns the worldly, temporal, and ephemeral enjoyments in order to chase after the eternal treasure which can be touched neither by moths nor by rust, and which is wholly celestial and wholly mundane” (*ibid.*).

The result is a religious option: “insofar as the hoarder of money combines asceticism with assiduous diligence he is intrinsically a Protestant by religion and still more a Puritan” (ibid., 130).

To the extent the hoarder aims at the eternal form of the hoard rather than at its perishable content, the whole process takes on a character of infinity:

The formation of hoards therefore has no intrinsic limits, no bounds in itself, but is an unending process, each particular result of which provides an impulse for a new beginning. . . . After all, movement of exchange-value as such, as an automaton, can only be expansion of its quantitative limits. But in passing one set of quantitative limits of the hoard new restrictions are set up, which in turn must be abolished. What appears as a restriction is not a particular limit of the hoard, but any limitation of it [*Contribution*, 132].

This money with its unlimited horizon is really always limited because it is the expression of social labor in relation to commodities. There is no way to buy more than has been produced and each money owner can never have more than a part of this total. This is so because “money is itself a commodity, an external object capable of becoming the private property of any individual. Thus the social power becomes the private power of private persons” (*Capital*, I, 229–30).

There arises an image of infinity connected to money and the power associated with it, not only because everything produced seems purchasable, but the producers themselves and indeed the whole world seem purchasable. Hoarding or accumulating seem to be the precondition for having access to everything; and beyond the limit of all that is possible there appears the reflection of transcendent infinity. “Gold can even enable souls to enter Paradise.” Marx quotes Shakespeare:

Gold? Yellow, glittering, precious gold? . . .
 Thus much of this will make black, white; foul, fair;
 Wrong, right; base, noble; old, young; coward, valiant.
 . . . What this, you gods? Why this
 Will lug your priests and servants from your sides,
 Pluck stout men’s pillows from below their heads;
 This yellow slave
 Will knit and break religions; bless the accursed;
 Make the hoar leprosy adored; place thieves,
 And give them title, knee, and approbation,
 With senators on the bench; this is it,
 That makes the wappen’d widow wed again;
 . . . Come damned earth,
 Thou common whore of mankind
 [*Timon of Athens*, act 4, scene 3; *Capital*, I, 230, n. 42].

Money can be transformed into such a means of access to everything once buying and selling are separated and money thereby becomes the depository of value and therefore the gateway to all values:

In this way, hoards of gold and silver of the most various sizes are piled up at all the points of commercial intercourse. With the possibility of keeping hold of the commodity as exchange-value, the lust for gold awakens [*Capital*, I, 229].

Avarice transforms the image of infinity associated with money into the motivation to possess it, and therefore into the kind of behavior necessary for attaining it:

In order that gold may be held as money, and made to form a hoard, it must be prevented from circulating, or from dissolving into the *means of purchasing* enjoyment. The hoarder therefore sacrifices the lusts of his flesh to the fetish of gold. He takes the gospel of abstinence very seriously. On the other hand, he cannot withdraw any more from circulation, in the shape of money, than he has thrown into it, in the shape of commodities. The more he produces, the more he can sell. Work, thrift, and greed are therefore his three cardinal virtues, and to sell much and buy little is the sum of his political economy [*ibid.*, 231].

A recognition of the infinite dimension of money leads to the appreciation of a whole catalog of virtues necessary for the dynamism of commodity relationships. These virtues become the moving force of commodity relationships. In their reflection in religion these virtues become sacralized. The fact that these virtues derive from the fetish of money and are in fact reversals and inversions of human virtues was developed by Bertolt Brecht in his work *The Seven Sins of the Petty Bourgeois*, which revolves around the relationships of two Annas. The sins of the one are the virtues of the other and vice versa.

As a type the hoarder is a person who can get values out of circulation only to the extent they were previously put in. But in another form, the hoarder becomes more significant:

The professional hoarder only becomes important when he transforms himself into a money-lender [*Capital*, III, 728].

In place of the old exploiter, whose exploitation was more or less patriarchal, since it was largely a means of political power, we have a hard, money-grubbing upstart [*ibid.*, 731].

Usury seems to live in the pores of production, like the gods in Epicurus's *intermundia* [*ibid.*, 733].

Usury, just like trade, exploits a given mode of production but does not create it; both relate to the mode of production from outside. Usury

seeks directly to maintain this mode of production, so as constantly to exploit it anew; it is conservative, and simply makes the mode of production more wretched [ibid., 745].

It is only where and when the other conditions for the capitalist mode of production are present that usury appears as one of the means of formation of this new mode of production, by ruining the feudal lords and petty production on the one hand, and by centralizing the conditions of labor on the other [ibid., 732].

But when the necessary conditions are present, the hoarder's virtues become what impels a change in the system of production. It is only the nature of the capitalist system of production, which is on the horizon, that makes possible this role for hoarding. Precapitalist society still mistrusts these hoarder's virtues. In many ways it limits the scope of commodity relationships. "Ancient society denounced it as the coin corroding its economic and moral order," said Marx, speaking of the way money was regarded in antiquity, and he could have said something similar about the Middle Ages (cf. *Capital*, I, 230). Capitalist society, on the other hand, is different: "it greets gold as its Holy Grail, as the glittering incarnation of its innermost principle of life" (ibid.). And he adds:

This boundless drive for enrichment, this passionate chase after value, is common to the capitalist and the miser; but while the miser is merely a capitalist gone mad, the capitalist is a rational miser. The ceaseless augmentation of value, which the miser seeks to attain by saving his money from circulation, is achieved by the more acute capitalist by means of throwing his money again and again into circulation [*Capital*, I, 254].

In both cases they seek "to approach, by quantitative increase, as near as possible to absolute wealth" [ibid., 252].

Behind all these movements Marx always sees a contradiction: commodity relationships create goals infinitely far away and yet the commodity producer wishes to approach them with finite steps. "Absolute wealth" (which the producer wants to approach step by step by quantitatively increasing wealth, which is necessarily limited) is the sum total of all qualities in the world, and even "the beyond," and those qualities are objects of the greed for piling up money. Thus commodity relationships and their associated reflections change the human being into a Sisyphus, into a conqueror whose conquests lead only to new frontiers, who makes into the greatest virtues the norms of behavior appropriate to this race. One runs toward a goal that is only the externalizing of one's own interiority. One formulates the goals in such a way that they can never be reached. The real infinity one is pursuing is nothing but an association of free human beings but it is presented in such a way that any step toward the goal as proposed leads one further from what really sparks

the quest. The real object of the quest would be human unity, but the hoarder makes the continual breakup of this unity the means to attain it.

The reflection of infinity behind money is therefore nothing but a bad infinity, as Hegel calls it.

Internalizing Values through an Object of Worship: "In God We Trust"

From this point there flows not only a theory of values but a theory of how values are internalized. Behind money is the infinity it promises to achieve. From this infinity may be deduced the values that must be served in pursuit of the goal. Because the goal is an infinite value, religious reflection enables it to be sacralized and thus made into an object of devotion. Seeking money becomes a work of devotion *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, and thereby makes the human subject fit for this endless race toward the infinity that money itself points to. In this way the fetish of money is an object of devotion. Through such a relationship of devotion persons internalize the values appropriate to the kind of activity involved in seeking money. With such a fetish created and such a relationship of devotion established, each dollar bill may now be inscribed with "In God We Trust" and the Vatican bank can be named the Bank of the Holy Spirit.

The Sorcery of Creation from Nothing: Value as a Subject—Capital Fetishism

We have already shown in connection with the most simple categories of the capitalist mode of production and commodity production in general, in connection with commodities and money, the mystifying character that transforms the social relations for which the material elements of wealth serve as bearers in the course of production into properties of these things themselves (commodities), still more explicitly transforming the relation of production itself into a thing (money). All forms of society are subject to this distortion insofar as they involve commodity production and monetary circulation. In the capitalist mode of production, however, where capital is the dominant category and forms the specific relation of production, this bewitched and distorted world develops much further [*Capital*, III, 965].

The starting point for capital is money. As commodity and money relationships widen their scope, capital comes to include not only the means of production but also labor. Labor becomes wage labor and the ownership of the means of production becomes capital. One consequence is the expropriation of small producers who from now on belong to capital even before capital buys their labor, and indeed even if it does not buy their labor, for they cannot guarantee their own subsistence except by selling their labor to capital.

As money becomes capital it becomes obvious how commodity relationships in their very workings are in a position to decide not merely how much of which material goods shall be produced but even whether producers will live or not. This is why producers belong to capital even prior to the purchase of their labor. The life or death of producers is in the hands of capital:

As the chosen people bore in their features the sign that they were the property of Jehovah, so the division of labor brands the manufacturing worker as the property of capital [*Capital*, I, 482].

That workers are the property of capital even prior to the purchase of their labor is a reflection of the fact that at this point there is a class relationship within capitalist commodity relationships. Our previous analysis of commodity and money fetishism did not run into the problem of social classes, because in precapitalist societies, class relationships take shape outside the realm of commodity relationships. The producer and the owner of commodities are presumed to be the same person. Commodity relationships affect these producer-owners but the externalizing of what they have within them does not lead to the power of one class over another. The power of some persons over others does not become class power, except in a minor way.

Capital fetishism therefore has two faces: the face seen by workers, who belong to capital and who are—when capital buys their labor—commodity producers; and the face seen by the commodity owner who is also the possessor of capital.

Capital as Seen from Below

Taking Away Life by Taking Away the Means of Life

It is the workers who see and experience capital from below. This means not only factory workers but all those whose life belongs to capital, because capital is the owner of their means of life. It means factory workers, landless peasants, the unemployed, and the outcast:

We have seen how this absolute contradiction does away with all repose, all fixity, and all security as far as the worker's life situation is concerned; how it constantly threatens, by taking away the instruments of labor, to snatch from his hands the means of subsistence, and, by suppressing his specialized function, to make him superfluous. We have seen, too, how this contradiction bursts forth without restraint in the ceaseless human sacrifices required from the working class, in the reckless squandering of labor-powers, and in the devastating effects of social anarchy [*Capital*, I, 617–18].

And he adds a note quoting Shakespeare:

You take my life
 When you do take the means whereby I live
 [*Merchant of Venice*, act 4, scene 1; *Capital*, I, 618, n. 30].

This sense of belonging to capital is experienced more intensely where capital buys labor for large-scale industry. Here the confrontation is not experienced as being with the capitalist, who is usually not there to be seen, but with the machinery itself. Only in the machine is capital present as owning the worker. Although it is really only a tool it becomes something different—that is, a mechanism of production, whose organs are human beings (cf. *Capital*, I, 483). The worker who belongs to capital undergoes the experience of being converted into a part of some machinery. It is now the machinery that exercises the right to decide over the worker's life or death. All hope of life is placed in the machine:

There is here a technical unity in that all the machines receive their impulse simultaneously, and in an equal degree, from the pulsations of the common prime mover, which are imparted to them by the transmitting mechanism [*Capital*, I, 500].⁴

This machinery is an automaton, powered by a “self-acting prime mover” (ibid., 520). In reality it is a dead machine and its “self-acting prime mover” has its principle of life in the life of the worker:

Insofar as labor is productive activity directed to a particular purpose, insofar as it is spinning, weaving, or forging, etc., it raises the means of production from the dead merely by entering into contact with them, infuses them with life so that they become factors of the labor process, and combines with them to form new products [*Capital*, I, 308].

This is a reversal of the image wherein God, as the self-moved Prime Mover, gives life to the human being with the touch of a finger. Here the machine with its “prime mover” receives life through contact with the human being-worker. Thus its life process begins, comes to an end, and begins again with a resurrection from the dead:

Just as during their lifetime, that is to say during the labor process, they retain their shape independently of the product, so too after their death. The mortal remains of machines, tools, workshops, etc., always continue to lead an existence distinct from that of the product they helped to turn out [ibid., 311].

There are even graveyards for machines; they have a true life cycle: “The instrument suffers the same fate as the man. Every day brings a man twenty-four hours nearer to his grave” (ibid.). As capital, however, the machine is

immortal. When the machine becomes a corpse, the capital it contains passes to another:

While productive labor is changing the means of production into constituent elements of a new product, their value undergoes a metempsychosis. It deserts the consumed body to occupy the newly created one. But this transmigration takes place, as it were, behind the back of the actual labor in progress. The worker is *unable to add new labor*, to create new value, *without at the same time preserving old values* [ibid., 314–15; italics added].

Capital Sucking the Blood of Living Labor

The machine is mortal. In order for capital to attain immortality, it needs the bodies of new machines to become incarnate in them. Labor makes this immortalizing process possible but behind the really existing worker's back. This worker, however, is mortal. Capital therefore immortalizes the worker so it may continue to live:

The owner of labor-power is mortal. If then his appearance in the market is to be continuous, and the continuous transformation of money into capital assumes this, the seller of labor-power must perpetuate himself in the way that every living individual perpetuates himself, by procreation. The labor-power withdrawn from the market by wear and tear, and by death, must be continually replaced by, at the very least, an equal amount of fresh labor-power . . . in order that this race of peculiar commodity-owners may perpetuate its presence on the market [*Capital*, I, 275].

If capital is to live, the worker must be kept alive. Capital gets its life from the worker and therefore has to keep the worker alive in order to stay alive itself. But although it is capital that ensures that the workers will live, it is concerned about that life only to the extent necessary for the worker's perpetuation. The number of workers allowed to perpetuate themselves, and accordingly the means of subsistence allotted to them, is calculated on the basis of the number of workers needed by capital. The misery of those left out does not enter into the calculation made by the capital, despite the fact that it has a monopoly on their means of life.

Capital, living off the life of workers in this manner, threatens them with death. Capital guarantees the life only of those workers necessary for its own life process. It therefore changes into an all-powerful force, capable of pouncing on and battering the worker at any moment. Thus, the "transformation of the process of production also appears as a martyrology for the producer" (*Capital*, I, 638). This is expressed in two ways. First, there is a tendency to extract more and more from labor:

Owing to its conversion into an automaton, the instrument of labor confronts the worker during the labor process *in the shape of capital*, dead labor, which dominates and soaks up living labor-power [*Capital*, I, 548].

This treatment goes from torture to murder:

Even the lightening of the labor becomes an instrument of torture, since the machine does not free the worker from the work, but rather deprives the work itself of all content [ibid.].

Second, “the instrument of labor kills the worker” (cf. *Capital*, I, 559). What was seen, in the case of commodity fetishism, as the enchanted world of commodities entering into social relationships with each other, now becomes a witches’ Saturday night, a Walpurgis Night. As they struggle among themselves, commodities threaten the life of those who produce them. When artificial nitrates defeat natural nitrates, hundreds of thousands of persons are condemned to misery. Whole regions and countries are devastated by this battle between commodities:

[Cheap machine-made cotton yarn] led to a great flow of people into cotton weaving until the steam-powered loom overwhelmed the 800,000 cotton weavers who had been given life by the jenny, the throstle, and the mule [*Capital*, I, 572].

The struggle between labor and capital is connected to this battle among commodities, and between commodities and the persons who produce them. Capital hides behind machines and uses them as battle weapons:

But machinery does not just act as a superior competitor to the worker, always on the point of making him superfluous. It is a *power inimical to him*, and capital proclaims this fact loudly and deliberately, as well as making use of it. It is the most powerful weapon for suppressing strikes, those periodic revolts of the working class against the *autocracy* of capital. According to Gaskell, the steam engine was from the very first an antagonist of “human power,” an antagonist that enabled the capitalists to tread underfoot the growing demands of the workers, which threatened to drive the infant factory system into crisis [ibid., 562–63].

Marx continues:

It would be possible to write a whole history of the inventions made since 1830 for the sole purpose of providing capital with weapons against working-class revolt [*Capital*, I, 563].

It is not just that specific inventions and the machines based on them are given life in order to put workers to death—the same may be said for all machines taken as a whole:

But in time the old capital itself reaches the point where it has to be renewed in all its aspects, a time when it sheds its skin and is reborn like the other capitals in a perfected technical shape, in which a smaller quantity of labor will suffice to set in motion a larger quantity of machinery and raw material [ibid., 755–56].

A tendency toward increasing unemployment is unleashed and the number of workers who cannot sell their labor even though they belong to capital keeps growing. “Redundant populations” are created and their chances for survival diminish:

By the destruction of small-scale and domestic industries . . . *capitalism* destroys the last resorts of the “redundant population,” thereby removing what was previously a safety valve for the whole social mechanism [ibid., 635].

However, technology in itself does not cause these tendencies. Rather it is its transformation into capital that makes it act this way. Capital creates these redundant populations and then offers itself as the solution for the problem it has created. Although in reality the “true limit of capitalist production is capital itself,” the opposite impression is now created. The growing number of “redundant” persons, now reaching catastrophic proportions in the whole capitalist world, seems to evidence a huge capital shortage. More and more, any workers who get a secure factory job seem to be the lucky ones, having found capital willing to take advantage of their life and therefore allow them to live. All others belong to capital but cannot live from it, because capital does not need them for its own life.

Capital seems to be the great fount of life—even of eternal life; the reason for misery seems to be capital shortage. The real problem, however, is quite different: the means of production should be stripped of their character as capital: capital is made to seem, and presents itself, as the only solution for the problem it has created.

Marx refers to this problem with an allusion to the world of religion:

Just as man is governed, in religion, by the products of his own brain, so, in capitalist production, he is governed by the products of his own hand [*Capital*, I, 772].

This statement may also be reversed. Just as in capitalist production human beings are enslaved by the products of their own hands, they project

this slavery onto a religious world, in which they are dominated by products emanating from their own brains.

Capital as Seen from Above

The Sorcery of Creation from Nothing: Value as a Subject

Those who look at capital from above are its owners. Being capital owners, they are the owners of the means of life for everyone else. Inasmuch as ownership of the means of life implies having control over life itself, everyone's life is in their hands. Nevertheless they do not thereby control the situation. Nor do capital owners themselves really direct how capital should be used. On this point Marx makes his own the opinion of traditional economics:

If in the eyes of classical economics, the proletarian is merely a machine for the production of surplus value, the capitalist too is merely a machine for the transformation of this surplus value into surplus capital [*Capital*, I, 742].

It is in this function that capitalists form their particular image of the world, their "religion of everyday life" (*Capital*, III, 969). In this religion of theirs capital is the fount of life; the fact that the life that capital has is drawn from labor goes unnoticed. It is capital itself that seems to be the great creator of value. Although it is a surplus value created by labor, the capitalist sees capital in a different way: the worker "creates surplus value which, for the capitalist, has all the charms of something created out of nothing" (*ibid.*, 325). Marx writes:

In truth . . . value is here the subject of a process in which, while constantly assuming the form in turn of money and commodities, it changes its own magnitude, throws off surplus value from itself considered as original value, and thus *valorizes itself independently*. . . . By virtue of being value, it has acquired the occult ability to add value to itself. It brings forth living offspring, or at least lays golden eggs [*Capital*, I, 255].

Behind the world of commodity-subjects, there now appears the great subject—value—that valorizes itself. It is the true subject that stands over the commodity world and effects a continuous creation from nothing as proof of its own legitimacy. It is the miracle-working subject of this religion of everyday life. Value-as-subject has as its horizon infinite growth toward the future, and so it is basically different from the hoarding type of growth. By comparison with this kind of capitalist accumulation, hoarding is a "barbaric form of production for the sake of production" (*Contribution*, 134).

In hoarding, growth is limited by the size of the present total product and it

does not spur the dynamism of productive forces. By contrast, growth in value is limited only by the potential for the growth of labor productivity in an unlimited future. Value is this potential and is thus the fount of life:

All the powers of labor project themselves as powers of capital, just as all the value-forms of the commodity do as forms of money [*Capital*, I, 756].

The human horizon, stretching to infinity toward the past and toward the future, is now viewed as the horizon of value valorizing itself, and hence as capital. Or as Paul Samuelson puts it:

First, let us survey the important economic role of capital. If men had to work with their hands on barren soil, productivity and consumption would be very low indeed. But gradually over time our economic system has been able to amass together a tremendous stock of instruments of production, of factories and housing, of goods in process [*Economics*, 42].

In Samuelson's view, goods in process, houses, fertile land—everything comes to us thanks to capital. Without capital we would still be living in the trees. All human creativity is subsumed under the heading of capital, and labor is simply mechanical or bodily movements with no impetus of their own. Only capital has any such impetus.

From this same angle, the inherent power of capital that makes it into a fount of life comes to its most extreme expression when—in total abstraction from the concrete content of different kinds of labor and economic activities—value is conceived simply in terms of money, and as the source of further value. In Marx's words, "in interest-bearing capital, the capital relationship reaches its most superficial and fetishized form" [*Capital*, III, 515].

The procreation of value by value now seems to be a potency inherent in value; value itself seems to be the dynamic subject of everything:

Capital appears as a mysterious and self-creating source of interest, of its own increase. The *thing* (money, commodity, value) is now already capital simply as a thing; the result of the overall reproduction process appears as a property devolving on a thing in itself; it is up to the possessor of money, i.e., of commodities in their ever-exchangeable form, whether he wants to spend this money as money or hire it out as capital. In interest-bearing capital, therefore, this automatic fetish is elaborated into its pure form, self-valorizing value, money breeding money, and in this form it no longer bears any marks of its origin [*Capital*, III, 516].

Value now takes the place of labor:

As in the case of labor power, here the use-value of money is that of creating value, a greater value than is contained in itself. Money as such is already potentially self-valorizing value, and it is as such that it is lent, this being the form of sale for this particular commodity. Thus it becomes as completely the property of money to create value, to yield interest, as it is the property of a pear tree to bear pears [ibid.].

Money thus becomes the true source of value, the point where all human creativity is concentrated, and the source of life for any kind of labor. In itself labor is of an animal or mechanical nature and without the creative power of capital it would be left high and dry.

The various areas of human activity thus become spheres toward which this inherent creative force of money-capital is aimed in order to give them vital force. Although profit is really a surplus value taken from labor, and interest on capital is simply a share in overall profit, the appearance is rather that the opposite is true:

There is still a further distortion. While interest is simply one part of the profit, i.e., the surplus value, extorted from the worker by the functioning capitalist, it now appears conversely as if interest is the specific fruit of capital, the original thing, while profit, now transformed into the form of profit of enterprise, appears as a mere accessory and trimming added in the reproduction process. The fetish character of capital and the representation of this capital fetish is now complete [ibid.]. [This is] the capital mystification in the most flagrant form [cf. ibid.].

We can read this same thing again in Samuelson:

That is, we could express *all* property rent as payment of interest. From this viewpoint we could view national income as made up simply of *salaries and interest*.⁵

Milton Friedman goes even further. The whole product is seen as being the product of capital and what is the product of labor is seen as resulting from investment in labor power: "From a broad viewpoint, there is much to be said for regarding all sources of productive power as capital" [*Price Theory*, 200].

He defines capital:

The concept of capital which we shall employ is that which includes all sources of productive services. In the United States today there are three main categories of capital: (1) material capital, such as buildings

and machines, (2) human beings, (3) the stock of money [*Price Theory*, 245].

The productive services provided by the stock of money make possible the productive services of nonhuman and human capital, and the price of the source of these services may be expressed by means of the interest rate:

For example, given the wage rate or rent per machine per unit of time, the interest rate enables us to get the price of the source of these services [*ibid.*, 244].

Labor and machines provide productive services and both are accorded an income; the price of a worker or a machine is determined by the relationship of this income flow to capital. But whereas the machine can be bought and sold at this price, the human being can only be assessed at this price, inasmuch as slavery has been abolished. Hence Friedman adds to his definition:

The main distinction between (1) and (2) is that because of the existing institutional and social framework and because of imperfections in the capital market, we cannot expect human capital to respond to economic pressures and incentives in the same manner as material capital [*ibid.*, 245].

Because both kinds of capital have a price that is calculated on the basis of how the cost paid for them is turned into capital, human capital cannot be employed as rationally as nonhuman capital due to “the existing institutional and social framework”—that is, because slavery is out of the question.

Human freedom thus becomes an imperfection in the capitalist market. Capital now not only sucks the life of the worker but devours the soul as well.

Money, by Love Possessed

In the furthest stretches of his imagination Marx did not anticipate the capital fetishism of Friedman. Fetishism as he saw it was more along Samuelson's lines. Capital and labor remain distinct but capital is the principle that gives life to labor. For Marx this life principle is essentially interest-bearing capital:

Capital is now a thing, but the thing is capital. The money's body is now by love possessed.⁶ As soon as it is lent, or else applied in the reproduction process . . . interest accrues to it no matter whether it is asleep or awake, at home or abroad, by day and by night. In interest-bearing capital, therefore (and all capital is money capital in its value expression, or is now taken as the expression of money capital), the hoarder's most fervent wish is realized [*Capital*, III, 517–18].

Marx points to the religious reflection associated with this phenomenon in terms used by religion teachers when they try to explain the essence of the Trinity to schoolchildren. This same sort of belief was probably held by the pious individuals who founded the Bank of the Holy Spirit in Rome:

[Value] differentiates itself as original value from itself as surplus value, just as God the Father differentiates himself from himself as God the Son, although both are of the same age and form, in fact one single person; for only by the surplus-value of 10 pounds sterling does the 100 pounds sterling originally advanced become capital, and as soon as this has happened, as soon as the son has been created and, through the son, the father, their difference vanishes again, and both become one, 110 pounds sterling [ibid., 256].

In the same sense Marx says of the colonial system:

It was the "strange God" who perched himself side by side with the old divinities of Europe on the altar, and one fine day threw them all overboard with a shove and a kick. It proclaimed the making of profit as the ultimate and sole purpose of mankind [ibid., 918].

With the change in God there is involved a change of the Holy Spirit:

And with the rise of national debt-making, lack of faith in the national debt takes the place of the sin against the Holy Ghost, for which there is no forgiveness [ibid., 919].

Marx speaks similarly, of the "trinitarian formula":

Capital-profit (or better still capital-interest) land-ground-rent, labor-wages, this economic trinity . . . completes the mystification of the capitalist mode of production . . .: the bewitched, distorted and upside-down world haunted by Monsieur le Capital and Madame la Terre, who are at the same time social characters and mere things [ibid., 969].

Marx is here reversing the allusions to the Trinity favored by conservative eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers such as Joseph de Maistre. Naturally for them the First Person was always the Land.

The whole mystique of money can be unveiled in this way. During the nineteenth century stock exchanges were built like churches. Biblical allusions appeared more frequently on the financial pages of conservative newspapers than anywhere else.

Such references to the Bible were most common when the financial news

was about money—and they always appeared with news about the gold market. Underlying these phenomena was the same sort of reasoning that led to the inscription on the dollar bill, “In God We Trust.”

The fact that the hoarder’s most devout desire is fulfilled in interest-bearing capital leads to “amazing fancies,” which “leave far behind the fantasies of the alchemists.” Marx quotes two examples. The first is from a Doctor Price:

Money bearing compound interest increases at first slowly. But, the rate of increase being continually accelerated, it becomes in some time so rapid as to mock all the powers of the imagination. One penny, put out at our Savior’s birth to 5 percent compound interest, would, before this time, have increased to a greater sum than would be contained in a hundred and fifty millions of earths, all solid gold [*Capital*, III, 519].

A shilling put out to 6 percent compound interest at our Savior’s birth (presumably in the Temple of Jerusalem—Marx) would . . . have increased to a greater sum than the whole solar system could hold, supposing it a sphere equal in diameter to the diameter of Saturn’s orbit [*ibid.*, 520].

The other example comes from *The Economist*:

Capital, with compound interest on every portion of capital saved, is so all-engrossing that all the wealth in the world from which income is derived, has long ago become the interest of capital. . . . All rent is now the payment of interest on capital previously invested in the land [*ibid.*, 521].

Marx comments:

Interest-bearing capital . . . displays the conception of the capital fetish in its consummate form, the idea that ascribes to the accumulated product of labor, in the fixed form of money at that, the power for producing surplus value in geometric progression by way of an inherent secret quality, as a pure automaton, so that this accumulated product of labor, as *The Economist* believes, has long since discounted the whole world’s wealth for all time, as belonging to it by right and rightfully coming its way [*ibid.*, 523–24].

Interest-bearing capital is here linked with infinite quantity. Gold and money are greater than the sun; the starting point for the calculation is always “from the birth of Christ,” or “from the birth of our Redeemer.” Self-valorizing value, however, links us with the sun, which is pure gold.

In Samuelson the conception of capital producing interest toward infinity and eternity is similar. He speaks of how money is loaned so that “it is certain

to pay . . . the *same* number of dollars each year from now until *eternity*” (*Economics*, 571)⁷—that is, *per saecula saeculorum*.

The nineteenth-century writers at least limited themselves to speaking of the period from the birth of Christ until today, but Samuelson claims interest payments for all eternity. Poor Christopher Columbus wanted to buy eternity for souls in purgatory with gold; now any lender has what Columbus wanted.

After 999 Years, a Day of Judgment

In his definition Samuelson links quantitatively limited capital with a qualitative infinity, but without making use of geometric progression. He does, however, speak of a geometric progression elsewhere in a manner just as far removed from concrete reality as do the writers quoted by Marx:

The farther off in the future a given dollar receipt is, the less it is worth today. . . . A building far off looks tiny because of spacial perspective. The interest rate produces a similar shrinking of time perspective. Even if I knew you would pay \$1 to my heirs 999 years from now, I should be foolish to advance you more than a cent today [*Economics*, 587].

To avoid the absurd character of the examples cited by Marx, Samuelson reverses the vision of geometric progression. He asks how much a dollar payable in 999 years would be worth and answers that it would not be worth much, because of the time perspective, which to his mind means interest. But this is a formalistic answer; rather than solving the problem, it simply camouflages it. If a dollar payable in 999 years is not worth much today, a dollar deposited today at even a low interest rate would be worth a lot in 999 years. If Samuelson were to discuss the matter, however, he would have to revise his theory of capital.

It is obvious that the future value of a deposit with long-range compound interest has nothing to do with the psychological perspective mentioned by Samuelson, or with any capital shortage. Interest is a form of income and the part of the total social income made up by interest payments can never be greater than the total income. In the long run, no part of total income may grow faster than income itself; hence, interest cannot do so. Thus if the growth of labor productivity is zero, the interest rate will also be zero. If the growth rate becomes positive, the interest rate can be positive. But it may never be greater—in the long run—than the rate of growth of labor productivity. Demographic growth is here being left aside; if it is included it contributes to a limitation of the interest rate. The interest rate is limited in the long run by these indicators, but it may easily remain below them. This point is obvious, indeed almost trivial.

Samuelson’s theory of interest, taking its place in a very long tradition, contradicts this obvious and almost trivial point; interest seems to be as eternal as capital itself. But because interest has these objective limitations,

neither the psychological perspective, nor a relative capital shortage, nor the period of maturity, nor abstinence (postponement of expenditures so as to accumulate capital) can provide even a minimal explanation of the amount of interest.

After Samuelson's mysterious 999 years in which capital has been held in deposit, the Millennium arrives:

So we cannot rule out the pessimistic possibility of a future Day of Judgment, where the authorities would have to supplement the orthodox methods by which the central bank eases interest rates if they are to succeed in coaxing out the volume of job-creating investment needed to keep employment high or full [*Economics*, 590].

This "Day of Judgment" or "Day of Calamity"⁸ is the day when the interest rate is lowered to zero. Unemployment and redundant population are becoming a threat. It is the day of death: "A zero rate of interest is a little like an 'absolute zero of temperature' in physics" (*Economics*, 578). It is a case of death by entropy. The fount of life—capital—dries up.

Underlying this bourgeois economic theory is a philosophy of death. As long as capital struggles for high interest rates, it overcomes entropy and serves to guarantee life. However, the day will come when entropy will win out. Hence the life of capital has all the signs of a terminal illness.

Friedman discovers another kind of death: death from abundance. There is danger when goods are no longer scarce: "An economic problem exists whenever *scarce* means are used to satisfy *alternative* ends. If the means are not scarce there is no problem at all; there is Nirvana" [*Price Theory*, 6].

Friedman obviously cannot imagine any motive for which human beings might act except to make a profit by investing money. Should there be a life without scarcity, no one would invest money—and hence there would be no movement. It would be a happy death, in contrast with Samuelson's unhappy death on the Day of Judgment.

Nevertheless, a new attitude is perceptible even in Samuelson's words. He can speak of a "Day of Judgment" because it is necessary to "keep employment high or full." But why is it necessary? Samuelson does not answer. The answer is to be found in those movements that threaten capitalist society—that is, movements of the unemployed, the redundant, those who are exploited, who cannot be restrained within the traditional patterns of capitalist society. These movements are now denounced as "messianic movements." The Antimesiah is enthroned as Messiah and comes into the darkness to light the torch of capital. So it is not a Day of Judgment on capital but rather on these "messianic" movements, which have dared to claim for themselves the torch that Lucifer holds in his hand. The Antimesiah as Messiah is perhaps to this day the supreme expression of the religious reflection coming from capital fetishism. It arose during the 1930s in Europe and is reappearing today among the military dictatorships of Latin America.

Traveling by Telegraph

Capital fetishism is not limited simply to the mystification of value. Inasmuch as all the dynamism of human creativity and potential are present in the dynamism of value, capital claims for its future the highest dreams of humankind. This it does by projecting the process of technology toward an infinitely distant future. Norbert Wiener, the founder of cybernetics, tells us:

It is amusing as well as instructive to consider what would happen if we were to transmit the whole pattern of the human body, of the human brain with its memories and cross-connections, so that a hypothetical receiving instrument could reembody these messages in appropriate matter, capable of continuing the processes already in the body and the mind, and of maintaining the integrity needed for this continuation by a process of homeostasis [*Human Use*, 96].

He suggests that “the distinction between material transportation and message transportation is not in any theoretical sense permanent and unbridgeable” (*ibid.*, 98). A whole future is thereby deduced:

Let us then admit that the idea that one might conceivably travel by telegraph in addition to traveling by train or airplane is not intrinsically absurd, far as it may be from realization [*ibid.*, 110].

In other words, the fact that we cannot telegraph the pattern of a man from one place to another seems to be due to technical difficulties, and in particular, to the difficulty in keeping an organism in being during such a radical reconstruction. The idea itself is highly plausible [*ibid.*, 103-4].

This dream is thoroughly radical. It is presented as a future possibility thanks to technological progress. Such a dream involves the conquest of two principles: the principle of individuation (because, if a human being can be reconstructed by transmission, two or more copies of the same individual may be made) and the principle of mortality (because, in creating by transmission, infirmities may be avoided). No human dream is excluded from the future of technical progress.

Karl Popper sets out to relate this infinite technological horizon to the infinite horizon of capital. His starting point is scientific progress as a precondition for technological progress. He discovers a world of theories—what he calls the “third world”—where theories act upon each other and on human beings, as happens in commodity fetishism with its world of commodities. He also connects his horizon with infinity in the form of immortality. He tells us that behind the proposition “All human beings are mortal,” there is a particular theory, which he says is Aristotelian. He goes on to say:

This theory was refuted by the discovery that bacteria are not bound to die, since multiplication by fission is not death, and later by the realization that living matter is not in general bound to decay and die, although it seems that all forms can be killed with sufficiently drastic means. (Cancer cells, for example, can go on living.) [*Objective Knowledge*, 22].

Human infinity and immortality thereby become real prospects offered by scientific-technological progress. But this progress faces dangers from those who object to the capitalist form in which it takes place.

By first projecting the values of commodity production onto scientific progress, and replacing intersubjectivity with scientific progress, Popper shows that the future of scientific progress may be ensured only by stabilizing these values throughout society. These values are made to seem to derive from scientific progress; in fact, however, he first projected them onto such progress. Thus he can denounce critics of capitalist society as enemies of the open society. But since this open society is now a metaphysical being that enjoys exclusive access to human infinity, its enemies are opposing the very destiny of humankind in all its dimensions.

Capital fetishism thus projects capital as being indeed light in the darkness and the fount of eternal life. Capital is what guarantees infinity for human beings. However, the horizons are always infinitely far off and any progress toward them must be made with finite steps, and capital makes sure these steps are heading in the right direction. Economists see human beings approaching perfect competition; sociologists see them marching toward institutionalization with all due normality; technology designers see them on their way toward immortality.

Capital, sowing death on the earth, and taking its own life from life of human beings, radiates itself as the light for human beings, in a pitch-black infinit: "By its own inherent laws, all surplus labor that the human race can supply belongs to it. Moloch" [*Capital*, III, 521].

The Thralldom of Capital and the Realm of Freedom

The Ethics of Capital Accumulation

Catholic Money and Protestant Money

The hoarder seeks after gold and deduces norms of behavior or values from the religious reflection connected with gold. Capital seeks surplus value and capital possessors have deposited their own wills in the will of capital, which has become an autonomous subject. The capitalist, led along by the way capital moves, then imposes certain kinds of activity on the worker. For both capitalist and worker the fount of values is capital.

In the pursuit of surplus value capitalists risk their capital. This attitude differs from that of the hoarder, who trusts in the apparent security of gold stored away:

The Catholic fact that gold and silver as the direct embodiment of social labor, and therefore as the expression of abstract wealth, confront other profane commodities, has of course violated the Protestant code of honor of bourgeois economists [*Contribution*, 159].

The monetary system is essentially Catholic, the credit system is essentially Protestant. "The Scotch hate gold." As paper, the monetary existence of commodities has a purely social existence. It is *faith* that brings salvation. Faith in money value as the immanent spirit of commodities, faith in the mode of production and its predestined disposition, faith in the individual agents of production as mere personifications of self-valorizing capital. But the credit system is no more emancipated from the monetary system as its basis than Protestantism is from the foundations of Catholicism [*Capital*, III, 727].

One who risks capital to gain surplus value must make an act of faith in the conditions that guarantee the circulation from which augmented capital will return. One may no longer believe in something palpable—a lump of gold; faith gives immediate security.

There are different kinds of faith. There is (1) faith in money, which is the Holy Spirit immanent in the commodity world. If one's faith is great enough, paper money may be substituted for gold coin. Then there is (2) faith in the preestablished order of the relationships of production—faith that they will continue eternally; there is also (3) faith that the agents of production are, and will continue to be, personifications of capital and that it will not occur to them to reclaim their own personality.

The distinction Marx makes between Catholicism and Protestantism corresponds to the difference between mercantile capitalism and industrial capitalism. Obviously this distinction does not reflect any present-day differences between them. Today the faith has gone out everywhere.

After Catholic hoarding there came Protestant asceticism, basing itself on the faith that saves. Its attitudes were translated into certain behavioral norms imposed on workers:

The capital given in return for labor-power is converted into means of subsistence which have to be consumed to reproduce the muscles, nerves, bones, and brains of existing workers, and to bring new workers into existence. . . . *The individual consumption of the worker*, whether it occurs inside or outside the workshop, inside or outside the labor process, remains an aspect of the production and reproduction of capital, just as the cleaning of machinery does, whether it is done during the labor process or when intervals in that process permit. The fact that the worker performs acts of individual consumption in his own interest, and not to please the capitalist, is something entirely irrelevant to the matter. The consumption of food by a beast of burden does not become any less a necessary aspect of the production process because the beast enjoys what it eats [*Capital*, I, 718].

From this point derives the central value or virtue of the capitalist ethic: humility. It means accepting that one is a personification of capital rather than an individual and independent human being. It is humility that demands that the worker consume in order to carry out the function of increasing the value of capital. Humility gives the strength to do so.

Moreover this same humility is demanded of the capitalist, who must be willing to be transformed into a subject apt for the exigencies of capital accumulation. Capitalists cannot insist on having their own personality; they too must be a personification of capital:

It was of decisive importance for the bourgeois economists, when confronted with the habitual mode of life of the old nobility, which, as

Hegel rightly says, “consists in consuming what is available,” and is displayed in particular in the luxury of personal retainers, to promulgate the doctrine that the accumulation of capital is the first duty of every citizen, and preach unceasingly that accumulation is impossible if a man eats up all his revenue, instead of spending a good part of it on the acquisition of additional productive workers, who bring in more than they cost [*Capital*, I, 735].

This is the first step toward orienting income to saving, which then leads to the virtue or value of being willing to save:

On the other hand, the economists also had to contend against the popular prejudice which confuses capitalist production with hoarding. . . . The exclusion of money from circulation would constitute precisely the opposite of its valorization as capital, and accumulation of commodities in the sense of hoarding them would be sheer foolishness [ibid.].

Consuming by Refusing to Accumulate: The Puritan Entrepreneur

The virtue-value of saving is now supplanted by this other virtue-value, which risks the saved capital—in faith—in order to obtain capital augmented in the circulation process. Therefore “his own private consumption counts as a robbery committed against the accumulation of his capital, just as, in double entry bookkeeping, the private expenditure of the capitalist is placed on the debit side of his account against his capital” (*Capital*, I, 739).

Insofar as the capitalist is the personification of capital, the commandment that forbids stealing now demands that consumption be minimized and accumulation be maximized, because accumulation is service to the Beyond personified in capital.

This is Marx’s analysis of what would later be called the “Puritan entrepreneur.” Consumption seems to mean foregoing accumulation, which is the main object in life.

Accumulating by Refusing to Consume: The Modern Entrepreneur

Later on, the relationship seems to be reversed. Accumulation seems to be a refusal to consume:

But original sin is at work everywhere. With the development of the capitalist mode of production, with the growth of accumulation and wealth, the capitalist ceases to be merely the incarnation of capital. He

begins to feel a human warmth towards his own Adam, and his education gradually enables him to smile at his former enthusiasm for asceticism, as an old-fashioned miser's prejudice. While the capitalist of the classical type brands individual consumption as a sin against his function, as "abstinence" from accumulating, the modernized capitalist is capable of viewing accumulation as "renunciation" of pleasure [*Capital*, I, 740–41].

In point of fact the relationship between accumulation and consumption is not reversed, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. One now consumes to make accumulation possible. Consumption is not bound by too many restraints. Without consumption there will be no accumulation; hence there must be consumption for the sake of accumulation. When consumption is necessary, accumulation comes to be seen as a renunciation of consumption. Things are now seen in a reversal of the way the "Puritan entrepreneur" saw them:

All the conditions necessary for the labor process are now converted into acts of abstinence on the part of the capitalist. If the corn is not all eaten, but in part also sown—abstinence of the capitalist. If the wine gets time to mature—abstinence of the capitalist. The capitalist robs himself whenever he "lends (!) the instruments of production to the worker," in other words, whenever he valorizes their value as capital by incorporating labor-power into them instead of eating them up, steam engines, cotton, railways, manure, horses, and all; or, as the vulgar economist childishly conceives, instead of dissipating "their value" in luxuries and other articles of consumption. How the capitalist class can perform the latter feat is a secret which vulgar economics has so far obstinately refused to divulge. Enough that the world continues to live solely through the self-chastisement of this modern penitent of Vishnu, the capitalist [ibid., 744–45].

As Samuelson puts it:

To the extent that people are willing to save—to abstain from present consumption and wait for future consumption—to that extent society can devote resources to new capital formation [*Economics*, 49].

From the viewpoint of "Puritan entrepreneurs" all income from capital should go toward capital accumulation; they mortified themselves in order to tear off the part they consumed. From Samuelson's viewpoint things are the other way around: any income legitimately belongs to consumption and capitalists mortify themselves when they tear off a part for the accumulation process. From this perspective all humankind is eager to consume and devour the whole world and even itself, but capital as a civilizing force creates

sufficient incentives for persons to restrain themselves. Those who share this view see human beings with their devouring tendency heading toward chaos, but capital comes along to maintain order. The logic of consumption seems to lead to the destruction of human beings, but saving humanizes them.

In fact, for the capitalist, the reversal of the relationship between consumption and accumulation is merely apparent. Consumption continues to be “original sin,” the “great temptation” that leads to ruin. Hell is a kind of “huge gluttony” that goes on because capital ceases to maintain its ascetic attraction. This attraction, present in capitalist society, is a muted “call” from capital to the sphere of accumulation, backed by the economic incentive of interest. Marx writes:

When a certain stage of development has been reached, a conventional degree of prodigality, which is also an exhibition of wealth, and consequently a source of credit, becomes a business necessity to the “unfortunate” capitalist. Luxury enters into capital’s expenses of representation. . . . Thus although the expenditure of the capitalist never possesses the *bona fide* character of the dashing feudal lord’s prodigality, but, on the contrary, is always restrained by the sordid avarice and anxious calculation lurking in the background, this expenditure nevertheless grows with his accumulation, without the one necessarily restricting the other [*Capital*, I, 741].

Consequently maximizing consumption becomes compatible with maximizing accumulation, and the conflict between them is seen to be in appearance only. There can be more accumulation only if there is more consumption at the same time, and consumption increases only when the effort to accumulate is increased. It was not really different even in the age of the “Puritan entrepreneurs.” They could consume because another social class, the wealthy English landed aristocracy, consumed a great deal. But when a high level of industrial capital had been reached, the consumption needed to provide a market for capitalist industrialization had to be provided more and more by industrial capital itself.

It is interesting to note how Samuelson perceives this fact. From his viewpoint it seems to be a paradox. He says that “paradoxically . . . the more people spend on consumption, the greater the incentive for businessmen to build new factories and equipment” (*Economics*, 49, n. 5).

The utterly obvious seems to be a paradox. (What is really paradoxical is the existence of a theory of capital such as Samuelson’s, which has to explain all phenomena in this world as exceptions to the rule and therefore as paradoxes.)

Consuming but Not Enjoying

The capitalist now turns into a Faust who vows to consume a great deal but never enjoy anything. Inasmuch as those who are doing the consuming are

personifications of capital, everything they consume becomes “capital’s expenses of representation.” Consumption is permitted but without happiness or enjoyment. The gospel of this kind of asceticism creates its own notion of poverty—to have as though not having, to consume as though not consuming—a poverty that entails the impoverishment of the person and the increasing ostentation of wealth at the same time. With its principle of maximizing benefits, this kind of consumption goes beyond capitalist consumption and even penetrates into mass consumption. Even though this kind of consumption is not very extensive except in limited areas of the capitalist world, it gives the appearance of being the kind of consumption appropriate for arriving at abundance and well-being.

The catalog of virtues follows from all this. The value-virtue of “humility” leads to an acceptance of the human being as the personification of capital. Vis-à-vis capital accumulation there stands the value-virtue of thrift, which is really a virtue only when capital that has been saved is risked again in accumulation in order to increase it. Hence the vision of consumption as the “great temptation” that will lead to ruin unless it is checked by saving.

In those areas of the capitalist world that successfully concentrate wealth, there is unleashed a passion to consume. Persons can consume more and more because they enjoy it less and less. When they enjoy what they consume, they cannot consume any amount whatsoever; the less they enjoy, however, the more they can consume. When enjoyment and pleasure disappear, the possibilities and then the necessities of consumption tend to be infinite. One can never rest. There is created a kind of consumption that tends to undermine society, nature, and the human person. Capitalist accumulation destroys both those for whom it creates wealth as well as those whom it impoverishes:

Capitalist production, therefore, only develops the techniques and the degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth—*the soil and the worker* [*Capital*, I, 638].

But once again capital offers itself as the “answer” to the problems it has created. For unrestrained consumption, it proposes abstinence; for the destruction of nature, an economic incentive not to destroy it. But the kind of abstinence it preaches is at the root of unrestrained consumption. The more this abstinence is preached, the greater the impulse toward this kind of consumption.

In reality, the kind of self-restraint needed to curb the passion to consume cannot bypass a rediscovery of pleasure and enjoyment of it. But this can occur on a solid basis only when a society has the security of a dignified standard of living deriving from the work of each person. Such security can be found only beyond capital.

What happens to human freedom when it is not rooted in that kind of security is plain to see in what Milton Friedman says:

The great advantage of the market . . . is that it permits wide diversity. It is, in political terms, a system of proportional representation. Each man can vote, as it were, for the color of the tie he wants, and get it; he does not have to see what color the majority wants and then, if he is in the minority, submit [*Capitalism and Freedom*, 15].

It seems he has never looked for a tie with a color that was out of style. In any case, this is what is left of human freedom.

The value of humility became increasingly important after Marx's time, in great measure due to the impact of his thought on the labor movement. Humility consists in accepting that one is a personalization of capital and renouncing the claim to a personality in one's own right. For workers this act of humility means not rebelling but accepting the fact that capital has the power of decision over their life or death. All bourgeois economic theory, which supposedly never makes any value judgments, attempts to justify this demand and to propose the basis on which persons may internalize this value of humility.

In the title of one of his books, *The Road to Serfdom*, F. A. Hayek reveals to the worker where his own thought is really heading. We have already shown how his most famous disciple, Milton Friedman, in his theory of capital, followed the advice of the master. Taking up Hayek's reasoning, let us see how this virtue of humility is internalized. Hayek makes the market rather than capital the basis for his argument:

It is more than a metaphor to describe the price system as a kind of a machinery for registering change, or a system of telecommunications which enables individual producers . . . to adjust their activities to changes of which they may never know more than is reflected in the price movement [*Individualism*, 87-88].

The market would be a kind of computer. But it is nevertheless a "true marvel": "I have deliberately used the word 'marvel' to shock the reader out of the complacency with which we often take the working of this mechanism for granted" (ibid., 87). If it had been invented "this mechanism would have been acclaimed as one of the greatest triumphs of the human mind" (ibid.).

Humility and Collective Reason

The miraculous market is immediately proclaimed to be collective reason:

Human reason . . . does not exist in the singular, as given or available to any particular person, as the rationalist approach seems to assume,

but must be conceived as an interpersonal process in which anyone's contribution is tested and corrected by others [*Individualism*, 15].

This would be the posture of "true individualism," which demands that the human being show humility toward this "collective and miraculous" reason. Therefore Hayek asserts:

The fundamental attitude of true individualism is one of humility toward the processes by which mankind has achieved things which have not been designed or understood by any individual and are greater than individual minds. The great question at this moment is whether man's mind will be allowed to continue to grow as part of this process or whether human reason is to place itself in chains of its own making [*ibid.*, 31].

In the name of individualism human reason is thus changed into collective reason—the presence of a "miracle"—which comes to have all the appearance of an object of devotion. The appropriate attitude toward this object Hayek calls "humility" and this value is internalized in a relationship of devotion. In doing this Hayek clearly presents individualism as an act of delegating individuality to a collective entity outside the human being—although it was produced by the human being.

Workers who insist on their own kind of reason in passing judgment on these aspects of the market will be accused of being "collectivists" by this writer; yet he calls "individualists" the other workers who accept having their individual reason be taken as merely a tiny part of this supremely wise collective reason. By transforming individualism into "true individualism," he is turning it into blind collectivism.

The measures that must be taken may now be deduced from the object of devotion that demands humility. Hayek states that "the question of how the powers of trade unions can be appropriately delimited in law as well as in fact is one of the most important of all the questions to which we must give our attention" (*Individualism*, 117).

Control must cover not only actions but also thinking:

It is the beliefs which must spread, if a free society is to be preserved, or restored, not what is practicable at the moment which must be our concern. . . . [We] must take a sane view of what persuasion and instruction are likely to achieve [*Individualism*, 108–9].

Pride and Hubris

Collective miraculous reason now comes to inspire terror. Hayek obviously does not believe he can convince workers and in fact he does not address

them. The “we” he speaks of in demanding control over labor unions and their way of thinking does not include the worker. What this kind of reasoning leads to is the particular kind of image the middle class forms of workers and which serves to radicalize it against them. This image is that of pride. Workers who refuse to make this kind of humility the highest virtue are found guilty of pride. They are moved by hubris. When the worker is opposed to capital—the spirit of this society—such rebellion is the sin against the Holy Spirit. Karl Popper formulates this condemnation in terms identical with those of the Inquisition:

Like others before me I also arrived at the conclusion that the idea of a social utopia . . . leads into quicksand. The hubris which leads us to try to make a heaven on earth seduces us into changing earth into a hell; a hell such as only can be made by some human beings against others.⁹

Hubris makes a hell on earth in a pact with the devil—and in God’s name. This inquisitorial accusation, made for a thousand years, reappears again. Therefore when the worker does not internalize humility, legitimate terror is brought to bear to impose such humility.

The reflection of religion implicit in such preaching of the fetish of capital became explicit on September 12, 1973, in Santiago, Chile, when Father Hasbun, director of the television station of the Catholic University, made a commentary on the murder of Allende by the military junta. He said:

The greater you are, the more humble you must become in order to find grace before the Lord. For the power of the Lord is great, and it is the humble who honor God. . . . There is no remedy for the proud soul, because evil has sunk its roots into it. . . . And may your attitude be that of Christ who, though he was in the form of God, did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at; rather he emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that he humbled himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross. . . . And the Lord says: although you multiply your prayers, I do not listen to you. You have your hands full of blood. . . . Something that always struck me about [Allende] was his pride. . . . There is no doubt he was not under the action of the Spirit of God.¹⁰

Friedman is a disciple of Hayek and the Chilean military junta rulers are disciples of Friedman. The “Spirit of God” lacking in Allende is the “spirit” that leads in the direction indicated by the title of Hayek’s main work, *The Road to Serfdom*. Marx had already observed:

This stuff ought to be studied in detail, to see what the bourgeois makes of himself and of the worker when he can model the world according to his own image without any interference [*Capital*, I, 916, n. 4].

The Realm of Freedom

Marx comes to his concept of the realm of freedom as a result of his method. It is not an end; rather it entails a conceptualization of all the social relationships that make up the framework wherein ends are determined. Consequently the concept of the realm of freedom underlies all his analysis and is not simply a conclusion drawn from them. It is the angle of vision that enables him to carry out his analysis in the first place.

The concept of the realm of freedom is already present in his analyses of commodities. It is the essential reference point for understanding commodity relationships and at the same time it is the logic inherent in the way they develop, ending finally in the realm of freedom. Commodity relationships are the opposite of the realm of freedom—yet by that very fact they reflect it. They are the antihuman, but by reversing the order of things; thus they are the reflection of what is human. In this manner the affirmation of the human being may be the negation of the antihuman. Hence we can never say what commodity relationships *are* except by analyzing what they *are not*. What they *are not* is an essential part of what they *are*. To explain this point I return to a text already quoted. Marx, speaking of human beings as producers, says:

The social relations between their private labors *appear* as what they are, i.e., they do not appear as direct social relations between persons in their work but rather as *material . . . relations* between persons and *social relations* between things [*Capital*, I, 166].

They appear as what they are—that is, products of private labor. But this is the appearance and not the phenomenon as a whole inasmuch as commodity relationships do not appear as what they *are not*: “directly social relations between persons in their work.” There is an absence in commodity relationships, an absence that cries out, but is not revealed by the appearance of commodities. Only the living experience of its results and a rational analysis of them can bring this absence to light. The commodity, however, silences this crying absence. Yet for Marx this absence provides the principle for making all human history intelligible. It is around this absence that changes and struggles take place in history and around it present history will eventually open out to true history. If, on the other hand, the principle for making history intelligible is sought directly in commodity relationships, there is lacking a reverence for something beyond history, which is also beyond any particular stage of history; as a consequence, history itself seems to be meaningless.

Out of the search for this Archimedean point there emerges the concept of the realm of freedom, which, as an absence, can make history and commodity relationships intelligible. What is it that humankind, without expressing it clearly, is seeking as it chases so enthusiastically after many illusory images of an illusory future? And what is the end toward which this pursuit is leading—if indeed it is going somewhere—even if perhaps what is consciously intended is something else? Marx attempts to find behind all these illusory images one that is present in all the rest, as their inverse; it would be the cornerstone of the whole ensemble. He conceptualizes it as the realm of freedom.

The Play of Physical and Spiritual Powers

The concept of freedom appears in two forms. One is the reference to it in what is absent from the commodity system; the other is found in social relationships beyond commodity production.

Indications of what is missing in commodity relationships can be seen in passages such as the following:

Apart from the exertion of the working organs, a *purposeful will* is required for the entire duration of the work. This means close *attention*. The less he is attracted by the nature of the work and the way in which it has to be accomplished, and the less, therefore, he enjoys it as the free play of his own physical and mental powers, the closer his attention is forced to be [cf. *Capital*, I, 284; italics added].

Marx sees commodity relationships and the technology developed around them as repressing human vitality. In this manner it becomes clear what is absent: the free play of the worker's physical and spiritual powers. Various forms of labor are explained by what they are—discipline—and what they are not—free play:

In agriculture, as in manufacture, the capitalist transformation of the process of production also appears as a martyrology for the producer; the instrument of labor appears as a means of enslaving, exploiting, and impoverishing the worker; the *social* combination of labor processes appears as an organized suppression of his *individual* vitality, freedom, and autonomy [*Capital*, I, 638; italics added].

What Marx is describing is the process of capitalist production. What it lacks is manifest in the repression of the vitality, freedom, and autonomy of the worker. What the relationships of production do not allow serves as a basis for analyzing what they are.

These absences serve as a starting point for analyzing how human beings

may move beyond commodity production and what the realm of freedom means:

The capitalist mode of appropriation, which springs from the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labor of its proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a natural process, its own negation. This is the negation of the negation. It does not reestablish private property, but it does indeed establish individual property on the basis of the achievements of the capitalist era: namely, cooperation and the possession in common of the land and the means of production produced by labor itself [*Capital*, I, 929].

Freedom and Necessity

Marx's analysis points toward the future as a reconquest of what commodity production—especially in its capitalist form—has suppressed. However, he does not describe this future as one that may be fully achieved. Rather he describes the society that overcomes commodity relationships as one that overcomes illusory images of the future and replaces them with a human projection consciously elaborated so that human beings will reach fulfillment as concrete human beings:

The realm of freedom really begins only where labor determined by necessity and external expediency ends; it lies by its very nature beyond the sphere of material production proper. Just as the savage must wrestle with nature to satisfy his needs, to maintain and reproduce his life, so must civilized man, and he must do so in all forms of society and under all possible modes of production. This realm of natural necessity expands with his development, because his needs do too; but the productive forces to satisfy these expand at the same time. Freedom, in this sphere, can consist only in this, that socialized man, the associated producers, govern the human metabolism with nature in a rational way, bringing it under their collective control instead of being dominated by it as a blind power; accomplishing it with the least expenditure of energy and in conditions most worthy and appropriate for their human nature. But this always remains a realm of necessity. The true realm of freedom, the development of human powers as an end in itself, begins beyond it, though it can only flourish with this realm of necessity as its basis. The reduction of the working day is the basic prerequisite [*Capital*, III, 958–59].

Plainly the realm of freedom is not presented as something fully achieved but is conceptualized as the anticipation of fulfillment, an anticipation that is

embodied in a kind of human activity that prevails over the blind power of the realm of necessity. In fact Marx discounts the possibility of fully achieving the realm of freedom. Marx views it rather as a horizon of any potential human activity and therefore speaks of it as something beyond the production process.

The realm of freedom can flourish only to the extent permitted by the realm of necessity. The degree of freedom possible is therefore limited by the degree of necessity, and the weight of necessity does not tend to disappear completely. It may be lightened, however, and this is how freedom is secured. The qualitative change Marx proposes relates to the realm of necessity. What he means is that exchange between human beings and with nature may be regulated by working in common so that the laws of necessity do not become a blind power dashing against the lives of producers, and so that human beings may turn these laws to their advantage in a dignified and rational way. In short, the aim is to guarantee all producers the possibility of earning a dignified living with their work, within the framework of a common agreement on the distribution of labor and its economic results.

Once it has been worked out how the realm of necessity is to be regulated, it will be possible to determine how far the development of the realm of freedom may extend—as an end in itself it can exist only beyond the production process itself. Hence the extraordinary importance Marx gives to reducing the length of the workday.

Freedom: A Transcendental Self-Projection

In the last-cited text the concept of communism as a realm of freedom undergoes a radical change in relation to all Marx's previous writings. He presents the realm of freedom as a "beyond," as a goal that is beyond all possible or feasible future human relationships. He expressly changes the realm of freedom—the enjoyment of work as the "play of physical and spiritual powers" and along with it "directly social labor"—into a transcendental concept. Socialist society is now conceived as approaching but not achieving this transcendental concept. The realm of necessity must be organized by "bringing it under their collective control instead of being dominated by it as a blind power" and this should be done "with the least expenditure of energy and in conditions most worthy and appropriate for their human nature." The realm of freedom flourishes on the foundation of this realm of necessity and cannot replace it. The extent to which it may be achieved depends on reducing the length of the workday.

In this formulation—which to a great extent corresponds to what actually takes place in practice in socialist societies—Marx in effect breaks with his earlier positions. In the prologue to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, published in 1859, he wrote:

Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation [21].

At this point in *Capital* he says something different. It might be summarized as follows: humankind sets for itself goals that it can approach but the goal itself remains something beyond any of its possible embodiments. It is a transcendental concept, a limit concept. Socialist society is therefore a society that is heading toward, and approaching the realm of, freedom—that is, an association of free human beings. But such a society is not and will not be this realm of freedom. A socialist society would be a society whose direction is not determined by any fetish, whether of commodities, money, or capital; it rather takes as its guide the formulation of a society that encompasses the overcoming of all fetishes and all structures of which fetishes are at once projections and reflections.

The subject-controlled, goal-seeking self-projection, “project,” of communism therefore undergoes a change. On the one hand it is a transcendental concept, beyond possible concrete embodiments; on the other hand, there are concrete projects in history that approximate the transcendental project. They embody it and make it concrete. Nevertheless, the transcendental project is in no way even a long-range goal. It is impossible to build toward it in step-by-step fashion. The relationship between the project in history and the transcendental project is logical rather than historical. The transcendental project does not come as an end result of working out the historical project but rather accompanies it at all stages of its realization as its transcendent dimension.

This formulation of the realm of freedom, which states that it is not feasible but rather that it accompanies in a transcendent fashion any socialist project possible in history, is clearly the end of the young Marx’s critique of religion. That critique of religion was based on the hypothesis that the realm of freedom was feasible. The validity of the critique depends on such a feasibility. Marx’s description of such a communism in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* is well known:

[Communism is] the restoration of man as a *social*, that is, human being. This communism as completed naturalism is humanism, as completed humanism it is naturalism. It is the *genuine* resolution of the antagonism between man and nature and between man and man; it is the true resolution of the conflict between existence and essence, objectification and self-affirmation, freedom and necessity, individual and species. It is the riddle of history solved and knows itself as this solution [304].

When Marx speaks of the realm of freedom in *Capital* he explicitly renounces such an aspiration. He no longer seeks a definitive solution to the

antagonism between freedom and necessity. If in fact he retains the concept of such a solution, he has changed it into a transcendental concept; it may be approached but there will be no definitive solution.

Nevertheless, the young Marx's critique of religion had expressed a hope of finding a "genuine resolution of the antagonism between man and nature and between man and man." It was this alone that led to the thesis that any transcendent dimension in religion could be recovered and retained in the immanence of a concrete self-projection in history. This position reflected an unlimited optimism, going beyond any concrete analysis of human feasibility toward a sweeping hope inevitably destined to crumble later on.

It is his analysis of fetishism that leads Marx to change his position. In taking up the realm of freedom in economic terms, he is forced to deal with the problem of feasibility and he comes to the conclusion that as a project the realm of freedom goes beyond any human feasibility in any possible future. He therefore ends up replacing his earlier critique of religion with a critique of fetishism. This is no longer a critique of religion but rather a method for discerning between fetishized transcendence and humanized transcendence.

It is very difficult to determine to what extent Marx himself was aware of this change. It is a fact that he went beyond his earlier critique of religion but he probably did not become fully aware of this development. What became part of Marxism as a movement in history was Engels' interpretation of the relationship between the realm of freedom and the realm of necessity. This interpretation seems to allude directly to Marx's text quoted above. Engels writes:

Man's own social organization, hitherto confronting him as a necessity imposed by nature and history, now becomes the result of his own free action. The extraneous objective forces that have hitherto governed history pass under the control of man himself. Only from that time will man himself, with full consciousness, make his own history—only from that time will the social causes set in motion by him have, in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is the leap of man from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom [*Anti-Dühring*, 307].

Although Marx had explicitly denied that this leap to the realm of freedom was possible, Engels insists it is. The content of the idea itself undergoes a change. Marx—in the tradition of Friedrich Schiller—understands by the realm of freedom the free play of physical and spiritual powers and he sees human activity as an end in itself. Engels, however, understands the realm of freedom as domination over the blind laws of history. For Marx this latter point signifies precisely the realm of necessity. For his part Engels completely ignores the transcendental concept of the realm of freedom within which Marx moves—that is, the concept of the identity of human beings with nature and with one another. Marx's concept centers on spontaneity, in the sense

that in their spontaneous activity, individuals do not enter into contradiction with one another.

Nor is Engels able utterly to get beyond the problem of transcendentalism. As he sees it, the kind of control that human beings exercise over the extraneous objective powers governing history will prevail, and “in a constantly growing measure.” For Engels the socialist project ends up being both a transcendent project aimed at controlling those powers completely, and a historical project in which they are controlled as far as possible. But he juggles with the problem, passing over rather than emphasizing it. It is only for this reason that he is able to speak of the “leap of man from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom.” Whereas Marx excludes the possibility of this kind of leap precisely because the goal may only be approached but not reached, Engels continues to maintain that the goal is indeed immanent (in history) at long range. It is only for this reason that Engels can deny the consequences for the critique of religion implied in the analysis that views the goal as transcendent. It is this interpretation of Engels that has prevailed in Marxist movements down to the present.

Nevertheless the history of socialist countries tends rather to confirm Marx's interpretation. The impossibility of the leap to the realm of freedom extends further than Marx foresaw and includes even the continuing presence of commodity relationships. Marx describes the organizing of the realm of necessity in terms of a rational regulation of the exchange of materials with nature, in which human beings place that exchange under their collective control, “instead of being dominated by it as a blind power” (*Capital*, III, 959). In socialist societies this has been changed explicitly to what is called the “conscious control of the law of value,” so that all may be enabled to reproduce their life by means of what they produce with their work. This replaces the blindness of the economic laws that govern the capitalist mode of production. This all indicates an approximation of, but not arrival at, what had been called the realm of freedom—whether in Marx's terms or Engels'—without the slightest approach toward a full achievement of the transcendent project.

Transcendence within Real Life

The transcendentalism of this project is a transcendentalism existing within real material life. Marx's vision is that of a full experience of this real life without its negative aspects. This vision is present in his whole analysis of fetishism. The point of this analysis is that transcendence explains what human relationships are not. By considering what human relationships are not—they are not directly social labor, labor is not the play of the physical and spiritual powers of human beings, it is not an activity that finds its end in itself—it is possible to arrive at what they are. Hence absences are utterly essential for explaining phenomena. But these absences mean that the project is transcendent in the measure in which it is beyond human capability to achieve what they point to.

Although socialist society aims at such a transcendent project, it can do so only in the form of a concrete project in history approaching the transcendent project. As such a society analyzes itself, the transcendent project will continually keep reappearing as what that society is not, and what must be studied in order to understand what it is. By means of the "conscious control of the law of value" persons can experience over and over again the fact that they do not exercise complete control over the conditions of production. By maintaining this awareness they can project toward the future a state in which such conditions will exist. The projection of the transition to full communism in a future that is not yet present—the ideology of socialist society—is achieved by society. Today socialist society sees itself as tending toward communism.

This fact demands a rethinking in terms of socialist society of the problem that is so decisive in the question of commodity fetishism—the problem of bad infinity, of infinite progress. It arises when finite steps are understood as steps toward goals that are infinitely far away. There is no question that in Marx's interpretation the realm of freedom is a goal that is infinitely far away and socialist society is seen as an approach toward this goal. Insofar as this is necessarily the case, the contradiction of human beings with nature and with one another is not resolved in any definitive manner. But in view of the constant task of consciously bringing the law of value under control, it is clearly seen that there must be an ideological projection toward a society in which such commodity relationships are no longer necessary.

Hence it is that socialist society ideologically projects toward the future the image of a communist society precisely because commodity relationships persist within socialism.

In this way it is possible to explain the reappearance within socialist society of the image of infinite progress reflecting a bad infinity. This image of communism—toward which socialist society is progressing—is nevertheless not produced by commodity fetishism. In commodity fetishism infinite progress serves to unite commodity relationships to the fetishization of social relationships and commodity relationships are presented as the humanization of these social relationships. The image of communism, on the contrary, projects an effective human liberation from this fetishization toward the future of a socialist society. The fact that it poses this liberation as a bad infinity linked to the structures of socialist society by means of infinite progress is due to the fact that this society constantly faces the task of consciously controlling commodity relationships. Because it cannot abolish them, it lives in tension with them, and the image of the future is born out of that tension. This image of the future serves as the reference point for determining goals; and it is from this image that the values of socialist society are set and its members internalize them.

Nevertheless, this image of communism toward which society is progressing is not the transcendental concept found in Marx's analysis. It is rather the ideological projection of this transcendental concept. The transcendental concept points to an absence in social relationships that leads to commodity

relationships. This absence—the absence of the realm of freedom—is experienced in commodity relationships. The existence of commodity relationships is proof of the absence of the realm of freedom. In commodity fetishism this absence is replaced by the fetish that is the illusory promise of such a realm of freedom (and is in fact the reverse). Hence in socialist society the fetish is present, as reversed, changed into its opposite, the realm of freedom. It is both present and negated.

In the social projection of the image of communism made by socialist society, this absence of the realm of freedom is explicit and not disguised behind a commodity fetish. But it continues to be an absence even though there are now approaches to achieving this realm of freedom. This situation reaches explicit expression in the image of communism: it describes what does not exist—that is, the full realization of the goal toward which society can only make approaches.

Thus the transcendental concept is expressed in two ways. On the one hand it is expressed in real life itself. To the extent that human beings experience their real life and seek their satisfaction in it, they discover its negative aspects and implicit absences, and out of this experience they come to a hope of definitively overcoming them. The absence of the free play of physical and spiritual powers is an experience of this kind. The hope of being able to enter into such free play is one of the highest ways of expressing such transcendence within real life. On the other hand, the transcendental concept is expressed in the form of a transcendent project. In this case it is the reflection of transcendence in the depth of real life, which is then projected ideologically on the basis of the effort to exercise conscious control over commodity relationships.

The Myth of the Cave

Marx's theory of fetishism thus leads to a way of interpreting how ideological processes function in socialist society. I have already shown how this theory is an interpretation of Plato's myth of the cave, reversing the relationship between the idea and reality. Whereas reality is an approximation of the idea in the cave myth, the idea is an approximation of the reality of real life in the theory of fetishism. Reality is seen reflected in a mirror, but this mirror makes it impossible to see correctly. Seen through commodity relationships, the transcendence within real life is reversed and what becomes visible in the mirror is a transcendence that is fetishized and disconnected from real life. The fetish, opposed to real life, appears to be the transcendental for which human life is lived. However, the more that commodity relationships are brought under control, the mirror can be corrected, so that in fact transcendence comes to be seen as within real life and no longer opposed to it. But reality continues to be seen in a mirror rather than directly.

Whereas the cave myth describes a transcendence that is outside real life and can be opposed to real life, the theory of fetishism reveals how this ideal

transcendence is the reversed reflection of another transcendence that is to be found within real life itself. The human mind is conceived as a mirror in which real life with its inner transcendence is revealed. Real life is not directly visible. Where fetishism prevails, the mirror reverses the reproduction of real life and makes the fetish visible and the needs of real life invisible. However, things can be reversed again so reality may be seen in the mirror without inversion. But it is still seen in a mirror and consequently the transcendence present within real life appears in an externalized form and as connected to real life by means of an infinite progress in what is a bad infinity.

Moreover in this case transcendence appears twice: once as the experience of transcendence in the depths of real life and again as the reflection of this transcendence that serves as ideology for socialist relationships of production. It is then an ideology—a false consciousness—that reflects real and material life. Although it pushes commodity fetishism aside, it does not avoid ideologizing social relationships. The ideologized transcendent project may obscure the very transcendence present within real life and replace it. It tends to do this to the extent to which the transcendent project is no longer interpreted as a reflection of the transcendence found within real life but as that transcendence itself.

In this way the theory of fetishism must be seen as implicit in all political economy. If political economy is the anatomy of modern society, as Marx says, the theory of fetishism analyzes the spirituality institutionalized therein. In this sense the fetish is the spirit of institutions. The theory of fetishism does not analyze any particular institution, but rather the spirit around which institutions revolve. When the military junta overthrew Allende, he was not accused of violating the letter of the constitution; he was accused of violating its spirit—the spirit that pervades the institutions of society and binds them with their central fetishism: capital accumulation. Accumulation is not explicitly present in institutions, however, but is represented by its spirit, a phantasm that is perceived and experienced. West Germany persecutes its “radicals” in the name of the spirit of the constitution and of its institutions. Those who defend this “spirit” can violate the constitution without violating it, but those who oppose this “spirit” are obviously violating the constitution—even when they do not.

If the theory of fetishism seeks to analyze the visibility of the invisible, it does not do so in all possible ways. Any institution as such is invisible despite the fact that we experience it in our life and in that way we “see” it. But running beneath the multiplicity of institutions there is a linkage that also is not visible to any kind of sense perception. But in experience it becomes visible as the spirit of all institutions taken as a whole, and it renders the needs of real life invisible. This “spirit” is the fetish.

The Harsh Face of Destiny: Fetishism in Other Traditions of Social Science

The Old Gods Ascend from Their Graves: Max Weber's New Polytheism

The starting point for Marx's analysis of fetishism is an analysis of the social division of labor. Directly or indirectly all human beings live within the vast machinery of this division of labor and all individuals are dependent on it for their very survival; hence in return for their contributions they should receive at least enough to stay alive. The way the social division of labor is managed is a life-and-death matter: the human being, as a part of nature and therefore subject to natural laws, must consume in order to live. An adequate management of the social division of labor is the objective factor that sets the conditions for all possible human activity. It is only within the framework of a coordinated division of labor that particular kinds of human activity become feasible in practice.

With the advent of commodity production (one particular way of managing the social division of labor), human life is threatened in the name of the commodity fetish. When capital becomes a fetish it comes to the point of destroying human life itself through its effect on the way the social division of labor is coordinated. Human beings have to die so that the fetish may live.

Critique of Value Judgments

In Marx's analysis of fetishism capital is seen to be the great lord of the commodity world; it has the power to decide on the life and death of human beings through impoverishment, unemployment, and the destruction of nature.

Implicit in this commodity world is a world of values, to which individuals must conform if there is to be commodity production. They internalize these values in a relationship of devotion that they establish with the pseudo-transcendental image of the fetish. Accepting this pious relationship means

internalizing the values implicit in commodity production and the verdicts over life and death emanating from the way the commodity and capitalism coordinate the division of labor.

There are, accordingly, several worlds superimposed on one another. The division of labor leads to a world of use-values aimed at human consumption and the reproduction of real life. This world of use-values at the same time exists as a commodity world in which capital ultimately determines all outcomes. Related to this commodity world there is a world of values that explicitly express the norms of behavior implicit in commodity production. In the name of the fetish the commodity world, together with the world of values, is raised up as a judge, charged with the task of organizing the world of use-values and therefore with a power of decision over life and death through the way it directs the flow of the means of life.

The main contrast and contradiction here is that between values and the reproduction of real material life. In the fetishist view, values are raised up as elements standing over real life. They live because they make human beings die. However, it is only real life and its reproduction that make it possible for values to survive. If real life is not necessarily the primary factor determining values—the fetish assumes that role—the ultimate factor for values is always this reproduction of real life.

There are certain basic concepts involved in the analysis of fetishism, three of which we may mention here. They reflect profound differences in content, between marginalist economic theory, neoclassic economic theory, and Max Weber's sociology. In the analysis of fetishism, *economics* is the sphere of production and reproduction of material life. From this starting point there is deduced a concept of *needs* based on the fact that for natural reasons (indeed, natural laws) the reproduction of material life is impossible without a certain minimum of material goods for consumption. Implicit in these concepts is another, that of *social activity*, which means any human activity that is objectively made possible by the collaboration of others. Any human activity that directly or indirectly takes place within a social division of labor is social activity. Inasmuch as there is no human life without a division of labor, all human activity is social activity: the human being is a social being. Therefore the activity of one individual is impossible without the corresponding complementary activity of the rest. Actions subjectively intended can be carried out only within the framework of the complementary actions of others. This framework is objective and in the last analysis it sets parameters for particular individuals in the pursuit of their subjective desires.

The content of these three concepts (economics, needs, social activity) is objective and can be ascertained empirically. They set limits to the possible subjective direction of activity but do not determine what such activities will be. Without determining what individuals want or what in fact they will do, they determine what is objectively possible. Hence these three concepts are independent of the will of human beings. Even if individuals should wish their social relationships to be different from those described in terms of these three concepts, they cannot have it that way.

The Economic Sphere Reduced to Calculability

It is Max Weber's sociology that has had the greatest impact on the critique of Marx's analysis. Yet one will never find there any treatment of these basic concepts. Weber's whole critique is based on changes he makes in the content of these concepts. He never offers a critique of the way Marx formulates them but rather tries to introduce a new methodology into social science, and in that connection he denies that Marx's concepts have any scientific status. The fetishism of Weber's analysis begins precisely in this denial of scientific status to Marx's analyses. His critique in fact never refers to the content of those analyses and he seems little aware of them, focusing instead exclusively on questions of method.

The starting point for this critique is his notion of value judgments. He dissolves the world of values analyzed by Marx into an unending series of values of any kind whatsoever and then goes on to show that one cannot discern one value from another in the name of scientific analysis. Making any decision about values thus becomes the exclusive responsibility of the individual because it is impossible to exercise any discernment among them in the name of reason. Social science can say what persons may be able to do or what they may want, but it cannot say what they should do. In the name of this impossibility of making value judgments, Weber then criticizes the starting point of the whole Marxist analysis of the theory of value: the subsistence of producers as an objective condition for their contributing to production. This he calls a value judgment:

This is true of the "idea" of "provision" (*Nahrungsschutz*) and many other Canonist doctrines, especially those of Thomas Aquinas, in relationship to the modern ideal type of medieval "city economy" which we discussed above. The same is also true of the much talked of "basic concept" of economics: economic "value." From Scholasticism to Marxism, the idea of an objectively "valid" value, i.e., of an *ethical imperative*, was amalgamated with an abstraction drawn from the empirical process of price formation. The notion that the "value" of commodities *should* be regulated by certain principles of natural law, has had and still has immeasurable significance for the development of culture—and not merely the culture of the Middle Ages [*Methodology*, 95].

Regarding this "ethical imperative" he says, "An empirical science cannot tell anyone what he *should* do—but rather what he *can* do—and under certain circumstances—what he wishes to do" (*ibid.*, 54).

Weber entirely passes over the whole issue. Marx never says that price *should* be adjusted to value. He says that it *must* of necessity be adjusted to value. According to Marx, value is the very life of producers; hence prices must be oriented to the need of producers to live. If they are not, producers

die of hunger and there will be no producers. Because the activity of each particular producer is dependent on the complementary activities of the rest, they must together seek to make sure that prices allow each one their subsistence. The same is true of wages. If capital is to have life, it must take it from labor. Wages have to be guided by the subsistence needs of those who do the work. This does not mean that wages can never fall in value, but this can happen only if there is surplus labor, capable of replacing the labor that cannot replace itself.

Even in the Scholastic tradition (which follows the Aristotelian tradition) natural law is not a simple "value judgment." The Scholastics were quite aware they could not live without the complementary services of rural and urban workers. They were equally aware that they could not have such services without permitting those persons their physical subsistence. They did not need to make any "value judgment" to express this necessity in the normative form of natural law. Without peasants there is no food and without physical subsistence there are no peasants. Without workers there are no goods and without physical subsistence there are no workers.

In fact Marx is as convinced as Weber that social science cannot make any "value judgments." It can speak of what must be done *necessarily* or of what *may* be done, but not of what *should* be done. To determine that something is "objectively valid," however, does not imply any value judgment whatsoever. Weber is here attributing to Marx opinions he needs in order to then go on to refute him.

He accordingly reworks the concepts of economics, needs, and social activity. Weber replaces needs (conceived as a consequence of the human being's relationship to nature and based on physical subsistence) with subjective inclinations and preferences. Any need to discuss the objective conditions involved in making human activity even possible thereby disappears. Neoclassical economic theory curiously assumes that human beings can live whether or not they have anything to consume and are free to choose whether to live by consuming or not consuming. Only in this manner can it dissolve the concept of needs into that of simple preference.

With the idea of needs dissolved, Weber goes on to replace the definition of economics. In Marx—as in the classics of bourgeois political economy—economics is the sphere in which real life is reproduced. In Weber, economics is the sphere of calculability:

We shall speak of economic action only if the satisfaction of a need depends, in the actor's judgment, upon relatively *scarce* resources and a *limited* number of possible actions, and if this state evokes specific reactions [*Economy and Society*, 339].

Although he uses the word "need," what he means by it is nothing but subjective preference.

This reduction of economics to calculability means that it becomes focused

on the struggle of human beings against each other. Henceforth any activity is economic to the extent that it involves "specific reactions" arising from the relationships between preferences and "scarce" means. There is no longer any connection with real material life:

It is conventional to think particularly of everyday needs—the so-called material needs—when the term "economy" is used. However, prayers and Masses too *may* become economic objects [ibid., 339–40].

Here the concept of "preferences" makes the difference between a request for a Mass and the demand for food totally irrelevant. They are said to be able to replace each other at will. The contradistinction between values and the reproduction of real life—between the human being and the Sabbath—vanishes. Night descends and "all cats are gray": the fact that the reason for any human activity is the need to reproduce real life is obscured.

With this concept of economics, Weber immediately goes on to refute the thesis that economics is the ultimate factor in social life. His proof is simplicity itself: having changed the content of the term "economics," he shows that it does not have such a determining force. But Marx never says that the economic calculation of the relationship between scarce goods and subjective preferences determined any social relationship whatsoever. There is no need for Weber to prove the opposite. Marx's thesis is that in the last analysis the reproduction of material life is determinative.

Other bourgeois writers follow Weber along this same road. Popper even attributes to Marx the thesis that political power belongs to those who have money and then spends many pages proving that this is not the case. Popper brings up the unquestionable fact (which no one has ever denied) that those who hold political power can take money from its possessors (*Open Society*, 118ff.).

The Objective Requirements for the Possibility of Any Activity

Along the same lines, the concept of social action is reduced to the point that its meaning becomes subjective:

We shall speak of "action" insofar as the acting individual *attaches* a subjective *meaning* to his behavior—be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence. Action is "social" insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of *others* and is thereby oriented in its course [*Economy and Society*, 4; italics added].

There is no sign of any objective conditions for the possibility of "action." "Action" is not seen as something taking place in time and space with its

concomitant conditions but simply as a meaning subjectively intended. However, taking place in space and time as it does, social activity is conditioned by objective factors: (1) because it takes place in time, activity is possible only to the extent to which the agent has available the material means necessary for life and for the activity, as long as the activity lasts; (2) because it takes place in space, the activity is carried out within a social division of labor and is possible only insofar as other agents make it possible with their own complementary activities. Implicitly those others must have the material means they need.

Freedom to act is possible only insofar as what is subjectively intended remains within the bounds of the objective conditions of possibility. It makes no sense whatsoever to seek to understand social activity starting from subjective intentions. Discernment between feasible and unfeasible activities can be made only by starting from their objective conditions of possibility. It is only then that any judgment on intentions and subjectively intended meaning becomes possible.

With his redefinition of needs and of economics, Weber has absolved himself of this basic kind of reasoning. Instead of engaging in serious discussion, he goes off on a flight of fancy. He declares that arguments that point toward the objective conditions of possibility of social activity are simple “value judgments” of no concern to him as a social scientist. In this sense he criticizes them as “material rationality.” He calls the calculation of subjective preferences vis-à-vis scarce means “formal rationality.” He states that this “formal rationality” is the only possible objective of social science. Whereas for Marx economic rationality is to be found in the possibility for producers to reproduce their real life, for Weber it means the calculability of means and ends. The consequences are obvious: impoverishment, unemployment, underdevelopment, and the destruction of nature—all the phenomena connected with the failure to reproduce real life—no longer have any relevance to economics and do not enter into the assessment of economic rationality.

A Stream of Immeasurable Events Flowing toward Eternity

By his refusal to discuss the objective conditions of possibility for social activity, Weber comes to see the myriad human decisions in a society as a swarm of events; these events are relevant only for the individuals making the decisions. Social reality becomes a vast virgin forest in which the subject must wander without a compass. The empirical basis for understanding things is replaced by mere viewpoints. Instead of organizing the whole of social reality from one point of view, as Marx had done, Weber makes knowledge relative vis-à-vis an immense chaotic torrent of events. Supreme values are now subjective values inevitably clashing with each other, and there is no way for persons to discern rationally their own supreme values from those of others:

The light which emanates from those highest evaluative ideas always falls on an ever changing finite segment of the vast chaotic stream of events, which flows away through time [*Methodology*, 111].

All the analysis of infinite reality which the finite human mind can conduct rests on the tacit assumption that only a finite portion of this reality constitutes the object of scientific investigation, and that only it is "important" in the sense of being "worthy of being known" [*ibid.*, 72].

The decisive point here is his insistence on the *portion* of reality—that is, on one sector of it. Marx's methodology in no sense permits us to grasp the whole of infinite reality, but by abstraction it allows us to work out a way of organizing phenomena as a whole, and so we can come to a judgment on that totality, without knowing each particular phenomenon. Weber, however, by declaring that certain sectors of reality are the only ones accessible to analysis, thereby gives up the effort to organize phenomena as a whole. He sees them as this "vast chaotic stream of events." "Infinite reality" thus becomes a great object of devotion for him:

The stream of immeasurable events flows unendingly towards eternity. The cultural problems which move men form themselves ever anew and in different colors, and the boundaries of that area in the infinite stream of concrete events which acquires meaning and significance for us, i.e., which becomes an "historical individual," are constantly subject to change. . . . The points of departure of the cultural sciences remain changeable throughout the limitless future as long as a Chinese ossification of intellectual life does not render mankind incapable of setting new questions to the eternally inexhaustible flow of life [*Methodology*, 84].

Faced with this "vast chaotic stream of events" that "flows unendingly towards eternity" and constitutes an "inexhaustible flow of life," human beings can only stop talking and be still. "Eternally" respecting it in its eternity, human beings can admire and wonder at parts of this immense reality as they select from among these parts according to the supreme values present in them. But they can never presume to dominate reality. Kneeling before this tremendous flow of "events," human beings can discover the gods they adore; they choose their gods and their supreme values alike. But just as they cannot presume to dominate the "eternity of eternities," this "eternally inexhaustible flow of life," human beings cannot and should not search for the "one god" directing the flow.

In this fashion Weber preaches the adoration of the fetish and so replaces Marx's analysis of fetishism:

The elder Mill, whose philosophy I will not praise otherwise, was on this point quite right when he said: If one proceeds from pure experience, one arrives at polytheism. This is shallow in formulation and sounds paradoxical, and yet there is truth in it ["Science," 147].

The Battle of the Gods

Weber speaks of a "struggle that the gods of the various orders and values are engaged in" ("Science," 148). This struggle of orders and values is waged as a battle among the gods:

Different gods struggle with one another, now and for all times to come. We live as did the ancients when their world was not yet disenchanted of its gods and demons, only we live in a different sense. As Hellenic man at times sacrificed to Aphrodite and at other times to Apollo, and, above all, as everybody sacrificed to the gods of his city, so do we still nowadays, only the bearing of man has been disenchanted and denuded of its mystical but inwardly genuine plasticity ["Science," 148].

According to Weber there is a world of gods behind the orders and values, and in opting for one value or another, persons offer religious worship, even though the form is secularized. For millennia Christianity struggled against this polytheistic world; today it has lost the struggle:

The grandiose rationalism of an ethical and methodical conduct of life which flows from every religious prophecy has dethroned this polytheism in favor of the "one thing that is needful." Faced with the realities of outer and inner life, Christianity has deemed it necessary to make those compromises and relative judgments, which we all know from its history [ibid., 148–49].

This millennial tradition is over:

Our civilization destines us to realize more clearly these struggles again, after our eyes have been blinded for a thousand years—blinded by the allegedly or presumably exclusive orientation towards the grandiose moral fervor of Christian ethics [ibid.].

Weber proposes this notion that Christianity is losing out to a new polytheism in order to counter a tradition that he sees as forming one bloc: Christianity, the Enlightenment, and Marxism. He uses the term "Christianity" in a generic sense for all three and he presumes they have a common denominator (as previously noted by Nietzsche).

The Old Gods Ascend from Their Graves

The millennium is over and the beast has been set loose again:

Many old gods ascend from their graves; they are disenchanting and hence take the form of impersonal forces. They strive to gain power over our lives and again they resume their eternal struggle with one another [ibid.].

These old gods, ascending from their graves and seeking to dominate us, are impersonal forces and therefore human creations, but human beings cannot control their comings and goings and are under their control. This is what Marx calls the fetish. Weber, however, presents the matter as one to which social science has no access:

Fate, and certainly not "science," holds sway over these gods and their struggles. One can only understand what the godhead is for the one order or for the other, or better, what godhead is in the one or in the other order. With this understanding, however, the matter has reached its limit so far as it can be discussed in a lecture-room and by a professor. Yet the great and vital problem that is contained therein is, of course, very far from being concluded. But forces other than university chairs have their say in this matter [ibid., 148].

The Harsh Face of Destiny

To the question of whether these old gods might be sent back to their graves, he replies that "it is weakness not to be able to look at the harsh face of destiny in our times" (cf. "Science," 149).

On the other hand, of those scholars who are unwilling to accept the old gods risen from their graves as the harsh face of destiny, he remarks:

It is still more critical if it is left to every academic teacher to set himself up as a leader in the lecture-room. . . . The professor who feels called upon to act as a counselor of youth and enjoys their trust may prove himself a man in personal human relations with them [ibid., 150].

The result is utterly obvious but ridiculous even in Weber's own terms: the scholar, like Weber in this case, may urge persons to worship the old gods ascending from their graves but may not refuse that worship in the name of science. He ends in the same point as Hayek: the call to humility and the rejection of hubris. Weber's argument, however, has a special note: hubris, or rebellion against these gods, would amount to returning to what Christianity sees as the "one thing that is needful." Nietzsche followed the same sort of logic.

Regarding “grandiose rationalism,” a concept in which Weber includes Christianity, the Enlightenment, and Marxism, and which sought to organize the world to serve human beings, he says, “Today, however, with respect to religion we live an ‘everyday life’ ” (cf. *ibid.*, 149).

Whether by coincidence or not, Weber’s description of the everyday life of religion and Marx’s of the “religion of everyday life” (*Capital*, III, 969) coincide not only in the terms used but in the meaning. After calling this religion of everyday life the “trinity formula,” Marx goes on to say:

It is equally natural, therefore, that vulgar economics, which is nothing more than a didactic and more or less doctrinaire translation of the everyday notions of the actual agents of production, giving them a certain comprehensible arrangement, finds the natural basis of its fatuous self-importance established beyond all doubt precisely in this trinity, in which the entire inner connection is obliterated. This formula also corresponds to the self-interest of the dominant classes, since it preaches the natural necessity and perpetual justification of their sources of income and erects this into a dogma [*Capital*, III, 969].

Harmony between God and the Devil

Weber’s everyday life of religion results from his transformation of the trinity into a myriad of gods. The gods struggle among themselves but there is no hierarchical order among them. Inasmuch as the gods are behind the values and orders around which human beings struggle—that is, inasmuch as the battle of the gods is the reflection of the other struggle—Weber finds a solution by declaring the gods equal, an equality that now replaces the equality of human beings:

According to our ultimate standpoint, the one is the devil and the other the God, and the individual has to decide which is God for him and which is the devil. And so it goes throughout all the orders of life [“Science,” 148].

What is God for one person and the devil for another is the same object; and because all objects are God and devil alike, all are equal. But human beings differ from one another. One who sees God in an object differs from one who sees the devil there. That, however, is a subjective matter; science, for its part, recognizes all the gods as equal. Why? Weber’s answer is more hinted at than well elaborated:

Also the early Christians knew full well the world is governed by demons and that he who lets himself in for politics, that is, for power and force as means, contracts with diabolical powers and for his action it is *not* true that good can follow only from good and evil only from evil, but that often the opposite is true [*Politics*, 123].

Weber's meaning seems to be that any attempt to send these gods back to their graves is fated to resurrect them. Gods and demons rule the world and there can be no rebellion. Rebellion in fact makes things worse. From Christianity to Marxism there have been good intentions in this direction but they have not been enough to avert bad results. Weber thus comes to a position like Popper's. Sending the old gods back to their graves would be tantamount to making heaven on earth; but one who tries to make heaven on earth transforms the earth into a hell. Weber therefore concludes that what the millennial revolution is aiming at is impossible, and he decides to recognize the gods and worship them. Such an interpretation makes it comprehensible how he feels it is scientifically legitimate to urge that these gods be worshiped and yet to deny others the right to rebel against them in the name of science.

Although Weber's analysis is much more simplistic and less differentiated than Marx's, both arrive at a common meeting point, which each interprets differently. This meeting point is Marx's analysis of the realm of freedom. He situates the potential realm of freedom outside and beyond the realm of necessity and consequently holds that the realm of freedom in its full sense is beyond the reach of human praxis. Weber draws a further conclusion from this same fact—namely, that commodity production is inevitable because the realm of necessity is permanent. Inasmuch as he excludes from discussion the possibility of the socialist type of commodity relationships, he concludes that capitalism is an unbreachable limit to human history. Hence he insists on the ethics of responsibility (*Verantwortungsethik*), which must accept responsibility for the results of an action and not only for the good intentions behind it, in contradistinction to the ethics of conviction (*Gesinnungsethik*), which is satisfied with its own good intentions and shows no concern for results. On this basis Weber urges the worship of the gods, which means the worship (and the free activity) of what Weber calls impersonal powers and Marx calls the fetish.

In his analysis of commodity relationships as an unavoidable element in any future economy, Weber was right. Managing the realm of necessity—the production process—cannot be done except on the basis of commodity relationships. Socialist countries have had to learn this through painful experience. However, Weber's most serious error is the call to worship gods and demons—impersonal powers.

The error lies in his perception of polytheism as a heaven filled with gods who are equal to one another and whose disharmony as equals ultimately turns out to be a marvelous harmony: "Hellenic polytheism made sacrifices to Aphrodite and Hera alike, to Dionysius and to Apollo, and knew these gods were frequently in conflict with one another" ("Politics," 123).

Within Roman polytheism it became ever clearer that among the many gods there was one god—in truth, the real one—and the maintenance of the whole heaven of gods depended on this one's being declared god. This god

was the only real one among them—the emperor. The emperor’s worldly power took its legitimation from his deification, and his deification was conceivable only within the polytheistic heaven. If he was to be a god, the emperor of necessity had to defend all the other gods. It was for this reason that there was a clash with Christianity. In denying the heavenful of gods, Christianity was implicitly denying the deification of the emperor. Confronted with Christians, the emperor defended the whole heavenful of gods, fully aware that he was the only real god among them all. In opposition to this one god, who was a false god, ensconced in the heaven of the gods, Christians of necessity had to maintain theirs as the only one and true God.

Behind Weber’s new polytheistic heaven there is just as surely one god, the real god among the many, the one who rules over them. At least that is what Marx’s analysis of the fetish leads to; and the praxis that follows from it tries to unseat that god.

That Weber should declare such praxis unviable derives from the fact that he identifies the inevitability of commodity relationships in any future economy with capitalist relationships of production. Hence his thesis of an inevitable pact with the devil. According to Weber, this pact results from the fact that it is not true that “good can follow only from good and evil only from evil, but that often the opposite is true.” The well-known pact with the devil that Weber must have in mind is Faust’s pact with Mephistopheles. We have already seen Marx’s reference to this pact, from which comes the line: “In the beginning was the deed.” From this pact Marx also derives the reversal of good and evil, and there surge forth those impersonal powers that human beings worship, which then rise up to destroy them. Weber, however, omits the prospect of these gods’ rising up against human beings and rather considers them to be peaceable.

Weber expresses this peaceable tendency by saying that good can produce evil just as evil can produce good: perfect harmony. It is common knowledge that one who seeks good often causes evil. But the reverse is not true. One who seeks evil will find it, period. In this connection, Weber makes reference to Nietzsche. But Nietzsche does not say that one who seeks evil will find good. Rather, such a person will call evil “good.” As Reinhold Schneider puts it:

I do not say that one who seeks good, will find it. But one who seeks evil will certainly find it. . . . No one goes stirring up trouble unsuccessfully; it is always there when one wants it [*Winter in Wien*, 80].

The world is not so amorphous that good should produce evil, and evil good. The happy fault is not that of one who pursues evil but of one who pursues the forbidden or unattainable good. Salvation is a response to that fault.

The same is true of Faust. Mephistopheles, the liar, is the one who believes

he always creates good with his evil power. It is Faust's good intention which, despite all the horrible things it causes, finally leads to a happy end, with Faust ruling a country, and Mephistopheles' bad intention is made to serve a good result. Without Faust's good intention, which sought the impossible and failed insofar as it was impossible to attain, the good effect of Mephistopheles' pursuit of evil would not have occurred.

Milton Friedman's Happy Fetishism

Max Weber completely reverses Marx's analysis of fetishism. He denounces Marx's rejection of the fetish as the great human deviation—that is, a deviation found in Christianity, liberalism, and Marxism. If Weber's main concern is making a critique of Marxism, he must bring in Christianity and liberalism: Marx's thought incorporates them into his own synthesis. The "one thing that is needful," which Weber denounces as a human deviation, he finds in Marxism, liberalism, and Christianity alike.

This reversal of Marx's critique of fetishism means that any kind of rationalism must be challenged and indeed it replaces rationalism with mere reasoning about particular situations. This is how Weber interprets the marginalist and neoclassical economic theory of his time, translating its economic concepts into sociological concepts of social activity. His thought ends up in an irrationalism more radical than that of his underlying economic theory, which still retains a concept of general equilibrium in the economy, reflecting the earlier rationalist tradition.

It is the economic theory of the Chicago school that finally breaks with these vestiges of rationalism in economic thought. Although Weber arrived at his concept of social activity starting from neoclassic economic theory, the concept itself is out of step with his theoretical framework. In the Chicago school the concepts of social theory and of economic theory finally fit together. The result is a homogeneous social science that uniformly rejects any kind of rationalist position whatsoever.

This school, however, does not remain on the level of pure negation. It declares that such rationalist positions are "utopian" and it becomes an antiutopian irrationalism and assumes an aggressive posture vis-à-vis the previous rationalist tradition. In the form of modern scientism (basing itself especially on Karl Popper's thought) it sweeps aside every rationalist antecedent to modern thought. In effect, it is sweeping aside all history insofar as almost all the antecedents of modern thought are rationalist. Popper enters the philosophical arena as though it were a boxing ring and he another Muhammad Ali—"I'm the greatest!"—and declares null and void the millennial tradition of thought from Plato and Aristotle through the Scholastics to German idealism and Marx. He is simply drawing aggressive conclusions from the kind of thinking already present in Max Weber. Antiutopia assumes an aggressive posture and rules that the whole tradition of science is outside the realm of what is scientific.

It was F. A. Hayek who first worked out this position in economic theory and Milton Friedman continued in the same line with unparalleled cynicism. The task of analyzing commodity fetishism must change in accordance with these developments. In Marx it meant analyzing a classical rationalist posture; fetishization consisted in the irrationality underlying this ideologized rationalism. With these thinkers of our time the rationalist stance has completely disappeared and in its place there is an open and aggressive irrationalism. It sees itself as a “true” or “critical” rationalism but does nothing more than reason about particular situations and declares any rational posture vis-à-vis society as a whole to be its mortal enemy.

With a deep grasp of this shift, Popper defines his “critical rationalism” as a “key for controlling the demons”—that is, as an exorcism. Economic thought appropriate to these positions must include the definitive rejection of the concept of general equilibrium. One can observe how Friedman tries to do just that in his economics. There now come to the fore positions that never came to Marx’s attention, except in abstruse forms such as in Max Stirner’s philosophy.

Marx’s theory of fetishism focuses predominantly on classical political economy. Neoclassical economic theory was just emerging and could not be judged in its full scope. Marx worked out a great deal of his critique of political economy before the change in economic theory occurred. The newer economic theory differed from classical political economy especially in one key respect—its concept of the economic subject. In classical political economy the subject is someone with particular needs that must be satisfied if life is to continue. Classical political economy takes as its starting point the fact that human beings have to live. A precondition is respect for human rights in the formal sense—the right to life—and economics is the sphere in which this subject obtains the means necessary in order to live. Hence classical economics defines economics as that activity of human beings that enables them to acquire the means necessary for life, a life in which their human rights are protected. From this viewpoint such human rights are not the product of any subjective “value judgment” but are themselves the preconditions for life, and value judgments should be based on them. This line of reasoning never attempts to prove anything like a positive legal right to the means of life.

Freedom to Murder Your Neighbor

The classical theorists are quite aware that capitalist industry has committed mass murder among the working classes, as evidenced in their theory of population. This murder has been going on for generations. With his characteristic delicacy Popper says this process was not true of all capitalism “but only of its infancy.”¹¹ (In fact, murder has now simply shifted to the Third World.) For the classical theorists this was the inevitable result of the mode of production of their times. Marx is thus faced with a political economy that (although quite hypocritically) maintains that the life of human beings is its

goal; his theory of fetishism shows how there is a whole philosophy of death at work, clothed as a philosophy of life.

Neoclassical economic theory breaks with this tradition and gradually begins to undermine and transform the concept of the economic subject. The subject with needs is replaced by a subject with arbitrary aims and the very definition of economy is thereby changed. It is no longer the place where human beings work to satisfy their needs but is rather a process of calculations and choices made to achieve goals. Goals replace needs and this shift entails a radical change in the concept of economic rationality.

From the viewpoint of classical political economy the pauperization and misery of the working class is clearly an economic irrationality, even if it is seen as unavoidable. This is not the case for neoclassical economic theory, for which the main issue is that of economic choice. Nevertheless, this science does manage to take a position that capital must be replaced. Economic rationality requires that capital be replenished; replenishing labor, however, is not viewed as essential. This kind of economic rationality has no concern with human life.

Only after a long process could economic theory come to formulate such contempt for human life so fulgently.

The Chicago school of economics, and Milton Friedman in particular, explicitly draw this kind of conclusion. The liberal theory of natural law undergoes a remarkable transformation in Friedman:

There is little difficulty in attaining near unanimity on the proposition that one man's freedom to murder his neighbor must be sacrificed to preserve the freedom of the other man to live [*Capitalism and Freedom*, 26].

He conceives of two basic freedoms, the freedom to murder and the freedom to live. There is also a "proposition" that the freedom to murder should be sacrificed to preserve the freedom to live; the decision to sacrifice the right to murder is the product of tastes and preferences.

Contrary to the liberal tradition, Friedman does not conceive of a conflict between human freedom and murder. The exercise of freedom and murder are not seen as at odds with each other.

Relinquishment of the freedom to murder, however, is not total but simply enough to establish social relationships based on contracts of purchase and sale. Friedman writes:

The basic requisite is the maintenance of law and order to prevent physical coercion of one individual by another and to enforce contracts voluntarily entered into, thus giving substance to the term "private" [*ibid.*, 14].

The freedom to murder is rejected only insofar as it implies the use of physical force. Freedom to live is complementary to this rejection.

Freedom is assured as long as physical force is rejected. This freedom does not mean that the freedom to live prevails over the freedom to murder, but that the free exercise of the freedom to murder (which has relinquished the use of physical force) coexists alongside the exercise of the freedom to live. Freedom becomes a struggle to the death, although physical force is not used. All values derive from this struggle:

There are thus two sets of values that a liberal will emphasize—the values that are relevant to relations among people, which is the context in which he assigns first priority to freedom; and the values that are relevant to the individual in the exercise of his freedom, which is the realm of individual ethics and philosophy [ibid., 12].

In Friedman's view ethics and philosophy have nothing to do with the first kind of values, those set up by the relationships of production. Instead they deal with the exercise of freedom, which, however, means nothing but decisions about buying—for example, what color of necktie to buy. Setting up relationships of production, by contrast, is an act of faith in freedom itself.

Having Faith in Freedom

Indeed, a major source of objection to a free economy is precisely that it does this task so well. It gives people what they want instead of what a particular group thinks they ought to want. Underlying most arguments against the free market is a lack of belief in freedom itself [ibid., 15].

The fact that some persons do not have faith enough to see how well the market functions does not bother him. Someone who has a car that runs well does not complain; complaints come only when something is not working. It has nothing to do with faith. In this case, however, only faith can tell how well the market is working. Where faith is missing, those who lack it can never offer reasons. Hence God and the devil are at war.

Because it is a matter of faith, opinions, even those of the majority, have nothing to do with the question:

The believer in freedom has never counted noses [ibid., 9].

Accepting majority rule is an expedient rather than a basic principle [cf. ibid., 24].

It is particularly in the most serious issues that majority rule is irrelevant:

Fundamental differences in basic values can seldom if ever be decided at the ballot box; ultimately they can only be decided, though not

resolved, by conflict. The religious and civil wars of history are a bloody testament to this judgment [ibid.].

It all comes down to this: in order for there to be freedom, our author is willing to reject the use of physical force in the exercise of the freedom to murder. If faith in freedom is wanting, however, he has recourse to physical force to make sure the right decision is made. Freedom must be assured independently of the will of individuals or of the majority. The freedom to murder is therefore a vital part of his reasoning.

Human Interiority as a Market

Friedman takes this basic position as a starting point for his discussion of the economic subject and the result of the production process. Instead of explaining them, however, he spins fantasies around them. His concept of the economic subject can be explained on the basis of the following description of the labor supply:

The short-run supply of labor for *all* purposes is perfectly inelastic: 24 hours times the number of people is the available daily supply of labor if we neglect the corrections for different qualities of labor [*Price Theory*, 203].¹²

Not even during the worst periods of capitalism has the labor supply been considered to be available twenty-four hours a day: that is physiologically impossible. Friedman does not mean a person is able to use twenty-four hours a day. What he means is that one is available to oneself twenty-four hours a day and one buys those hours from oneself every day.

The person's interiority has become a market in which there are commodity relationships between two internal subjects, which ultimately have nothing to do with each other. One of these is dynamic and makes decisions. Friedman calls it the *portfolio*, and in effect it is the subject's internalizing of his or her own wallet. This portfolio-subject buys the twenty-four hours from the other subject, which is characterized by preferences, and distributes them among the preferences according to their relative intensity. The preference-subject offers to the portfolio-subject twenty-four hours and gets back from the portfolio-subject its due. Because the portfolio-subject has nothing of its own except its own private initiative, it sells a portion of these twenty-four hours on the market outside. It therefore receives a salary, which it now uses to purchase the leisure hours and it returns these to the preference-subject with something added, consumer goods, which the preference-subject consumes during the twenty-four hours of the day.

In this fashion the portfolio-subject is an intermediary between two markets, one of them internal (where it does business with the preference-subject)

and the other external (where it does business with other portfolio-subjects so as to combine factors of production).

The preference-subject is the one who works and consumes. However, it is nothing but a graph of preference curves that the portfolio-subject uses to make decisions. The portfolio-subject has no preferences and is nothing but the internalization of the wallet and checkbook, combined with a small computer.

If the preference-subject now wants to sleep, the portfolio-subject makes various estimates. It buys the leisure needed for eight hours of sleep. The price for these hours is the income the preference-subject would have earned by working the eight hours. In addition it has to buy the bed, and pay the rent, and so forth, for the time spent sleeping. With the income (not received) from the eight hours of sleep, the portfolio-subject now pays the employer (who does not exist and has not paid) these hours of work and can thus give the preference-subject permission to sleep eight hours. It pays the bed, rent, and so forth, from the salary it receives in the market outside.

Obviously if one ignores this flight of fancy, things are the same as ever: the individual sell hours of labor and the resulting salary buys consumer goods. Creating the fantasy, however, does serve a purpose, which can be observed better in Friedman's theory of population. In working out his theory he says that "the production of human beings is to be regarded as if it were a deliberative economic choice determined by the balancing of returns and costs" (*Price Theory*, 208).

The Child: Two Products in One

The preference-subject lets the portfolio-subject know it wants to have a child. The portfolio-subject immediately puts the child in its proper category as a good:

From this point of view, children are to be regarded in a dual role: they are a consumption good, a way of spending one's income to acquire satisfaction, an alternative to purchasing automobiles or domestic service or other goods; and they are a capital good produced by economic activity, an alternative to producing machines or houses or the like [*Price Theory*, 208–9].

The portfolio-subject therefore knows that the result is a joint product. The child is not the product of two—the process is seen as completely asexual—but two products in one:

The fact that children are, in this sense, a joint product means that the two sets of considerations need to be combined: the returns from the children as capital goods may be taken as reducing their costs as consumer goods. . . . Viewed as a consumption good, the amount pro-

duced will be determined by the relative cost of children versus other consumer goods, the income available for all uses, and the tastes and preferences of the individuals in question. . . . Viewed as a capital good, the amount produced will be determined by the returns that this capital good is expected to earn relative to other capital goods, and the relative costs of producing this and alternative capital goods [ibid., 209].

He has obviously forgotten to factor in the cost of a psychiatrist for a child produced in this fashion.

Human and Nonhuman Capital

With this theory in hand, migration from the country to the city becomes quite easy to understand:

The alternative interpretation suggested . . . is that rural areas have a comparative advantage in the production of human capital as well as of food; that people in rural areas are involved, as it were, in two industries that are pursued jointly—the production of food and of human capital—and that they engage in net exports of both to the city [*Price Theory*, 210].

He also notes the relative disadvantage of human capital in relation to nonhuman capital:

A major difference between this and other capital goods is the possibility of appropriating the returns by the individual who makes the initial capital investment [ibid., 209].

The absence of slavery makes investment in human beings more risky.

Once again it is fantasy at work. In order to understand the fact that procreating children runs into economic limits, there is not the slightest need to construe the child as a consumer good or as a capital good. Nothing is added to our knowledge by saying that such an economic barrier exists. What is added is just a wild flight of fancy. As it stands, it is completely tautological. What everyone already knows is simply being expressed from the angle of the portfolio-subject. That parents enjoy their child, that the child may later help (or may not), and that children entail expenses, which can be high in relation to income, this is all quite explicable without turning the decision to have a child into a calculation and viewing it that way.

We must ask why he tries to change all human problems into decisions made by a portfolio-subject vis-à-vis a preference-subject. If this notion cannot explain anything, what is it good for? One possible answer is that it is useful for showing the total and unlimited scope of commodity relationships.

Friedman is trying to develop a world vision in which anything whatsoever is subject to being made a commodity; there is no free zone, either within the person or outside.

Commodity calculation tries to be all-absorbing and where it cannot set up real commodity relationships, it at least sets up imaginary ones. The result is an unlimited commodity totalitarianism with no escape for anything or anyone. Such utter contempt for what is human, manifested in the absolute reduction of all human phenomena to their expression as commodities, is but the expression of the contempt signified by such relationships. Only those who resist such commoditization see them as expressing contempt, however. From his own viewpoint, Friedman has no intention of showing contempt for anyone. He simply reduces what is human to the category of a commodity and he considers this procedure to be scientific. If science means contempt, it is no fault of his. He hides behind the science. In order to contemn, one must have a dignity above the act of contempt. That is not the case here. Contempt is shown for others to the very same degree that it is internalized.

This urge to extend commodity relationships in both real and imaginary ways is better explained in terms of its political purpose. The aim is to prove the unlimited scope and effectiveness of commodity relationships in order to argue that state intervention is unnecessary and is in fact what generates crises in markets. This economic theory, challenged by state intervention and socialist planning, closes in on itself and looks for theoretical solutions that will enjoy a priori dogmatic validity and will then dispense it from discussing specific problems. The point is to avoid discussing whether in one case or another an intervention in the market would be called for, and rather to have a once-and-for-all answer, blocking any kind of intervention *ipso facto*.

The fact that anything can be the object of such calculation means extending such consideration to more and more objects, whether in real or imaginary ways. Inasmuch as anything that may produce income may be regarded as capital, it is seen as increasing the capital value of the preference-subject with the flow of income obtained by its labor offered on the market and in line with current interest rates. Such calculation may consider the feasibility of an increase in income based on new knowledge to be had by training. Training may be undertaken if its total cost is equal to or less than the additional income received; otherwise, it will have to be viewed as a consumer good and evaluated in terms of the relative satisfaction it brings. Even friends who sometimes help out have capital value and putting some investment into them is worthwhile but less so than in the case of an impersonal capital investment. And so on, case by case.

If any income source is now valued as capital, it is easy to find a basic imperfection in the capital market. Because slavery is excluded, investments in human capital are much riskier than those made in nonhuman capital. The difference is so great it justifies making a distinction between human and nonhuman capital. This is the only difference, however. It is not a result

deriving from the very nature of things; it is an imperfection caused by state intervention:

Even though we recognize that all sources of productive services can be regarded as capital, our social and political institutions make it desirable to recognize that there is an important distinction for many problems between two broad categories of capital—human and nonhuman capital [*Price Theory*, 200].

Because of state intervention it is safer to invest in material goods:

The fact that human capital sources cannot in our society be bought or sold means, as was noted above, that human capital does not provide as good a reserve against emergencies as nonhuman capital. . . . The individual who invests in a machine can own the machine and so be sure that he gets the return from his investment. The individual who invests in another individual cannot get this kind of assurance [*ibid.*, 201].

The difference between human capital and nonhuman capital consists in the fact that:

Because of the existing institutional and social framework and because of imperfections in the capital market we cannot expect human capital to respond to economic pressures and incentives in the same manner as material capital [*ibid.*, 245].

Obviously the imperfections in the capital market derive entirely from the institutional framework and therefore from the abolition of slavery:

These peculiarities would disappear only in a slave society and there only for the slaves. The fact that human capital sources cannot in our society be bought or sold means . . . that capital does not provide as good a reserve against emergencies as nonhuman capital. . . . Finally, the fact that human capital sources cannot be bought and sold is the basic reason for Marshall's second peculiarity: it is only for this reason that the seller of labor must deliver it himself [*ibid.*, 201–2].

This is all aimed at denying that there is any specific difference, from an economic viewpoint, between the machine and the human being. As a result the human being is seen as a subject only because institutions have so determined, and not because institutions acknowledge human subjectivity as being prior to them, as was the case in the liberal theory of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Because it is institutions that protect commodity relationships, human beings—as seen by Friedman—are subjects insofar as they are recognized as such by the flow of commodity relationships. The implica-

tion is that the human being is the creature of commodity relationships, not their creator.

This thesis is present in neoclassical theory as a logical consequence but it is not stated explicitly. Neoclassical theory explicitly maintains that there is an essential difference between capital and labor, a point that Friedman attacks in Marshall. Because his starting point was neoclassical, Marshall had to hold onto the inconsistencies of the argument so as not to fall into an overtly antihumanist position. Friedman can be more consistent in this respect because he is not afraid to be overtly antihumanist. What is true of Marshall is also valid for the vast majority of neoclassical theoreticians, such as Samuelson. They may disagree with Friedman but their theoretical starting point impedes them from developing their disagreement with any consistent arguments.

The difference between this position and fetishism as analyzed by Marx is overwhelming. In classical political economy, surplus value is created from nothing, as a result of commodity relationships and money-capital. In neoclassical theory it is the human being that is so created. In classical political economy the subject is prior to commodity relationships and therefore can have needs to which commodity production must respond. This is true even for Malthus's theory of population. There is a notion of subsistence below which human beings die. Neoclassical theory does away with this concept of subsistence and replaces it with a subject created by commodity relationships. It is finally Friedman himself who expresses this concept sharply: the human being is now a subject only insofar as recognized by commodity production. The concept of need vanishes and is replaced by that of demand. Whether human beings are or are not able to demand the minimum necessary in order to live is simply outside the sphere of economic theory. Capital replacement is an economic concept but human replacement is not. In reality the human being is not even viewed as equal to the machine but as inferior.

Homo Homini Lupus

The machine is one's friend: other human beings are unreliable. Friedman is entirely unaware that you have to choose between the two. If all commodities are to be available for purchase or sale, there is one condition: that human beings not be for sale. Human beings who are sold—that is, slaves—may neither buy nor sell. The abolition of slavery was therefore necessary not only from a human standpoint, but even within the logic of commodity relationships and their expansion. A high development of commodities is quite incompatible with slavery, and hence the abolition of slavery should not even be considered an imperfection in the market. If it looks that way to Friedman, it is probably a sign of an imperfection in his theory. One point comes out quite clearly, however: if the market were perfected along the lines he indicates, civilization would have to start over from a primitive state of slavery. Applying his theory would be the equivalent of nuclear war.

The imaginary extension of commodity relationships, begun in neoclassi-

cal theory and taken to extremes by Friedman, abolishes the limit to monetary calculation that classical political economy had always maintained. One aspect of the problem is the difference between productive and nonproductive labor. In classical political economy the cost of a child is all the goods that must be bought to raise that child, but all of these costs together do not constitute a price. The child has no price; the child is priceless. The same is true of a singer's voice. The concert ticket is not the price of the singer's voice but is a transfer of goods to the singer that one must make in order to have the opportunity to hear the singer. The singer's voice has costs, but it is also priceless. Even in the case of a consumer good, one buys not utility but its value, and through the value, one obtains use-value, which is the opportunity to enjoy it. Utility itself is not purchased. When you go to the beach to enjoy the sun, you purchase lodging in the hotel, a bathing suit, and so forth, but again the sum of these costs is not the price of the sun (or the price of the moon at night).

Similarly, in Marx's view of things, it is not labor that is purchased but labor power. The reason for a purchase is always use: the concert ticket to hear the singer's voice, the resort hotel room to enjoy the sun, the consumer good for the enjoyment it allows, labor power for the creativity of labor. The more something is esteemed, the greater is the likelihood of having to pay more for it. Such differences, however, do not measure benefits and they are not prices.

The boundary line between what has a price and what is priceless is also a line limiting those objects that a science, which is strictly operational and aimed at what can be proven, can investigate. The notion of prices for labor, utility, a singer's voice, the sun, stars, and children, is utterly imaginary, and amounts to a metaphysical fancy, to which no science has access—unless it be to refute it. It is an imaginary world that this economic theory has extended to cover all phenomena in the world, both inner and outer, without the least bit of scientific responsibility. Its contempt for human phenomena is tantamount to disrespect for scientific procedure.

Be that as it may, this totalizing effect (even though it takes place in the imagination) leads to a change in the way things are consumed, which Marx in his day called consumption without enjoyment. Making imaginary commodity relationships move into noncommodity areas is the basic ideological tool for affecting the way things are consumed. The more the imagination transforms the cost of enjoyment into its price, the more it destroys the possibility of enjoyment. Down inside the notion of maximizing benefits there lurks avarice, which destroys the enjoyment the consumer good is intended to allow. Spontaneous enjoyment disappears; maximizing benefits is only another way of expressing it. Any real enjoyment is spoiled.

Parallel to this imaginary striving to make commodity relationships all-embracing, there is another imaginary effort to expand them to include all possible phenomena. Friedman, for example, does not ask to what extent commoditization is necessary, but rather to what extent it is possible. It must

be extended to any possible area. He is annoyed by the thought that the sun or a forest or a park may be seen without paying for each look. He asks to what extent it would be possible to put not merely an imaginary price on all this, but a real price. We would have to pay a price to use all streets, highways, and parks. He is horrified that this is impossible. It is quite revealing that he calls the fact that it is impossible a “neighborhood effect.” Indeed this effect reminds Friedman of something he finds quite annoying: the human being does not live in isolation but in a community of human beings. That is the way things are, even if Friedman does not like it:

For the city park, it is extremely difficult to identify the people who benefit from it and to charge them for the benefits which they receive. If there is a park in the middle of the city, the houses on all sides get the benefit of the open space, and people who walk through it or by it also benefit. To maintain toll collectors at the gates or to impose annual charges per window overlooking the park would be very expensive and difficult. The entrances to a national park like Yellowstone, on the other hand, are few; most of the people who come stay for a considerable period of time and it is perfectly feasible to set up toll gates and collect admission charges. This is indeed now done, though the charges do not cover the whole costs [*Capitalism and Freedom*, 31].

When admission was free things were bad. Now visitors pay but things are still bad because they pay too little:

If the public wants this kind of an activity enough to pay for it, private enterprises will have every incentive to provide such parks [ibid.].

When there were no restraints on entering, freedom was threatened; when a fence is put up and visitors can enter only after paying, freedom is assured.

Friedman writes:

I cannot myself conjure up any neighborhood effects or important monopoly effects that would justify governmental activity in this area [ibid.].

Freedom as a Cage . . . or a Garrison

Friedman is incapable of imagining a concept of freedom whose starting point is freedom of access to the goods of the world. Classical political economists conceived of commodity relationships as a fence around things. They found it necessary but were bothered by it—hence, their romantic vision of the vagabond or of a return to nature. Neoclassical economic theory leads to seeing freedom as a fence or cage. As much as possible such a fence must be set up around every good, so money may then serve as its “Open

Sesame!” Increasingly it is money that gives access to the goods of the world. Friedman sees freedom as an endless number of cages around an endless number of goods, but the military officers who follow him conceive the world as an endless series of garrisons. In the military view there should be a garrison around every good in the world and in Friedman’s view every good should be put in a cage. Both are horrified by “neighborhood effects” that make it impossible for this process to be extended to every good in the world.

What is quite striking is the way this theory shows its fear of human spontaneity, of the vagabond—that is, one who takes things for what they are and not for what they cost. In both thought and action, it is a theory calculated to kill spontaneity and immediate enjoyment. This theory aspires to do what political totalitarianisms have never achieved and cannot achieve. By killing enjoyment, it leaves an empty kind of consumption. Human beings who reproduce themselves with this empty consumption are also empty.

The Theory of Marginal Productivity

Alongside the fantasy about the consuming human subject there is a fantasy about the producing subject. Its starting point is the theory that explains incomes on the basis of the marginal productivity of the factors of production. Friedman presents it in this fashion:

The normative function of payment in accordance with marginal product is to achieve efficiency in the allocation of resources [*Price Theory*, 194].

More generally, payment in accordance with marginal product can be seen to be a means of making the rate of substitution of final products in purchase on the market equal to the rate at which it is technically possible to substitute final products in production [*ibid.*, 195].

This position leads to a principle of distributive justice: “an individual deserves what is produced by the resources he owns” (*ibid.*, 196).

This system is completely tautological. It is the imaginary and tautological equivalent of the theory of utility. No company in the world pays according to marginal productivity and none could do so. There is no such thing, just as there is no such thing as utility. It does not appear in any account books, nor in any statistics, and most businesspersons are unaware of it. It is a figment of the imagination, just like utility, which has never been measured or applied. It is not simply that there are no exact measurements—there are no measurements of any sort, not even approximate. Nevertheless all economists think they see this ghost.

With all its complicated theoretical apparatus, the theory says something quite simple: it concludes from price theory that incomes are paid according to marginal productivity, and from the conclusion that incomes

are paid according to marginal productivity it deduces that they are paid according to marginal productivity. The same is true in the case of utility. Consumers make choices according to marginal utility and therefore marginal utility accounts for the way they choose. They can choose whatever they want and by definition utility is what they want. There can never be any comparison between choosing and utility, because utility is revealed only in the consumer's choice.

If we wipe out the whole fantasy of utility, we know just as much as we did before. The same is true of marginal productivity. It shows up only when income is paid and no economist in the world could ever discover any income payment greater or less than marginal productivity. Once more we know just as much about economics if we erase everything we know about marginal productivity. The labor theory of value is quite different: it is based on concepts that are subject to at least approximate measurement and that can be seen in statistics or deduced from them.

Nevertheless the theory of marginal productivity provides a certain image of the productive process, in which the social division of labor is organized in such a way that the various factors of production continually receive incomes equivalent to what they contribute. Although the product is a result of joint effort, each factor participates at its own risk and on its own responsibility, and the income of each factor is entirely unrelated to the incomes of other factors. Behind the factors stand their owners, who receive in accordance with the factors they supply to the process.

The division of labor looks like a huge octopus: each factor gets what it can and hands the result over to its owner. It takes according to its ability and receives according to its yield. If any factor increases its output, it receives exactly in proportion to the increase in the total product due to the increase it supplies. If what a factor supplies decreases, the total product decreases accordingly. Despite the fact that production is in common, each factor contributes and receives as a Robinson Crusoe would with his individual product. Machines, persons, ideas, and so forth, are all working and each hands over what it receives to its own portfolio-subject, which uses it according to the preferences of the preference-subject. Each factor is a real subject tied to its portfolio-subject.

Although pay always follows marginal productivity, it is not always at a competitive level. If pay is greater than at a competitive level, some factors will be excluded from employment. This is what concerns Friedman:

Let us suppose that the wage rate can be fixed above its competitive level by direct means, for example, by legal enactment of a minimum wage rate. This will necessarily mean that fewer jobs will be available than otherwise and fewer jobs than persons seeking jobs. This excess supply of labor must be disposed of somehow—the jobs must be rationed among the seekers for jobs [*Price Theory*, 160].

If unions raise wage rates in a particular occupation or industry they

necessarily make the amount of employment available in that occupation or industry less than it otherwise would be—just as any higher price cuts down the amount purchased [*Capitalism and Freedom*, 124].

The gain to the miners was in the form of higher wage rates, which of course meant fewer miners employed [*ibid.*, 125].

Factors are rewarded according to their marginal productivity. When wages go above the competitive level, labor will be employed only to the extent it shows greater productivity. It is economically irrational for wages to rise this way—and it is labor that pays the price, for overall employment is affected. Factors, therefore, do not compete with one another. Pay still reflects marginal productivity. The system is described as being so flexible that the economic harm done by increasing the price of a factor falls on that factor itself. Other factors have nothing to do with it.

Raising wages beyond their competitive price—which is utterly a figment of the imagination—therefore does not affect capital but only labor itself. Nor will increasing profits beyond their competitive price affect the labor factor. It affects only the employment of the factor in question (i.e., capital).

When they seek such increases, factors are showing irrational economic behavior and harm only themselves. Harm comes when factors establish monopolies. It is in the interest of all factors to prevent monopoly formation.

Preventing Monopoly Formation

In Friedman's view the tendency toward monopoly formation becomes especially dangerous when supported by the state. In this case the forces of competition cannot defeat the tendencies toward monopoly formation:

The first and most urgent necessity in the area of government policy is the elimination of those measures which directly support monopoly, whether enterprise monopoly or labor monopoly, and an even-handed enforcement of the laws on enterprises and labor unions alike [*Capitalism and Freedom*, 132].

Here again there is a very close parallel between labor unions on the one hand and industrial monopolies on the other. In both cases, widespread monopolies are likely to be temporary and susceptible of dissolution unless they can call to their aid the political power of the state [*Price Theory*, 161].

Therefore an antimonopoly policy on the part of the state is not really necessary. All that is required is that the state not grant recognition to any monopoly. Inasmuch as the only "monopolies" that need state recognition are unions (i.e., through labor legislation), the apparent attack on monopolies in general becomes an attack on labor unions:

Perhaps the most difficult specific problem in this area arises with respect to combinations among laborers, where the problem of freedom to combine and freedom to compete is particularly acute [*Capitalism and Freedom*, 26].

In industry, by contrast, there is practically no such thing as monopoly:

Of course, competition is an ideal type, like a Euclidean line or point. . . . Similarly, there is no such thing as “pure” competition. . . . But as I have studied economic activities in the United States, I have become increasingly impressed with how wide is the range of problems and industries for which it is appropriate to treat the economy as if it were competitive [ibid., 120].

Utilizing his criterion, itself quite revealing, he comes to the conclusion that “domestic service is a vastly more important industry than the telegraph and telephone industry” (ibid., 122).

Where there are monopolies it is because labor unions operate as “enterprises selling the services of cartellizing an industry” (ibid., 125).

Breaking up unions would therefore be a decisive blow for industrial monopolies. Those monopolies will accept a similar blow against their own interest out of sheer love for free competition. By the same token breaking the union monopoly is a help to the labor factor, which can no longer “hurt” itself by asking for higher wages.

The argument is obviously based on the thesis that factors of production can replace one another, and particularly that “human capital” can be replaced by nonhuman capital. According to this notion, should labor demand excessive pay, machines will work by themselves. How they do this is a mystery. Friedman in fact never says what this nonhuman capital is. He merely gives examples—“buildings and machines” (*Price Theory*, 245). That is not a definition. Buildings and machines, like anything else, are the product of labor. If a wage increase leads to a greater use of machines, it also leads to a greater use of labor to produce machines. What happens, therefore, is that labor that uses machines is replaced by labor that makes them. If the capital coefficient remains constant over time—and that is the normal case—this shift cannot increase or decrease total employment but only restructure it. If such is the case, wage shifts affect only the distribution of incomes between capital and labor, and the employment structure will be affected to the extent that this redistribution changes the composition of the overall demand for consumer goods. There is no negative effect on employment at all. In an utterly dogmatic fashion and without any argumentation, Friedman postulates that supply and demand operate in regard to factors just as they do with goods.

Economic Rationality

Out of all this there emerges a particular concept of the economic subject as producer, receiving the product in the form of income. According to Friedman, income is determined by the marginal productivity of labor—which in fact means the criterion is completely arbitrary and there is no objective criterion for determining income. Using unemployment as an indicator, he goes on to say that the income going to the labor factor is above competitive levels whenever unemployment exists. Inasmuch as there is always some labor unemployed throughout the capitalist world, he concludes that the income to the labor factor has been too high from the beginnings of capitalism to the present. He arrives at this conclusion by means of a fanciful deduction with no proof whatsoever. He then states a conclusion as a norm for the labor factor, and extends it to all incomes. Pay for the labor factor should be determined without taking personal needs into account or, in the language of classical political economy, without taking into account the need of human beings to maintain their own lives. He posits this norm as a requirement of economic rationality.

All this results from the fact that the neoclassical theory did away with the concept of an economic subject prior to commodity relationships. When this concept disappeared, the concept of needs went with it, to be replaced by the concept of demand in accordance with preferences.

This is how Friedman defines economic rationality, and therefore the function of the market: "It gives people what they want" (*Capitalism and Freedom*, 15). Never does he ask whether it gives them what they need. Their need comes from a physiological reality, which is determined by natural laws. In the tradition of neoclassical economic theory, Friedman can inquire only about the composition of the basket of goods that persons buy according to their tastes or preferences. He does not take into account the size of the basket. To the extent that the starting point is a subject who has needs, however, the economic problem is primarily the size of the basket and only secondarily its composition according to personal preferences. Need comes first. This is so true that in emergency periods even capitalist countries ignore preferences in order to guarantee what is necessary: during wartime there is rationing.

Dissolving the concept of needs and focusing attention exclusively on prices leads to conceiving of the economic subject as one who, in the name of economic rationality, can only demand that the economy take its cue from preferences and not from needs. When rationality is so defined and becomes a social norm, it requires a kind of economic behavior that leaves the problem of human needs out of consideration. Because it treats the human being as a creation of commodity relationships, this kind of economic rationality requires that human needs be passed over entirely. Where classical political economy conceives economic rationality to be the satisfaction of human needs as adjusted to individual preferences, this reformulation of rationality

transforms it into the exercise of the freedom to murder. With Friedman this freedom now becomes the duty to murder to the extent to which such rationality is treated as the norm.

The right to the means to life is a logical conclusion from classical economics—and Marx draws it; the right to murder is a logical conclusion from neoclassical theory—and Friedman draws it.

The theory of marginal productivity is an intellectual construct aimed at replacing the theory of production and distribution in classical political economy. In the latter there are interests linked to the factors of production that are at odds inasmuch as when one factor receives a greater share of the product, another receives less, and vice versa. Shifts in distribution affect the composition of the overall demand for final products and capital goods, but not its magnitude. Distribution is therefore a result of the relative strength of social classes, which then determines how they share in the product; profit comes from surplus value. The theory of marginal productivity when seen vis-à-vis classical economic theory is a flight of fancy as opposed to a scientific explanation.

Inasmuch as its basic concepts cannot be expressed operationally at all, the theory of marginal productivity only bears the appearance of being a serious theory. It amounts to a way of looking at the production process through the eyes of the kind of faith Friedman demands. Only one who has faith can see how well the market works and how economic exploitation is really impossible; it is faith that enables one to see the production process like this. With faith, the world is different.

Inasmuch as the theory is tautological—a vicious circle—there is really no way to evaluate it scientifically. You cannot argue with a vicious circle, but only expose it for what it is. From a scientific viewpoint you can only declare it to be irresponsible, metaphysical, and fanciful.

Friedman is not entirely unaware of the deep chasm separating classic liberalism from his own:

The relation between political and economic freedom is complex and by no means unilateral. In the early nineteenth century, Bentham and the Philosophical Radicals were inclined to regard political freedom as a means to economic freedom. . . . In retrospect, one cannot say that they were wrong. There was a large measure of political reform that was accompanied by economic reform in the direction of a great deal of *laissez faire*. An enormous increase in the well-being of the masses followed this change in economic arrangements [*Capitalism and Freedom*, 10].

What followed were a hundred years of the impoverishment and misery of the working classes worldwide, and later especially in the Third World, which today includes the bulk of those living in the capitalist world.

The liberals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries took as their start-

ing point human rights in the sense of the right to life, but they excluded the right to the means of life. This was their greatness and their misery. To the extent that the capitalist system was unable to guarantee the means to life, liberal society was undermined. Now Friedman attempts a solution. He reverses the liberals' understanding of the relationship:

Viewed as a means to the end of political freedom, economic arrangements are important because of their effect on the concentration or dispersion of power [ibid., 9].

It is no longer human rights that are taken to be the starting point but the organization of the economy or, what amounts to the same thing, the capitalist property system. Friedman points to the obvious result: from now on there is no guarantee of the right to life (human rights as formulated by liberals), which means denying any right to the means needed for life. The kind of society that would come from such rights can no longer be maintained. The right to life will now be denied so as to be able to keep denying the right to the means of life. What Friedman is announcing is the new police state. This state breaks with the whole liberal tradition of human rights, so that private property may deny the right to the means of life. The police state means freedom and the socialized state means slavery. This is his new liberalism. Overarching and enclosing the many cages around individual commodities, he erects a larger cage.

Repression by Nonintervention

This whole new conception of the liberal state is aimed at justifying utter nonintervention on the part of the state. The measures he advocates, therefore, are those that allow the imposition of such nonintervention. Naturally the first thing they presuppose is a major buildup in the repressive apparatus, about which he says nothing, focusing rather on what this repressive apparatus would have to do. He does not have to outlaw anything: "It is a mark of the political freedom of a capitalist society that men can openly advocate and work for socialism" (*Capitalism and Freedom*, 16).

Nevertheless, his uneasiness is apparent: "Make the advocacy of radical causes sufficiently remunerative, and the supply of advocates will be unlimited" (ibid., 18).

Here it is Friedman who is lacking faith. Faith will be safeguarded if those who take advantage of their political freedom to advocate "radical" causes are attacked at their economic base of support. If this is not enough to silence them, McCarthy-type methods are no threat to freedom. Quite the contrary, they make it shine all the more:

The commercial emphasis, the fact that people who are running enterprises have an incentive to make as much money as they can, protected

the freedom of the individuals who were blacklisted by providing them with an alternative form of employment, and by giving people an incentive to employ them [ibid., 20].

McCarthy's blacklisting kept persons from exercising their profession but at the same time it offered incentives for others to employ them: they now had to offer their services for lower wages. In Friedman's view, McCarthy, other enterprises, and those who were persecuted, all exercised freedom alike:

Freedom also, of course, includes the freedom of others not to deal with him under those circumstances [ibid.] [i.e., when the individual is exercising freedom to promote communism—TRANS.].

If they get jobs despite being blacklisted, that is a proof of freedom. If they do not get jobs, it is also a proof. Blacklisting is not state intervention, however. Although it is an act of repression, it is not intervention: those being repressed brought on state intervention. Repressing by nonintervention is obviously not repression.

As if McCarthyism were not enough, Friedman states:

Fundamental differences in basic values can seldom if ever be resolved at the ballot box. Ultimately they can only be decided, though not resolved, by conflict. The religious and civil wars of history are a bloody testament to this judgment [ibid., 24].

A police state is not interventionist when it is a necessary condition for maintaining nonintervention. What Friedman pictures, then, is a noninterventionist police state that is utterly totalitarian. This police state employs repression against all who advocate intervention. It is as strong and repressive as the situation requires. There is no means that this end cannot justify. It does not want to be repressive, but bears this heavy burden in order to safeguard freedom. For their part citizens may do as they wish as long as they do not advocate state intervention. If they do so, repression is never a priori but always a posteriori. Such a police state smashes heads as soon as they are lifted, but it does not prohibit their being lifted.

This explains why Friedman is against fascism. In his view fascism means an interventionist police state. He does not condemn it as a police state but for its interventionism.

Racial Discrimination: A Matter of Taste

Friedman's analysis of racial discrimination reflects this same stance:

The man who exercises discrimination pays a price for doing so. He is, as it were, "buying" what he regards as a "product." It is hard to see

that discrimination can have any meaning other than a “taste” of others that one does not share [*Capitalism and Freedom*, 10].

Discrimination is an exercise of freedom—to murder—whose costs are incurred by the one exercising it. The one discriminated against suffers no harm, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding:

Because of the prejudices of both customers and fellow workers, being a Negro involves having a lower economic productivity in some occupations and so color has the same effect on earnings as a difference in ability [*Price Theory*, 225].

Work done by a black and a white produces the same thing but their productivity is different, owing to purchasers’ tastes. There is no point in asking about Friedman’s concept of productivity: he has none. Because the black receives less, the white receives more. Therefore one who buys and employs the labor of blacks and whites pays the price of discrimination, first paying less to one group because of its “inferiority” and then paying the other group more because of its “superiority.”

Those discriminated against cannot complain: their work is being paid according to its marginal productivity and it is “less” than that of whites, even when it produces the same thing. Elsewhere he says, “The fundamental ‘injustice’ is the original distribution of resources—the fact that one man was born blind and the other not” (*ibid.*, 197).

Where there is a question of taste, freedom of contract reigns supreme. When a store owner “hires white clerks in preference to Negroes,” he should not be stopped. “He may simply be transmitting the tastes of the community” [*Capitalism and Freedom*, 111–12].

Attempting to stop such cannibalism would obviously be state interventionism. Fair employment programs tried to do that:

Fair employment practice commissions [FEPCs] that have the task of preventing “discrimination” in employment by reason of race, color, or religion have been established in a number of states. Such legislation clearly involves interference with the freedom of individuals to enter into voluntary contracts with one another [*ibid.*, 111].

Such laws fall into fascism:

The Hitler Nuremberg laws and the laws in the Southern states imposing special disabilities upon Negroes are both examples of laws similar in principle to FEPC [*ibid.*, 149].

All these cases are matters of taste. Hitler had a “taste” for discriminating against Jews, and others have a “taste” for blocking discrimination. Just as persons have both the freedom to murder and the freedom of not being

murdered, they also have the freedom to discriminate or not to discriminate. Freedom to murder does not imply a duty to murder, nor does freedom to discriminate imply a duty to do so. But one who has such a "taste" should not misuse the state with interventionism. If Hitler had used the state to impose nondiscrimination against Jews, he would have been as horrifying as he was in fact with discrimination. He was horrifying because of his interventionism.

In his radical anti-interventionism Friedman stops at nothing. Hence the list of all the forms of state intervention that should be ended:

. . . farm programs, general old-age benefits, minimum-wage laws, pro-union legislation, tariffs, licensing provisions of crafts or professions, and so on in seemingly endless profusion [ibid., 191].

Obviously if his program were applied it would hit like an atomic bomb.

Charity—But Not That of St. Vincent de Paul

One can imagine the repressive force needed to impose such measures, should they be enacted. One can also imagine (although it is difficult) the poverty that would ensue. Friedman is concerned for the poor but he sees a solution: "One resource, and in many ways the most desirable, is private charity" (*Capitalism and Freedom*, 190). Charity, however, has its drawbacks:

I am distressed by the sight of poverty; I am benefited by its alleviation; but I am benefited equally whether I or someone else pays for its alleviation; the benefits of other people's charity therefore partly accrue to me. To put it differently, we might all of us be willing to contribute to the relief of poverty, *provided* everyone else did [ibid., 191].

Obviously this is not St. Vincent de Paul's kind of charity—it is the exact opposite. Friedman does not see the poor person as someone in need who should be helped in order to satisfy the need. There is no sense of solidarity with the one in need.

Naturally Friedman would say the concept of "distress" is "neutral" and that he has nothing to say about solidarity. What he means by distress is being uncomfortable. If he is distressed, he is relieved when the distress disappears. Any sort of content can be made to fit into the relationship of distress and relief.

But that statement is not entirely true. Among all the possible contents of distress, there is one that is excluded by that very way of formulating the matter: charity. In the tradition of charity there is an awareness that in helping the poor, one is helping oneself and others, but the other—the poor

person—must be recognized as one in need, one who has needs that must be satisfied. In responding to this situation, one who gives out of charity enters into community with the poor person and in this fashion affirms oneself as a human being.

Because he excludes the notion of need from his concept of the subject, Friedman's "distress" can never have a sense of respect for and recognition of the other. There is no room in his theory for the concept of another person as a person. Given his conceptual framework, there is no way to conceive of charity at all. Hence he can say:

The Germans who lost their lives opposing Adolph Hitler were pursuing their interests as they saw them. So also are the men and women who devote great effort and time to charitable, educational, and religious activities [*Capitalism and Freedom*, 200].

The only human subject Friedman can see is one who is isolated and alone and for whom others are simply objects of preferences. There can be a whole range of reasons for devoting oneself to such an object or dealing with it, but recognizing the other as a subject is impossible.

Distress as a motivating factor can therefore have any sort of content except charity. Distress affects only the one who feels it. Helping the poor thus takes on a sense of "cleaning up" those elements in society that distress others. If things are to be "clean and neat," the poor must have a "basic minimum" to live on. This "basic minimum" can be established by determining how much is needed to eliminate the distress. "The precise floor set would depend on what the community could afford" (*ibid.*, 192).

This basic minimum is therefore determined not by what persons need in order to live but by the amount society can afford. This amount is determined not objectively but according to the tastes of those who pay. Their "taste" will depend on how great their "distress" is. The poor person as a subject is nowhere to be seen. If the poor really did appear the outcome would be quite radical. If the poor must have what they need, society would have to change enough to make it possible. Such would be the demand of charity, which would now be pressuring for justice.

Friedman, however, is more concerned with ways to keep the poor under the minimum. He considers quite dangerous the proposal of an income tax to support the poor:

It establishes a system under which taxes are imposed on some to pay subsidies to others. And presumably, these others have a vote [*ibid.*, 194].

Because all individuals have exclusive ownership of their income and can never take anything from another, there is no such thing as a distribution of the social product. The social product is the sum of individual incomes

already distributed. Hence redistributing income is the exclusive prerogative of those who have already received it.

From the foregoing he hits on the idea of canceling the voting rights of the poor and concludes by quoting the Englishman A. V. Dicey, writing in 1914:

Surely a sensible and a benevolent man may well ask himself whether England as a whole will gain by enacting that the receipt of poor relief, in the shape of a pension, shall be consistent with the pensioner's retaining the right to join in the election of a Member of Parliament [ibid.].

General Bonilla, the minister of the interior in the Chilean junta, understood this kind of charity exactly. "We don't give anything away; a person is insulted to be given something" (*El Mercurio*, Santiago, June 10, 1974). The "distress" he felt at the sight of the poor was minimal.

Friedman's book proposes to answer this question: "How can we keep the government we create from becoming a Frankenstein that will destroy the very freedom we establish it to protect?" (*Capitalism and Freedom*, 14).

The question is a sheer façade behind which he in fact proposes what he says he wants to avoid: a Frankenstein.

The Economic Creed of the Trilateral Commission

Milton Friedman's "happy fetishism" is simply an extreme expression of a kind of thinking in the capitalist world today that maintains that the liberal age is over. A new age is said to be coming into being, but it does not have any commonly accepted name. Among bourgeois social thinkers Max Weber had already declared that the liberal age was at an end. After World War I fascist movements brought this notion into the political sphere. However, the various fascist movements were primarily nationalistic and were unable to imprint their character on the world capitalist system. More important, they were unable to penetrate the classic liberal democracies.

With the defeat of fascism at the end of the World War II, the notion that the liberal age, and therefore classic liberal democracy, was ending, began to gain acceptance even in the main centers of the world capitalist system. Underlying this change were both the movement for decolonization and the recognition of labor unions. Decolonization created the expectation that liberal democracy would expand to all countries within the capitalist system, and the recognition of labor unions created an expectation that all spheres of society would be democratized in the liberal sense. Its ideologists had always presented liberal democracy in universal terms. However, when faced with the challenge of really being extended universally, liberal democracy proved to be a myth. There now appeared, accordingly, antiliberal trends of thinking, which fed on the defeated fascist ideologies, even though they did not follow a directly fascist line. This is most clearly seen in the case of the ideology of national security, which has its roots in German geopolitical thinking.

The founding of the Trilateral Commission and the policies of the Carter administration in the United States represent the first systematic attempt to go beyond the liberal age (and classic liberal democracy) and replace it with new systems of power on the scale of the capitalist system as a whole. The Trilateral Commission was set up in 1973 by David Rockefeller, president of

the Chase Manhattan Bank. Its main ideologue: Zbigniew Brzezinski. It has three main branches, one in the United States, one in Europe, and one in Japan. Its members are recruited from among high executives of large corporations, parliamentary representatives, intellectuals, journalists, editors, union leaders, and the like. President Carter, Vice-President Mondale, and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance have all belonged to the Trilateral Commission and it was a major impulse behind Carter's election campaign.

Interdependence and the International Division of Labor

Because the Trilateral Commission represents a systematic attempt to reformulate power relationships within the world capitalist system, it seems useful to analyze its main concepts. A small number of concepts (or clichés) taken together serve to reveal a kind of "economic creed" helpful for organizing and understanding commission proposals. Key Trilateral figures keep returning to these concepts and utilize them to rationalize their policy positions. In these observations I intend to extract such concepts from publications of important persons in the Trilateral Commission as well as from commission reports.

Without a doubt the central concept in the whole Trilateral ideology is that of interdependence. In all its discussions it uses interdependence as a starting point or heads toward it. In the Trilateral context, however, the word "interdependence" takes on a particular meaning, beyond the sort of interdependence present in any economic or social system:

Although such interaction existed in earlier times, the development of modern technology and the evolution of the international economic and political system have brought a quantitative and qualitative change [Cooper et al., *Renovated System*, 5].

Interdependence, accordingly, is not a mere interrelationship but is the product of quantitative and qualitative changes. Because it is technology that underlies these changes, this kind of interdependence cannot be understood except in terms of a particular period in the international division of labor, which should be interpreted in all its psychological, social, economic, and political consequences.

These levels may be distinguished from one another according to their importance:

In the economic and political domains, interdependence has grown to an unprecedented scale. The rapid growth of international trade and finance has led to an intense degree of mutual dependence. The vast amount of internationally owned and managed production provides a particularly important transnational link, as does mutual dependence on vital imports such as oil, food, and other raw materials. Economic

events—and shocks—in one country are rapidly transmitted to other countries [ibid.].

Although there is mention of interdependence as affecting both the political and the economic domains, the economic domain (that is, the existing kind of international division of labor) prevails over the political domain. This is even clearer in other contexts where the function of the nation-state vis-à-vis “interdependence” is laid out.

The kind of division of labor that has arisen in recent decades is only partially described and it is not put in context with an analysis of previous periods. However, it is easy enough to reconstruct. The kind of division of labor that arose during the nineteenth century and lasted until around World War II was a result of the fact that there were several industrial centers in the world. These centers engaged in competition with one another to sell their finished products on the world market and were relatively independent of one another in their internal division of labor. Nation-states such as England, France, the United States, and Germany had industrial systems, each of which produced practically all the capital goods needed for their own production, but at the same time they became increasingly dependent on imported raw materials. International trade among the various industrial centers involved relatively little exchange of factory-made inputs, whether of machinery or of partly finished goods. This is the reason for extended wars such as World War I. These nation-states faced each other as sovereign imperialist centers.

The new technologies that appeared around World War II and have characterized the production process up to the present have profoundly changed this situation. The different industrial centers of the capitalist world have become increasingly dependent on one another for their industrial inputs (machinery and partly finished goods), but have maintained and increased their traditional dependence on imported raw materials. The industrial centers that previously were independent of one another have now become interdependent. This process is more obvious among the industrial centers of Europe where it has been observed for some time; it is increasingly true, although to a lesser extent, in the case of the United States, where dependence is greatest regarding raw materials. There have been similar processes in Japan vis-à-vis other industrial centers of the capitalist world. The degree of mutual sovereignty among the industrialized countries has declined in comparison with the pre-World War I period.

The technologies on which this process is based are changing international relationships, especially in the field of communications. As the industrial centers become ever more interrelated through the new division of labor and as they become ever more dependent on relatively undeveloped countries for raw materials, the levels of information on events within the system also increase.

These processes are what the Trilateral Commission calls “interdepen-

dence.” Hence it is not a static concept, as in classic economic theory, but one that is dynamic and implies a process heading toward the future.

Viewed as such a future-oriented process, interdependence is analyzed not only as an object but as a subject—indeed, ultimately it is the only subject recognized in the Trilateral economic creed. Interdependence becomes a subject through the activity of particular human beings. However, this human activity does not have its basis in the nation-states as they were previously, for they have now lost their sovereignty. The activity that advances interdependence as a process comes from other agents.

Brzezinski tells us who they are:

The nation-state as a fundamental unit of man’s organized life has ceased to be the principal creative force: “International banks and multinational corporations are acting and planning in terms that are far in advance of the political concepts of the nation-state” [*Two Ages*, 56].

The nation-state is therefore undermined:

On the formal plane, politics as a global process operates much as they [nation-states] did in the past, but the inner reality of that process is increasingly shaped by forces whose influence or scope transcend national lines [*ibid.*, 8].

Interdependence is thus seen as an acting subject and the force that advances it is that of the international banks and multinational corporations. In Trilateral publications interdependence is always viewed in its two dimensions: as an objective process in the international division of labor and as a force that advances this process, which shows its subject character in multinational corporations.

The Technetronic Era

Because interdependence is seen as a process, its forward advance is linked to the projection of a goal attributed to the process. Brzezinski, who has seen this most clearly, begins by speaking of a new age in history, one toward which interdependence is heading. That this is a purely artificial construct is obvious right from the name he puts on this goal: the technetronic era. There is a new society beyond “industrial civilization,” “shaped culturally, psychologically, socially, and economically by the impact of technology and electronics—particularly in the area of computers and communications” (*Two Ages*, 9). Human intelligence will be the most important creative factor and human progress will be based on knowledge. Unemployment will become unimportant. Human conflicts are losing their ideological (and therefore deep-seated) character and can now be solved pragmatically. There will

be increasing equality between social groups, between men and women, and among nations.

Brzezinski sees the elaboration of this projection toward the future as extremely important:

Since it appears true that "this society has chosen to emphasize technological change as its chief mode of creative expression and basis for economic growth," it follows that this society's most imperative task is to define a conceptual framework in which technological change can be given meaningful and humane ends. Unless this is done, there is the real danger that by remaining directionless, the third American revolution, so pregnant with possibilities for individual creativity and fulfillment, can become socially destructive [ibid., 221].¹³

He sums up the goal: "The positive potential of the third American revolution lies in its promise to link liberty with equality" (ibid., 273).

The Importance of Faith

Brzezinski intends to provide a content for the demands of social cohesion, a factor that he views as very important:

Belief is an important social cement. A society that does not believe in anything is a society in a state of dissolution. The sharing of common aspirations and a unifying faith is essential to community life [*Two Ages*, 141].

In turning the coming technetronic era into an article of faith in order to provide a kind of social cement, he links the future of "interdependence" with the search for God. Of Carter he says:

He does happen to think—and it's a view which I share—that spiritual values have a significant social utility: that a society which rests on certain fundamental beliefs is a society which has stronger foundations. . . . Individual existence is only meaningful if it involves a search for something beyond one's self—for God, in effect [*Sunday Observer*, London, July 10, 1977, 22].

Andrew Young took the same tack, although in a manner more adapted to underdeveloped countries, in an address before the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America in Guatemala City on May 3, 1977. He said, "On that day when every person is paid a reasonable wage for a socially useful job, the need for revolution will begin to disappear" ("New Unity," 575).

All these projections toward the future are patently crude transplants and

“secularizations” of the image of communism as it is proposed in communist countries. To the extent they are projections of the directions in which capitalist society is said to be heading, they are quite weak, and Brzezinski himself points out this weakness. He estimates that by the year 2000 only a few countries will have entered the promised new age—particularly the United States, Japan, Sweden, and Canada. Others will have arrived at the stage of mature industry. But the poverty suffered by the vast majority of the world population in underdeveloped countries will be greater than it is today (see *Two Ages*, 50). The promised new age will therefore be like all past ages: as the majority becomes more impoverished, a minority prospers.

This is a curious way to fulfill the promise to “link liberty with equality.” Nevertheless, with the silencing power of North American imperialism Brzezinski thinks he can safeguard the stability of the world system even under these dramatic conditions.

In 1969—at the height of the Vietnam war—he quoted the following passage approvingly:

American influence has a porous and almost invisible quality. It works through the interpenetration of economic institutions, the sympathetic harmony of political leaders and parties, the shared concepts of sophisticated intellectuals, the mating of bureaucratic interests. It is, in other words, something new in the world, and not yet well understood [*Two Ages*, 33].

The Specter of Catastrophes

Because its promise is quite vague and unattractive for the bulk of the world population, the Trilateral ideology does not develop its future projects to any great extent. Nevertheless, it has to find some sort of motivation in the way “interdependence” will unfold in the future. It therefore becomes a sort of catastrophe thinking. Insistently it conjures up images of unlimited kinds of possible catastrophes in order to offer interdependence as a way out. Lacking any convincing future goal, the Trilateral ideology becomes an apocalyptic ideology. Unable to offer hope, it inspires fear. Hence Andrew Young tells the Economic Commission for Latin America:

We can choose the community of shared goals and interests over the chaos that means destruction. . . . Resources . . . should be used to feed the hungry and nurse the sick and to build society and freedom rather than to prepare for doomsday. . . . Create and grow or die. . . . There is no possibility of stopping where we are and just avoiding catastrophe [“New Unity,” 567, 568, 571].

In the Trilateral report previously quoted one finds the same kind of catastrophic thinking about the threat of war, or ecological collapse, or the

threat of extreme poverty. However, all potential catastrophes are seen as threats to interdependence and never as what they really are—namely, the *result* of it. Interdependence is presented as the great life preserver for humankind and disregard for interdependence is regarded as the source of all potential disasters:

Although interdependence involves a network that bonds practically all the states of the globe, its makeup is fragile. Nuclear proliferation and harmful ecological changes are two growing threats to its cohesion. . . .¹⁴

In fact, unless the states of the world can cooperate in this field, controlling nuclear proliferation, a period of instability and violence could be opened, compared to which the past quarter century may appear as a *belle époque*. . . . Undesired ecological changes present a different problem. They may not be foreseen, and may already be serious or irreversible when their first symptoms appear. . . . The pressure of man on the environment has already caused many undesired changes, and could threaten partial breakdowns. A breakdown of the globe's biosphere is unlikely during this century, but there can be no certainty of its avoidance. . . . The prevention of ecological damage and breakdowns (and the repair of existing damage) are major tasks for the globe as a whole [Cooper, *Renovated System*, 6].

The Trilateral ideology treats the dangers of war and of ecological change like natural disasters that must be prevented so far as possible. However, it also foresees other kinds of disaster, some resulting from extreme poverty and others from a whole range of issues centering on political interference with interdependence:

Interdependence among welfare states . . . inherently poses a sharp dilemma: tariffs, export subsidies, industrial policy, privileged treatment, and so forth, the very instruments used to implement social policy nationally, inherently threaten the systems of interaction and interdependence which are a source of prosperity in the industrial world and a precondition for meeting and surpassing minimum human needs in the developing countries [ibid., 8].

This threat is one endangering interdependence from within, one that takes the traditional nation-state as its starting point and in so doing undermines the very wealth of modern society.

Interdependence is thus threatened by some disasters seen as external (war and ecological breakdown) and others seen as internal. Because national-state policies might lead to the dissolution of interdependence (and this would be the greatest disaster of all), interdependence must not abandon the nation-state. Rather it issues a call to action:

The international system is undergoing basic changes that may increase injustice and repression and bear within themselves the probability of economic, ecological, and political breakdowns; but such an outcome is by no means the foregone conclusion that apocalyptic fatalists and determinist theoreticians would like us to believe. . . .¹⁵

By understanding the forces at work and by cooperative action, mankind can influence the ongoing transition in the international order, to move toward its social and political goals [ibid., 2-3].

A Monopoly of the Strong to Benefit the Poor

In order to face such threats to interdependence, the Trilateral ideology invokes the magic word "cooperation." Cooperation is necessary in order to achieve what is called the "management" of interdependence, "which has become indispensable for world order in the coming years" (ibid., 5). Hence the appeal to the sense of community:

But the presence and strength of a cooperative predisposition and of a global sense of community will decisively influence whether the ongoing change in world politics can take place without major disturbances or breakdowns [ibid., 11].

There is little confidence, however, in such a sense of community, which could lead to a cooperative kind of relationship among different nation-states. The Trilateral ideologists see little chance that all nation-states will cooperate: their numbers are unmanageable. They therefore seek a "pragmatic" solution. If it is impossible for all to cooperate, the logical procedure is for the stronger to cooperate and so represent the weaker:

The stronger a state is, the better able it is to help the weaker: a number of benefits for the rest of the world will flow from closer cooperation among the trilateral countries. First, it can produce a more coherent approach by countries whose cooperation is essential to the evolving character of the world order. Second, it can produce better management of important global problems in some areas, notably overall macroeconomic management. Third, it is more likely to result in more adequate assistance for the alleviation of world poverty and promotion of economic development in the poorer parts of the world [ibid., 18].

With these perspectives in mind the Trilateral ideologues boast of the power of their countries:

These countries have the largest shares of world trade and finance and produce two-thirds of the world's output. They are the most advanced

in terms of income, industry, and technology. . . . They also have democratic governments and share common values—industrial market economies, a free press, the commitment to civil liberties, an active political life, and concern for the economic welfare of their poorest citizens [ibid., 4].

The stability of the world economy is in their hands:

For example, the responsibility for stabilization of the world economy falls overwhelmingly on the Trilateral countries, and especially on the United States, Germany, and Japan as the three largest national economies. But other countries have a deep interest in the actions taken by those countries, and coordination among the Trilateral countries should take this into account [ibid., 17].

In *this* sense, the international monetary system is a question primarily for the major noncommunist countries. Other countries, however, have a major interest in how it works [ibid., 47].

The way they take the interests of other countries into account may be deduced from the following passage:

Thus the desirability—indeed, the practical necessity—of proceeding with close cooperation among the Trilateral countries should be complemented by also continuing discussions in broader fora, including universal ones [ibid., 37].

What they have in mind is a “consultation” relationship that will exclude other nations from all decisions connected with the “stabilization of the world economy” and the “international monetary system.” In practice, the Trilateral Commission has determined that such decisions should be made by the Trilateral countries together, because the United States by itself can no longer exercise monopoly control over the world economy.

Japan and West Germany should share the monopoly in specific cases, such as that of the world monetary system, and all the Trilateral countries should take part in other decisions. This is not to be seen, however, as simply the exercise of their economic power. In terms of the Trilateral ideology, it is “interdependence” that must be safeguarded and not the interests of these countries as nation-states.

The Nation-State Subordinated to Interdependence

The Trilateral ideologues sense a certain degree of conflict with the very nation-states that they consider to be their main support. Although this whole ideology was created to serve the economic power of the Trilateral countries, it does not view them as nation-states with national interests but

rather as geographical spaces in which “interdependence” concentrates economic power. They speak in the name of interdependence. The Trilateral countries are interdependent only because (as a result of interdependence) it is in them that the requisite economic and political power has been formed to permit the functioning of interdependence. Interdependence is always the main subject, and these ideologues are always speaking in its name. They therefore acknowledge a conflict between national priorities and the exigencies of interdependence. Nevertheless it is interdependence that comes first and the nation-state must be content with a subordinate position:

National intervention is inevitable in the name of a more just society, but it should be guided through international agreement and joint action in such a way as to preserve the advantages of interdependence [Cooper, *Renovated System*, 8].

Traditional economic policies are seen as obstacles: national autonomy is no longer compatible with interdependence—and therefore with economic rationality—and domestic policies become a danger to the extent that they take their direction from the interests of the nation in question. Such policies would lead to competition among nation-states and the result would be a threat to interdependence.

All this leads to the conclusion that the full employment policies that characterized previous decades must be given up. The Trilateral theorists nevertheless maintain:

Competition can be avoided if it is recognized that for the community of nations as a whole (or for important groups of countries) the effectiveness of monetary and fiscal policies in maintaining total demand remains unimpaired. As national economies become more open, therefore, the need for coordination of monetary and fiscal policies will also increase [ibid., 58].

What was previously valid for each nation-state is now valid for groups of nations and especially the group of Trilateral countries. The nation-state is to lose its role as representing national interests and is to receive guidelines from interdependence as incarnated in the international institutions that make the decisions about monetary and fiscal policy.

The key point in this analysis is that the nation-state may now pursue its domestic policies only to the extent to which it can insert those domestic interests into the decisions of international institutions. It does not give up pursuing those interests, but it may do so only insofar as it can safeguard them in the international institutions that make decisions on monetary and fiscal policy. As the traditional nation-state is undermined, such international institutions will arise. Whether individual nations can assure their own interests will depend on their economic and political power. It is obvious that

the Trilateral countries, especially the strongest, will be able to make their own interests prevail within the world economy. The International Monetary Fund offers a clear anticipation of what it means when the nation-state is undermined by such interdependent management.

Nevertheless there is something real in the Trilateral ideologues' analysis. What they call interdependence—the present phase of the international division of labor and the way capital accumulation takes place—now makes it impossible to follow the traditional (Keynesian) policy of full employment prevailing in recent decades. Experience has shown that national policies aimed at maintaining total demand end up fueling inflation and so weaken the impact on total demand. Thus the nation-state had indeed been undermined.

The difficulty with the Trilateral analysis is not on this point but rather in the way it completely refuses to analyze the conditions for the insertion of individual nations into the international division of labor. The Trilateralists instead propose this quasi-mythical entity called “interdependence” and so subordinate national interests to the interests of multinational corporations and of those institutions that determine monetary and fiscal policy on the international level. These interests do not operate above the level of national interests. They promote the interests of particular nations, the Trilateral countries, and subordinate those of the rest. However, because the nation-state is not allowed to represent its own interests unless it has the economic power to act through the operation of international corporations and institutions, dependent countries end up as mere executors of the interests of the central countries. In those dependent countries the nation-state itself becomes simply the local representative of international economic powers.

To the extent that the nation-state takes on this role, it must give up traditional development policies and devote itself to the task of stabilizing society—which is indeed quite unstable owing to underdevelopment. Insofar as the state assumes its assigned task from the Trilateral, it replaces traditional development policies with repressive functions (such is already largely the case in underdeveloped countries).

For the nation-state of an underdeveloped country this subordination to “interdependence” means an increase of extreme poverty and the systematic violation of basic human rights. Inasmuch as being subordinated to “interdependence” increases poverty, stability is endangered and it can be maintained only by violating human rights.

In practice this subordination of the nation-state to “interdependence,” observable throughout the capitalist world, tends to increase poverty everywhere. Even though the Trilateral ideologues maintain that a policy aimed at keeping total demand high might be possible for the Trilateral countries as a whole, the possibility is at best remote. Poverty is growing most dramatically in underdeveloped countries. The Trilateralists mention this extreme poverty as one of the threats to interdependence:

The alleviation of poverty is a demand of the basic ethical principles of the West as well as of simple self-interest. In the long run an orderly world is unlikely if great affluence on one part coexists with abject poverty in another, while “one world” of communication, of mutual concern, and interdependence comes into being [Cooper, *Renovated System*, 7]

The reference to the “basic ethical principles of the West” is woefully fragmentary and obscurant. Extreme poverty as it exists today in the underdeveloped countries is the product of the application of those basic ethical principles and in no way in basic conflict with them. Those ethical principles first produce extreme poverty and then demand that it be alleviated. What they do not envision is the possibility of eradicating poverty. In practice those “basic ethical principles of the West” are nothing but the expression of self-interest, of the capitalist principle given free reign in society. The West knows no other basic ethic than that of self-interest. Movements that propose any other ethic are regarded as subversive and treated accordingly.

In view of these “basic ethical principles of the West” the Trilateralists conclude that “a minimum of social justice and reform will be necessary for stability in the long run” (*ibid.*, 10).

The aim is to combine a maximum of “interdependence” with a minimum of “social justice”—this is the optimizing task that the Trilateral ideologues set themselves. When they speak of stabilizing the system, it is this optimizing task that they have in mind.

Can Poverty Be Eliminated?

Trilateralists deal with extreme poverty in terms of stabilizing the system:

The problems of peace, ecology, and independence already impose operative demands on policy-making in the Trilateral world, and failure to meet them would be very costly.¹⁶

Poverty is viewed differently: “The situation is different with respect to meeting human needs” (Cooper, *Renovated System*, 10).

The Trilateral ideologues do not consider that failure to meet the demands of high infant mortality, malnutrition, hunger, and the despair that comes from unemployment would be “very costly.” To justify their position they say that “even with immediate and energetic efforts, it will take decades to achieve substantial progress on a large scale” (*ibid.*).

They repeat this over and over:

It is not possible to eliminate world poverty at a stroke [*ibid.*, 27].

We do not have the human resources to eliminate poverty within the immediately foreseeable future; but we can contribute toward that end over a longer period of time [*ibid.*, 29].

The socialist countries have shown by their own experience that it is indeed possible to eliminate poverty within the “immediately foreseeable future.” Doing it, however, is incompatible with the “basic ethical principles of the West,” which simply manifest the capitalist character of society, and are therefore at odds with the eradication of extreme poverty. The Trilateralists nevertheless offer us a projection of a better world in the future, without committing themselves to any time frame, of course:

We must therefore define what we are striving for: a more rational world order that can create the preconditions necessary for physical human survival, basic education, and political participation.¹⁷

A good deal of our past thinking on economic development has failed to put human beings in the center of transitional strategies [Cooper, *Renovated System*, 27].

In a very explicit manner the Trilateral ideologues put interdependence—not human beings—at the center of their transitional strategies. They announce it for all to hear:

In addition to keeping the peace and maintaining close cooperation among the industrial countries on a wide range of common interests a global strategy for the Trilateral countries must also seek to foster economic development and alleviate poverty in the poorer countries of the world [ibid., 24].

That human beings are not exactly at the center of their strategies could hardly be stated more plainly.

The Trilateralists’ treatment of poverty does not directly explain why they see it as a threat to interdependence. The connecting link is found when the functions of the nation-state in the underdeveloped countries are discussed:

In developing countries, many of which have become independent so recently, the desire for autonomy poses special difficulties. Jealous of their independence, they often tend to regard the types of accommodation and consultation necessary in interdependent relationships as interference in their domestic affairs and an encroachment upon their sovereignty [ibid., 12].

Trying to solve their problems of poverty, they become a threat to interdependence. However, they do not reach their goal and end up hurting themselves:

Elites in some developing countries regard the present disparities between rich and poor countries as so extreme, with so little protection for

the weak, that they tend to reject interdependence as a form of dependence and exploitation. Hence they may reject or resist collaboration with the advanced nations, even though that may impede the alleviation of their problems [ibid., 13–14].

The real threat is that interdependence could degenerate:

In the LDCs [less developed countries] the idea of greater self-reliance, which is, in fact, an indispensable goal of development policy, could degenerate into a rejection of an integrated world economy if present trends continue [ibid., 17].

To the Trilateral ideologues this threat to “interdependence” is the most serious of all. Brzezinski says:

We see today that the visible plane of the international scene is dominated more by the conflict between the developed and developing worlds than by the conflict between Trilateral democracies and communist states. . . . The new aspirations of the Third World and Fourth World (underdeveloped and OPEC nations), taken as a whole, represent, to my mind, a much greater threat to the international system, and certainly to our own societies . . . the threat, namely, of the refusal of cooperation [*Dialogue*, summer 1975, 12].

Another working group report points out the danger even more pointedly:

Developed countries’ industries, which are already beginning to manufacture products in developing countries to benefit from lower costs and advantages of access, will become so many future hostages [Duchene et al., “Crisis,” 48].

They sound the alarm but not vis-à-vis the socialist countries. Brzezinski states that “the principal threat the Soviet Union poses to the United States is military” [*Two Ages*, 286].

From the angle of his “technetronic era” Brzezinski sees the socialist countries suffering from a technological inferiority that he considers to be structural and therefore chronic. One can nevertheless detect in his writings a definite strategy for weakening the technological development of the socialist countries. This is why he insists on the military threat they pose. The fact that they do pose such a threat shows their capability for technological advance. He emphasizes the threat for another reason, however. The arms race is the main instrument of the capitalist world for weakening the socialist economies. These countries have to respond to the threat posed by the whole capitalist world by producing an equal quantity of weapons.

The arms race thus permits the capitalist world to determine the military expenditures of the socialist countries. However, the per capita income of the socialist countries is considerably below that of the central capitalist countries. Because they are forced to make military outlays as big as those of the central capitalist countries put together, the socialist countries carry a much larger burden in the arms race. This factor becomes a fixed impediment to the economic development of spheres of production not connected to arms production. Thus by means of the arms race the capitalist countries can weaken the economies of the socialist countries. The Carter administration did it systematically.

Nevertheless the Trilateralists' main concerns are not about the socialist countries. What they fear most is that the underdeveloped countries might follow the example of the socialist countries. Hence they have to destroy the image of the socialist countries within the underdeveloped countries. Economic weakening is part of this campaign, but their main concerns relate to the underdeveloped countries that might reject the way the transnational corporations manage the international division of labor. They praise the transnational corporations:

Countries that want economic development would be well-advised to welcome foreign firms on appropriate terms. Where necessary, they can obtain outside assistance, for example from the World Bank, in negotiating with such firms [Cooper, *Renovated System*, 26].

Andrew Young says:

Even the much maligned transnational corporations, some of which have undoubtedly contributed to social problems, can—and have on occasion—become instruments of helpful diffusion of technology, the allocation of development resources, and the promotion of social justice [“New Unity,” 571].

Multinational corporations are presented as indeed promoting social justice:

Developing countries should be free to determine whether and under what conditions they wish to accept foreign investment. Yet all countries bear the obligation of fair treatment for foreigners and their property—a concept that applies both to developing countries' citizens and investments in developed countries and vice versa [Gardner et al., “Turning Point,” 68].

“This is the kind of social justice that prohibits everyone—rich and poor alike—from sleeping under bridges. There is something else here, however: a threat. The notion of interdependence points to something real: the present

phase of the international division of labor, which involves such a network of connections that no country can avoid it. No nation-state can be a Robinson Crusoe.

When the Trilateral ideologues accuse the underdeveloped countries of wanting to break away from "interdependence," they are speaking with manifest bad faith. No underdeveloped country could escape the international division of labor and none aspires to. What they aspire to (and what the socialist countries do in practice) is to be able to condition their integration into the international division of labor on finding a solution to the problem of poverty in the "immediately foreseeable future" and overcoming unemployment. Hence they seek to reject the kind of integration that would subordinate the nation-state to the demands of "interdependence" and they hold up the nation-state as a mediator between the exigencies and possibilities of the international division of labor and human needs. They demand the right to follow a policy where human beings will be at the center, subordinating the exigencies of interdependence to survival. This of course implies a clear rejection of foreign capital and the establishment of socialist relationships of production. Without such policies it is impossible to put the human element at the center of a development strategy.

Such a stance does not constitute a refusal to participate in the international division of labor. It is enough to recall some recent cases: it was not socialist Cuba that refused to be inserted into the international division of labor, but rather the United States that cut Cuba off. Nor did Allende's Chile reject that kind of integration: it was the United States that rejected it. Today Vietnam seeks to be inserted into the international division of labor and once more the United States is blocking it. In practice it is never integration into the international division of labor that is in itself in question, but simply the conditions of such integration as expressed in the term "interdependence." The Trilateral countries seek to impose the multinational corporation as the agent of integration and to subordinate the nation-state to their operating mechanisms. The underdeveloped countries must necessarily seek to overcome those mechanisms through their own nation-states, and so to achieve survival levels—that is, work and subsistence—for their citizens.

In this conflict the Trilateral countries see "interdependence" as a weapon; when they use it they call it "destabilization." Given the reality of interdependence, this weapon is deadly when the underdeveloped countries are divided. Precisely for this reason the Trilateral ideologues insist that the "pole of cooperation" that they are seeking to encourage cannot include underdeveloped countries, for that might favor their unification.

Given the fact of interdependence, it is very hard to stand up to policies of destabilization. The capitalist countries as a whole can isolate each underdeveloped country, but no underdeveloped country can afford to be isolated. Cuba was able to stand up to destabilization because it managed to be integrated through the Soviet Union. Chile was defeated because that path was closed.

***Food Production or Industrialization?
A Development Question with Deeper Roots***

When the multinational companies are proposed to underdeveloped countries as an alternative to socialist paths to development, the problem of poverty offers a pretext for suggesting a change in development policies:

We believe, therefore, that the Trilateral countries should substantially increase the flow of resources addressed to alleviating world poverty, with emphasis on improving food production, providing simple health care delivery (including healthful water supplies, sanitation, and help in family planning), and extending literacy. These programs should be available wherever there is poverty, with minimal political constraints. The grants can properly be subject to conditions to achieve their stated objectives and be closely monitored for their effectiveness in alleviating poverty. Recipient countries whose sense of national sovereignty is offended by such conditions can decline the foreign assistance [Cooper, *Renovated System*, 28].

This all sounds like the purest form of humanism. However, what is being proposed here is a shift away from the whole previous development strategy:

We would encourage further the tendencies that now already exist in foreign aid programs to shift the relative emphasis away from big capital projects in the industrial sector toward those activities mentioned above which alleviate poverty more directly and tend to provide jobs for more people, especially in rural areas [ibid.].

The Trilateral ideology here takes an anti-industrial tack. Such a position implies an overall ideological vision of the problems of both poverty and employment. The notion is that agriculture and nonindustrial activities in general provide more employment than does industry, and the conclusion is therefore drawn that the Trilateral countries should limit the industrialization of the underdeveloped countries precisely as a contribution toward alleviating poverty. Industrialization is made to seem to be responsible for both poverty and unemployment.

In fact, however, whether investment is made in agriculture or in industry, the result is unemployment. Since the mid-1950s there has been a general tendency toward stagnation in industrial employment in underdeveloped countries, at least in relation to population increase. Given this stagnation, investments made in agriculture have led to unemployment, because they reduce agricultural employment. Where the "green revolution" has been implemented, the result has been disastrous for rural employment and for employment in general because of stagnation in industrial employment. The

problem of unemployment and resultant poverty does not come from any particular direction given to investment, but from the fact that investment takes place in the framework of capitalist relationships of production. Any kind of investment no matter where it is aimed will tend to increase unemployment in underdeveloped countries within such a framework. Poverty cannot be eliminated without eliminating unemployment. Hence the elimination of poverty is impossible unless the relationships of production are changed.

The Trilateral ideologues know this even though they do not want to admit it. They try to come up with arguments against industry, when their real motives are different. By channeling investment in underdeveloped countries toward agriculture, they can maintain the present form of the international division of labor. They realize that when underdeveloped countries become industrialized, even in a capitalist way, they can become more independent vis-à-vis transnational capital. This is what they mean when they speak of the danger of transnational capital becoming a "hostage" in a country becoming industrialized. Brazil is one case that worries transnational capital and there are others.¹⁸ Such cases are much less likely when capital goes mainly to agriculture.

Why the Trilateralists see dire poverty as a threat to interdependence now becomes understandable. What they really regard as a threat is any strategy on the part of the underdeveloped countries to eliminate poverty. Such a policy would challenge the dominant position held by the Trilateral countries in the world economy, and would lead to radically different international economic relationships. An effective strategy for eliminating poverty in underdeveloped countries would indeed be a threat to world capitalism and to the dominant role of the multinational corporations in the present international division of labor. The Trilateral ideologues are quite frightened at the prospect that the underdeveloped countries would go down such a path.

Therefore they state that the elimination of severe poverty is a long-range goal—indeinitely far off, in fact—but it remains a goal. Indeed, the more they can present the elimination of poverty as a long-range goal, the more they talk about it, but now with less danger to "interdependence."

If the nation-state is declared to be subordinated to "interdependence" and the elimination of poverty thereby becomes a long-range goal, the main function of the nation-state comes to be repression, as the Trilateral ideologues are well aware. As Andrew Young puts it, "underdevelopment and political repression are surely part of the same total problem" ("New Unity," 573).

The more the elimination of poverty is put off to a future indefinitely far away, the more political repression becomes an ongoing task. Only political repression can keep persons living in poverty over a long period. The previous nation-state is replaced by the authoritarian police state, the only kind of state that can so subordinate itself to "interdependence."

The New Democracy

It becomes fashionable to speak of the “new democracy,” which is simply a systematic recognition that liberal democracy is finished. The new democracy is the police state.

The same enemies of “interdependence” now appear on the political scene but under other names. They are now called utopians or visionaries—here the Trilateral ideologues follow the antiutopian line of all modern bourgeois ideology. Utopians obviously bring on chaos and disaster. But it is not only they who bring on such an outcome. Politicians who adhere to the traditional concept of the nation-state and hence operate with a patchwork policy and a short-range focus are guilty of the same thing:

An effective strategy must avoid either of two mistakes: (1) the excessive pragmatism of seeking to solve problems solely on a day-to-day basis; or (2) the visionary long-term approach that does not concern itself sufficiently with the practical steps for achieving the ultimate goal. Both approaches to politics have much the same consequence: both tend to support the status quo, the short-term approach by merely tinkering with the symptoms of the problem, the utopian by fleeing from the realm of the feasible. In the last analysis, both leave the real problems unsolved until breakdowns or explosive changes occur [Cooper, *Renovated System*, 3].

The Trilateral ideologues see themselves as realists among visionaries, and as a center between right and left. However, as ideologues of the new democracy they do not worry too much about what happens in underdeveloped states, states that have accepted subordination to interdependence in the name of national security. In that situation (realists that they are) they even see the seeds of this new democracy. They are more concerned about what is happening in the liberal democracies of the Trilateral countries. They now see the need to change these liberal democracies into new democracies—that is, into what the national security states have already achieved incipiently. Brzezinski has said:

Consequently, sweeping political actions and probably new political structures will be needed to respond effectively to problems which at this moment are essentially technical or economic [Sept. 18, 1973].

He was speaking exactly a week after the military coup in Chile. There is concern over the way liberal democracy is working in the Trilateral countries because politicians cannot be sure their own peoples will support their policies vis-à-vis the underdeveloped world. They are quite aware that one of the reasons why the war in Vietnam could not be continued was the fact that the American people finally rejected it. Military coups in Latin America

(Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina), and the revelation of their CIA and Pentagon links, have led to movements of solidarity against such actions. Together with the Watergate scandal, these events led many to question the legitimacy of their own government. The whole political focus of the Trilateral Commission, however, makes it necessary to reinforce the domination exercised over the underdeveloped countries to such an extent that the commission ideologues feel they must appeal to the union of all the forces of the Trilateral countries for this task. They foresee that these conflicts, far from decreasing, will increase, but they also foresee that under present political conditions it will be hard to find support broad enough to maintain such policies.

As they see it, one of the main reasons for this difficulty comes from modern developments in the mass media. They know that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century policies were possible only because there were no such means of communication. The administrators of those policies had the best access to information on what was happening. The concern over liberal democracy and the attempt to move toward a "new" democracy—also called "viable," "restricted," or "governable" democracy—finds expression mainly in efforts to control the media, regarding both what is published and sources of information. Samuel P. Huntington defends restrictions:

Specifically, there is a need to insure to the press its right to print what it wants without prior restraint except in most unusual circumstances. But there is also the need to assure to the government the right and the ability to withhold information at the source [Crozier et al., *Crisis*, 182].

He also urges self-censorship of the press:

Journalists should develop their own standards of professionalism and create mechanisms, such as press councils, for enforcing those standards on themselves. The alternative could well be regulation by the government [ibid.].

Responsible editors recognize that such mechanisms (self-censorship bodies) are desirable and that their creation may be a great step toward ensuring the existence of a "free and responsible press."¹⁹

Huntington offers this analysis of how traditional liberal democracy works:

The effective operation of a democratic political system usually requires some measure of apathy and noninvolvement on the part of some individuals and groups. In the past, every democratic society has had a marginal population, of greater or lesser size, which has not actively participated in politics. In itself, this marginality on the part of some groups is inherently undemocratic, but it has also been one of the

factors which has enabled democracy to function effectively. Marginal social groups, as in the case of the blacks, are now becoming full participants in the political system. Yet the danger of overloading the political system with demands which extend its functions and undermine its authority still remains. Less marginality on the part of some groups thus needs to be replaced by more self-restraint on the part of all groups [Crozier, *Crisis*, 114].

That is, liberal democracy has been able to function only because it has not been extended universally; if it is to function universally it must be changed into a "new democracy," which means abolishing it as liberal democracy. This has become increasingly clear:

Yet, in recent years, the operations of the democratic process do indeed appear to have generated a breakdown of traditional means of social control, a delegitimation of political and other forms of authority, and an overload of demands on government, exceeding its capacity to respond [ibid., 8]

This line of reasoning inevitably leads to a reconceptualizing not only of the role of the press, but of the whole educational system and a round condemnation of those intellectuals who act to "serve values."

This renewal of democracy already has a certain amount of history behind it. Karl Popper first proposed it in his book *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. There he shows how the open society can remain so only by becoming a closed society. It is rather like Huntington saying that democracy is effective only when it is not practiced. The first country to formally put this idea into its constitution was West Germany. It was applied only in a minimal way during the 1950s and 1960s, but for some years now it has been used to change a liberal democracy into a new democracy and by now the process is in full swing. The ideology Popper developed, however, was already at work in McCarthyism, although it had not come to a full-fledged conception of politics ready to replace liberal democracy. The Trilateral Commission is now attempting such a change and Huntington is its main thinker.

In dealing with questions of politics the Trilateralists find themselves caught in the middle: on one side is liberal democracy, which is becoming "ungovernable" and whose governability must be restored, and on the other side are the military dictatorships, the new authoritarian regimes that operate in the name of national security, and contain the seeds of the new democracy. They are opposed to both, but they know that it is the new authoritarianisms that represent the creative principle of modernity.

The New Hope for Latin America

When Andrew Young spoke to the Economic Commission for Latin America on May 3, 1977, he was addressing representatives of Latin Ameri-

can governments, most of whom were delegates for regimes that engaged in bloody repression against any kind of popular movement. He treated them as bearers of a new hope:

This new period of hope is one in which it is again realistic to believe that democracy is viable, that human rights can be protected. . . . We stand on the threshold of a new period of hope. . . . We must unite the concept of development . . . with the concept of liberation ["New Unity," 567, 569, 570].

However, the democracy he is announcing is the "new democracy." It is democracy made governable because it does not live up to democratic values, a democracy with enough groups left out that it may work.

The formulation of the "new" ("restricted," "viable," "governable") democracy that emerges from the Trilateral ideology is a way of organizing the nation-state so it may be subordinated to "interdependence." The "new democracy" therefore is not aware of any guaranteed human rights that cannot be violated when subordination to interdependence requires it. Human rights are guaranteed only within the flexible framework of this subordination. Hence the Trilateral ideologues are always talking about "pluralism," which is simply an expression used to relativize the applicability of human rights, which will vary from one place to another according to the exigencies of interdependence.

This new democracy means a kind of regime made for stability. As the Trilateralists see it, the military coups in Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina signify failure. No doubt these violent measures were necessary, but the fact that they were necessary evidences a prior failure in the way interdependence was being managed. The fact that conflict breaks out shows there has been a failure in the policy of avoiding conflicts:

Major disturbances to international relations and to domestic societies can sometimes be avoided by anticipating potential difficulties now and taking action to stave them off. Conflict avoidance is usually preferable to conflict resolution [Cooper, *Renovated System*, 18–19].

The "new democracy" is a political system for subordinating the state to "interdependence" and it regulates the applicability of human rights with enough flexibility to prevent serious disturbances in international and intranational relationships. The degree to which human rights are to be applied is no longer determined by those rights themselves, nor by the relationship among them, but rather by the need to stabilize interdependence, which is really just another name for capital accumulation on a world scale.

Basic Human Rights and Liberal Human Rights

From what has been said it is easy to see why the Trilateral ideology is presented in the name of promoting human rights. It is hard to imagine any

other ideology in whose name the absolute relativization of human rights could be justified in order to serve the needs of capital accumulation.

This result, the relativizing of all human rights, is a logical conclusion from the first step of the Trilateral Commission. Making interdependence—that is, worldwide capital accumulation—the absolute priority is tantamount to declaring capital ownership and competition between different sums of capital to be the only absolute value and relativizing all human rights. Whether human rights are to be enforced becomes a question of whether it is convenient or not, and the campaign for human rights is presented as promoting such rights within the parameters set down by capital accumulation. The guarantee of human rights is abrogated and is replaced by a campaign for human rights. The goal of this campaign is not to reinstate that guarantee but simply to keep the level of their violation within the bounds of what is “necessary” to serve free capital accumulation on a world scale. For this new situation the Trilateral ideologues invented the term “planetary humanism.” What it really amounts to is the formulation of the national security ideology on a worldwide scale. This is all reflected in the way the leading Trilateral representatives speak. They do not speak of guaranteeing human rights but rather promise to promote them.

There is here a sharp break from liberal ideology, which considered human rights to be inviolable and spoke of guaranteeing them, even though in practice it always did so only in a relative sense. Even liberal ideology, and the policies that went along with it, never promised to guarantee all human rights. It gave a priority to some human rights and guaranteed them and treated others as secondary and therefore made their observance relative.

Those human rights considered to be of priority and therefore guaranteed were, first, those relating to the integrity of the person in relation to the state. These rights contain guarantees against arbitrary imprisonment and cruel treatment or punishment. Other human rights accorded priority were civic and political freedoms, and especially freedom of speech and of association. These liberal human rights taken together were given priority over other human rights, which were recognized only in rhetoric: the right to satisfy basic needs in food, shelter, medical attention, education, and social security. Underlying this refusal to guarantee such fundamental human rights was a refusal to guarantee the right to work. Massive impoverishment in liberal societies was ultimately due to this refusal to guarantee the right to work. The prioritizing of human rights was a consequence of the unconditional recognition of private property in a capitalist market economy, unable to guarantee the right to work.

All human rights are individual rights. Nevertheless, in liberal ideology it was common to speak of liberal rights as individual rights, and of fundamental rights as social rights. Behind this way of speaking there is an ideological purpose. Inasmuch as the individual is prior to society, individual rights will be prior to fundamental rights; this kind of thinking ends up with the kind of

prioritizing of human rights inherent in liberal society. Such prioritizing is a consequence of the fact that the economy is based on private capitalist property.

Liberal ideology considered liberal human rights to be universal but liberal societies never accorded them universal recognition. When the recognition of liberal human rights fails to guarantee fundamental human rights, the very logic of those liberal rights leads to their nonapplication to those social groups that suffer most from the denial of their fundamental rights. Such is the case with class relationships, colonialism, and racism.

The great empires of the liberal age (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) granted a guarantee of liberal human rights to only a small fraction of the population. No more than 10 percent of the subjects of the British crown were ever recognized as citizens. Only English subjects were citizens and only their liberal human rights were recognized. In other liberal-colonial empires the situation was similar. Only citizens of the central imperial countries enjoyed human rights and they were like "Roman citizens" in the new empires. Even within the central imperial countries the human rights of particular groups were limited. Those who declared, in the American Revolution, that all men were equal and were subjects of human rights saw no incompatibility between that statement and the slavery existing around them. As a legal institution slavery lasted for almost a century after the Declaration of Independence and another century passed before racial discrimination was recognized as a violation of liberal human rights. Something similar occurred with free association. It was only at the end of the liberal era that workers in the central imperial countries gained the recognition of their right to free association and then only within limits.

After World War II the main limits on the recognition of liberal human rights that had marked the liberal age were abolished. The imperial colonies were done away with, racial discrimination was recognized as a violation of human rights, and the right of free association was granted to unions to an ever greater degree. Limits to human rights now began to appear increasingly under a new and different form. Pro-Western military dictatorships began to appear, refusing to recognize the liberal rights of the masses in the underdeveloped countries. They have become once more parts of an empire, whose center is now in the United States.

The essence of this domination is not essentially racial or colonial in the literal sense but clearly one of class, and it is aimed against any broad popular movement demanding those fundamental human rights that capitalist society, for reasons inherent to it, cannot recognize and therefore cannot guarantee. These are human rights that cannot be fulfilled universally without guaranteeing the right to work. As the demand for fundamental human rights becomes more broadly based, the dictatorial regimes become bloodier. Regimes that achieve stability by massacring popular movements in huge pogroms become prevalent. These regimes become consolidated in power with the support of the United States. It becomes increasingly obvious that

the inherent refusal to guarantee fundamental human rights means that liberal human rights must be restricted.

The Contradiction Inherent in Liberal Democracy

Liberal democracy thus bears a contradiction within itself. Its greatness is that it recognizes certain human rights and therefore guarantees them. Its tragedy is that it neglects fundamental human rights and is therefore constantly forced to exclude those who do not enjoy fundamental human rights. This all leads to the end of the liberal era itself, when there is no longer a guarantee of liberal human rights for anyone and fundamental human rights may continue to be neglected in favor of capital accumulation or "interdependence." If liberal democracy is to be "governable," it must cease to be liberal.

Liberal democracy has always been a restricted democracy in the sense that only small groups had their liberal human rights guaranteed. However, what is now appearing under the name of the "new"—"restricted," "viable," "governable"—democracy is the end of any guarantee of liberal human rights. Such rights are now to be recognized "flexibly," to the extent that the absolute priority of "interdependence" allows, so that fundamental human rights can continue to be denied in the name of capital accumulation.

There is an obvious similarity between the Trilateral ideology and earlier fascist ideologies, but there are important differences as well. The fascist regimes also relativized all human rights but they did so in the name of the "nation" or the "race." In this sense they were ideologies of the "blond beast." The Trilateral ideology is an ideology of the beast of many colors and of all countries.

The Kennedy administration in a way represented the last attempt to save liberal society. In ideological terms it sought a universal recognition of liberal human rights and aimed at extending liberal democracy around the world as a basis for solving the problems of fundamental human rights through structural reforms. Because a socialist regime based on a guarantee of fundamental human rights had appeared in Cuba, the aim was to achieve political stability in the rest of Latin America by means of structural reforms so as to be able to promote those fundamental human rights. However, it was also the Kennedy administration that prepared the death blow to democracy. As a great promotor of antisubversive warfare, it readied the instrument that was to undo the very reform movements it had encouraged. Those who raised their heads because of what happened during the Kennedy period—the movements pressuring for the recognition of fundamental human rights—had them cut off during the military coups that followed; and cutting them off were the very antisubversive forces that had been trained for that purpose, starting with the Kennedy administration.

After the decapitations, the "new democracy" is proposed. The intention

is not to go back to cutting off heads, but to consolidate a kind of political domination that will ensure that no heads will dare be raised. Its ideology is accordingly one of promoting human rights. The constant and systematic violation of human rights replaces the kind of paranoiac outburst of violence seen in the “nights of the long knives,” and the task of promoting human rights is therefore one of making sure that rights are violated only to the degree necessary to maintain policies of stability.

The “new democracy” is not the legitimate heir of liberal democracy; it is an illegitimate offspring. It is the legitimate heir of fascism. The legitimate heir of liberal democracy is socialism. Liberal democracy took as its starting point a particular way of giving priority to certain human rights and it guaranteed that they would be enforced. Socialist society retains this starting point. However, in view of the contradictions encountered by liberal democracy, socialist society takes as its starting point the priority of fundamental human rights, and it guarantees their enforcement. However, now it is liberal human rights that are relativized vis-à-vis the task of enforcing fundamental human rights—the opposite of what happens under liberal democracy. Liberalism stood democracy on its head; socialism puts it on its feet.

The Trilateral ideology, on the other hand, does not start by guaranteeing any human rights. In order to reject fundamental human rights for the sake of capital accumulation, it also refuses to guarantee liberal human rights. In this sense it is totalitarian—its rejection of human rights is complete—and it reveals the basic contradiction in liberal democracy: if you try to guarantee liberal human rights by setting aside fundamental human rights, you end up in practice not recognizing any human rights. Trying to stabilize liberal human rights simply by insisting that they are to be observed, ultimately means doing away with them.

***Criticizing Human Rights Violations:
A Façade for Maintaining Their Causes***

Resulting from the “new democracy” is a new division of the capitalist world and of its ideological self-image. A “flexible” recognition of human rights tends to mean imposing authoritarian police regimes on underdeveloped countries. The Trilateral countries impose on them economic policies that produce extreme poverty and cannot be maintained except by police repression and terror. Despite the fact that it is they who have imposed these policies, the Trilateral countries begin to criticize the others for violating human rights. After first obligating them to do so, they criticize them for their human rights violations—which in fact received a good deal of “technical” assistance from the central countries. The refinement of torture in Latin America during the 1970s drew on U.S. advisers who passed on the know-how they had acquired in the Vietnam war.

The more the underdeveloped countries are criticized for repression, the

better the Trilateral countries look: they can keep their own violations of human rights submerged. Criticizing human rights violations becomes a way of praising the Trilateral countries, even though they are at the source of those violations. They seem to be islands of respect for human rights that can offer their example to others, when in reality they are the centers of a worldwide empire in which the violation of human rights is the rule. They manage to convey the impression that the capitalist world is divided into two great poles—the central countries, where even the “new democracy” operates with a greater respect for human rights, and the underdeveloped countries, which are so underdeveloped they do not even respect human rights. Thus President Carter in his speech at Notre Dame could say “We are confident that democracy’s example will be compelling and so we seek to bring that example closer to those from whom . . . we have been separated and who are not yet convinced.” He also said, “The great democracies are not free because we are strong and prosperous. I believe we are strong and prosperous because we are free.”

With “interdependence” completely forgotten, the Trilateral world is made to seem to be the way it is because of its respect for human rights. Over and above the economic exploitation of underdeveloped countries, there is now added a moral element: contempt for their human rights violations. Pontius Pilate innocently washes his hands. It is the rest of the world that violates human rights and that is why they are weak and poor. What took place in nineteenth-century empires is now repeated on a global scale. Nineteenth-century England seemed to be the country that most respected human rights—despite the fact that they were violated at whim elsewhere in the empire and even within England they were observed only in the most formalistic terms. The Trilateral ideologues now attempt the same thing. Although it is the Trilateral countries that make human rights violations necessary throughout the capitalist world, they try to present themselves as their true guardians. Their critique of human rights violations is the instrument for maintaining the situation that necessitates their violation.

Part Two

THE REALM OF LIFE AND THE REALM OF DEATH: LIFE AND DEATH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The theory of fetishism is the theory and critique of the transcendence of interhuman social relationships. Both Marx and Weber deal with this transcendence but they are opposed in the ways they see it. Weber denies the kind of transcendence that Marx's analysis leads to: the realm of freedom. Continuing in the tradition of Weber, Popper treats the realm of freedom as demonic and something to be exorcised. For his part, Weber ends up in a kind of transcendence that Marx calls fetishism. This Weberian transcendence is indeed a mere eternalized immanence. It amounts to making transcendent the "vast chaotic stream of events," which "flows unendingly toward eternity," and which forms an "inexhaustible flow of life." This is not transcendence at all but a projection of present events toward the infinite.

By contrast, Marx ends up with a transcendence that is not a projection of the present toward the infinite, but an anticipation of a transformation of this world beyond all human capability. It is a transcendence emerging from the transformation of this world into another kind of world. That is why he can describe it as a "realm of freedom," as a world where work becomes "the free play of . . . [human] physical and mental powers," and as "the development of human powers as an end in itself." According to Marx such a form of transcendence can be anticipated in socialism but it cannot be fully achieved even there. What he is pointing toward is real transcendence, something beyond human capabilities.

Weber works out his critique of Christianity on the basis of his kind of immanence projected toward eternity. It is merely a bad infinity presented as an "object of devotion" and as the "harsh face of destiny in our times." The world of the gods is found in this eternalized immanence; "fate . . . holds sway over these gods and their struggles." Weber does not allow any kind of thinking that would seek to go beyond this kind of "fate."

For his own critique of Christianity Marx takes as his starting point his

concept of transcendence as functioning within real life. He sees Christianity as one more instance of fetishism. But Marx never confuses Christianity with fetishism. On the contrary, he denounces as Antichrist the Christianized fetish.

Weber's position of equating eternity with fate is quite identical with that of Nietzsche, who, following out his own logic, declares himself to be Antichrist.

Marx's pursuit of transcendence is an integral element of his critique of capital. The logic of Weber's approach, by contrast, leads to the position of Milton Friedman. Friedman tries to solve the contradiction between human beings and capital by going at it in reverse. He creates a concept of capital in which the relationship of human beings with themselves is a relationship between the human being and capital. When everything, including the human being, is capital, there can be no contradiction between the human being and capital. The end result is contented fetishism.

Marx's thought includes a belief in life that goes beyond human capabilities. It is a kind of thinking that is never satisfied. Weber's thought, on the other hand, contains a whole philosophy of death, to which it is quite resigned. These contrary positions exactly parallel their positions on transcendence.

In Marx there is a kind of transcendence that implicitly goes beyond death toward fullness of life, whereas Weber does not get beyond a mere eternalized immanence, a projection of the present toward an infinite future. These positions, so utterly opposed to each other, cannot be understood except by comparing them with the positions taken by Christianity in its beginnings.

We must therefore now compare them with the Christian message.

Domination and Love of Neighbor

The Resurrection of the Body

The resurrection is the key to how the New Testament perceives life, and the crucifixion is the key to its perception of death. In Christian terms, the relationship between life and death is perceived in reference to the relationship between resurrection and crucifixion. When the New Testament speaks of crucifixion it is speaking of death; when it speaks of resurrection it is speaking of life.

What stands out in the evangelists' perception of resurrection—and therefore of life—is their insistence on the resurrection of Jesus' *body*. What has arisen is neither ghost, nor soul, nor spirit: it is a *body*. When he appeared to be a spirit returned from the grave, Jesus did inspire fear: "While they were still speaking about all this, he himself stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace to you.' In their panic and fright they thought they were seeing a ghost" (Luke 24:36–37).

As a spirit he would have startled and terrified them. But the shock goes away when Jesus shows them his bodily self:

He said to them, "Why are you disturbed? Why do such ideas cross your mind? Look at my hands and my feet; it is really I. Touch me, and see that a ghost does not have flesh and bones as I do." As he said this he showed them his hands and feet. They were still incredulous for sheer joy and wonder, so he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of cooked fish which he took and ate in their presence [Luke 24:38–43].

The opposed terms are spirit or body, fear or trust. What is distinctive about the resurrection is its bodily and material character. Body signifies eating, touching, drinking. Resurrection here means coming back to be touched, coming back to eat and drink. That is what makes it a scandal. In the context of those times the resurrection of a spirit would be nothing new.

Everyone believed spirits came up from their graves and everyone feared them. Spirits were thought to be the dead threatening the living. This scandal is also a part of Paul's preaching at Athens: "When they heard about the raising of the dead, some sneered while others said, 'We must hear you on this topic some other time' " (Acts 17:32).

What makes this a scandal is that Paul is claiming that the resurrection of bodies makes bodily life eternal in a Greek milieu where eternity is proper to the soul and to ideas.

This is why in the Christian message Jesus' death is perceived as a complete death. There is no death of the body that does not affect the soul. The soul dies with the body:

Because Jesus truly experienced death in all its horror, not only in his body but also in his soul ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"), Christians can and must see in him the redeemer who triumphs over death by his own death [Cullmann, *Inmortalidad*, 29].

The gospel texts reflect a clear awareness that the claim that bodily life is eternal is something new and different. They continually and repeatedly link the resurrection to bodily life so as to leave no room for equivocation:

They killed him . . . only to have God raise him up on the third day and grant that he be seen, not by all, but only by such witnesses as had been chosen beforehand by God—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead [Acts 10:40–41].

A spirit has no body and hence cannot exercise any bodily functions or feel bodily needs. That is the common belief among those to whom witnesses are sent. Therefore they place special emphasis on the body, by pointing to the exercise of specifically bodily functions; they single out eating, drinking, and being touched. The texts refer most frequently to eating:

When they landed, they saw a charcoal fire there with a fish laid on it and some bread. "Bring some of the fish you just caught," Jesus told them. Simon Peter went aboard and hauled ashore the net loaded with sizable fish—one hundred and fifty-three of them! In spite of the great number, the net was not torn. "Come and eat your meal," Jesus told them. Not one of the disciples presumed to inquire, "Who are you?" for they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came over, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish [John 21:9–13].

Jesus starts the fire, cooks the meal, serves it, and they all eat together. The resurrection narratives do not mention drinking much, but do so in treating the last supper: "I tell you I will not drink this fruit of the vine from now until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's reign" (Matt. 26:29).

It is obvious that not only do persons eat in “my Father’s reign” but they also drink wine. The witnesses touch him. Thomas says “I will never believe it without probing the nailprints in his hands, without putting my finger in the nailmarks and my hand into his side” (John 20:25). When Jesus appears he says, “Take your finger and examine my hands. Put your hand into my side. Do not persist in your unbelief, but believe” (John 20:27).

Jesus’ body and activity are perceived as being in direct continuity with his life prior to death. Even the wounds and the scars are recognizable.

There is, however, a change. There is a note of wonderment in these narratives regarding the way he is recognized. The witnesses do not dare ask who he is, because they know he is the Lord (John 21:12). Elsewhere they see him and think he is a gardener or a traveler. They recognize him when he makes himself recognized (John 20:16; Luke 24:30–31). “When he had seated himself with them to eat, he took bread, pronounced the blessing, then broke the bread and began to distribute it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him; whereupon he vanished from their sight” (Luke 24:30–31).

Nevertheless they recognize him in continuity with the way they knew him before—through the body, with their senses. The only difference is that the body he has risen with is not the same as the previous mortal body but is an immortal body. Inasmuch as his body has all his particular features and carries out bodily functions, the discontinuity is simply a matter of mortality. “The one whom he raised from the dead would never again see the decay of death” (Acts 13:34).

The continuity is complete except in the mortality of the body. In this respect the old body is now something else; it is transformed. It is now transcendence within bodily life: this present bodily life but without death. This is exactly how Paul later describes it:

This corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, this mortal body with immortality. When the corruptible frame takes on incorruptibility and the mortal immortality, then will the saying of Scripture be fulfilled: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?” [1 Cor. 15:53–55].

Pauline Bodiliness

Paul centers his whole message on this idea of bodily resurrection, first Jesus’ resurrection and, flowing from it, the hope of resurrection for all humankind on a new earth. His image of God, of humanity, and of death come from this resurrection and everything revolves around it:

And if Christ was not raised, your faith is worthless. You are still in your sins (1 Cor. 15:17). And if Christ has not been raised, our preach-

ing is void of content and your faith is empty too (15:14). If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die!" (15:32).

In Jesus' resurrection Paul sees expressed all the meaning, and indeed the whole content, of Christianity: stemming from this one resurrection he sees the resurrection of all human beings. He goes so far as to develop a cosmology of the resurrection, which starts with the resurrection of all human beings and goes on to the whole universe: "The trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:32).

Resurrection is for the dead and transformation is for those who are alive at that moment—when the trumpet sounds. In both cases bodies can die no more and are the same as the previous bodies, except regarding mortality:

It is the same with the resurrection of the dead: the thing that is sown is perishable but what is raised is imperishable; the thing that is sown is contemptible but what is raised is glorious; the thing that is sown is weak but what is raised is powerful; when it is sown it embodies the soul, when it is raised it embodies the Spirit [1 Cor. 15:42–43, JB]. For there will be a spiritual body just as there is now an animated and living body [v.44, Bib. Lat.].²⁰

Here it is not the soul that is resurrected; indeed the Spirit appears in place of the soul. The continuity is exclusively that of the body: the transformation of the body means that death has been overcome. The body is not the perishable part of an eternal soul; rather a soul animates the body, which is eternal. This soul is not eternal; it is replaced by the Spirit the moment death is cast off, in the very act of the resurrection and transformation of the body. The body is renewed: "This corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility" (1 Cor. 15:53).

At this point Paul uses the analogy of changing clothes. With the act of resurrection it becomes clear which clothes are old and which are new. This judgment is made on the basis of the transformation of the body. Whatever owes its existence to death is old clothes and will perish. Whatever remains is the renewed body: it can no longer die and its principle of life is no longer the soul but the Spirit.

For Paul the hope of the present life is that it is to be re clothed. This hope, however, is not only for human beings but for the whole universe:

Indeed, the whole created world eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God. Creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but by him who once subjected it; yet not without hope, because the world itself will be freed from its slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. Yes, we know that all creation groans and is in agony even until now. Not only that, but we ourselves, although we have the Spirit as first fruits, groan inwardly

while we await the redemption of our bodies. In hope we were saved. But hope is not hope if its object is seen [Rom. 8:19–24].

This transformation affects the whole universe: it means that the universe also is to be liberated from death. Paul awaits a new earth, just like the present one but with no death, and he sees the present universe as suffering and sharing in hope. But hope does not focus only on some point of time in the future when the body will be liberated. There is an anticipation of this liberation of the body—namely, the Spirit. In the Spirit the body may be liberated in anticipation. The Spirit is the “first fruits” of what we will have. This idea is involved in Paul’s concept of knowledge, which in turn is linked to the resurrection of the body:

Now we see indistinctly, as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. My knowledge is imperfect now; then I shall know even as I am known [1 Cor. 13:12].

For Paul liberating the body always means destroying death in it, and hence giving it life. The liberated body is liberated from death and is therefore able to be fully alive. Death thwarts the life of the body until it ends in death; when liberated from death, however, the body is fully alive. Because this is a full life, it is one fully involving the senses. Liberating the body therefore means freeing the senses. The soul dies and does not arise again. The body arises, animated by the Spirit. The soul disappears; it does not have eternal life. The body does have eternal life in the Spirit.

Holiness of life means freeing the body and engaging in dialogue with God in a material language. This is how the body is oriented toward life. We cannot converse with God directly in a spiritualized fashion. We can converse with God through the Spirit, which is the orientation of the body toward life. We converse with God only in the temple that is the body.

The liberation of the body is the anticipation of the new earth in the Spirit. But it is even more. Life animates mortal bodies even while they remain mortal. Life ceases being merely the road to death and—while still on the way to death—becomes a journey toward life. Even though the body remains mortal and will indeed die, this present life is already transformed into genuine life, beyond death, because even now it anticipates the new earth, which is this life but without death:

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will bring your mortal bodies to life also, through his Spirit dwelling in you [Rom. 8:11–12].

Finally, this presence of life in the mortal body is not only the anticipation I have been describing, but it is also a way to hasten the coming of the Lord. In fact it is the only possible way to do so:

The day of the Lord will come like a thief, and on that day the heavens will vanish with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and all its deeds will be made manifest. Since everything is to be destroyed in this way, what sort of men must you not be! How holy in your conduct and devotion, looking for the coming of the day of God and trying to hasten it! Because of it, the heavens will be destroyed in flames and the elements will melt away in a blaze. What we await are new heavens and a new earth where, according to his promise, the justice of God will reside [2 Pet. 3:10-13].

A holy life serves to hasten the coming of the day of God, even though that day, in any case, will come "like a thief." In other words, hastening the day means helping to ripen the time, but the day cannot be predetermined.

Therefore a holy life means freeing the body, which is the means for engaging in dialogue with God. Nevertheless it remains the anticipation of the new earth, the entrance into which is resurrection. This anticipation of the new earth and of the resurrection is at the same time the means for hastening the coming of the day of God.

The assurance of this hope depends, nevertheless, not on human beings but on God. Christians can anticipate the resurrection and the new earth but they cannot decide when or how it will arrive or be accomplished. In looking for the reason for the assurance of hope, Paul finds it in the fact that God has raised Jesus already. The resurrection is for him the proof that God really has the power to fulfill this hope and the will to do so. Jesus' resurrection is not deduced from God's power; quite the reverse, God's power is deduced from Jesus' resurrection:

It is like the strength he showed in raising Christ from the dead and seating him at his right hand in heaven, high above every principality, power, virtue, and domination, and every name that can be given in this age or in the age to come [Eph. 1:19-21].

This power was manifested in the resurrection of Jesus and it is on the basis of that manifestation that it is made known. This power is capable of accomplishing in all human beings what God did in Jesus: "He will give a new form to this lowly body of ours and remake it according to the pattern of his glorified body, by his power to subject everything to himself" (Phil. 3:21).

It is not simply that Christ has this force. He is also committed:

In him we were chosen; for in the decree of God, who administers everything according to his will and counsel, we were predestined to praise his glory by being the first to hope in Christ. In him you too were chosen; when you heard the glad tidings of salvation, the word of truth, and believed in it, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit who had been promised. He is the pledge of our inheritance, the first payment against

the full redemption of a people God has made his own, to praise his glory [Eph. 1:11–14].

Paul finds the assurance of this hope both in Christ's power to fulfill it, as well as in the Spirit, who is the pledge that this potential power will indeed be used. The Spirit is the pledge that the power of God will liberate bodies ("the pledge of our inheritance") and this deliverance can be anticipated in the Spirit through hope.

Death, Law, Sin, Faith

Paul's whole concept of the anticipation of the liberated body in the mortal body, which is accomplished by the Spirit, leads him to a complex idea of what it means to be a subject. It is by means of this idea of subjectivity that he develops his approach to morality.

Sin and the Establishment of the Realm of Death

Paul's starting point is the mortal body, which can tend as well toward death as toward life. He describes the kind of morality proper to its tendency toward death as one related to the law and sin. He often speaks of the flesh, of the desires of the flesh and its instincts, or of the old self. Insofar as the body tends toward life, he speaks of faith, of the anticipation of the liberated body, of needs being satisfied, of enjoying goods, of light, of the body as God's temple, of a spiritual body.

The tendency of the body toward death is not identified with amorality nor is its inclination toward life identified with morality. This is an essential point in the Pauline concept of the subject. Paul does not identify life with morality and death with immorality and vice. Quite to the contrary, the tendency of the body toward death is one particular kind of morality and its tendency toward life is another kind. For Paul there are two kinds of morality in conflict and sin is a category proper to the morality that tends toward death. The morality arising from the tendency toward life does not know sin. It may fall into sin, but if it does so, it is falling into another kind of morality. The inclination toward life is faith, and for one who has faith, falling into sin means a lack of faith. In the categories of life, that person is lacking faith; in the categories of death, that person is falling into sin.

Law, Sin, Death

The mortal body that tends toward death develops a kind of ethic around which there is a morality of death. Paul calls this ethic law. Law, sin, and death therefore form a unity around the mortal body, the fate of which is death. Sin brought death and is oriented toward death. The law is the negation of sin, which for its part reproduces and reinforces sin and therefore

also leads to death. Sin and law belong together, both mutually excluding and mutually reinforcing one another, in a headlong race toward death:

Well then, sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned. Sin existed in the world long before the Law was given. There was no law and so no one could be accused of the sin of "law-breaking" [Rom. 5:12–13, JB].

First comes sin, followed by death "as sin reigned through death" (Rom. 5:21). As a response to sin there is set up the "law with its observances" (Rom. 3:27). But because it is law, it cannot limit sin. On the contrary, it reinforces it: "The law came in order to increase offenses" (Rom. 5:20). The law is sheer negation and therefore condemnation: "Indeed the law serves only to bring down wrath" (Rom. 4:15).

Because it simply lays down limits in the form of commandments, the law makes sin more attractive and stimulates it. The law therefore becomes a part of the game of death even though it is opposed to sin. Sin mockingly defies the law.

The more the law tries to expel sin, the more power sin has. In this connection Paul treats sin as a subject dwelling within the human subject: "When we were in the flesh, the sinful passions roused by the law worked in our members and we bore fruit for death" (Rom. 7:5).

Sin acts on its own and takes over a person's body: "Sin seized that opportunity; it used the commandment to rouse in me every kind of evil desire. Without law sin is dead" (Rom. 7:8).

Without the law, sin still exists but it is dead, not alive. The law brings it to life, infuses it with life, changes it into a subject dwelling in the body. It lives in "sinful passions" and "every kind of evil desire." Sin sucks a person's very life:

At first I lived without law. Then the commandment came; and with it sin came to life, and I died. The commandment that should have led to life brought me death. Sin found its opportunity and used the commandment: first to deceive me and then to kill me [Rom. 7:9–11].

Death: Fruit of the Law and Its Observance

Although it was given for life the commandment ends up serving death. Paul is therefore concerned to show the relationship between commandment and sin:

Yet the law is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good. Did this good thing then become death for me? Not that either. Rather, sin, in order to be seen clearly as sin, used what was good to bring about

my death. It did so that, by misusing the commandment, sin might go to the limit of sinfulness [Rom. 7:12–13].

Given to serve life, the commandment and the law are holy, just, and good. But because sin can make use of them, they are not life and indeed as a result sin lives by killing the human being. In killing, it is revealed as sin. This is then the criterion for distinguishing what is sin, the only one Paul is aware of: causing death. Whatever causes death is sin; and sin lives by sucking the life out of those it kills. Sin is a fetish that lives by the law.

This leads Paul to discuss the relationship between intentions and their effects. The commandment is given to serve life; that is its intention: life. Sin takes advantage of the commandment to live off it and put to death the body for whose life the commandment has been given. But what is given with a good intention cannot be evil. Those who affirm the law and its commandments step out of their true self. Sin comes to dwell within the person who affirms the law and makes its presence manifest in “sinful passions.” To the extent one tries to deal with these passions, however, they are reinforced and thus there is no way out:

When I act against my own will, by that very fact I agree that the law is good. This indicates that it is not I who do it but sin which resides in me. I know that no good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; the desire to do right is there but not the power. What happens is that I do, not the good I will to do, but the evil I do not intend. But if I do what is against my will, it is not I who do it, but sin which dwells in me [Rom. 7:16–20].

If I do what is against my will, what I will to do is the law and what I really do is sin. But if I do something without willing it, it is not I doing it but another: sin dwelling within me. Sin is possible because what is intended and what is actually done are not the same. Good does not dwell in the flesh. As Paul puts it further on, “Do not be led by the flesh, allowing yourselves to serve its impulses” (Rom. 13:14, Bib. Lat.).

This explains why good does not dwell in the flesh—that serving its impulses leads to death.

Paul situates sin in the immediacy of bodily impulses, in the fact that they are not mediated in any way. He sees these impulses as disordered passions; the law is opposed to them, without being able to put them in order. Sin puts the body at the service of these impulses. Confronting God’s law there thus springs up a law of sin, dictated by sin (as a subject itself), which the law of God cannot destroy, even though the law is intended to serve life. Sin can therefore make use of that law in order to live itself:

This means that even though I want to do what is right, a law that leads to wrongdoing is always ready at hand. My inner self agrees with the law of God, but I see in my body’s members another law at war with the

law of my mind; this makes me the prisoner of the law of sin in my members. What a wretched man I am! Who can free me from this body under the power of death? All praise to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! [Rom. 7:21–25].

Sin is at work following out its own law—that is, the norms coming from the impulses of the flesh. The law of sin means the order to follow those impulses. This law is independent of the will of the person seeking to follow God's law and makes that person miserable. God's law does not replace the law of sin but leaves it intact. It only forbids following that law. The observance of God's law is set in opposition to the law of sin, but that observance finds itself frustrated.

Anticipation of the New Earth: The Realm of Grace and Life

It is against this background that Paul analyzes the morality of the body tending toward life. The law disappears: “no one will be justified in God's sight through observance of the law; the law does nothing but point out what is sinful” (Rom. 3:20). This is the law of observances:

What occasion is there then for boasting? It is ruled out. By what law, the law of works? Not at all! By the law of faith. For we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from the observance of the law [Rom. 3:27–28].

This faith now means affirming (in the Spirit) hope for a liberated body. It is not belief but the morality implicit in this act of affirmation. There are an ethic and a morality implicit in faith insofar as it is anticipation. But neither of these is the law. Paul intends to do away with any kind of norm fulfilled by observance. There is no intrinsic value in the norm. There is no reason within the norm for observing it. It is something external to the person and the person must decide whether to be guided by it or not. Not even the fact that it has been dictated by God on Mount Sinai will change that. It has lost all its legitimacy but not its validity. It is valid to the extent to which faith gives it legitimacy. The norm does not have any value simply by being a commandment, but it does come back into play insofar as faith gives it legitimacy. The criterion, however, is not that norms be dictated (by God or by other human beings) but that they originate in faith.

This obviously implies a concept of faith that does not mean belief or observances associated with beliefs, but the anticipation of the new earth. The new earth is not anticipated individually but in community with all humankind. The center of this anticipation, according to Paul, is love for neighbor, which is the nucleus of ethics and the decisive point for working out morality. No morality can be derived from the observance of any norm; rather the morality connected with love for neighbor legitimates activity

carried out in accordance with a norm. The norm is not destroyed but its reference point is changed:

Owe no debt to anyone except the debt that binds us to love one another. He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet," and any other commandment there may be are all summed up in this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love never wrongs the neighbor, hence love is the fulfillment of the law [Rom. 13:8-10].

With this change in the reference point of the norm, there is also a change in the reference point of morality. The law meant the negation of sin and it therefore reproduced sin. Faith is aimed at the liberated body of the new earth and it anticipates liberation. With the law, sin was the attraction that the individual had to reject. The law therefore multiplied sin. In faith Paul sees everything reversed. The good becomes what attracts, the body is freed, and sin is recognized as slavery. By liberating the body, faith and the attraction associated with it come from the body itself now definitively liberated. In faith, morality ceases to be something imposed from outside by a dictate that demands observance.

Faith does not mean ceasing to live but living more. It destroys the law of sin and the very source of life for sin. The realm of death, imposed under the law, is replaced by the realm of grace, the realm of life. The law of sin is destroyed and disappears. Thus, faith is enabled to overcome sin and not multiply it as did the law: "There is no condemnation now for those who are in Christ Jesus. The law of the Spirit, the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, has freed you from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:1-2, Bib. Lat.).

When faith (the law of the Spirit of life) replaces the law, the law of sin and its realm of death are destroyed. In the law of sin the body was in slavery to the flesh. The body is now freed from this slavery. The self of sin and of the flesh is crucified and the body is resurrected for life. The "old self" dies and the new self is resurrected:

This we know; our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed and we might be slaves to sin no longer. A man who is dead has been freed from sin. If we have died with Christ, we believe that we are also to live with him [Rom. 6:6-8].

For Paul identification with the crucifixion means the death or crucifixion of the flesh, which ends the law of sin and ends slavery; this is what frees the body so that it may live. Sin can no longer keep itself alive by leading the body toward death, but rather the death of sin now enables the body to live in freedom:

In the same way, you must consider yourselves dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus. Do not, therefore, let sin rule your mortal body and make you obey its lusts; no more shall you offer the members of your body to sin as weapons for evil. Rather, offer yourselves to God as men who have come back from the dead to life, and your bodies as weapons for justice. Sin will no longer have power over you; you are now under grace, not under the law [Rom. 6:11–14].

To permit oneself to be dominated again by sin means returning to the world of the law. In the world of grace and of life, Paul does not know sin: sin in fact means leaving that world. In itself therefore faith is not a matter of avoiding sin. Rather sin is evidence of the lack of faith, not of some kind of morality proper to faith. One who falls into sin does not have sufficient faith; such a person is returning to the world of the law and is under the law of sin. Because faith does not mean observances connected with beliefs, the lack of faith shows up as a lack of morality.

Paul denounces certain kinds of sin:

Those who live according to the flesh are intent on the things of the flesh, those who live according to the Spirit, on those of the Spirit. The tendency of the flesh is toward death but that of the Spirit toward life and peace [Rom. 8:5–6, Bib. Lat.].

But what he points toward is like a method, and never means well-defined norms. The will of the Lord, leading not toward death but toward life, must be discovered: “Do not continue in ignorance but try to discern the will of the Lord” (Eph. 5:17). What he intends to offer are not norms but examples that teach us to discover where the good lies:

Our salvation is closer than when we first accepted the faith. The night is far spent; the day draws near. Let us cast off deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us live honorably as in daylight; not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual excess and lust, not in quarreling and jealousy. Rather, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the desires of the flesh [Rom. 13:11–14].

The Imperial Roman Way of Life: False Vitality

All Paul’s thinking here is aimed against the orgiastic way of life prevailing in the ancient Roman empire, the kind of life portrayed in the *Satyricon*. Paul denounces the death that is present underneath its seeming vitality. He calls this kind of life the life of the flesh, the impulses of the flesh, the tendency of the mortal body toward death, disordered passions.

He does not deal with this way of life in the abstract. It is linked to a particular kind of religiosity, which begins to spread among the lower classes

of the empire during the first century, the mystery religions, whose rites are based on this orgiastic way of life. They particularly resemble Christianity in the way they center their teachings on what is bodily and sensate. Livy writes about the influences of these bacchanalian celebrations, which spread among the masses. These rites continually provoke the state to intervene to stop them with repression. Yet they can be assimilated into Roman society: they share its way of life. They are eruptions of sensuality within the lower classes, which sweep other classes along as well. Their bodily and sensate approach to life is very attractive to the oppressed classes in the empire: oppressed classes always express their liberation in terms of the liberated body.

Paul discovers this sense of the liberated body and links it to the Christian message of the resurrection. At the same time he discovers the great weakness of these movements. By unleashing what Paul calls the impulses of the flesh, they bring back death when in reality they seek to offer liberation from death. The empire therefore continually manages to tame these movements, through either repression or assimilation, and at the same time they throw it into turmoil. They never come together to make up a force that can be confronted. It is precisely Paul's concept of the liberated body that enables Christians to resist both assimilation and repression at the hands of the empire. He works out this idea in connection with these mystery cults. This close connection between Christianity and the mystery religions continues for centuries. From it derive the idea of the liberated body, the very word "mystery," the feast of Christmas (December 25 was the feast of Mithras), and even the rites of baptism and the eucharist. However, starting with the idea of the liberated body in Paul, all these other aspects unfold quite differently from their parallels in the mystery cults. The fundamental difference is that between Paul's liberated body and what he calls the inclinations of the flesh. From these elements comes the strength for resisting and undermining the empire.

Paul's thinking here is not aimed only at gnosticism. Unlike Christianity, gnosticism was never a popular or mass movement. Gnosticism deprecates the body and is therefore a kind of thinking that the empire can assimilate and use for its own self-preservation. Obviously Paul also takes aim at gnosticism in his thinking, but he does so through his critique of the law. This critique is leveled at eternal values that put bodily life into subjection and are an obstacle to the liberated body. "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." This stance implies a critique of Greek thought that tends to subject bodily life to eternal ideas. The body is despised and downgraded in reference to both eternal values and eternal ideas.

The fact that Paul deals primarily with the law may be explained by the status of Christianity as a Jewish religion standing in competition with Judaism. *Vis-à-vis* Judaism Paul must insist on the body and must relativize values. *Vis-à-vis* the mysteries and their associated cults he must insist on the liberated body, as distinguished from the impulses of the flesh. Here he is not struggling with gnosticism.

Later Paul deals with another influence in the Christian movement, one deriving from money and its power. Christianity penetrates into the upper classes and encounters other values. It is there that the influence of gnosticism is felt. Its importance increases over the centuries until the decisions of the Council of Nicea in the year 325.

The Money God: Lord of the Realm of Death

In the epistle to the Romans Paul speaks of the realm of sin and the realm of death. In both cases it is death that he is dealing with: it is the fact that sin leads to death that makes it what it is. Sin stands up to confront God's law, which cannot destroy it. On the contrary, the realm of death develops precisely in the shadow of God's law.

Subsequently Paul begins to speak of another king in the realm of death. It is more of an antigod; worship of it is incompatible with the realm of grace, of life, and of the true God. Paul calls it the "money god" ("the greedy, who serve the Money God"—Eph. 5:5, Bib. Lat.).

The author of 1 Timothy speaks of preachers who "value religion only as a means of personal gain" (1 Tim. 6:5). This point is then developed into a critique of wealth in the form of money:

Those who want to be rich are falling into temptation and a trap. They are letting themselves be captured by foolish and harmful desires which drag men down to ruin and destruction. The love of money is the root of all evil. Some men in their passion for it have strayed from the faith, and have come to grief amid great pain [1 Tim. 6:9–10].

The root of all evil lies in love for money—the money god. Previously the expression of sin was its inclination toward death. Now money is the root of all evil and it drags its victims down "to ruin and destruction." Money likewise means death—death glittering as though it were life. Earlier when Paul was talking about the impulses of the flesh, death was glittering with vitality. Now it is glittering just as much, not because of the many impulses of the flesh but because the money god unites them all into one: that is the reason for love of money.

Death now appears as the money god. Serving death does not so much mean an endless list of unconnected sins as an antiworld where all impulses are organized via a common denominator. There appears the asceticism of death and money: "they have tortured themselves with endless torments" (1 Tim. 6:10, Bib. Lat.). The hoarder is dragged down and tormented. The hoarder is swept away by love of money, swept away by death—death of others and death of self.

This money god is then confronted with the true God, again taking the liberated body as a starting point. The fact that needs cannot be fulfilled and goods cannot be enjoyed provides the angle of vision:

There is, of course, great gain in religion—provided one is content with a sufficiency. We brought nothing into this world, nor have we the power to take anything out. If we have food and clothing, we have all that we need [1 Tim. 6:6–8].

Food and clothing, bread and shelter: an economy exists to serve these ends, but hoarding does not. You are oriented toward life if you are seeking food and shelter; you are oriented toward death if you take your sense of direction from love for money. In a society such as that of Rome, it is appropriate to demand that persons be satisfied with what they have. There the per capita product remains constant and so it is impossible to increase the satisfaction of everyone's needs. Increasing one person's wealth means diminishing someone else's. Love for money gives the appearance of life when in reality it is death.

An economy should be aimed toward food and clothing, and they should be enjoyed: "Let them trust in the God who provides us richly with all things for our use" (1 Tim. 6:17).

The glitter of gold can cause the life of the body to disappear; that is what Paul is afraid of. In such a case the liberated body loses its bodiliness. At one point, after speaking of the money god, he says, "no one ever hates his own flesh; no, he nourishes it and takes care of it as Christ cares for the church—for we are members of his body" (Eph. 5:29–30).

Paul never conceives of any kind of life that is not the life of the body. This life means food and clothing and consuming them with enjoyment. Hence he sees the relationship with Christ in a bodily way also, for indeed there can be no other kind of relationship. All human bodies—joined in unity—make up the body of Christ. According to Paul, Christ lives in the bodily life of human beings.

Love for money breaks down this bodily unity between human beings, which is where God's love dwells. Those who love money have placed their confidence in a thing (money) rather than in God, for the relationship with God is this bodily unity. When persons trust in the god of wealth, they lose faith and thereby pride enters: "Tell those who are rich in this world's goods not to be proud, and not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth. Let them trust in . . . God" (1 Tim. 6:17).

Trust in God of course is not an act that takes place just within the mind; it is the acceptance of the bodily unity between human beings—of the person in community—which for Paul means both the body of Christ and the bodily connection with God. Pride means the breakup of this bodily unity and its bodily expression is money. Money is the body of the antigod, just as the liberated body for Paul is the body of Christ. This is why one cannot trust in God without really doing away with hoarded wealth. This must occur in an external, and not merely internal, fashion: "Tell . . . [the rich] to do good, and be rich in good works, to give gladly and share their goods. That way they

can save up solid capital for the future which will enable them to attain eternal life” (1 Tim. 6:18–19, Bib. Lat.).

The Pauline letters do not usually speak of eternal life. Normally they simply speak of life, meaning the life of the present body as liberated with an eternal perspective at the same time. When 1 Timothy speaks here of “solid capital” in order to gain eternal life, it means returning to real life the body that had been lost when it sought to be “liberated” through love for money. The fact that some have “tortured themselves with endless torments” brings them to death, for one who loses the present life also loses eternal life. And one who lives this present life gains eternal life. Love for money makes one lose eternal life along with the present life.

Paul does not speak about money in moral terms but only in terms of faith. Loving money means losing faith. The second letter to Timothy projects this loss of faith onto the last days: “Do not forget this: there will be terrible times in the last days. Men will be lovers of self and money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, irreligious” (2 Tim. 3:1–2, Bib. Lat.).

The sequence runs: selfishness, love for money, pride, loss of faith. Selfishness means the breakup of unity among persons and is the opposite of love for neighbor.

The part of the epistle that deals with love for money ends by affirming that God “alone has immortality and . . . dwells in unapproachable light, whom no human being has seen or can see. To him be honor and everlasting rule! Amen” (1 Tim. 6:16).

Pride: Confidence in “Something of the Body”

It is precisely where the money god and love for money or lovers of money are mentioned that God’s power is more and more emphasized. A new threat is seen, one not perceived before, and emphasis is put on making the true God stand out more emphatically. Subsequently, however, these texts were turned upside down in a way their author could not have foreseen. In fact today capitalist regimes that assault their own peoples take these texts out of context and use them to justify the way they have separated themselves from the unity of humankind. This is particularly true of Philippians 2:1–11, which the regimes emerging from the coups in Chile (1973) and Argentina (1976) used. Those coups, motivated by “pride,” put to their own use the image of God that the Pauline letters had developed to combat pride. By linking pride with an image of God as all-powerful and Lord of history, they create a transcendent justification for their own law. Paul’s God becomes divine providence.

Paul always sees danger in this breakup of the bodily unity of humankind: “We are the truly circumcised for we serve God according to the Spirit of God, and we glory in belonging to Christ Jesus rather than in trusting anything of the body” (Phil. 3:3, Bib. Lat.).

He now contrasts the liberated body with “anything of the body,” by which he means any partial aspect of the body—in this case, being a Jew and circumcision. But by “anything of the body” any breakup of unity is meant, whether out of love for money or attachment to the law. He has in mind, if we may express it this way, the idealist tendency associated with absolute values.

Paul’s view of the relationship (and opposition) between the law and the Spirit may now be summarized. Under the law a person feels a multitude of impulses of the flesh and has no common denominator that might serve as a mediating link with the activities of other persons. The law makes up for this lack of connection or mediation by means of norms, of which there are as many as there are impulses of the flesh, or even more. But the law leaves persons just as responsible for their impulses, although it prohibits their consequences. The law points toward unity among human beings—toward life—but it cannot bring it about; on the contrary, it reinforces the brokenness. The relationship between the law and the impulses of the flesh ends in a bad infinity.

In the Spirit, on the other hand, there is a prior unity among human beings, which has consequences for the way they act. That unity, however, is latent and not yet put into effect. It is a unity to be realized and hence involves a should-be. Actual unity is built up by putting this should-be into effect. When this is done in the Spirit, the result is faith.

The Pauline epistles also recognize another way of going beyond the law, and that is by changing it into a law of value, where the law is replaced by love for money and the money god, and the corresponding kind of behavior destroys the liberated body. This is the law of the realm of death: it leads to destruction, brings torment, and means that needs are not satisfied and nothing is enjoyed. The law was from God but this law of value, into which it has been changed, is from antigod, from death. It is pride and stands in defiance of the true God.

Behind Paul’s critique of the impulses of the flesh is the way of life of the Roman empire. Its religious projection is the polytheistic world where each impulse has its god. Behind his critique of the law is the religious projection of Judaism, of a God who lays down as many laws as the flesh has impulses. Behind his critique of money is the projection of the money god, organizing the impulses of the flesh in the service of death, and so creating a world that is the reverse of the world of faith. It is the true Antichrist. This is the world of gnosticism.

Neither the law nor the imperial orgiastic way of life allows the person to emerge. They repress and split up the person and human unity as well. What makes one a subject comes from outside, externally, and so there is no real subjectivity. Faith, however, leads to a subject constituted on the basis of the coming unity among human beings. Subjectivity comes about on the basis of love for neighbor, and so its starting point is life.

Nevertheless, the money god has its own form of subjectivity, on the basis of disunity rather than unity. This kind of subjectivity takes as its outside

reference point a thing, money. The resultant subjectivity leads to the death of others and oneself as well. The relationship between the law and the impulses of the flesh is replaced by a relationship between a subjectivity tending toward life (based on love of neighbor) and a subjectivity tending toward death (based on love for money). Two opposite worlds appear, God and antigod, Christ and Antichrist.

In this whole analysis, Paul encounters notable difficulty in expressing the unity between human beings as a liberated body. He does so by referring to the body of Christ in which all human bodies are one. But he cannot come up with any expression of bodiliness prior to that which comes from Christ, a bodiliness that can then be transformed by becoming the body of Christ.

Neither the body of Christ nor love for neighbor has its own bodily expression that might serve as a criterion for judging relationships among human beings. This lack is striking and it goes a long way toward accounting for the many fluctuations in the Pauline concept of bodiliness. This also explains how Marx could confuse it with Fichte's "I am I"—that is, with a pure and simple self-reflection, where one's own bodiliness is simply a mirror for another's bodiliness or of oneself. Paul encounters the same problem when he tries to link the liberated body with the liberated universe. He does not give the bodily criterion that might connect the two liberations, and could make one serve as conditioning the other. What is missing, and what could not be recognized at that time, is a recognition of the division of labor as the bodily union prior to, and conditioning, the life of each individual human being.

If human beings are recognized as united in a bodily way in the division of labor, the ultimate unity of the person in the human community (and therefore love for neighbor) has a bodily expression in flesh and bone. Otherwise there is no way to arrive at how to act on the basis of the definitive human community, in order to establish how things should be now. Hence Paul is always jumping from faith to examples of how to act. This is inevitable as long as there is no bodily link between behavior and definitive human community.

The King Commands Because He Commands: Authority and Class Structure

Authority: Illegitimate but Valid

Paul declares that all the norms of the law—that is, all external norms for human behavior—are illegitimate. On the basis of the liberated body, where such norms might or might not have a role, he relativizes them. The statement "The Sabbath was made for human beings, not human beings for the Sabbath" makes any norm as such illegitimate. It has the same effect on any kind of authority or class structure. But Paul must deal with a bothersome

question: "Just because we are not under the law but under grace, are we free to sin?" (Rom. 6:16).

After declaring that the law is illegitimate, Paul goes on to say that it is still valid. This does not mean a disguised return to the law, making it legitimate, but interpreting it as involved in faith and therefore in love for neighbor. The legitimacy is in love for neighbor and the fact that the law is valid is a consequence of this love.

In regard to the law Paul makes a distinction between commandments given by God and human laws. He argues that these latter are valid only on the basis of love for neighbor. The commandments are intrinsic to love for neighbor. If what makes them legitimate is to be found in this love and not in the fact that the norms of the commandment have been laid down, what makes them valid is intrinsic (Rom. 13:8-10). The commandments are intrinsically involved in faith and love for neighbor. This is not the case with human laws. They may be abrogated or retained. Whether they are or not, is of no import; nevertheless, they are not simply made invalid. Love for neighbor cannot legitimate them but it can demand that they be regarded as valid and respected. Paul argues the point, referring to the Jewish law on ritual purity at meals:

I know with certainty on the authority of the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; it is only when a man thinks something unclean that it becomes so for him. If, then, your brother feels remorse for the food he has eaten, you have ceased to follow the rule of love. You must not let the food you eat bring ruin to him for whom Christ died [Rom. 14:14-15].

Compared with the commandments these are arbitrary laws and of little importance. But they are valid—they are binding in conscience—if others consider them important and if not respecting them means separation from others. It is love for neighbor that makes them valid. This validity is extrinsic. If everyone is convinced they are arbitrary, they may be dropped with no problem. What determines whether they are valid or not is interaction between persons; in the case of the commandments, in an intrinsic manner, and in the case of human laws, in an extrinsic manner.

The point of reference is the person in community and in a manner that points toward the future; in the future the commandments will be reaffirmed and human laws will be abolished. In relation to the future it is clear that human laws will be abolished because they have no binding force on love for neighbor, but this same love for neighbor is what makes them valid in the present.

It is within this framework that Paul takes up the problems of authority and of class structure. He declares that they are strictly illegitimate and yet he at once insists they are valid. But this case is different from those of the commandments and of arbitrary laws. For one thing the validity of authority and class structure is not intrinsic to love for neighbor but extrinsic. How-

ever, unlike arbitrary laws, authority and class structure cannot be abrogated simply by common consent. They will be abolished only on the day of God, when the transformation into a new earth takes place. They have a special status because their abolishment must be seen on a horizon that is transcendent.

In this framework the illegitimacy of authority is already implicit in the fact that the law is illegitimate. It is not authority that has the power to decide whether norms are valid or not but the person acting out of love for neighbor. From the viewpoint of authority such a procedure would end up in chaos. Paul argues for the validity of authority from the need for order. There must be authority if there is to be order. But neither he nor the other apostles have the slightest criterion for making any discernment among different specific kinds of authority. They cannot provide any basis for preferring one kind of authority over another, because they have no grasp of a bodily nexus between person and community. They conclude that authority is valid from the fact that there must be order to avoid falling into chaos. Thus they conclude that authority is valid on the basis of human interaction. But in their transcendent and eschatological perspective, they can only refer to any authority and any class structure without differentiating.

Authority and class structure can be abolished only in an eschatological perspective and therefore it is only in this perspective that they are said to be valid. The validity of any kind of authority or class structure is deduced from the fact that authorities are necessary. The New Testament authors do not affirm one type of authority over another, or one kind of class structure, but simply the kind of authority or class structure at hand. They affirm their validity not because they are one sort of authority or another, but simply because they are authority. It is only from an eschatological perspective that they deny authority and class structure as such. Between these two poles they move back and forth. From an eschatological perspective, authority and class structure are illegitimate; but at present they are valid, and Paul and the others are not interested in inquiring about the nature of the existing authority or class structure: "Let everyone obey the authorities that are over him, for there is no authority except from God, and all authority that exists is established by God" (Rom. 13:1).

There is no effort to ask whether a particular authority has been established by God or not. The issue is not one kind of authority or another. All authority has been established by God. Peter states the point in so many words: "For the sake of the Lord, be subject to every human authority: to the king because he has the power to rule, to the governors he commissions for the punishment of criminals and the recognition of the upright" (1 Pet. 2:13-14, Bib. Lat.).

Authority as such is the order established by God. The established order is contrasted with unspecified chaos. The fact that such order is established by authority is rooted in evil behavior and so authority is valid until the day of the Lord: "The ruler is God's servant to work for your good. Only if you do

wrong ought you to be afraid. It is not without purpose that the ruler carries the sword; he is God's servant, to inflict his avenging wrath upon the wrongdoer" (Rom. 13:4). The fact that authority is valid implies an obligation and a duty in conscience: "You must obey, then, not only to escape punishment but also for conscience' sake" (Rom. 13:5). Insofar as they bear authority, they are ministers in God's service. "You pay taxes for the same reason, magistrates being God's ministers who devote themselves to his service with unremitting care. Pay each one his due: taxes to whom taxes are due; toll to whom toll is due; respect and honor to everyone who deserves them" (Rom. 13:6-7).

This validity is clearly something extrinsic to love for neighbor, because love for neighbor does not enter into the way authority acts. Those in authority are under no norms or demands except keeping themselves in power as authorities. To do so they must have the capability of punishing. Their sphere of influence is to continue. They will be deposed on the day of God.

Slavery: Illegitimate but Valid

Paul's attitude toward slavery is exactly the same. Slavery is illegitimate but valid in the strictest sense. With such a concept of authority early Christians cannot criticize the authorities in any way. Authority seems to be infinitely far away and they feel neither the power nor the duty to bring any influence to bear on it. At most they can address slave owners, but without making any judgment whatsoever on the class structure: "You slave owners, deal justly and fairly with your slaves, realizing that you too have a master in heaven" (Col. 4:1).

This exhortation is addressed to Christian slave owners, but there is no hint of any discernment between different kinds of authorities or class structures. In itself the existing class structure is valid.

Nevertheless, they consider it illegitimate. Paul leaves no doubt about this in his epistle to Philemon. He asks Philemon, a Christian and slave owner, for the freedom of the slave Onesimus. This slave has escaped from Philemon and Paul has converted him to Christianity. He sends him back to Philemon with the letter:

It is he I am sending to you—and that means I am sending my heart! I had wanted to keep him with me, that he might serve me in your place while I am in prison for the gospel; but I did not want to do anything without your consent, that kindness might not be forced on you but might be freely bestowed. Perhaps he was separated from you for a while for this reason: that you might possess him forever, no longer as a slave but as more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially dear to me; and how much more to you, since now you will know him both as a man and in the Lord [Philem. vv.12-17].

As a brother, Onesimus is no longer legitimately a slave. But slavery is valid and in force. Paul stresses the illegitimacy by bringing up the possibility of damage payments:

If he has done you an injury or owes you anything, charge it to me. I, Paul, write this in my own hand: I agree to pay—not to mention that you owe me your very self! [Philem. vv.18–19].

He plays with the notion of various ways of belonging to one another. Paul is in prison for the gospel, Onesimus as a slave belongs to Philemon, and both Philemon and Onesimus owe themselves to Paul because it was he who converted them to Christianity. The only one with a legal claim is Philemon, as master of the escaped slave Onesimus. This claim is valid and Paul does not deny it. But there are other ways of belonging to one another. Paul belongs to the gospel and Philemon owes himself to Paul. Similarly, Onesimus owes himself to Paul and yet as a slave belongs to Philemon according to valid law. Because he respects this validity, Paul did not want to keep Onesimus without Philemon's consent. But because Onesimus owes himself to Paul, it is not as though Onesimus has been snatched away; rather he was simply separated from Philemon.

Paul sends Onesimus back to Philemon who will have him in either case: as a slave or as a brother. If Onesimus belongs to Paul, he will also belong to Philemon, by virtue of the communion existing between Paul and Philemon. But to the extent he is a slave, this is impossible. If Philemon demands that he be a slave he will have him, but then not as a brother: by demanding him as a slave he rejects him as a brother. The effect is to break the communion between Paul and Philemon. In such a case, Paul will pay, but Philemon will no longer belong to Paul. If Philemon makes Onesimus a slave, he will be doing the same to Paul, who belongs to the gospel. Communion between Paul and Philemon will be broken and Philemon will be free of Paul and of the gospel. If he makes Onesimus a slave, Philemon will be set free—free of the gospel—but for Paul this means being a slave of sin. By making Onesimus a slave, Philemon will lose his freedom. Onesimus is validly—but illegitimately—a slave. Philemon would become a slave legitimately.

What Paul is asking for is therefore not a favor between friends but an act of faith. Underlying the play of ideas, it is faith that demands that Onesimus be freed, even though slavery remains validly in force.

This vision of authority and of class structure renders them immutably valid and so they become a source of suffering. Christians subject to them interpret authority and class structure as a “cross” or a “yoke” they have to bear. After calling for subjection to every human authority, Peter says:

You household slaves, obey your masters with all deference, not only the good and reasonable ones but even those who are harsh. When a

man can suffer injustice and endure hardship through his awareness of God's presence, this is the work of grace in him. If you do wrong and get beaten for it, what credit can you claim? But if you put up with suffering for doing what is right, this is acceptable in God's eyes. It was for this you were called, since Christ suffered for you in just this way and left you an example, to have you follow in his footsteps. He did no wrong; no deceit was found in his mouth. When he was insulted, he returned no insult. When he was made to suffer, he did not counter with threats. Instead, he delivered himself up to the One who judges justly [1 Pet. 2:18-23].

Authority is now a means of crucifixion. In this sense of crucifixion by authority—not by any particular kind of authority—Paul speaks of slavery as a “yoke” (1 Tim. 6:1). Just as sin, which leads to death, came forth under the shelter of the law, Paul now sees how evil comes forth and is reinforced under the authority ordered by God: “Our battle is not against human forces but against the governors and authorities who rule this world and its dark forces. We are confronting the spirits and the supernatural forces of evil” (Eph. 6:12, Bib. Lat.).

Paul, writing the epistle from prison, foresees a confrontation with the authority and class structure of the empire. He had declared that authority was illegitimate but valid. Authority defends its legitimacy and launches an attack on Christians. An authority that has been declared illegitimate but valid is withering and collapsing, but Christians have no alternative to offer. By declaring that any authority is illegitimate (though valid) they are undermining it. However, because they have no political movement themselves and have not developed any criteria for politics, they do not offer any concrete alternative. The result is a centuries-long struggle that destroys the empire. Christianity is a political movement, even though it has no intention and no desire of being one. However, it does not assume responsibility for its political impact, focusing its attention instead on awaiting the day of God. When the empire collapses on its own, Christians are incapable of stepping in to replace its political power: they cannot differentiate between specific forms of authority. They have indeed had a political impact, but they cannot organize any political action. What they do parallels, and to some extent causes, the centuries-long decline of the Roman empire.

Christianity during this early period is a religious movement that in fact becomes political even though it does not intend to engage in politics and does not want to do so. Something similar happens with Puritanism between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. In its intention it is solely religious, but it unintentionally provides a key element for the rise of industrial capitalism.

The political impact of Christianity during this early period is the result of its declared position that authority and class structure are illegitimate. The result is conflict between Christians and the Roman state, which defends the only legitimacy it knows: its sacralization of the emperor-god. Christianity

destroys this legitimation and simply declares that the existing state is valid. At the same time it rejects the possibility that any other authority could be legitimate and so attacks all authority as such. But every authority is specific: it is this authority or that authority. Every class structure is this or that class structure. This inability to make any discernment leads to the frustration of both Christianity and the empire.

This refusal to legitimize is the first instance of the secularization of authority. It occurs from within a particular viewpoint and at a particular place in the Roman class structure. It is a rejection of domination, even though such domination is not called into question in any political way. Domination—whether by the state or by class structure—brings crucifixion. Liberation is perceived as opposed to authority and class structure.

Domination and Authority

Obedience to sin is slavery. Everything is a denunciation of slavery, which is the kind of domination prevailing during that period. But Christians see liberation from this slavery in terms that are strictly transcendent and identified with the definitive liberation from sin on the day of God. They therefore contribute to the chaos they seek to avoid. They make authority unbearable but they reject any substitute for it except through the coming of the Lord.

This is an impasse. When Christians reject domination they have nothing to put in its place. They destroy it but they refuse to offer a substitute, and indeed, they have no alternative. What they lack is an idea of praxis and they are unable to develop any, given their point in history. Although they denounce domination, the only political alternatives available embody domination. Hence when the empire collapses, all the traditional teaching on authority and class structure is erased and then reinterpreted to serve a particular society that now claims to be Christian. A particular authority is now legitimized in the name of Christianity. The king does not command because he commands; he commands because he is Christian.

Early Christianity expresses its repudiation of domination with a clear kind of symbol. Domination—authority and class structure—is the cross, the crucifixion of the dominated. The New Testament writers are aware of two situations that they identify with crucifixion: the crucifixion of the flesh, which leads to the resurrection of the liberated body; and the crucifixion of the dominated by class structure and authority, which leads to resurrection on the day of God, on the new earth. In both cases there is an old self, and in the resurrection there appears a new self as liberated body. In the case of the flesh it is sin that crucifies; in the case of being subject to authority and class structure it is the “supernatural forces of evil” that crucify. These forces grow in the shadow of authority and class structure.

These “supernatural forces of evil,” which have the power to act as vital subjects analogously to the way sin acts, are what Marx later on, in his analysis, calls the fetish. Paul mentions them in Ephesians 6:12, after oppos-

ing the money god to the realm of Christ in Ephesians 5:5. But he is unable to focus the question around any kind of praxis, simply because he has no adequate concept of the bodily connection uniting human beings. Such a concept would permit him to come to a more specific notion of authority and class structure on the basis of love for neighbor. He cannot use love for neighbor to mediate class structure and authority without such a bodily reference point, which in the last analysis is always the division of labor. Limited by being where he is in history, he cannot discover any kind of praxis either. Paul discovers the fetish as Antichrist but the only stance he can take toward it is eschatological.

It is this situation that made authority simultaneously both illegitimate and valid. Christians maintained this position without budging. The emperors could be as frenetic as Nero, as hysterical as Diocletian, or conciliatory—but the Christian response was always: “illegitimate but valid.” The emperors were eased out of power without being destroyed. Christians remained untainted; but the more they did so, the more the existing power was eroded. The maxim “illegitimate but valid” proved to be a fearful weapon in the hands of powerless social classes. In the vision of these Christians, authority existed for the sake of order until the day of God, when it would be judged. In the meantime they saw any political action as something done under the impulses of the flesh and so deserving of condemnation.

The two poles of this undermining process were the maxim “illegitimate but valid” and the rejection of praxis in the name of the day of God. In the later history of Christianity there were similar movements. The Cathari seem to have been rather like this. According to Max Weber the Puritans and Calvinists of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries appeared on the scene with a position similar to that of “illegitimate but valid,” and Weber sees this as the explanation for their tendency to form sects. Outside the Christian tradition the Jacobite factions were similar, as were the socialist parties of the second half of the nineteenth century, which Engels himself compared to primitive Christianity. Within them there was a great deal of discussion over Proudhon’s dictum “property is theft.” Such a slogan not only declared that capitalist property was illegitimate but even denied its validity. In rejecting that slogan, the Marxist parties turned it into a kind of “illegitimate but valid.”

Obviously what was changing was the sense of the validity of authority now declared illegitimate, and the sense of how long that validity would last. To the extent that an idea of praxis grew, the upper time limit on that validity was recognized as the revolution, understood as a change in class structure and authority itself. But illegitimate authority is still held to be valid, because of the need to maintain order: human beings have to live even in a period of revolution or prerevolution. Hence authority, even though it is illegitimate, has to be assured until it is replaced by another order. Although it is not legitimate, the fact that it is valid means that it is to continue until it is replaced.

What is alarming about these movements is that even without touching authority, they change it into a meaningless empty shell in the eyes of its subjects. They influence the way authority is regarded—and the legitimacy of authority is always a matter of how it is seen. Authority becomes empty when it is seen as empty. At that point, idea becomes power.

The contradiction of early Christianity was that it transformed the authority of the Roman empire into empty authority and so concentrated power in its own hands, but it refused to use that power. Events ultimately pressured it to take power even though it had no criterion for how to do so.

With the empire defeated, when political power was in their hands, Christians were forced to take up a political position. They could no longer maintain their eschatological stance. Because there was no Christian political thought dealing with domination, the kind of Christianity that arose was one of domination. But this domination could no longer be legitimized by order of the gods, or of God, or of the emperor-god. All such possibilities had been destroyed. Therefore domination was now legitimized on the basis of love for neighbor. For this to take place, however, the whole content of Christianity had to be changed. All the mysteries and even love for neighbor were now given a new content that would enable them to legitimize a power against which they themselves originally had arisen.

Part Three

THE BODILY CONNECTION BETWEEN HUMAN BEINGS: LIFE AND DEATH IN MODERN CATHOLIC THOUGHT

Paul's whole theology is based on bodiliness. In anticipating the new earth the person in community is liberated in a bodily manner. This bodily liberation enters into the liberation of the whole bodily universe. Bodily liberation is the language that enables human beings to speak to God in the Spirit. Nevertheless, Paul cannot work out specific criteria for how this bodily connection is to unite human beings. He points to this nexus in the sense that liberation is worked out in common between human beings, and between them and nature, but he does not develop the criteria for how society should be organized as a consequence.

Lacking such specific criteria for class structure and public authority, Christianity ends up utterly incapable of dealing with that authority. Although it holds love for neighbor as the supreme criterion for its social ethics, Christianity is unable to translate love of neighbor into criteria for discerning among different kinds of class structures and authorities, and this incapability is expressed in the maxim "illegitimate but valid."

Yet even during the first few centuries some more specific criteria regarding this bodily connection were beginning to be worked out, especially insofar as the right of the poor, and the right of all, to have access to the goods of the earth is spelled out. Communicating with God in the Spirit is more and more understood as having a bodily basis in the fulfillment of these rights. These ideas of the church fathers, however, do not become a specific criterion for evaluating the property system itself. This occurs only with the social philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, who states that the criterion for judging the legitimacy of a property system is whether these rights are fulfilled. His position represents progress but the later social teaching of the church goes backward when it replaces the right to access of the goods of the earth with its own thesis that private property is a natural right.

Because Paul makes bodiliness the guiding notion for theology, the issue of life or death comes to serve as his central ethical criterion. Sin means that bodily life is guided by death; grace means it is guided by life. As time goes on, this bodily link among human beings and with nature becomes clearer and there is a greater need to work out the criteria for organizing social relationships among human beings on the basis of this criterion of life or death. The right of access to the goods of the earth is only the expression of this criterion. This right is fulfilled to the extent that all are enabled to live and the lives of some are not conditioned on the deaths of others. If such is to be the case, the property system and public authority must be set up in such a way that all may live. When it is impossible to live, it is clear that sin is living off the social structure by killing those who find it impossible to live. What is required is a social division of labor coordinated so as to enable all to live and reproduce their material life by means of their work.

The logic of this conclusion follows from Paul's idea of bodiliness. Although this position is present to some degree throughout the whole Christian tradition, it is not the only understanding of social relationships nor is it always the prevailing one. Very early there appears another—antiutopian—interpretation. It arises with gnosticism and Origen's Neoplatonic theology and comes into political power with the theology of the empire in Constantine's time (Eusebius). This line of antiutopian Christianity continues from the Middle Ages to the present. On the other hand Christian antiutopianism is joined by the body-rejecting mysticism of an Eckhardt and to the mysticism of violence of a Bernard of Clairvaux. This mysticism of violence is plainly a mysticism of the cross. Closely related to this medieval mysticism is the philosophical position of those who argue that universalia are real. Both mystical union and the realism of universalia prefigure the later contempt for the bodiliness of human life.

It is not my intention to sketch, even in broad strokes, such a history of Christianity. What I wish to do is rather to see how it is reflected in different currents of Christianity today, and I shall concentrate my analysis on present-day Catholicism.

Moreover I am not concerned about analyzing different political currents as they reflect existing ideological currents. Such an inquiry would demand a much greater effort to differentiate among various groups. Rather I am going to study how there arise different positions regarding the bodiliness of relationships between human beings and with nature. This study involves analyzing the kind of transcendence present in such positions and the postures taken toward life or death.

Because in itself the Christian message does not contain any theory of society, present-day currents of Christianity arise already linked to particular existing theories of society. It is in contact with these theories that the contents of the key elements of Christian teaching—transcendence, the person, life and death—become concrete, and the mysteries as a whole acquire their concrete meaning.

My goal in the analysis that follows is to uncover how these meanings are

concretized in the ideological currents of Catholicism today. I base this effort on the results of the analysis of the theory of fetishism in Marx and Weber earlier in this book.

By starting with these two opposing theories, I shall be able to pick out the different categories they use in referring to these key elements of Christian teaching: transcendence and the person; and the stance they take in favor of either life or death.

Private Property and Modern Catholic Social Teaching

The Right of the Poor and the Right to the Use of the Goods of the Earth

Authority, class structure, and the resultant property system are seen in the earliest Christian writings only as they appear from the viewpoint of eschatology. Seen from that angle, they are destined to disappear and therefore they are regarded as illegitimate. But inasmuch as they are seen as disappearing *only* from this viewpoint, they are also declared to be valid. It is the eschatological perspective that renders it impossible for Christians to make any discernment between specific forms of authority, class structure, and property. This makes any kind of social praxis impossible.

From the earliest centuries the fact that this element is missing in the Christian message leads to new formulations. The Christian message takes as its starting point the person in community with other persons. Christians see the existence of property as limiting such a community and some seek to convert the Christian community into a community of goods. When that solution proves unworkable, some, from the second century onward, begin to express thoughts about the right of the poor, and the right of all to the use of the goods of the earth. Property itself comes to be seen as illegitimate, although it remains valid because a community of goods is not feasible. Therefore an owner is regarded as merely an administrator of the goods of the earth. The aim of such administration is to ensure that all have access to those goods. The poor have a right to the goods that are necessary for them and it is an obligation to grant them those goods.

This development, the right of the poor, establishes a bodily connection among human beings. It was the lack of such a connection in Paul that made it impossible to make any discernment among different forms of authority, class structure, and property ownership. But this right appears in a timid fashion and takes as its starting point the Christian community. The focus is on the rights and duties that this community recognizes, and there is no

effort to apply them to the prevailing authority structure and property system. Christians now begin a discussion about the relationship between, on the one side, the right of all to the use of the goods of the earth and, on the other, property—which means that the right to the use of the earth is monopolized. This discussion is still going on within the Christian tradition.

This right to the use of goods (which is a right to life and includes the right to the means of life) constitutes a new intrinsic value, which is expressed only indirectly in the foundational Christian message. It is a consequence of the fact that in the Christian message all values are derived from the person in community with other persons, and therefore from love of neighbor.

We find this process of deriving all values from love of neighbor in Paul. He stresses that the commandments are values deriving from love of neighbor and that their validity is intrinsic. Therefore these values are valid not only from an eschatological viewpoint and until the day of God, but even afterward. Other values—authority and human laws—are valid until the day of God but afterward they will disappear. Nevertheless Paul still arrives at them on the basis of love of neighbor, although in an extrinsic manner. Human laws may be done away with if persons agree to do so in common. The validity of authority, however, does not depend on common agreement but lasts until the day of God.

The right to the use of the goods of the earth now arises as a value inherent in love of neighbor and its validity goes beyond the eschatological perspective. Consequently there are two types of intrinsic values: the commandments and this right to the use of the goods of the earth. If we leave human laws aside, we may place these values in opposition to the extrinsic values of authority, class structure, and the property system. The more Christianity finds it necessary to exercise some judgment about particular kinds of authority (which is what happens when Christians find political power in their hands, beginning with Constantine's conversion), the more it has to interpret authority, with its extrinsic validity, by seeing it as a mediation or administration of the values that are inherent in love of neighbor.

Vis-à-vis the mediation of the commandments through authority, Christians work out a critique of tyrannical authority; vis-à-vis the right to the use of the goods of the earth, they elaborate a critique of property. To the extent that they work out such a critique, Christians begin to be able to exercise some discernment regarding specific kinds of authorities. Only the authority that is really a mediation of the values inherent in love of neighbor is judged to be valid. Hence some begin to make distinctions between those authorities with whom the Christian may legitimately cooperate and those whose validity may be denied in the name of Christianity itself. This discernment of particular authorities continues to take place from an eschatological perspective and new ways to legitimize power now appear. A new way of sacralizing power now appears and it can be understood only from the eschatological perspective that it takes.

Property Hypostasized in the Natural Right to Private Property: The Right to Life in Catholic Social Teaching

Private Capitalist Property as the Ultimate Criterion for the Orthodoxy of Faith

It is with this background in mind that the social teaching of the Catholic Church must be interpreted. That teaching supports one particular property system—capitalist private property—as the legitimate form of property, as opposed to other possible types of property. The basis for this position is taken from the right of all to the use of the goods of the earth. This social doctrine therefore makes capitalist private property a cornerstone of the orthodoxy of faith. In this sense Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez, commenting on a document of the Christians for Socialism, said:

The first objection we find in the document is that it ignores a great part, if not all, of the doctrine contained in the teachings of the Catholic Church, which in the mind of the popes is inseparable from the Christian conception of life (*Mater et Magistra*). This is the teaching of Christ in social and economic matters, which is therefore the gospel as applied to present-day society, and so to class struggle.²¹

Along the same lines he criticized them for having taken a road that “in fact makes them reject their Christianity.”²²

The implicit reasoning in such a position is that private capitalist property must be the central means for ensuring the right of all to the use of the goods of the earth. From among all conceivable forms of property, capitalist private property is singled out as the mediating link between the right to such use and the administration of property, which has to take some specific form. In this sense capitalist property is declared to be both the will of the Creator and the doctrine of Christ. Hence it becomes the ultimate criterion for the orthodoxy of faith. Defending the faith and private property come to mean the same thing.

Thomas Aquinas on the Need to Institutionalize Property

The reasoning on private property found in contemporary treatises on Catholic social doctrine always refers back to the analysis of Thomas Aquinas. Indeed Aquinas is the first theologian to develop a theory of property on the basis of the right of use (of the goods of the earth). The reference point for his teaching is not the values found in the Christian community; rather, he analyzes the property system itself as institutionalized and then moves on to the question of authority. Aquinas seeks criteria for political action vis-à-vis the property system.

However, he does not legitimize any specific property system. He con-

fronts the right of use (of the goods of the earth) with the necessity of property. The right of use is the basic right, but if exercised directly the result would be economic disorder. Property is necessary in order to avoid the chaos that would result from the direct exercise of the right of use. In this sense property means institutionalized property, in contrast with what Christian tradition called the community of goods. In this sense property is not a right but a necessity. By being institutionalized it sets up and creates some distance between persons and goods, and consequently persons can have access to goods only in return for something rendered. Property is necessary in order to administer goods; without it there is no way of ensuring that human life will be reproduced.

There is nothing in Aquinas that would lead to any specific form of property beyond this definition of property as opposed to holding all goods in common. His idea of property is as broad as Paul's idea of authority. Aquinas finds that property, like authority, is necessary for order. Therefore he holds that the right to use can be ensured only within some kind of institutionalized property.

Pierre Bigo sums up Aquinas's arguments for the need to institutionalize property as follows:

- (1) Something will be better administered if it is entrusted to a responsible individual than if it is left in the care of several persons or of everyone;
- (2) there will be more order if each thing is entrusted to someone responsible; there would be confusion if all were responsible for everything with no differentiation;
- (3) there is a greater possibility of peace: leaving things undecided leads to conflict [*Doctrina*, 51].²³

In a footnote Bigo adds:

It must be recognized that these arguments condemn more a confusion of goods (everything entrusted to everyone) rather than supporting private property as such (something entrusted to a person and not to the people as a collective whole) [*ibid.*, 51, n. 60].

Indeed what these arguments reject is the confusion of goods, which according to Aquinas must be the result when the basis of property is the community of goods. Whether Aquinas's arguments are correct or not today, they have nothing whatsoever to do with supporting private property. He is only pointing to the need to institutionalize property, whatever be the form. Just as Paul affirms the need for authority (whatever be the form), Thomas Aquinas says that property must be institutionalized (whatever be the specific form it might take).

Joseph Stalin on the Need to Institutionalize Property

Aquinas's reasoning has so little to do with capitalist private property that his arguments were used by Soviet socialism at the outset of the first five-year

plan. Stalin used the very same arguments to justify the replacement of collective management in Soviet enterprises with individual management. In his political report to the Central Committee on June 27, 1930, Stalin said:

Infringements in the sphere of introducing one-man management in the factories are also becoming intolerable. Time and again the workers complain: "There is nobody in control in the factory"; "confusion reigns at work." We can no longer allow our factories to be converted from organisms of production into parliaments. Our Party and trade-union organizations must at least understand that unless we ensure one-man management and establish strict responsibility for the way the work proceeds, we shall not be able to cope with the task of reconstructing industry.²⁴

All Aquinas's arguments appear here down to the same words, although Stalin was surely unaware of it. Any property system may in fact arrive at such criteria simply in view of administrative efficiency, and hence these criteria in themselves do not support any specific kind of property. Aquinas is not drawing conclusions about any specific form of property but simply offering a method for doing so: a particular kind of property is judged to be valid if it can really guarantee to all their right to the use of the goods of the earth. This is a matter of method rather than a result. As conditions vary during different periods of history, one specific form of property will turn out to be valid, and others will cease to be valid.

Pierre Bigo's Misrepresentation of Aquinas's Teaching

In essence Aquinas's method makes the property system subordinate to the right of use and supports it only as a mediation of that basic right. According to Aquinas no property system is valid in itself (that is, legitimate); rather its validity comes from the right of use. Property is what mediates the right of use. Therefore Aquinas conceives of a natural right of use but not to private property. The institutionalization of property is a matter of necessity, not of right. Property systems are lawful and valid insofar as they serve what the right to use demands. There is never a right to a particular property system, according to Aquinas. He therefore treats the specification of property under *ius gentium* rather than under natural law.

Bigo's footnote shows that he knows this. He nevertheless draws a conclusion that is to be found in all treatises of modern Catholic social doctrine:

[Thomas Aquinas] takes the common good as his framework of reference and it is the common good (which means, lest we forget, the good of human persons insofar as they together make up one human totality) that demands private property: it is in the interest of the totality to ensure that things run well and that there be order and peace [*Doctrina*, 51].

Bigo explicitly defines the common good as the person in community and arrives at private property from criteria of administrative efficiency without so much as mentioning the right of use, which is the natural right of the person in community.

Clearly this conclusion does not come from his premises. Bigo had said as much previously but, fully aware of what he is doing, he draws this false conclusion. It is only by means of this deliberate effort to confuse things that he can present the prejudices and preconceived dogmas of our bourgeoisie as the teaching of Aquinas. And this basic falsification is alleged to be the cornerstone of modern Catholic social doctrine! All the results are predetermined by this deliberate false step. It would be impossible to go so far as to canonize the capitalist bourgeoisie within the tradition of Thomas Aquinas except by taking this deliberate false step.

Elsewhere Bigo mentions this argument of Aquinas again:

[He] comes to the conclusion that “property” is necessary to society because it leads to better management, order, and peace, provided it does not destroy community use [*Doctrina*, 260].

Again Bigo is twisting words. St. Thomas concludes that property is necessary but never does he conclude that *private* property is necessary. The necessity of property does not mean there must be private property. Nevertheless Bigo again insinuates that Aquinas teaches the opposite.

Elsewhere Bigo repeats this false conclusion in terms that are even more deceptive:

Nevertheless the calculation of costs and benefits that constitutes the basis of private enterprise is a necessity: throughout all sectors of the social body they give rise to a kind of care and dynamism that benefit the whole of society and could never be replaced by mere obligation. It would be economically irrational to do away with this basic necessity. Moreover it would mean that persons would be condemned to seeing a system of collective obligation established, and consequently their fundamental political freedoms would be destroyed [*ibid.*, 240].

Bigo tells us that costs and benefits must be calculated. That much is quite true: such calculation is as necessary as the institutionalization of property itself. Any enterprise makes such a calculation, whether it be within a capitalist or a socialist ownership system. The difference between these kinds of enterprises does not come from whether they make such calculations but from the way they make them. Nevertheless Bigo repeats the same kind of reasoning as before. From the general necessity for such calculation, he draws the conclusion that it must be of a specific type—that of the capitalist system.

This conclusion is as shocking as the previous one. Bigo’s use of the

concept of necessity becomes utterly imprecise. When Aquinas says property must necessarily be institutionalized, he is speaking of a real necessity. If society does not institutionalize property, it will fall into chaos. The necessity for economic calculation is similar. If society does not measure its enterprises by means of economic calculation, it will fall into chaos. However, the other necessity Bigo talks about is qualitatively different. The “necessity” of private property and the “necessity” of the capitalist system are nothing but Bigo’s preferences. They are norms that he wants to establish without justifying them except by twisting arguments and switching terms.

If he can conclude that private property is a “necessity,” Bigo has no need to justify it; no one justifies what is necessary. If eating is a necessity, no one needs to justify it. If it is necessary to institutionalize property, there is no reason to justify it—it is a fact.

Bigo avoids the problem he would have to solve if he were to start out with Thomas Aquinas: proving that private capitalist property is a way of mediating the right to use (of the goods of the earth). But once he has made his switch, he has no need to prove anything. If the need to institutionalize property and calculate costs implies the necessity of capitalist private property, order itself requires it. Inasmuch as no society can exist unless order is assured, capitalist property is utterly beyond any questioning. Bigo makes it synonymous with order. Aquinas’s question is turned upside down. Aquinas had sought a property system capable of ensuring the right to use, and that right to use was what justified its validity. Bigo now asks the question the other way around. Taking private capitalist property as his *ne plus ultra* and as unquestionable, he asks how and to what extent the right to use may be ensured.

Bigo erases Aquinas’s original question and takes what was simply the result of a fallacious argument and attributes it to the Creator: “The right to private property was given to human beings by nature—that is, by the Creator” (*Doctrina*, 263).

Bigo’s whole analysis shows that the right to private property was given by *him*—Bigo. The Creator has nothing to do with it and cannot be made to share the blame just because some terms are switched around. The most frightful tragedies have been presented as examples of God’s doing.

In the same vein Bigo states, “It is natural for persons to own what they have made or have acquired legitimately” (*ibid.*, 270). Nature and God are construed in such a fashion that through their mouth you can hear our bourgeoisie speaking. But why is it not natural that each person’s work belong to *all*, so that all working together might be able to live?

What we have here is the hypostatization of a particular kind of property. Not only is it conceded to be valid, but it is made legitimate in the most definitive manner. Private property becomes an entity, and no one is ultimately responsible for its effects. God in person has set it up. God has ordered things this way and eating from any other tree is forbidden.

Going even further, Bigo declares that private property is free of original sin. It is present in the eternal design of God:

We here discount the theory that private property is a result of original sin. It has no textual basis nor does it seem easy to reconcile this idea with the teaching that considers property to be a natural right and attributes to property a very great personalizing effect [*Doctrina*, 270, n. 289].

Indeed if private property is a natural right, it must be conceived and created simultaneously with humankind itself. It is eternal. Nevertheless, for this very reason the whole Christian tradition up to and beyond the fifteenth century denied that private property had the status of a natural right. It argued the exact opposite. Because institutionalized private property is a product of original sin, it cannot be a natural right. Private property is simply a specific form of institutionalized property. This tradition never expressly denied that private property was a natural right, because no one had ever imagined that such a notion could be proposed. Hence the natural law recognized by this tradition is found in the commandments and the right of use.

Bigo, however, states just the opposite. He says that the “traditional doctrine” holds that “private property, even of the means of production, is a natural right” (ibid., 262). Yet he offers not a single proof. Having hypostatized private property, he arrives at the following formulation of a question basic to his analysis: “How may private appropriation be justified, from the viewpoint of reason?” (ibid., 261). This question makes everything plain.

If Bigo really meant to make reason his reference point, he could never formulate such a question. His intellectual bad will is patent in the way he formulates the question. In the name of reason you could ask only whether or not private property might be justified; you could never predetermine the analysis and assign to reason the task of justifying a predetermined result. Such a procedure means the destruction of reason. With his conclusions he compromises not only the Creator but reason as well.

Bigo discovers the same question under the heading of “modern economics”:

The question posed by modern economics is therefore as follows: To what extent and under what conditions may private persons have at their disposal capital—that is, goods removed from consumption or an instrument of production—of which they have no immediate and personal need? [*Doctrina*, 261–62].

Once again the result is already known and the question deals only with possible modifications. When he speaks of modern economics, Bigo modestly takes it on himself to bestow that title on those currents of economics that agree with his viewpoint—namely, neoclassical economic theory and one school of Keynesianism—and these are then presented as synonymous with modern economics. This kind of economics creates the language used by our

bourgeoisie when it speaks as though from “God’s own lips” or speaks of “nature.”

The end result is a kamikaze mission in which Christianity is immolated in sacrifice so that our bourgeoisie might survive. In answering the question basic to his analysis, Bigo again refers to the natural right to private property: “Public authority cannot abrogate that right. All it can do is moderate its use and harmonize it with the common good” (ibid., 270).

Inasmuch as the common good is the person in community, the formulation of the question involves skipping over a prior question: Is private capitalist property compatible with the common good?

If the Creator, nature, and reason all sanction private capitalist property, the right to use cannot be raised in opposition to private property. The right to use becomes the social function of private property and is “intrinsically inherent in the right to property” (ibid., 264). Now that this right is within private property, it becomes an end of private property: “Its primary end is to make the right of all to the use of the goods of the earth a reality” (ibid.).

Even the use of words is changed. In Aquinas the right to use is by natural law and property is not. Later both the right to use and the right to property are called natural law. For Bigo only the right to private property is natural law, and the right to use it put into the category of fundamental right. As a fundamental right it is made synonymous with the social responsibility of capitalist private property:

Hence the communitarian purpose of owning goods and the autonomy of the will of the owner are both essential to the institution of property. If one or the other is denied, the balance . . . between the individual and the social aspects of the right to property is destroyed [ibid.].

The right of use and the will to own are now simply two aspects of private property. The right of use loses all the threat present in the older formulation wherein it was a matter of natural law; and the institutionalization of private property is now indicated as serving to fulfill natural law. This becomes plain when Bigo speaks of the “balance . . . between the individual aspect and the social aspect of the right to property.”

The most remarkable thing here is that the needy person, the subject of the right of use, is nowhere to be seen. Balancing the two aspects, according to Bigo, is not a matter of ending misery, unemployment, and so forth. It means that property does all it can about these problems without endangering itself. The reference point is always property, never human need.

Bigo does not say that capitalist property must eradicate misery in order to justify itself. He says the opposite: it must eradicate misery to the extent that it may do so and still remain in existence. Capital should do what it can, but it has no obligation to do what it cannot. If that means impoverishment, unemployment, underdevelopment, and so forth . . . so be it. Inasmuch as the Creator willed that there be private property, the Creator must also have

willed the consequences. Human beings should not become involved in this matter. The subject of the right of use therefore disappears and is replaced by the owner:

Owners have the right, or rather the duty . . . of ensuring for themselves and their families what is needed for a decent life. This right does not come from society in any way whatsoever. This is what makes the right to property such a powerful source of economic activity, as individuals strive to “earn” a living for themselves, thus obtaining a legitimate share in common resources [*Doctrina*, 265].

***A Decent Life for Property Owners and
the Ascertainment of What Is Superfluous***

The “legitimate share in common resources” is a share that ensures one a decent life. It is the owner’s duty to claim it. Because the right of use holds for all, it holds for owners. Hence society may not take away this decent life. There is, however, one part of the owner’s income that could be illegitimate:

Owners should try to determine how much of their fortune is unnecessary in order to leave it for the use of others. . . . What is superfluous belongs to others. St. Thomas Aquinas is still part of this great tradition [*Doctrina*, 269].

How does one determine what is superfluous?

The owner must evaluate this “part that belongs to others,” what is superfluous, not according to the needs of the moment, but according to a judgment of conscience [*ibid.*, 265].

And what are the criteria for this “judgment of conscience”? Conscience itself. There are no objective criteria. This case is utterly unique in all Catholic teaching. The criteria for conscience are always external to conscience—except in this case. It is up to the owner’s subjective inclination to decide, “in conscience,” what is “superfluous.” In reality, what is superfluous may be worked out only on the basis of the right of use. Because this is a right of all, the criterion for determining what is superfluous ought to be a decent life for everyone. That would be an objective criterion.

Bigo, however, lifts owners out of the community and says that they may now decide what is superfluous. The poor, to whom what is superfluous belongs (according to Bigo himself), now depend for their very life on what owners’ consciences will or will not declare superfluous. The needs of the poor have nothing to do with the it; the only thing taken into account is the difference in income between what owners “in conscience” consider to be a

“decent life” and what their income is. What belongs to the poor is that difference, as evaluated by owners. If that difference means the poor die of hunger, so be it. Once again: a decent life for the poor has nothing to do with the issue. If what owners’ consciences judge to be superfluous is less than what the poor need, there is nothing to be done about it.

Bigo does not so much as mention this problem, though it is so obvious. On the contrary, he says that “the fact that owners do not fulfill their social obligations does not thereby mean that the right to property is ipso facto abolished” (ibid., 266).

Because he never once mentions a single objective criterion for determining these obligations, it is impossible to imagine a case where an owner does not fulfill them. The owner lives a “decent life” and gives what is left over to others. Everyone does that. Because Bigo never brings in the needs of nonowners, there is no criterion for what is superfluous, except Friedman’s: the “distress” an owner feels on seeing the poor. This is especially plain when Bigo deals with the problem of “extreme need,” which he sees as the main instance where property is affected by the right of use. He refers to this case in cautionary terms, warning that it should not be taken advantage of: “Except in cases of real and extreme need . . . these are not obligations in justice, but in Christian charity” (ibid.).

Once again “real and extreme need” is not determined by the needs of the needy. What is decisive is the demand that the institution of property be maintained, and consequently only in very specific and very rare cases will the desperate be able to use goods against the will of their owner. The stress is not on the degree of need but on how rare such situations will be. Determining such a right on the basis of human need will entail the breakdown of the whole system of private capitalist property. There are a billion persons in a situation of “real and extreme need.” None of them can be saved by invoking this exceptional right of “extreme need.” This kind of right must be very handy for owners when they happen to forget their wallets.

In addition to this right in the case of “extreme need,” the state may interfere with the right to property to make sure there is an adequate distribution of income. Bigo, however, does not tell us what a just distribution is; he supports “the legitimacy of interventions by public powers, as long as they do not make property and inheritance rights meaningless” (ibid.).

Again there is no sign of the needs of individual persons, but only of private capitalist property. The state may use its influence on income distribution but its concern for a “decent” life goes only as far as property owners and not to anyone else. The extent to which public power should intervene is determined not by the needs of the poor, but by concern for the right to property and inheritance. Hence in this type of social doctrine, the one to whom the right to use (of the goods of the earth) primarily refers does not even exist as a subject. That person exists only as an object of private property, which takes that person into account only insofar as it judges fitting:

But if the poor have a right over what is superfluous to the rich, that does not mean a right of a particular poor person vis-à-vis a particular rich person, but the poor as a whole vis-à-vis the rich as a whole; the subject of this right cannot directly execute its fulfillment [*Doctrina*, 266, n. 283].

Obviously it cannot be a right of a particular poor person vis-à-vis a particular rich person. That would destroy the very institutional basis of property. The logical subject would therefore be the poor as a whole: such a subject could claim its rights vis-à-vis society. But Bigo shuns that possibility. About the right of use he says:

It is a *fundamental* right—that is, one that the subject cannot claim immediately except in a case of extreme need. In order to be put into practice, this fundamental right depends on a decision on the part of the owner or a decision of public officeholders. Consequently the subject of this right cannot claim it directly. The duty of the property owner does not fall under commutative justice [*ibid.*, 267–68].

Because this fundamental right cannot be the right of one poor person vis-à-vis some other particular person, Bigo sees no other possibility than that of making the property owner the highest appeals court for deciding the case. He does not seriously mean it when he refers to public officeholders, because he has already made it clear they should not help the poor if that means the right to property and inheritance would become meaningless. Private capitalist property is the appeals court for deciding on the validity of the right to use. In line with what has already been said, this court would decide whether the right to use could be fulfilled. At this point that right and private property have been made identical. The right of use becomes an empty rhetorical phrase.

This appeals court of property owners is even more rigid than it first seems in what Bigo says. Not even property owners are free to make a decision, according to Bigo. Speaking of the right to private property he says that “public authority may not abolish it. All it can do is moderate its use and harmonize it with the common good” (*ibid.*, 270).

This means that not even the general assembly of all the property owners in the world voting unanimously could annul the right to property. Nor could such an assembly help the poor by undoing the right to property and inheritance. Capitalist property is not only above the poor and their will, but it is above the will of its owners. Even owners are forbidden to touch it. “The Creator” in person is present in it, along with nature and reason. Viewed this way private capitalist property brings together all sorts of interests:

In the long run the interests of both classes are united because it is in the interests of owner-workers that dependent workers be satisfied with

their lot; and it is not in the interests of dependent workers that the situation of owner-workers worsen, because their own freedom depends on the existence of property [*Doctrina*, 537].

Property owners are now “owner-workers” and workers are “dependent workers.” A property owner may give up personal property, but not even all property owners together may give up the property system. If so, they would be giving up freedom. It is no longer the suffering of the poor that can redeem the rich, but it is rather the insistence of the rich on keeping their wealth that redeems the poor. The poor are even robbed of the imaginary consolation that comes from thinking that their suffering makes some sense in the scheme of eternal salvation. Here wealth is literally everything. Marx called this “pulling the flowers off the chains.”

No Way Out for the Poor

The poor are trapped, with no way out. In the name of the right of use they fall into an ambush and now all ways out are blocked. The right in extreme need is of no use, because it undermines private property. The state cannot help, because if it did so it could undermine private property and the right to inheritance. Not even property owners themselves can help, if that would undermine the property system. Indeed the Creator cannot help, because nature has been set up in such a way that it needs capitalist property. Certainly the Creator would not change nature just for some poor person. This ambush amounts to a cage and if things work out as foreseen in Bigo’s social doctrine, the poor will never get out.

Whereas property in Thomas Aquinas is a way to mediate the right of use, now the right of use is a way to mediate private capitalist property:

Paul VI reaffirms that “private property does not constitute for anyone an absolute and unconditioned right,” precisely because this right is conditioned and relativized by the “primary finality” of private property, which is to ensure that the fundamental right is fulfilled [*Doctrina*, 589].²⁵

After capitalist property has swallowed up the right of use, Bigo gives it a romantic sense:

[Property] has a “personalizing” value, because of the responsibilities it entails. It stabilizes the home and serves it as a “vital space.” It conditions the economic initiative of individuals and private associations. It is the infrastructure necessary for a free city [*ibid.*, 262].

Again it is capitalist property—not the right of use (of the goods of the earth)—that serves as the “infrastructure necessary for a free city.” This is just how Friedman puts it. Such a position firmly locks capitalist property into the heavens. Bigo writes:

Hence, from the Christian viewpoint, the economic and political structure of society and, in a more general sense, the welfare of individuals depend on how society as a whole respects the right to property. Society as a whole cannot destroy a right that does not come from it, because the human being is “prior to society” [ibid.].

What Bigo means is that capitalist property is prior to society. He is not aware of any human subject prior to society. For him “human being” is one more synonym for capitalist property. He is unaware of the human being as subject. He says social doctrine “does not consider human beings as abstract but as connected with the things they own” (ibid., 234).

But that is precisely abstract human beings: “connected with the things they own.” The concrete human being is one who has needs and is related to things at hand. Bigo thus ends up hypostasizing capitalist property: he lumps the Creator, nature, reason, freedom, and all existing or conceivable human values together with this form of property. Nevertheless he states:

Within a perspective where time takes its meaning from eternity, societies cannot hypostasize themselves, because, properly speaking, they do not have any further destiny. It is not societies that will be saved but persons, and in society each person pursues a special destiny that is independent from the destiny of other persons in that society. It is this point in particular that protects Catholic thought from the headiness of totalitarianism [ibid., 297].

The truth is just the opposite and Bigo proves it. It is only “within a perspective where time takes its meaning from eternity” that societies can indeed be hypostasized. Hypostasizing society means the same thing as referring it to eternity. That is precisely the “headiness of totalitarianism.” If indeed, according to Bigo’s teaching, only “persons . . . will be saved,” their salvation depends on their recognizing capitalist property. There is no salvation except in capitalist property. Against this kind of hypostasizing, Bigo’s social doctrine does not put up the least bit of resistance. Capitalist property is a matter of faith. One who departs from it, is cut off from the faith. Capitalist property comes to be more important than the existence of the whole universe. In this vein, Cardinal Höffner says:

No social order on earth, even in its common good, is superior to goods of a supernatural order. The supernatural salvation of one human being is above the natural welfare of the whole universe.²⁶

The defense of capitalist property knows no bounds. Even the universe can be swallowed up. Bigo is nevertheless convinced that he has overcome the fetish of capital. He says that for Christ “money is not merely an economic medium. It is an inversion, something that stands in opposition to God” (*Doctrina*, 33).

This is how Bigo describes the fetish of capital:

Within the economic organism, capital thus conceived is a closed system, self-sufficient, developing according to its own law, rejecting any kind of service, ignoring and smashing the human being, ignoring the human community and splitting it; it is a network that spreads anarchically like a cancer [ibid., 240].

Capital is a “cancer” if it fails to carry out its social responsibilities. Such is Bigo’s position. If those responsibilities are carried out, however, the “cancer” is cured. Moreover, because Bigo believes that this capital itself is what must limit the fulfillment of any such responsibility, he is simply dressing capital up in new clothes.

The Division of Labor and the Property System

Biblical Poverty and Capitalistic Pauperization

Poverty is at the heart of the traditional social doctrine on property. In this respect it follows an ancient Christian tradition, itself based on biblical tradition: the poor person is one who is helpless—that is, who cannot work and has no other means of staying alive. Thus the poor person is especially one who is disabled, or very old, or an orphan, or a widow. These persons are poor: they depend on others for their survival—and yet there is no one particular person whose responsibility it is to support them.

Of necessity these persons must live on what is “superfluous” to the rest. The Christian tradition must therefore reflect on the property system and on how to maintain these persons. During the whole precapitalist period this led to a profound mistrust of private property, which was seen as cultivating selfishness and avarice. This mistrust is reflected in prohibitions of interest-taking and usury.

This idea of the poor also explains why they are not regarded as themselves being able to make what is called the “right of the poor” work for them. It is a fact that the poor cannot make that right prevail in society and it is their very poverty that explains why: the disabled, the old, orphans, and widows as groups cannot defend any right. If they could, they could work and would not need to invoke any “right of the poor.” Ultimately the poor are those who cannot defend their rights in society—and that is why they are poor. To say they cannot defend their rights means precisely that they are poor. That they cannot defend themselves does not mean that they should not do so and demand their rights; it means that even if they demand their rights, they will not gain anything. The poor are those who have no social power.

The disabled, elderly, orphans, and widows have no way to bring social power to bear. They cannot rise up against injustice and cannot use force, as can others. They cannot use arms and they cannot create pressure by means

of noncooperation. Their cooperation is not needed and indeed they cannot cooperate, by reason of their condition; and they cannot use arms, because they are too old, too young, or too feeble. Dependence is inherent in their condition. It is completely legitimate for them to defend themselves, but they are unable to do so. Therefore society must respect the "right of the poor," and through charity make up for their inability to defend themselves.

This charity is not that of Friedman or Bigo. It is an undertaking to ensure for the poor what Bigo calls a "decent life." It is not a question of owners turning over what they in their conscience consider superfluous, but of providing what is necessary for a "decent life." There are ways of measuring this objectively. Whatever means are necessary to ensure such a life must be used. Alms cannot be anything but a last resort. That is how things were viewed in the earlier Christian tradition. One of the reasons the medieval moralists preferred feudal property to private property was precisely the fact that it allowed the poor to get along without begging. The feudal property system incorporated a social security system, rudimentary as it was. No such provision obtains in the private property system.

Obviously this concept of poverty is inadequate for understanding modern capitalist property. This kind of poverty is still with us, but the poverty caused by the world capitalist system today is of another kind. It is not poverty in the biblical sense, but the result of capitalist relationships of production. It is a poverty that affects persons who are quite able and willing to work, but who are kept from working by the property system itself. They fall into poverty, but that does not make them poor in the biblical sense. Contrary to the case of the biblical poor, they can defend themselves—for example, by organizing themselves or acquiring weapons. In the social order they are potentially active agents pursuing their own rights and are not inevitably dependent on letting property owners concede them their rights (voluntarily, "in conscience," after ensuring their own "decent life"). They can demand those rights. Their poverty is really pauperization.

As a group they are the proletariat. As the proletariat they continually experience the threat of pauperization, whether they are employed or unemployed. In neither case are they granted security for their life or a right to live. Rather, they demand it.

Modern Catholic social doctrine does not reflect on this new phenomenon—which is as old as capitalist society. The poor were (correctly) said to be unable to defend themselves. This social doctrine now says the proletariat must not defend itself when such a defense would undermine private property. Instead this social doctrine devotes itself to discussing the just wage. Discussing a just wage is meaningless, however, if there is no prior assurance that everyone can find work: it is only then that it makes sense to demand that employment provide enough income to live on. This social teaching does not bring up this basic problem except in a marginal way, even though today the basic problem is pauperization due to unemployment.

There is another reason why this kind of pauperization cannot be identified with poverty as it was viewed traditionally. It was traditional to make a

distinction between the functions of administering and of distributing the products of labor. Administrative functioning produced goods and distributive functioning portioned them out. The right of use was therefore separated from the administrative or productive function. Poverty appeared to be entirely the result of the distributive function.

This helps explain the medieval preference for feudal over private property: the distribution of goods envisaged the needs of the poor. With feudal property poverty does not mean begging, as it does with private property. It was inconceivable that poverty could be the result of the way the production process was managed, nor was there any indication that this was in fact the case. Apart from natural disasters and wars, poverty during the Middle Ages was primarily a result of a person's inability to work, or of bad administration.

It is only with capitalist society that there arises the kind of pauperization that results from the very way the production process is organized. There now appear unemployment and paltry salaries, the result of the objective laws of particular relationships of production. Pauperization is not the result of a distributive function but of the very way property and production are organized. The more that workers employed in production manage to improve their wages, the more noticeable is the pauperization resulting from unemployment, which becomes the central trait of the underdeveloped and largest part of the world capitalist system.

This pauperization is quite unexplainable if considered only in terms of distributive functioning. It is a result of the way the capitalist property system seeks to manage the social division of labor. Capital shows that it is quite incapable of organizing the division of labor so that the whole labor force in the system can take part in socially managed work and so guarantee its own life through its work. On the contrary, capital keeps ever larger sectors of the population from working. In the underdeveloped countries this exclusion is not cyclical but long-range, and generation after generation is being sacrificed with no prospects for a solution. Even in the developed countries there are signs that a similar process is beginning, although it is less pronounced.

The specific problem of how to coordinate the division of labor in such a way that everyone may be included in socially organized work now emerges. Any property system should be judged on how well it accomplishes this coordination: any property system is implicitly a system for managing the social division of labor. Insofar as pauperization is the result of the way a particular kind of division of labor is managed, the right of use (of the goods of the earth) must be the right to a property system wherein all may be involved in socially organized work.

Modern Catholic social teaching rejects this understanding of the right of use, taking advantage of the fact that tradition does not mention such a dimension in the right of use. But it was because this phenomenon—pauperization as a result of the way the division of labor is managed—did not exist that tradition has nothing to say about it. When the problem appears, the right of use takes on a new dimension.

***The Social Division of Labor as the Bodily Connection
between Human Beings***

Underlying property as the bodily link between human beings there now appears another link, in relation to which property is only an instrument. This bodily link between human beings is the social division of labor: property has the role of mediating the way that the division of labor is organized so as to serve the right of use.

It is through the social division of labor that the relationship between human beings becomes bodily and objective; through the social division of labor nature becomes the extended body of humankind and it is only by ordering the social division of labor that social relationships can be ordered. Traditionally property was viewed as a mediation of the right of use. When the social division of labor is recognized, property becomes a mediation of that division of labor, aimed at the right of use. This means giving the division of labor a direction so that it serves the life of all, instead of serving the life of some at the expense of the death of others. This direction comes not only from the distributive function, but basically from the administrative function, which is an expression of the way the division of labor is organized.

Modern Catholic social teaching does not deny all this directly. It rather sidesteps it. It takes these basic criteria, which ought to serve as a basis for studying diverse property systems, and transforms them into the pious wishes of prelates with regard to capitalist property.

Bigo says that “investments should tend to provide work opportunities and enough credit for the community both at present and in the future” (*Doctrina*, 241, n. 247). He does not say what this “should” mean. Obviously it means an “ought-to-be,” because that is what the right to use demands. But what if capital does not do it? Or worse, what if capital cannot do it? In that case, would this “should” go so far as to undermine private property and inheritance rights—and the “decent life” of owners? Of course not. That would be a sick joke. If capital cannot do so, then there is no “should”: this social doctrine never demands of capital more than it can do. Human beings may die, but capital never dies. Bigo concludes that “the state has no reason to take charge of the life of the enterprise” (*ibid.*, n. 248).

Hundreds of millions of unemployed and underemployed persons within the global capitalist system are living in extreme poverty. Those who rise up are repressed with the most savage and massive kinds of torture known: there are concentration camps everywhere to terrorize the dominated classes. The centers of the capitalist world use their science to develop ever more destructive kinds of torture to export to the police forces of the underdeveloped, capitalist-controlled world. By means of torture and hunger in these countries, the capitalist centers maintain their own so-called political freedoms while overturning and destroying the most basic human rights in most countries of the underdeveloped world.

But Bigo’s clerical heart does not falter: it beats in unison with private

property. Private property has a “personalizing value,” “stabilizes the home and serves it as a vital space,” develops private initiative, and is “the infrastructure necessary for a free city” (ibid., 262, n. 262). If what is happening already is not enough, what has to happen for this social doctrine to begin to doubt the saving power of private property and capital?

In taking up this position this social doctrine is closely connected with particular strands in modern economics—namely, neoclassical theory and some currents in Keynesianism. This social doctrine cannot utterly deny that property is a mediation of the division of labor for either life or death. It therefore chooses those economic currents that allow it to insist on what has been dogmatically predetermined: that private property can organize the division of labor so as to serve human life. But it does this quite indirectly and never elaborates the argument.

If this social doctrine were intellectually honest, it would have to lay out its argumentation step by step. The first step would be to determine that, given the need to manage the division of labor so as to serve the right of use, there should be a specific system of property, without making any prejudgment in favor of a particular kind of property. The second step would involve making a judgment on the ability of property systems to guarantee the right of use (of the goods of the earth). This second step would entail analyzing various economic theories. In order to arrive at the position taken by this social doctrine, such a line of reasoning would have to embrace neoclassical theory openly.

However, such a method (the only honest one) would make it difficult to present private property as the work of the Creator—that is, to hypostasize it. Insofar as it served the right of use, it would be valid; if it did not, it would not be valid. It would be up to the social sciences to decide. And anyone who decided that it did not serve the right of use, would not be separated from the faith. But this social teaching does not choose this path. Having chosen to use the results of neoclassical economic theory, it is not willing to accept any evaluation in the light of a critique of neoclassical economics. That form of economics is the servant of the theology of this social doctrine and shares in the revelation of capital that is attributed to Christian dogma.

Regarding socialist countries, Bigo says:

But if one looks at socialist regimes, where private property was really abolished . . . one finds that the complete nationalization of businesses and rigid planning of the economy pose very difficult problems both in regard to economic rationality as well as in regard to overall rationality [*Doctrina*, 280–81].

Of course, the economic rationality he means is that of neoclassical economics. For him it is rationality itself, not just one form of rationality:

All indications are that the collectivist method is valid only during initial economic takeoff and in large enterprises, but it seems to run into

increasing problems in small and medium-sized enterprises, when there is an effort to meet the high levels of production and output characteristic of modern production [ibid., 281].

His solution is always the same:

The conclusion seems to be unavoidable: only private initiative can provide the economy with the underlying dynamism and high output that are necessary if its full potentiality is to be realized [ibid., 282].

Nowhere in Bigo's whole analysis does there appear the criterion that he himself calls "fundamental right." He does not even ask whether the right of use, the fundamental right, is respected in socialist countries. He overlooks this point, pointing out again how fundamental it really is. Instead, he offers us criteria that have nothing to do with Christian social teaching. Christianity was not founded to guarantee high growth rates, and it is not a myth of economic dynamism. If the right of use is fundamental, it has to be a guide for any judgment that intends to take its inspiration from Christian tradition. Instead, in the name of Christianity, Bigo shares with us the prejudices of our bourgeoisie. Christian tradition does not demand high growth rates; it demands the right of use, the right to live.

Furthermore, it is not so obvious that Bigo's judgments about economic dynamism are correct. In the underdeveloped world—and that is where socialism began—it is the socialist countries that are the most dynamic economically and they accomplish this on the basis of a right to life that is not respected in any capitalist country. Capitalist countries are even destroying their own economic dynamism in order to continue to deny the elemental right that all persons have to the means of life.

Liberation Theology and the Dehypostasization of Property

It is only with the theology of liberation that the Christian tradition of the right of use with all its ramifications has become a basic issue again. All property systems whatsoever are declared illegitimate.

Liberation theology may not simply substitute socialist property for private property. That would mean canonizing Marxist political economy instead of neoclassical economic theory, presently canonized in modern Catholic social teaching. The point is not to canonize *any* economic theory, and not to derive any more property systems whatsoever from divine revelation. What liberation theology is attacking is the hypostasizing of property in any form whatsoever.

Liberation theology has begun to consider the right of use as a method for determining which property systems might be most adequate, but this is more a matter of method than a result. The Christian message may lead to it as a method but not as a result. One may conclude from the Christian message

and in the light of the right of use that it is necessary to examine different property systems and make a discernment about their ability to really ensure that natural right be respected. Although it does not legitimize the essence of any institutionalized form of property, the Christian message can express approval or disapproval of the validity of particular property systems. Thus it may legitimize human activity within particular property systems and at the same time reject others. But what it is legitimizing is the human activity that takes place within that system and makes use of it, but never the system in itself. It is only in this sense that one may speak of a kind of legitimizing that comes from the right of use.

The Christian message serves only for arriving at the method, not for the result itself. The result toward which the method leads is a matter to be worked out in the realm of the social sciences, not in the realm of faith. Faith is utterly incapable of deciding the result. Therefore, coming to a concrete judgment in favor of a particular social system is a matter for social science analysis, and that must be the basis for such a judgment. If that analysis is incorrect, faith will be lost in idolatry and fetishism. The work of social science is therefore work to safeguard faith: we need what it produces in order to distinguish between fetishism and liberation.

Liberation theology is not social science; it is theology. The only procedure possible, however, has been to pose its questions in both theological and sociological terms, because the latter are decisive for making faith concrete. The liberation theologians could not ignore the need to engage in this kind of work, any more than did the framers of modern Catholic social teaching. But the theologians could not follow the path of hypostasizing a particular mode of property ownership and pretending that it was a direct conclusion from the gospel. Hence they began to adopt the positions of the school of modern social science that had studied the problems involved in the connection between property and the social division of labor, and had thereby developed a concept of the human subject based on human needs: historical materialism and Marxist political economy. They adopted those positions not because they are Marxists but because they explain something that no bourgeois social science even takes up, something that nevertheless is utterly basic for the way faith is to be made concrete. These analyses lead to the conclusion that private property is incompatible with the right of use. However, this is not a conclusion drawn from faith but from political economy and is dependent on such analysis. Yet faith cannot be made concrete except by adopting the results of such analysis. Basing itself on political economy, faith does condemn private property, but it does not do so qua revelation.

That discernment among property systems is a question of method rather than a conclusion is a decisive point here. If this were not the case liberation theology would fall into a new Constantinianism, a new revelation of something never revealed, newly creating a Creator (really a façade for petty self-interest).

This method can be summarized in a phrase that also comes up frequently

in modern Catholic social doctrine: “the subject is prior to society.” However, this social doctrine speaks more of the human being or the person as prior to society, and in fact prefers to focus on the person as being prior to the state. Such ambivalence reflects the fact that this social teaching never managed to develop a concept of the human subject. Therefore, it finds it easy to continually put the property owner in place of the human subject. When it speaks of the subject, human being, or person as prior to society or to the state, it never really refers to the human being, or the subject, or the person—indeed, it is unaware of them; it is really speaking of the property owner. What this means is that capital and private property are prior to society or the state, and that it is precisely the human being that is not prior. If human beings suffer contempt, this social doctrine protests. But if there is contempt for private property in order to save human beings, it declares a holy war.

Liberation theology reinstates the human person as prior to society and treats property as part of society. The person, however, is a person in community. Christianity knows the person only as in community. This person must be recognized as such and this can be done only when property is administered in relation to the community and the state is structured accordingly.

Law, Morality, and the Human Subject

Revoking the Pauline Theology of Law

The kind of thinking present in modern Catholic social doctrine is obviously what Paul means by law. It is a social analysis that has not undergone the transformation of the law into faith, and in fact it rejects such a transformation. Bigo plainly says as much:

Moreover, it is through God’s law that God speaks to the human being. This law, defining what is good, tells how persons should lead their lives. It is God’s will, or rather, it is a covenant with God; it is divine friendship. Although it imposes an obligation, it also includes a promise; it does not bind the human being with chains but frees from all alienation, offering access to God [*Doctrina*, 91].

God speaks through the law and it is God who dictates it. God tells how persons should lead their lives. The promise derives from carrying out the obligation. The law gives access to God, is God’s will, and is the means for a loving dialogue with the Creator. This law is imposed:

A mother who does not impose her will on her child . . . is an indifferent and unnatural mother. The child is not fooled and senses the lack of love. . . . The law is proof of love and shows that there is concern. God directly appears in history as one who allows and forbids. The law is

association with God. Sacrifice means reciprocity and seals a covenant between two wills [ibid.].

This is an indirect reference to passages in Paul:

Before faith came we were under the constraint of the law locked in until the faith that was coming should be revealed. In other words, the law was our monitor until Christ came to bring about our justification through faith. But now that faith is here, we are no longer in the monitor's charge [Gal. 3:23–25].

Brothers, as long as a designated heir is not of age his condition is no different from that of a slave, even though in name he is master of all his possessions; for he is under the supervision of guardians and administrators until the time set by his father. In the same way, while we were not yet of age we were like slaves subordinated to the elements of the world; but when the designated time had come, God sent forth his Son born of a woman, born under the law, to deliver from the law those who were subjected to it. . . . You are no longer a slave but a son! [Gal. 4:1–5, 7].

Bigo takes a stand against this interpretation of the law and revokes it. Indeed he must do so if he wants to hold onto his interpretation of private property as natural law. If it is natural law, then it is law in Paul's sense. Because Bigo interprets everything on the basis of this natural law, he cannot accept the Pauline interpretation of law.

His stance toward Paul's concept of bodiliness is quite similar—that is, he rejects it. In the Pauline tradition there can be no social ethic except by taking the bodily connection between human beings as its starting point. In Paul this connection is already seen as the objective world, in the sense that it is the extended body of humankind. When one works out a social ethic from this starting point, property is the element that enables persons to act on the basis of that bodiliness, but this social bodiliness can be dealt with only through the division of labor. Property, accordingly, must be understood as that which mediates the division of labor. In Paul's sense, this mediating function must be aimed at either life or death. Hence one may arrive at the critique of private property as that which directs the division of labor toward death.

The social doctrine defended by Bigo cannot evade the logic just traced out except by doing away with the Pauline tradition. Hence Bigo goes on:

The law is not only the norm that forms the basis of society and links human beings to one another. It is obviously that. But above all else it is God's word, a sign of God's ongoing presence, of covenant, of charity [*Doctrina*, 91].

He not only interprets God's love as a dictate of law, instead of being what overcomes the law, but he even denies the bodily connection between human

beings. According to Bigo, human beings are social not because they live a bodily life within nature, which is bodily, but because of law.

A New Law and a New Sinai

Bigo says that the law “forms the basis for society and links human beings to one another,” and it does so *as a norm*. It is now clear where the Sinai of this law is. It is in the bourgeois natural law of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. The enlightened now speak through the mouth of God—the Creator created by Bigo. They say:

The characteristic trait of rational beings is that they recognize in one another the same rights they claim for themselves. The law that forms the basis for human society is: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” This law does not vary according to situations, as occurs in the subhuman world where the strongest prevail. *Ego nominor leo*. In human society the norm that protects me may also oppose me, and it is not changed simply by the way forces line up at the moment [*Doctrina*, 88].

What he is talking about is a rule of reciprocity: “Don’t do to others what you don’t want them to do to you.” Everyone gives up something and everyone comes out ahead. Only negative norms, saying “Don’t do such-and-such,” come from this law of reciprocity. The “such-and-such” may change. Formally this norm includes every possible norm. It accordingly excludes the anticipation of a new earth that cannot be understood in terms of these norms. But one who eliminates anticipation, eliminates faith. Bigo, moreover, is aware that this is a law of reciprocity, and so he says that “sacrifice means reciprocity and seals a covenant between two wills” (*ibid.*, 91).

That may be true of the law of Sinai, but it is not what Paul means. An agreement between wills is purely negative and has no content. Bigo is not thinking of values derived from love of neighbor as Paul sees them, but rather he is making a body of norms serve as the basis for explaining what love for neighbor means. Paul’s reversal of the law is eliminated. Nevertheless, for Bigo this mutual self-limitation of wills provides support for private property.

Hence it is correct to identify Bigo’s law with the law of value in Marx. On Bigo’s Sinai stands the god who laid down the law of value, and behind that god stands the fetish.

The Human Subject: A Puppet with an Immortal Spirit Inside

Bigo also describes the kind of human subject corresponding to this vision. This subject is a double one, bearing eternal and universal values, on the one hand, and, as bodily, bearing interests and tastes. The ideal is for the former to prevail over the latter. He describes the first subject in these terms:

The fact that the human being is capable of renouncing the highest values of the earth and time, and the very good that is the condition of having the others—life itself—if such sacrifice is necessary so that those one loves (one's child or country) may live, is a proof that social existence is not completely circumscribed in space and time. It opens out onto a world of universal and eternal values. Thanks to this ability to choose between good and evil—that is, perform acts whose consequences are unlimited—the human being is immediately set in a universe different from the one where earthly life is carried out. *Il naît à un aujourd'hui qui n'a pas de commencement et que n'aura pas de fin*—the human being is born into a present that has no beginning and will have no end [*Doctrina*, 88–89].

There are two levels corresponding to the two subjects, one “where earthly life is carried out,” and the other a “world of universal and eternal values.” It is not earthly life that connects the human being to infinity. Values are the link. Human beings take up a position in this universe by sacrificing their lives—that is, by death. The sacrifice of one's life (for child or country)—death—is proof of infinity.

However, child and country are present in space and time, as are those who sacrifice themselves for them. Infinity is to be found only in sacrifice. However, Bigo provides no norm or value to explain such a sacrifice. All his norms are negative: “Don't do such-and-such.” If such a death is to mean anything, there must be proof that there is life beyond it. But it is impossible for Bigo to prove this in terms of the values he can come up with. His very mental construction of eternal values prevents it. He simply says that this sacrifice does not have a meaning, but he derives its value from the fact that it is a sacrifice.

In itself, however, the sacrifice of life is not a value but an evil. It can acquire meaning only if this sacrifice is necessary for life. Hence the sacrifice must be referred to the life that Bigo calls earthly. But if the subject undergoing the sacrifice—the object—and the sacrifice itself are judged only by their earthly effect, where is the infinity? In the Pauline tradition there is an answer: the eschatological horizon of the subject in community—the new earth. But Bigo is looking for a different kind of infinity:

Within the life of the human being there is something that does not die and continues to build itself up: it resists evil, does not fear sacrifice, and conquers death. By means of a bold and sweeping free act, the human being erects a bridge that will lead to a mysterious beyond [*ibid.*, 89].

There now appears on the scene this subject who has neither needs nor tastes, who does not die, does not fear sacrifice, and conquers death. It is in this subject that values are to be found:

To respect life, others' property, and the marriage bond not only means bending to acknowledge someone who has equal rights, but also means doing good. To violate these rights means doing evil. At this point human beings become aware that they face another scale of values, out of all proportion to self-interest and pleasure [ibid., 88].

Self-interest and pleasure are earthly, whereas values are eternal. Inasmuch as values are eternal, the subject who applies them is immortal. This subject Bigo now calls "spirit"; self-interest and pleasure he calls "flesh." The eternal subject confronts the earthly subject to conquer it:

To go back to nature without Christ would mean—for the human being—falling below the human order and even below the animal level, because it means destroying the whole internal structure of life and destroying it at its most sensitive point, the rule of the spirit over the flesh [ibid., 96].

This leads to a condemnation of the Pauline concept of the liberated body. Bigo identifies flesh with body, and spirit with eternal values. The result is that life is condemned in the name of death. What is earthly—life—is now subordinated to the eternal values of the law and death. He does this with an allusion to Paul (Rom. 13:14):

Freedom is not spontaneity and does not consist in abandoning oneself to the impulses of instinct—which would mean human beings are no different from animals—but on the contrary consists in the capability of ruling those impulses [ibid., 87].

Obviously, what was at the center of the Christian message, the resurrection and liberation of the body, has lost all meaning. The body is a puppet and there is another being inside it, moving it and running it. The body is mortal but the other being inside it is immortal. Anything immortal has no need of resurrection. This being simply sends the body signs of eternal values, which are nothing but prohibitions. The impulses of instinct become inherently destructive, and prohibitions are needed to keep them in line. The liberated body, the spirit as life, and the guidance of these impulses in the direction of life, all disappear. In their place there appears this subject of eternal values, ready to face anything. This subject has no fear. It is immortal; it can afford to laugh. It has no reason to fear death. Why should someone who is not going to die be afraid? That is why it is unafraid. But that is just why it can never conquer death. To conquer death one must be mortal. Death is conquered only by resurrection. But this strange being undergoes neither resurrection nor death. It *is* death.

The Good News of Crucifixion and Death: Antiutopia in the Christian Understanding of Society

At the core of the Christian message there is a utopian kind of thinking. This utopia is transcendent but it starts out from immanence. There is not only a utopian image of the new world but also an anticipation of the new earth in present human activity. This anticipation also hastens the coming of the new earth, but it is not what brings it about. For that, the Lord must come on the day of the Lord: his coming will bring to fulfillment what was anticipated in the activity of Christians.

There is still a Messiah who will bring to fulfillment the aspirations that Christians have as a messianic movement; hence the image of blessed bread, which signifies the opening of the present world to the messianic world to come. In such a worldview the Messiah is never regarded as one who is to come to destroy messianic movements, nor is a blessing understood as a substitute for bread. The human being does not live on bread alone, but on blessed bread—and certainly not on a blessing given instead of bread.

In the Christian message the anticipation of utopia is never an individual or moral anticipation. It is an anticipation in faith, and that means by the person in community. Everything is subordinated to faith, which is the anticipation of the new earth in the Spirit.

It is only from that anticipation that particular ethics and moralities may be derived. This is how love for neighbor is understood. It is lived out by the person in community, and ultimately the community is humankind itself. The reference point for community is not the Christian community but the whole human community. In the Christian community there is an anticipation of the extension of the Christian faith to all humankind. The non-Christian is not a “foreigner” toward whom there might be a morality different from that applied to the Christian community. Within the universalism of faith in the Christian message, there is no room whatsoever for an attitude of “save your own soul.”

However, this person in community as found in the Christian message does not at all question class structure and state authority in political terms. The Christian community regards itself as the true community that respects the validity of authority seen from an eschatological viewpoint. Such authority is necessary until the “day of God,” but it does not represent the community. It is illegitimate but valid, and its function is that of external order. It comes from God insofar as it is imposed as authority. But just as sin takes advantage of the law, the “spirits and the supernatural forces of evil” take advantage of authority (Eph. 6:12, Bib. Lat.). That is why it is the cross. Christians experience state authority and class structure as a crucifixion that must be accepted until the coming of the Lord. The greater the suffering, the greater is the hope that the Lord will come soon, for that coming will bring liberation from this cross. The forces of darkness are at work behind authority. In its suffering the Christian community sees itself as the bearer of light.

Three Antiutopian Inversions

The dark forces of the world, the spirits and supernatural forces of evil, find their place in authority and class structure. That is where sin, and therefore death, dwell. The antiutopian interpretation of Christianity starts by reinterpreting political authority and class structure. It does so out of a theology of the empire that accompanies the accession of Christianity to state power at the time of Constantine. The poles are reversed. Authority is now understood as coming from God, and the human community finds salvation in accepting authority. The specific form of authority is again legitimized but in a manner quite different from its legitimation in the Roman empire.

A clear indication of this reversal may be found in the radical change that Christian symbolism undergoes. In primitive Christianity the Christian community is the bearer of light vis-à-vis the kind of authority behind which the forces of darkness dwell. The coming of the Lord is the messianic coming that destroys authority and liberates humankind. Now everything is reversed.

Lucifer Transformed into Satan

A striking example is the change of content in the name Lucifer—“bearer of light.” In the early centuries the name Lucifer points to Jesus. Even in the third century one of the church fathers bears the name Lucifer of Cagliari. There is a church called Saint Lucifer in Cagliari, Sardinia. The Easter Vigil liturgy still retains this ancient meaning in the *Exultet* sung over the Easter candle:

*Et in odorem suavitatis acceptus, supernis luminaribus misceatur.
Flammas ejus lucifer matutinis inveniat. Ille, inquam, lucifer, qui
nescit occasum. Ille, qui regressus ab inferis, humano generis serenus
illuxit.*

[May it be received as a sweet fragrance, and mingle with the lights of heaven. May the morning star find its flame alight, the Morning Star that knows no setting, that came back from limbo and shed its clear light upon humankind.]²⁷

As early as the second century, gnosticism was beginning to reverse the meaning of the name Lucifer. This shift is closely connected to the gnostics' polemic against Judaism. They denounce the God of the Jews as the fallen angel. Apelles, a disciple of Marcion, treats Yahweh as Lucifer who has brought sin into the sensate world.²⁸ Lucifer does so out of lust for power.

From gnosticism this reversal of the name Lucifer insinuates itself into orthodox Christianity through Origen's Neoplatonic theology. Lucifer is no longer Yahweh but the highest angel, who rose up against God out of pride and lust for power. Lucifer is now the angel of light, who took over the sensate and earthly world and so stirred it up that any orientation toward this world becomes idolatry. The Jewish tradition is one of earthly salvation, and so the image of Lucifer retains the antisemitic sense given it by gnosticism. At the same time it is directed against the Pauline idea of the new earth, on which the popular religiousness of the period is based.

Origen is the first representative of antiutopia in Christianity. He is an extremely aggressive individual, and indeed carries a double charge of aggression, directed against himself and against others. This kind of aggressiveness is quite typical of Christian antiutopianism. His aggressiveness against his own person, to the point of self-destruction, is well known. But he also externalizes this aggressiveness:

Suppose the whole Roman empire were to unite in adoring the true God. Then the Lord would do battle for them and they could be at ease. They could then conquer many more enemies than even Moses was able to do in his time.²⁹

Origen gives this aggressiveness an ideological covering with the image of Lucifer, which enables him to denounce as diabolic everything humanly good. In embryo this already prefigures a limitless aggressiveness in the name of Christianity.

The Christian community of Alexandria, Origen's city of residence, rejects his ideas. This early Christianity is explicitly utopian and the name Lucifer is quite appropriate for expressing its faith. The term "light" points to the relationship established in faith with the new earth, anticipated in the Spirit. Anti-Lucifer aggressiveness, aimed at the realm of the body, is incompatible with this kind of faith. Moreover, this name for Satan has no biblical basis. As this change begins to gain more ground, the Bible is given anti-Lucifer meanings where in fact there are none (esp. Isa. 14:12). The Vulgate begins to translate those verses where the text speaks of a "light of the morning" or "morning star" as *lucifer* (also Job 11:17 and 2 Pet. 1:19).

However, it takes several centuries for this shift in a central symbol to come about. Not even Augustine applies the name Lucifer to Satan. Rather he says that "Satan, as we read, sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light."³⁰

The image of Lucifer as Satan means something different—namely, that the angel of light has in fact become Satan. Daylight, accordingly, means the presence of Satan.

This is how the image of Satan becomes fixed in medieval popular religiosity. With this image in their heads, the Spanish conquistadores enter Incan Peru, and when they encounter the worship of light, they immediately conclude that it means Lucifer worship, and so they feel no compunction in not leaving a "stone upon a stone." From that point on, the idea becomes one of the pillars of antiutopia campaigns carried out in the name of Christianity, always accompanied by a strong dose of antisemitism. Today this is one of the key images used by military juntas in Latin America in their antiutopia campaigns, which also invoke Christianity. This amounts to demonizing an ancient and central aspect of Christian faith, and it is the result of an antiutopian reversal brought about to defend established power. Insofar as the angel of light is regarded as Satan, the Christian utopia itself is denounced as the work of Satan.

Furthermore, to the extent that the Lucifer element changes meaning and reverses the image of Jesus to that of Satan, Jesus also loses his meaning as Messiah, the one who comes to complete and perfect the body, already liberated in faith, with a liberation on the new earth. Because that kind of liberation is now understood as a reflection of Satan-Lucifer, Jesus Christ Messiah is replaced by Jesus Christ, Judge and King. The return of the Lord is no longer liberation but Last Judgment, crucifixion of the crucifiers, or entrance into the high command of the kingdom of God. Christ the King is an anti-Messiah who comes to destroy messianic movements.

Starting with this basic reversal or inversion, one could draw up a long list of inversions of all the Christian mysteries in the antiutopian vision. It occurs everywhere and at all levels. What happens, however, is not a simple displacement of the old contents; all the mysteries take on a double existence, wherein they have both a utopian and an antiutopian meaning. Everything now has a double aspect, although there is often a clear order of precedence: the utopian elements are subordinated to their antiutopian inversions.

This is clear in the modern social doctrine of the Catholic Church. The fundamental right to life and to the means of subsistence is subordinated to private property. Private property really means the opposite: monopoly control of the means of subsistence in the hands of a few. The fact that human activity is limited to what is called the social responsibility of private property clearly shows how the right to life is thus eclipsed.

Fundamental right is utopian; property is antiutopian. The refusal to make fundamental right determine the particular form that property takes means that utopia is subordinated to antiutopia.

Pride: The Refusal of Liberation

With Satan designated as Lucifer—that is, the force involved in anything utopian—another key category of faith in the Christian message is turned upside-down: pride. In Christian tradition pride is the loss of faith, its direct opposite. The opposite of faith is not sin but pride, which enables sin to have life. This pride is exclusively linked to trust in what Paul calls the “thing of the body” (Phil. 3:3, Bib. Lat.). This is trust in salvation through observance of the law. In other contexts it refers to money and hoarding as something that runs counter to the person in community, the foundation on which faith must rest. Pride is therefore antiutopia.

All the imagery of false prophets and of the Antichrist is related to pride in this sense. The Antichrist of Christian tradition is the anti-Messiah, the supreme expression of pride. It is from this angle that Paul’s thinking on sin is best understood. Sin lives off the law even though the law is from God. In pride persons remain within the sphere of the law, and Satan is the inspiration for pride. By passing from the law to faith, one leaves pride behind. The law does not disappear, however, but is changed and becomes subordinated to faith. Pride is therefore a refusal to live by this subordination. In this sense it is antiutopia and Satan is the opposite of Lucifer.

In the antiutopian vision everything is reversed. A “thing of the body,” such as private property, comes forth and is declared to be God’s will. With this “thing of the body” taken as a starting point, the aspiration for utopia is regarded as pride and arrogance. If God’s will is in this “thing of the body,” the aim of living as a person in community seems to run counter to the will of God. God and the person in community seem to be two elements going in different and even opposite directions in history.

To insist that history be humanized is now viewed as pride. Human beings are to set limits to all human activity to keep it within the bounds set by the will of God, understood as a “thing of the body.” It is not God’s will that human beings should do all they can to explore the real limits of human potential, but rather that they refuse even such liberation as is possible, subjecting themselves to God’s will. Thus Cardinal Döpfner has said that “the goal and purpose of world history is not the human being, but God and God’s presence among human beings.”³¹

To put the human being at the center of history is now pride. This obviously means turning upside down the Pauline notion of faith, where the human being cannot be related to God except as a person in community and therefore as standing at the center of history. That is precisely what Pauline faith is. It is ultimately a criterion for making a discernment between gods. The true God for Paul is the one with whom humankind enters into relationship by taking its place at the center of history.

In the antiutopian vision Satan appears as the force that is seen as God in the utopian vision—and vice versa. The two visions are mutually exclusive, even though they coexist in Christian history. This coexistence is conflictive;

the utopian current is usually subordinated to the antiutopian. From that starting point it is clear that movements that try to recover the utopian dimension should be treated as heretical and the frantic explosion of antiutopian forces is simply regarded as a bad application of the correct faith. The Crusades, the persecution of heretics, and the antiutopian terrorism of Latin American military governments today are all examples of such antiutopian explosions.

From the standpoint of Christianity in the “central countries” (where utopia is suppressed by antiutopia), such antiutopian terrorism is not seen as pride or arrogance. It is regarded as a problem of how the human being is to be thought of, or as a questionable application of the faith.

For example, regarding fascist movements and governments, Pierre Bigo says:

The philosophies from which they took their inspiration, even though they were not atheistic in the strict sense, question the Christian idea of the human being. In other cases their moral and religious ideas were in agreement with those of Christianity but their idea of freedom and of the different roles to be played in political and economic society, especially regarding labor unions, are not in agreement with Christian social doctrine [*Doctrina*, 539–40].

Bigo sees their religious position as correct but not their position on social questions. In any case, at least they are not “atheistic in the strict sense.” Even Hitler’s undertaking does not seem to be anti-Christian in the strict sense. Bigo neglects to mention that not even the Roman emperor who threw Christians to the lions was an atheist. In the antiutopian viewpoint the faith of simple believers is all that matters. The antiutopian posture provides a common denominator.

Movements that persecute the utopian hope for a new world are not accused of pride; they are seen as movements doing battle against pride. They are all Michael the Archangel and cry “Who is like God?” Even in the case of the Nazi “blond beast” (clearly a pride based on a “thing of the body”), Christianity in the “central countries” recognized pride and arrogance more on the side of the Soviet communists whom the Nazis killed. In the same way today they see military terrorism as a struggle against pride—admittedly going to excess—and they see persecuted socialists as the incarnation of pride: lucifers, light-bearers. When pride rises up against the human being, it is presented as Christian humility and the Christianity of the “central countries” accepts this view.

Substituting Crucifixion for Resurrection

There is another inversion taking place in this presentation of the angel of light as Satan, one that points to the central Christian symbol—victory over

the cross. This symbol is present during the early centuries of Christianity in images of hope (the anchor, the good shepherd) or new life (the egg, the phoenix). There is no symbolizing of the bare cross—everything points to overcoming the cross. This reflects the fact that the resurrection has unquestioned preeminence in the early Christian church and it always means the overcoming of the cross.

As a symbol the bare cross appears later and even by the end of the third century its significance is minimal. However, when Christianity assumes power it rapidly becomes the central symbol. The earlier symbols are quickly pushed to one side, and largely disappear or are forgotten. Crucifixion replaces resurrection in the Christian mind. Parallel to Satan's being called Lucifer, Jesus Christ appears as the crucified one. Cardinal Bengsch says, "Wherever the cross is missing in a doctrine, a program, or an activity, it is not Christian."³² That is just what Paul said regarding the resurrection. The reversal is obvious.

Crucifixion becomes the key to Christianity. Christianity becomes the good news of crucifixion and death, although in reality the event of the crucifixion is the most radical expression of death and antiutopia in Christian history. It is that cry: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). It is only in the light of the resurrection that the crucifixion becomes mystery; otherwise it is an everyday fact with no particular Christian meaning.

Understood now in this harsh and bare fashion, the cross is the celebration of antiutopia and death.

This development involves changing the place where the cross is experienced in Christian life. In the Christian message there are two key situations of human life that refer to crucifixion and resurrection. The first refers to the human person who shares in the crucifixion. This means a crucifixion of the body by the flesh, in which the old Adam dies and the new self arises in the liberated body. The active agent here is sin, which lives behind the law. The law dies along with the old Adam and the new self no longer obeys sin. The person who shares in this crucifixion is the person in community: the sin of the flesh is behavior that runs counter to community with other persons. The crucified are ennobled: they are identified with Jesus Christ. The crucifier has to die when resurrection takes place. It is evil that is the crucifier. It is not a person but rather sin, which lives in the flesh, just as the Spirit lives in the liberated body. It lives by death but it is not a living being. It is a fetish.

The second situation that the Christian message identifies with crucifixion is that of authority. The person subject to authority is crucified (1 Pet. 2:18–23) by the supernatural forces of evil (Eph. 6:12). These forces live behind authority, just as the sin within a person lives behind the law. From an eschatological perspective, the Christian message announces the resurrection as it refers to these realities. It is only from this perspective that there is

resurrection. When the supernatural forces of evil are destroyed, there will no longer be subjection to authority. As in the previous case, the crucifier is not a human person but the supernatural forces that live off the death of human beings. The crucified one is the human person who is ennobled through identification with Jesus. Again the supernatural forces of evil are fetishes. The Christian message is unaware of any other way of taking on crucifixion unless one's personal destiny is martyrdom. The crucifier is never a human person, but rather the power of evil in a human person. Therefore no human being is guilty of murdering God.

These same two situations also appear in the antiutopian understanding of Christianity as identified with crucifixion. However, they are turned upside-down in such a way that the resurrection makes no sense, no longer has a role to play, and no longer even appears.

One can note an analogy between Paul's analysis of sin in the person and of the supernatural forces of evil in social life, on the one hand, and Marx's analysis of fetishism. In Marx the fetish appears behind the law of value and takes its life from the death of human beings whom it oppresses. Marx analyzes this most clearly in connection with the fetish of capital. Capital gets its life out of the oppression and death of the worker, operating behind the law of value. Life therefore means that capital must die and that the law of value must be overcome. Marx describes the life of capital as the realm of death; overcoming this death he describes as the realm of freedom. This is achieved when the realm of necessity is organized to serve the realm of freedom. There is, accordingly, a direct parallel between the fetish, in Marx's sense, and the supernatural forces of evil in Paul, and also an indirect parallel with sin in Paul's sense.

A further point of contact is that Marx does not blame particular human beings for the effects of fetishization. It is not the capitalist but the capital the capitalist commands that kills the worker. In capitalist relationships of production the agent responsible is capital, which acts by means of the capitalist and whose most characteristic mask is the capitalist. Nevertheless, this capital does not exist as such—it is a fetish. It exists insofar as human beings let it exist. Marx points to the liberation that destroys the fetish as life standing against death. In this context Marx makes no allusion to resurrection and never even mentions crucifixion. In the Christian message, however, this relationship between life and death is always known as crucifixion and resurrection.

The Human Subject Crucified

Sweet and Pleasant Suffering: Paradise on Earth

In the antiutopian vision it is the body, life itself, that crucifies the person; it is not the flesh that crucifies the body but the body is identified with the flesh and the two become the crucifier of the human subject, which is the

eternal soul. The needs of the body are confused with the "impulses of the flesh" (Bigo, for example, calls them the impulses of the instincts) and they mortify this human subject, who accepts being crucified insofar as it will bring these impulses of the body into subjection. The soul thus defends itself against the pleasures of self-interest that mortify it. The refrain is always to accept the cross, never to overcome it. All of life becomes crucifixion, and salvation means replacing this life with another.

This acceptance of the cross is not simply passive. The needs of the body crucify. One who takes up the cross must dominate this crucifier and take action against it. Hence you mortify the body that is mortifying you. Accepting the cross means mortifying the body, which is what crucifies the human subject. The effect sought is domination over the body.

This is a crusade waged by the human subject against the body. It is not a relationship between flesh and body as in Paul. In Paul the body is liberated and therefore flesh and sin die. Here everything is reversed, and the body is dominated, following a crusade against it, a crucifixion of the crucifier. This crucifixion of the crucifier is now called life. In Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* we read:

Behold everything dependeth upon the Cross, and everything lieth in dying; and there is none other way unto life and to true inward peace, except the way of the holy Cross and of daily mortification [Benham, trans., II, chap. 12, 3, p. 119].

Those who follow this path are extremely aggressive toward themselves. They crucify the body but this crucifixion does not ennoble the body. On the contrary, it is the crucifixion of a crucifier. This crucifixion ennobles the subject doing the crucifying. Accepting the cross means taking on the task of crucifying the crucifying body. This is an active kind of cross, not at all passive. The cross being accepted is the crucifixion of the crucifier. In this sign, you will conquer:

When thou hast come to this, that tribulation is sweet and pleasant to thee for Christ's sake, then reckon that it is well with thee, because thou hast found paradise on earth [ibid., chap. 12, 11, p. 124].

The crucifixion of the crucifer (one's own body) is now the sweetness of paradise on earth. In this sweetness the "world and the flesh will be subject to your rule." It is clear that if this kind of paradise on earth is taken as a starting point, the paradise in heaven will be conceived in a particular way:

But blessed is that man who for Thy sake, O Lord, is willing to part from all creatures; who doth violence to his fleshly nature and crucifieth the lusts of the flesh by the fervor of his spirit, so that with serene conscience he may offer unto Thee a pure prayer, and be made worthy

to enter into the angelic choirs, having shut out from himself, both outwardly and inwardly, all worldly things [ibid., III, chap. 48, 6, p. 265].

This text offers a whole paradigm of the antiutopian subject, a paradigm repeated throughout antiutopia today. The subject is the soul as opposed to the body. Of this soul Bigo says, “Within the life of the human being there is an entity that does not die and continues to build itself up: it resists evil, does not fear sacrifice, and conquers death” (*Doctrina*, 89).

The soul has “another scale of values, out of all proportion to self-interest and pleasure” (ibid., 88). The soul-body relationship occupies the center of this subject: the body and its needs are the cause of suffering. The soul suffers the needs and pleasures of the body—it is crucified—and it is freed through the crucifixion of this concupiscence. As the core of this subject, the soul cannot rescue the living body that takes pleasure, but its own eternal life is now conceived as being the life of the angels. This is the life of a body without needs, an ethereal body, a body that cannot even enjoy pleasure or feel needs. This ethereal and angelic body is therefore not “a new body on a new earth” that easily satisfies its needs and is able to take pleasure in that satisfaction, but a body that no longer feels any need or any enjoyment—it is a castrated body. Paradise on earth thus means being above needs, and never means having them satisfied. This heaven is the opposite of life as it is now:

If thou wouldst possess the blessed life, despite the life which now is. If thou wilt be exalted in heaven, humble thyself in the world. If thou wilt reign with Me, bear the cross with Me; for only the servants of the cross find the way of blessedness and of true light [*Imitation*, III, chap. 56, 2, p. 296].

Hell, however, is the world of the eternal body that has needs and feels them. It is only in hell that the body continues to be sensate: it feels thirst, hunger, and pain. There is no image of a world—whether heaven or hell—where persons satisfy their needs with enjoyment. For those in hell needs are eternal and they are suffered eternally; those in heaven have no needs. Bodily sensuality is a curse and happiness thus means freeing the body from all its sensuality. For life to go on without any prospect of death is hell.

What Paul called the new earth is here called hell and this change exactly parallels the change in the meaning of Lucifer. The body crucifies the soul, and then the body, itself a crucifier, is crucified. All is resolved at the Last Judgment, after which sensuality becomes the basis of hell, and heaven is set up on the basis of castrated and ethereal bodies that have left the sphere of sensuality and now join the angelic choir. There is no resurrection except for those who go to hell.

Heaven is eternal peace. Hell appears as a mixture of sensual attraction and repugnance. The medieval hell is one of purely negative sensuality—thirst,

pain, hunger. Toward the end of the Middle Ages and especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, hell often appears as a place of sensual satisfaction. It is peasant circles that begin to imagine a mercenaries' hell, a place where mercenaries spend eternity getting drunk, playing dice, copulating with prostitutes, and cursing. This mercenaries' hell is one big brothel.

In peasant legends this same hell sometimes appears as a mercenaries' heaven. The mercenaries' heaven and hell look the same, always pictured on the basis of a crude sensuality. This same kind of imagination is at work in the tavern scene in Goethe's *Faust*.

This antiutopian Christianity is what Marx calls the religion of the abstract human being. It is a Christianity of the destruction of the human body for the sake of the abstract soul. Thomas à Kempis speaks of violating nature and crucifying concupiscence (which for him means pleasure). This violent destruction of the body is the very essence of the antiutopian human subject. From that viewpoint the liberated body is understood as a "materialist" image and as a utopia that leads to hell, whereas spirituality is understood as a road on which to save oneself from the pressures of bodily needs. The Eucharist itself thus becomes a celebration of the crucifixion inasmuch as bread is changed into flesh and wine into blood. In the celebration of the resurrection it was the other way around: flesh became bread and blood became wine. The bread used for the host symbolizes this ethereal body in an eternal life with neither needs nor enjoyment: the host is a kind of bread that satisfies no needs and offers no enjoyment.

Along with this destruction of the body and its sensuality goes a contempt for the body, which is sacrificed to the soul. This leads to a particular way of seeing poverty. Poverty is holy because the poor are very close to eternity: the less that persons satisfy their needs or the less they are able to have any enjoyment, the closer they are to the ethereal life of the angelic body. This is the source of the romantic vision of poverty or of the ascete, who appears to be as free as a human being could possibly be.

Property Owners' Consumption: Incense to Eternal Values

Not everything is asceticism or poverty. Out of this same romantic vision of poverty there arises a concept of the consumption or lifestyle of those in power. Consumption is seen as separated from satisfying needs and enjoying life. The antiutopian vision has nothing but contempt for human life. What it recognizes are eternal values unconnected to the world of self-interest and pleasure—that is, the ethereal values of the eternal ethereal body. Still, these values must become present in bodily life now. They must become embodied, and so they become present in the consumption and way of life of those who impose these eternal values on society. These values are incarnated in the lifestyle of property owners, and it is in their consumption that these values are embodied.

It is exactly in this sense that Marx calls capitalists' consumption the

expenses of representation of capital. They are said to be the expenses of representation not of capitalists, but of capital. Capital, the fetish, discharges its expenses of representation in the capitalist's consumption and makes itself present by means of this consumption. Capitalists consume not for themselves but to honor capital.

In the same sense, although unconsciously, the social doctrine championed by Bigo usually speaks of a "decent" life for the property owner (see Bigo, *Doctrina*, 265). This kind of consumption is a decoration for property, and it has ever less to do with satisfying needs; it serves as incense to the eternal values represented in property. There are some professions that have this representational character. In Chile, during the Allende government when doctors were required to adjust their incomes to the economic possibilities of the country, they replied that they wanted to be paid in accordance with the high dignity of their profession.

Among those who impose these high eternal values on society, contempt for the body leads directly to a high consumption level and standard of life. They arrive at this way of life without taking into account the capacity of the economy—that is, the possibility of meeting the needs of others. Their consumption is incense to eternal values and is therefore untouchable. They cannot give it up: it is their obligation to live a "decent" life. It is not they who consume; eternal values consume through them and are embodied in them. Their consumption is therefore spiritual.

There are, accordingly, two kinds of poverty: material poverty, and the poverty of inner dispossession that endures consumption as an expense of the representation of eternal values. Both approach the eternity of the ethereal body: material poverty does so negatively and the poverty of dispossession does so positively. Hence the true poor are those who are poor through dispossession: they are poor through freedom. The true poor are therefore the wealthy.

Once such a view is taken, the very notion that poverty is dehumanizing vanishes. Poverty is made to seem an ideal when in fact it is the opposite: human destruction. Destroying the body becomes an ideal: Thomas à Kempis's earthly paradise. Material life and the ideals that come from satisfying needs now seem to be a threat to human dignity. One who defends consumption as the expense of the representation of eternal values begins to feel like the true defender of "human dignity" and sees no way to make concessions to the materialism of the needy. Certainly such a person is not defending anything like selfishness but simply eternal values—that is why there can be no concession to those in need. Opposition to materialism therefore means defending the consumption and way of life of those who represent eternal values. Defending such a way of life is idealism. Therefore those who have little stand on the side of materialism and those who own a lot stand on the side of idealism.

The result is a way of life directly based on the destruction of the human

being. Paul's problem of a carnal way of life reappears. In Paul this way of life is contrary to faith and it begins with an orientation of the body toward death. It is a way of life that lives off the destruction of the body and so it is of the flesh. In Paul the life of the flesh is not an immoral life. It is indeed a moral life but its morality is one of death, and is the opposite of a morality of life. The life of the flesh is a life of sin; it means living sin in a realm of death with its own laws. In relation to the life of faith, the life of the flesh is an antiworld: the morality of death.

Relishing Human Depravity

The antiutopian human subject is one who lives out such a morality of death. Death lives in that person and puts others to death. This morality of death is the reversal of love for neighbor as the basis for the morality of life. One who determines consumption according to the high dignity of one's profession despite the economic capabilities of the country, brings economic death. Moreover, it brings death in another sense as well.

From the antiutopian viewpoint, criticism of the way of life of those who represent eternal values is not simply criticism of income distribution. It is an attack on eternal values. Therefore those on the defensive are not defending their share of income distribution; they are defending eternal values. That being the case, they must actively defend their share. The violent death of those who attack eternal values is now added to economic death. At particular moments in history, when those values are defended with violence, the representative of eternal values becomes a "warrior of Christ the King." This means physically destroying bodies.

At this point the corporeal life of the antiutopian takes on a new dimension, that of relishing physical destruction and human depravity. Unable to enjoy life this person begins to take pleasure in death. The inner room of the antiutopian's bodily orgy becomes the torture chamber where the violation of nature is at its sharpest. Because this is a sensual antiworld, torture is concentrated in the form of sexual perversion, in violating the human being. All the sensual pleasures that can be derived from the life of other persons the antiutopian now takes from their death, with all those pleasures reversed. This whole way of living out death reveals that what is being replaced is not pleasure in general but only pleasure in life. It reappears as the pleasure of the antiworld—the realm of death.

Father José Miguel Ibáñez Langlois, the paramount ideologist of Opus Dei in Chile, has published a series of poems that reflect this antiutopian dimension. The poems sum up the positions he made public in Chile before the military coup.

He speaks of what the saints thought of the world: "They all considered the splendor of the kingdom of this world nothing more than garbage" (Soto, *Fascismo*, 72). Father Ibáñez, just like the saints, thinks "there will be no

lack of bread, lunch, wine, bed, or hot water, because the Lord himself will be your dish, your bed, your woman, your drunkenness" (ibid., 81). Needless to say, life disappears:

I don't have anything against you, woman. To me you appear as sacred and mysterious and closer to heaven than to earth. And loving you is sweeter than honey. I don't have anything against you except that some day your teeth will fall out, you are not God, you will get fat, and you will die.

Between a 20-year-old girl, fresh as springtime, and a toothless old beggar woman there is no difference but pure mental subtlety, what in logic is called a distinction of reason, something for those Byzantine minds that like to play around with the well-known effects of our perception in time [ibid., 82].

Sensuality is death; the fact that anyone has lived can have no meaning. Those who defend their own lives, therefore, are "doing nothing but eating and fornicating. Still, they are not pigs: their ideas are a higher and redeeming gift. Although the soul rots, a person's ideas go on through history" (ibid., 45). Here is the real dichotomy: "You cannot serve two masters: the Roman Catholic Church or the worm-infested womb of death with all its glories and seductions" (ibid., 39).

Hence the angel of the Lord rises up against the angel of the poor:

Chile is a long dirty wall running north to south and amidst the garbage there are messages scrawled by the angel of the poor: they falsely call him Christ. Successive redeemers appear on the wall while the angel of the Lord writes underneath in invisible flames: *Mene, Tekel, Peres* [ibid., 35].³³

The angel of the poor is the angel of those who do nothing but eat and fornicate, and promote this sort of carrying-on. "The sex you pursue is the mouth of Hades. . . . Your title is that of lord, and you are the beggar of your houses and lands, heir of your own worms" (ibid., 90).

Sensuality is aggression and deserves to be violently destroyed: "Any beauty who resists her victim for three days and nights shall be handed over to a cavalry regiment for their pleasure" (ibid., 94).

He still finds himself able to laugh at such destruction:

Excuse me if I laugh with the dead, if I recall the loud laughter Saint John heard after the seventh silence. The whole heavens came crashing down. Only the lucifers were crying. Eternity is a laughing spree. How can one avoid laughing to the point of tears over Hades? [ibid., 79].

His religious mystique becomes sexual perversion:

Is he a Marxist? And have you heard, Lord, he thinks we are “idealists”? Let us leave him: he is a theologian. Let us embrace once more. My God, flesh and blood, body of Christ, my love [ibid., 82].

He alone has legitimate power to destroy and demands the means to put it to use. In a poem titled “Cobalt Bomb” he writes:

Come here, you little cyclops: I know you have a degree in science and mathematics, but because you do not know how to read and write you are ignorant of the catechism, you little son of a bitch. Give me that toy you have in your hand [ibid., 52].

Destroying the body leads to the life of the flesh. The life of the flesh is presented as *imitatio Christi*. What Father Ibáñez is proclaiming is a Walpurgis night.

The Angel of Light and the Angel of the Poor: Satan

Lucifer, the angel of light, becomes the angel of the poor. This identification has historical roots. In the first centuries, when Lucifer was the name of Jesus Christ, the poor, as the center of the Christian message, thought of Lucifer as a special angel, a guardian angel, an angel of light. The name Lucifer referred both to Christ and to the angel of the poor, their patron. Ibáñez, however, conceives the angel of the Lord as the opposite of the angel of the poor—the angel of dominion and domination.

Ibáñez is quite aware of what happens with the angel of the poor: when the angel of domination destroys the angel of the poor, everyone weeps—the angel of the poor out of pain, and Ibáñez, along with the angel of his lord, laughing to tears.

Domination and Crucifixion

Property Owners and Prelates: The Chief Victims of Crucifixion

When early Christian writings speak of authority, they are referring to what in present-day terms would be called domination, whether in politics or in class structure. The one crucified, and therefore ennobled, is the one who suffers domination.

To the degree that Christianity takes its direction from antiutopia, there is a striking shift in regard to this identification with the cross. In Chile one can notice this shift both before and after the military coup in September 1973. In his Good Friday message in 1973, Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez of Santiago addressed the Chilean people:

This Good Friday afternoon I can feel the suffering of thousands and thousands of our brothers and sisters, who wander through the streets of this nation with no goal or destination. A hidden suffering weighs down their souls. They are the poor, the defenseless, the weak. They have not chosen this condition; it has been imposed on them. The selfishness of a society based on profit has marginated them. They are without bread and housing, health care and education. Their voice carries no weight; they have no responsibility whatsoever in the community [*Viernes Santo*].

To this social pole of the poor, he opposes another pole:

Other thousands and thousands of Chileans . . . are also embittered, and a radical insecurity takes possession not only of their bodies but also of their souls. They feel discouraged, disillusioned, and pessimistic. Given the avalanche of hatred and violence that seems to be pouring into our country, the future looks dark and anguishing to them [*ibid.*].

The cardinal sees a polarized society: on the one side the poor and on the other those whose traditional, biblical name the cardinal does not use: the rich. The poor have always suffered, but it is something new for the rich. They are insecure. They feel a tremendous insecurity overhanging them. This insecurity comes from the poor. The poor are demanding "bread and housing, health and education." This is what changes the secure wealthy into insecure wealthy. According to the cardinal this transformation comes from an "avalanche of hatred and violence."

Viewed this way, it is not the poor who suffer violence. The rich suffer it when they lose the security of their wealth. What the poor are demanding amounts to violence. The cardinal pronounces judgment on the situation: "The root of violence is that some want to impose justice" (*ibid.*).

This statement represents a total inversion of Christianity. The poor suffer injustice, the lack of "bread and shelter, health care and education." But the moment they begin to demand justice and apply pressure for it to be put into practice, the justice of the poor is labeled violence. The insecurity of the wealthy is hence not a result of their own injustice but of the violence of the poor. The violence of the poor does not consist in using physical force but demanding justice. Justice brought about by pressure is called violence. If justice is achieved through pressure, it ceases to be justice—it becomes violence. The insecurity of the rich is thus a result of the hatred of the poor. The angel of the poor is a lucifer here also. For the cardinal the opposite is also true. He says the imposition of justice is violence. By the same token he says that the imposition of injustice is not violence. And indeed for the cardinal it is not. Lucifer is Satan but the "dark forces of evil" at work behind authority and class structure are not satanic.

This is how the cardinal views identification with the crucifixion:

Our aspirations surge, our hopes are reborn; we are not alone; there is someone who understands us, someone who appreciates us as persons because he knows us . . . because he has suffered our same misfortunes; he was called the son of the carpenter and they looked down on him; insecurity and the cross were always part of his life [ibid.].

Jesus—"son of the carpenter"—belonged to the poor. He experienced insecurity and was the object of violence. The cardinal invites the rich to follow Jesus' example:

This afternoon, beloved children, I invite you to share in imitating the example of Jesus. . . . Let us go forth to meet our poorest brothers and sisters, those enduring the cross and suffering. . . . Perhaps we will have much to offer; and perhaps we must learn to share a great deal: our bread, our goods, our friendship, our time, and our life, because perhaps until now we have kept them to ourselves. Let us follow the example of Jesus. Those of us who have more, let us learn to understand the aspirations of our brothers and sisters who have less; let us learn to be dispossessed, let us accept being crucified, let us surrender our possessions and our life for others [ibid.].

He is therefore asking the rich to accept injustice and to expose themselves to hatred and violence—that is, he is asking them to allow themselves to be crucified. The cardinal can speak this way because injustice, hatred, and violence are said to have their root in the fact that some "want to impose justice."

At the beginning of his address the cardinal spoke of the two groups—the poor and the insecure rich—in the third person. Now he switches to the first person and says "us." "Let us learn to be dispossessed, let us accept being crucified" (ibid.). Who? We the rich. Here the dispossessed are not the poor but the rich. The poor despoil, the poor crucify, the poor threaten, the poor show hatred, the poor resort to violence. The rich never do such things.

The center of ennoblement in Christ has quietly been shifted. Being identified with Christ in the crucifixion and therefore in the resurrection has passed from the poor to the rich. It is now the rich who are the objects of Christ's predilection. It is like the topsy-turvy world of a song by Paco Ibáñez: "There was once / a good little wolf / whom all the lambs / abused."

If he were to remain within the framework of predilection for the poor as found in Christian tradition, the cardinal could say, "Let us stop crucifying the poor. No more!" However, he turns things around: the poor person is the crucifier; "let us accept being crucified." Here is his interpretation of the predilection for the poor:

The only way to understand this predilection is in a nonexclusive way—as an extension of the charity of Christ, of the God who loves the poor,

the weak, the outcast, but who offers the same bread of truth that he gives to beggars and lepers also to Matthew the publican, or to his friends, Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, and Lazarus, at whose well-furnished tables he often sits down. Today we live in a world divided by a class spirit that is neither human nor Christian [ibid.].

The hypocrisy of this passage leaps off the page. The predilection for the poor is in fact not an extension of anyone's charity but the privilege of identification with crucifixion and resurrection. The poor are the only ones who can be identified in this way and receive their dignity from it. It is the poor who are the crucified and no one may take this privilege from them.

The imposition of justice is never violence in the sense of absolute illegitimacy—that is, a violence to be identified with the violence Jesus suffered on the cross. Violence in the Christian sense is only the imposition of injustice, never the reverse. Justice, by the same token, is never the “decent” life of the rich but only the life of the poor. The crucifier is always injustice, “supernatural evil forces” operating from behind authority and class structure. Nevertheless, the rich person is not a crucifier but simply the one carrying out crucifixion for the “supernatural forces of evil.”

This has never meant that the rich are left out, but in the tradition of the Christian message the wealthy person is saved by sharing in what is the poor person's by privilege. The resurrection includes pardon to crucifiers and therefore their share in the privilege of the poor. But they have to earn it. The wealthy are the evildoers crucified with Jesus. They are dependent: “Remember me” (Luke 23:42).

Christian Predilection for the Wealthy

The Christian message leaves not the slightest doubt about who is favored. The cardinal, however, has the predilection the other way around. The one crucified belongs to the “insecure rich.” The rich person is the object of predilection, and “predilection in a nonexclusive way” (ibid.) [toward the poor] simply means that satisfying their needs is always put off.

In his 1974 Easter message the cardinal again defines things this way. About himself he says, “I love my people and if it should be necessary to die for them I pray the Lord to give me strength to bear this cross to the end” (*Pascua*).

At the very moment when the poor are being dragged away by the police, tortured, and killed, and are hungry as never before, the cardinal tells them:

Only one, one alone, died for the whole people. One alone was the innocent victim who gave himself over in order to redeem all human-kind; and this one family in Jerusalem two thousand years ago wept bitterly for the death of the beloved son, the friend, the brother, the Master, and this group of persons alone has served to redeem all

humankind with its redemptive sorrow and so give us the drop of happiness we have [ibid.].

He is here explicitly rejecting the privilege of the poor—that of being identified with the cross and the resurrection. “Only one, one alone, died for the whole people.” Christ does not die in the poor who are dying due to police repression. “Only one . . .”—that is, not they. And since the crucifixion is an exaltation and predilection, he again denies predilection for the poor. The poor are identified with Jesus’ suffering and in a way different from that of the rich. They are identified with Jesus’ followers at the foot of the cross, “weeping bitterly.” The poor person is identified with the “redeeming sorrow” of this group. By contrast, when the cardinal spoke of the rich the previous year they were identified directly with the crucifixion: “Let us accept being crucified.” The cardinal does not identify himself with the group “at the foot of the cross” but directly with the one crucified: may he “give me strength to bear the cross.” The poor are left out. For them it is valid to say that “Only one, one alone, died for the whole world.” They should stay out. Christ respects the hierarchical levels in our world.

In this fashion the poor have been despoiled not only of their possessions but also of their soul and their dignity. In symbolic terms it is class struggle to the death with no compromise. It is condemnation and dehumanization. Nevertheless, on the mythical level it is the same thing we already saw with regard to the subordination of the fundamental right to life, when we dealt with the natural right to private property as seen in modern Catholic social teaching. The consequence of this reversal of Christianity is astounding and frightening. The cardinal’s reason for excluding the poor from being identified with Christ is quite clear: the exclusion of the poor is something deep-seated in his own soul.

Within Christianity anyone who says the poor are identified with the crucifixion and the resurrection is implicitly stating that class structure and domination (which negates the right of every person to the means of life) are radically illegitimate. This amounts to a declaration that private property is illegitimate and therefore involves an anticapitalist option. If the means to life are tied to private property, the biblical predilection for the poor is hamstrung.

Crucifixion of the Church: Crucifixion of the Poor

Archbishop Alfonso López Trujillo has his own interpretation of who is being crucified in Latin America. Speaking of the extremes of right and left, he says:

The means used by both sides are exactly the same: limiting and eliminating civil liberties, stamping out the rights of the person (by persecution, torture, denying channels of expression). . . . These groups, with their polarized attitudes, generate mutual reactions and

increase the flood of passion. It is the church that ends up being crucified [*Liberación*, 118].

Should it not perhaps be the torture victims who are crucified? No, it is not they; it is the church. Elsewhere he says this even more succinctly: "The bishop . . . has become a sign of contradiction. More than ever it is the bishop who is crucified" (*Teología*, 123).

He regards Marx with suspicion:

G. Fessard is quite correct when he points out how Marx, under the influence of the "old communist rabbi" Moses Hess, sees the struggle of the proletariat according to the image of the struggle waged by Christ, the Son of God, against sin, by sacrificing himself on the cross [*Liberación*, 247].

At least López Trujillo does not dare accuse Marx of putting himself on the cross. Nevertheless he criticizes him for having put the proletariat on the cross, replacing the bishops who were there by right (along with property owners).

But Marx never presented the proletariat as those who were crucified. This is one of the many inventions of those who want to brand him as "Lucifer"—proud, and so forth. Marx compares the worker rather to Prometheus, the god who rose up against Zeus to bring human beings fire and light:

Finally, the law, which always holds the relative surplus population or industrial reserve army in equilibrium with the extent and energy of accumulation, rivets the worker to capital more firmly than the wedges of Hephaestus held Prometheus to the rock [*Capital*, III, 799].

Marx is here speaking of workers and those who make up the "relative surplus population." This is in no way an allusion to any Christian mystery. If he had made an allusion to the crucifixion, however, he would have been right about its meaning as a Christian mystery. The Jesuits in El Salvador have spoken of this identification of the poor with crucifixion:

The cross on which so many Salvadorans die every day manifests the sin of a social context that crucifies them by means of hunger, sickness, ignorance, and plunder.³⁴

The sin of the world . . . is unmasked on the cross. Facing the cross of Jesus the Jesuit recognizes that he is involved in the sin of the world. Facing the cross of Jesus it is impossible to evade solidarity with the cross being borne by human beings.³⁵

The crucifixion of the church is seen as an act of solidarity with the crucifixion of human beings.

The dominant class understood this very quickly. The martyrdom of the

Jesuits began when they identified the poor person as the one being crucified. It was a result of the faith they professed, which was centered precisely on this point of identification. The dominant classes do not reject their application of the faith—they reject that faith itself.

According to an ancient legend St. Peter was killed by crucifixion, but he asked to be crucified upside down so his death would not be identified with that of Jesus.

In his *Marat-Sade* Peter Weiss has Marat speak like the priests who support the dominant system:

Our kingdom is not as the kingdom of this world. . . .
Suffer
Suffer as he suffered on the cross
for it is the will of God. . . .
Raise your hands to heaven, bend your knees
and bear your suffering without complaint
Pray for those who torture you
for prayer and blessing are the only stairways
which you can climb to Paradise.³⁶

Peter Weiss is wrong. Such preachers know very well what they are doing. They never preach the way Weiss suggests. They do not offer the cross to the exploited and downtrodden—in fact they take it away. They never speak of the cross in connection with exploitation, because one who is crucified is thereby legitimized. The only relationship with the cross that they can accept for the poor is the crucifixion of their bodies. It is precisely that crucifixion that makes it illegitimate for them to demand their rights. No such preacher has ever identified what their torturers do to them as the cross. That would be tantamount to declaring domination illegitimate. The first Christians declared the Roman empire illegitimate and that was what eventually undermined it.

As can be seen in the Chilean cardinal's messages, identification with the cross shifts a predilection for the poor to a predilection for the rich. It is plainly a matter of class. Nevertheless, it does not have all the antiutopian force of inverted Christianity. The cardinal's formulation is not an open call to attack the crucifiers—that is, the poor. Rather he says, "Let us allow ourselves to be crucified." Something similar happens in the Catholic social doctrine analyzed above in Bigo's writings. He would say, "Let us accept the social responsibility of property."

To some extent those who support such formulations are dependent on antiutopia but they are not quite the same thing. When a policy is clearly antiutopian and aggressively against the general population, they take some distance from it. Although they support and legitimize the thrust of this policy, they criticize it when it is put into effect. They share the same roots with such a policy, but they do not want to eat the fruits. Thus the cardinal of Santiago says of the declaration of principles made by the military junta:

Its explicitly Christian inspiration is admirable and, despite some deficiencies in the way the Christian ideal for social and political life is formulated, it provides a basis for giving direction to civic and social activity during this emergency situation.³⁷

He wants the apple without the worm inside.

Colonel Arturo Armando Molina, who was the one responsible for the persecution of the Jesuits, has spoken in the same vein:

Colonel Molina said that he could not persecute the church, given his own Catholic conviction and education, but that the involvement of some priests in politics has led to their being expelled.³⁸

The question of who is to be identified with the crucifixion and the resurrection plainly has a political dimension. Identifying crucifixion with property owners and bishops is one kind of politics; identifying it with the poor, the persecuted, and the oppressed is another kind. But faith depends on an option for one of these forms of identification; without such an identification there is no faith. What does safeguarding the faith mean? Latin American secret police have their own clear idea:

Cardinal Ivo Lorscheider, secretary of the Brazilian Bishops Conference, today charged that the security agencies are investigating the "religious ideology" of every bishop and all the priests in the country. . . . Archbishop Lorscheider said he has documents whose authenticity is beyond question, [including] a two-page questionnaire about each bishop and each priest. . . . He read what he said are the first three questions in the questionnaire: "Does he try to alter the image of the person of Christ? Does he try to alter the image of God? Does he speak in grassroots communities?"³⁹

The secret police want to support the faith because they know that the faith has political consequences. Hence they are concerned that the person of Christ and the image of God not be altered. They need a faith—the person of Christ and the image of God—on which they can base their own practices as secret police. Therefore they become involved in the specific way the mysteries of the faith are expressed. The secret police are defending a kind of faith in which crucifixion is identified with the property owner. They reject a faith that gives back to the poor the predilection that is the heart of Christian faith.

Crucifixion of the Crucifiers

The images of crucifixion in the expressions of Cardinal Silva are not very aggressive: he calls on his listeners to suffer the cross. Thoroughgoing anti-

utopian Christianity wants property owners to share in being identified with the cross. But it does not call on them to suffer the cross, but rather to crucify the crucifiers. Cardinal Silva Henríquez is only reacting to this kind of antiutopian position. It is the direct result of a reversal of the utopian message of Christianity.

Anticipating the Last Judgment

The Christian message is essentially anticipatory. It anticipates a new earth, and is unaware of any “end of the world.” Whenever it speaks of the end of the world it always has in mind the transformation of the world. Antiutopian Christianity does indeed conceive of an end of the world in the literal sense, but beyond this end of the world there is no new earth; there is only a situation of escape from everything earthly. It would be an ethereal world, with no needs—and therefore no satisfaction of needs—an ethereal world where there are bodies without bodiliness.

There is one key aspect in the Christian message that the reversal to antiutopia retains: the anticipation of a postmortem situation. Thus it keeps the dynamism of pre-Constantinian Christianity, but aims at another world, postmortem, and therefore yields a different kind of ethic. The postmortem world is as essential for antiutopian Christianity as it is for the Christian message. In antiutopian Christianity the resurrected body is forevermore a body without bodiliness, a corpse that will never decay, an ethereal body. It is a body without sensitivity. The postmortem world is reformulated in such a way that anticipating it contributes to stabilizing political domination. This is achieved through the influence of the body without bodiliness, the ethereal body. The anticipation of a postmortem world becomes the anticipation of the body with no sensitivity. The liberated body was the center of the Christian message; the center of this other kind of Christianity is now “being freed of bodily sensitivity.”

But if you destroy the sensitivity of the body, you destroy the body itself, because the body is nothing but this sensitivity. Anticipating a postmortem world therefore leads to legitimizing the destruction of the body. Indeed, it makes destroying the body a categorical imperative. Accordingly Paul’s liberated body, threatened by the flesh, is replaced by an eternal soul, threatened by the body. The enemy now has a bodily expression. Satan is incarnated in bodiliness, and the body incarnates Christ to the extent that it has no sensitivity. The promises that the sense needs of the body will be fulfilled—the new earth—are now declared to be a seductive mirage, the work of Lucifer. The acceptable body is now the ethereal body, the perfect reflection of the eternal soul. The less the body takes its directioning from its bodiliness, the more it reflects the soul. The body is emptied of significance without explicitly being called evil. Any vitality it shows is Luciferian; and any tempering of the body represents an approach to the postmortem world.

Although the ethereal body is considered good, its vital impulses are not. Paul's impulses of the flesh are identified with the impulses of the body or of the instincts. That is where Satan is and to struggle against those impulses is to struggle against Satan. Bodily impulses are seductions, crucifiers; struggling against them means crucifying the crucifiers. The struggle against Satan is now the struggle against Satan's bodily presence. This presence is the vitality of the body, its impulses and instincts. This body must be crucified but this means crucifying a crucifier, a crucifixion that will not ennoble the one crucified at all but only the crucifier. When the crucifier is crucified, the divine majesty incarnate becomes present in the one doing the crucifying.

When human subjects crucify their bodies, they share in the divine majesty acting within them. They place the soul above the perishable body and find within the soul the bridge for dialogue with God. But this bridge works only insofar as bodily reactions are violated. This violation implies harshness and rigor.

The eternity of the soul as a bridge to God is established in this act of crucifying the crucifier. Ennobling the human person now means violating one's bodiliness. The affirmation of the resurrection, which was at the root of this reversal, now becomes unimportant. To affirm the resurrection of the ethereal body means precisely to do away with bodiliness for the sake of the soul, and so the resurrection of the body becomes meaningless. Because the eternal soul does not die, the core of the human subject is not mortal. The bridge with God established during the subject's life cannot be affected by death. For the soul, therefore, death is but an accident; the only thing important for the body is that it be reunited with the soul as an angelic body. The resurrection, however, has nothing to do with the issue of life and death. The whole question is concentrated on the moment of the subject's death; the state of soul determines whether heaven or hell is its destiny. The resurrection to come can only confirm what has already been decided at the moment of death.

An Eye for an Eye, Infinitely

The act of crucifying the crucifier means contact with eternity. In this act the subject erects a bridge to God and so engages in dialogue with God. Therefore in this supreme act of violating nature there is an anticipation of the Last Judgment, the coming of Christ as judge. The crucifixion of the crucifier is the exaltation of that divine majesty with which the one doing the crucifying is united in the very act of crucifixion. The anticipation of the *postmortem* world becomes a celebration of violence and violence becomes the supreme and most ennobling act. The anticipation of the Last Judgment has replaced expectation of the new earth and resurrection.

This crucifixion of crucifiers does not take place only within the human

subject through the crucifixion of the body. It is externalized in political and class domination and becomes the supreme legitimation of domination. Dominators now appear as the crucified ones and it is their obligation to crucify their crucifiers, an act in which they reach their greatest dignity. But the initial crucifier, the one the dominator attacks, has a bodily life. First it is the pagans, then alongside them the Jews, and later alongside them both the poor who demand that their needs be met. Throughout a long history these groups are mystified so as to turn them into crucified crucifiers. Constantine is still pragmatic. He wants to win wars for his empire and uses Christians for support. But with an unerring instinct he knows what slogan to use: "In this sign you will conquer." Not with the fish, the anchor, or the lamb—Christianity must be linked to violence and that is done by putting the cross in place of the fish.

From this moment on, domination is increasingly understood as crucifying crucifiers. A new kind of aggressiveness appears in history, one never seen before—the exercise of violence as a categorical imperative. The Crusades of the Middle Ages are the first great outburst of this aggressiveness. They are launched against pagans and Jews, who are viewed as Roman soldiers and Jewish priests known from legends. The Crusades aim to impose the cross on them.

Dante is somewhat horrified as he transmits this image in the *Divine Comedy*. In canto 23 of the *Inferno* he writes:

I . . . said no more, for to my eyes came one, cross-fixed in the ground
with three stakes.

When he saw me, he writhed all over, blowing into his beard with sighs:
and Friar Catalano, who perceived this,

said to me: "That confixed one, on whom thou gazest, counselled the
Pharisees that it was expedient to put one man to tortures for the
people. . . .

"And after the like fashion his father-in-law is racked in this ditch, and
the others of that Council, which was a seed of evil for the Jews."⁴⁰

Caiaphas and Annas—crucifiers crucified for all eternity. It is a crucifixion that exalts God's majesty, and it is to share in this majesty that the crusaders go forth. The kind of aggressiveness the Crusades give rise to is echoed in the writings of Arab chroniclers. They see this aggressiveness as a horror without precedent, violence made transcendent, a force of self-destruction that sets out to destroy others with an all-out will to murder. As they see it, the Crusades reveal a people enamored of death, the death of others and its own. One chronicler writes:

Islam is here facing a people in love with death. . . . They fanatically imitate the one they adore: they want to die for his sepulcher. . . . They act as impetuously as moths in the night that fly toward light.

This transcendentalized aggressiveness leads to a kind of cruelty that does away with any natural limits or saturation point. It is the kind of aggressiveness described by Bernanos in *Against Robots*—violence as the fulfillment of duty and as human achievement. The crucifixion is the source of merit and it leads to the right to despoil the crucifier, now crucified. The crusader is the first Faustian, who never reaches a saturation point, but who, by crucifying crucifiers, acquires an unlimited right to anything. The crusader is not avaricious or cruel in the same sense as the sultans. The crusader's avarice and cruelty are ends in themselves and infinitely cruel. The divine majesty itself has this same infinite cruelty. Caiaphas and Annas condemned Jesus to a crucifixion that ended on Good Friday afternoon but Jesus returns as judge and condemns them to crucifixion that will last all eternity. This is not the pre-Christian "eye for an eye"; now the "eye for an eye" becomes an infinite number. Unyielding ferocity takes over.

All the Gothic cathedrals teach this kind of cruelty. They show no new earth. There is a Christ who is crucified, martyrs who are tortured, and a Last Judgment where crucifiers are condemned to be crucified eternally. God the Father stands peacefully above all this and the divine majesty is celebrated in this spinning hell.

In the Middle Ages (beginning with the first Crusade, in 1096) the Crusades are most clearly symbolized by the crucifixion of the Jewish people. Hundreds of thousands are killed that year in Germany alone; their property is confiscated and their cemeteries are destroyed. The crusaders express it clearly:

Look, we are going to set out to seek our Lord and avenge him with the Ismaelites; but the Jews, who crucified and killed him, are right here. Let us first take our revenge on them and exterminate them from all peoples, so the name of Israel will be forgotten [Deschner, *Kirche*, 212].

This is not a search for a scapegoat for the starting point for a whole new kind of aggressiveness. What they are looking for and find is ritual murder. The whole undertaking of the crucifixion of crucifiers is centered on this ritual murder; the crucifixion of Jesus is regarded as the originating ritual murder. Starting with this event, the coming of Jesus in the Last Judgment is anticipated and hastened by insatiably crucifying crucifiers. Ritual murder leads to massacre: the *pogrom*. The faithful reencounter the divine majesty in massacre. Golda Meir says of her youth: "My sharpest memory is of fear . . . persons waving daggers and huge clubs and shouting 'God's murderers!' while they went on searching for Jews."

But this upsurge of antisemitism in Christianity has an even deeper root.

These Christians are not simply aiming at ritual murder. To the extent they must deal with the Jews, they condemn them for their messianic hope. Inasmuch as Judaism is the origin of Christianity, the messianic hope of the new earth is a continual challenge to antiutopian Christianity. In the Jewish people they confront the truth of the Christian message, which is centered on messianism. When Lucifer is sent to hell, the whole messianic tradition is sent along with him. Messianism, however, is simply hope in the liberated body, whereas the aggressive impulse behind antiutopian Christianity is the satanization of the body. Because bodiliness is seen as the incarnation of the devil, so is messianism. As a people the Jews are bearers of messianism. They are therefore the incarnation of Lucifer in the vision that makes an antiutopia out of the Christian message.

It becomes clear that the struggle against messianism, regarded as the very force of the devil, is seen as more important than crusades against pagans. The less messianism there is, the nearer the day of the Lord. Crucifying the body leads to crucifying the bearer of messianism in society. As the body crucifies the soul, messianism crucifies humankind. The divine majesty, joined by antiutopian Christianity, rises up against them both. Crucifixion of the crucifier extends to any social expression, especially messianism, that affirms the body. Messianism is denounced as antigospel.

The Crusades are especially aimed at messianism. Because messianism affirms that the needs of the body should be met and that the body should find enjoyment, antiutopian Christianity considers any social movement that makes such demands to be messianism and utopia. As such movements make their appearance toward the end of the Middle Ages, the poor who demand that their needs be satisfied are seen as the incarnation of the diabolic. Aggressiveness against the body is now aimed at those who seek the satisfaction of their needs. The poor person is now the crucifier of the soul. As in the case of the Crusades, domination justifies itself as the crucifier of crucifiers and the defender of God's majesty.

The Counter-Reformation is a crusade for the same reasons, like the massacre of the Cathari some centuries before. It is symbolized by the cross. The Cathari consider the sign of the cross the sign of the Antichrist. Joan of Arc (according to the fourth charge brought against her in the trial of 1431) signs her letters with the cross when she does not want the orders written in it to be carried out, and so the prosecutor accuses her of blasphemy. The motto of Florian Geyer in the peasant war in Germany during the sixteenth century is *nulla crux, nulla corona*. When confronted with the peasant war, Luther takes the side of the authorities being threatened and writes: "You have to strike the devil in the face with the cross, with no hesitation or second thoughts, so he'll know who he's dealing with."

These sixteenth-century movements of rebellion are a great rediscovery of faith in the resurrection. In churches during this period there appear images of the resurrection, something previously unknown. Nevertheless, after the defeat of the peasants, and of the Hussites, and of the Anabaptists of

Münster, German Lutheranism makes Good Friday the most important feast day of the year.

Antiutopianism sees these popular uprisings, class struggles, and any demand that human rights be respected as diabolical messianisms, behind which there is a pact with the devil. This accusation is first made against liberalism, but starting in the nineteenth century it is more and more aimed against movements for social revolution. Antiutopian Christianity now fights on three fronts: antiatheism, antisemitism, and anticommunism, but its core remains the same. Atheists, Jews, and communists are all implicated in ritual murder, and antiutopianism must take its revenge. But antiutopianism is always domination that feels threatened, whether in its legitimacy or in its structures. Antiutopianism uses antiatheism and antisemitism to affirm its legitimacy; it uses anticommunism to affirm its structures.

Antiutopianism can become secularized and lose its specifically Christian character, by becoming conservatism, but the connection with antiutopian Christianity is always close. Without this connection it is impossible to understand the massacre of the Jews in Germany during World War II. Auschwitz is one huge act of revenge for ritual murder, a moment in world history in which antiutopianism is absolutely unfettered. The ritual murder in the vision of Nazi antiutopianism is aimed at the very root of communism. Hence it is not racism in the usual sense—that is, the exploitation of one race by another.

In the case of antisemitism, utopia and messianism are viewed as objectified in a race and the destruction of that race therefore means the salvation of antiutopia. The framework of the original ritual murder continues to operate vis-à-vis heretics. The Austrian Catholic historian Friedrich Heer describes the massacre of heretics in World War II:

During an interview in Zagreb, Poglavnik Pavelić shows the Italian writer Malaparte a basket at his side: "A gift from my beloved faithful, the Ustaschas. Forty pounds of human eyes." Wild priests, led by Croatian Franciscans, set out to eliminate the Serbs. "It is not a crime to kill a 7-year-old child, if that child breaks the Ustaschan law. Even though I dress like a priest, I often have to use a machine gun," says Dionis Jurićev, a priest. Franciscans like "Brother Devil" . . . are directors of death camps where 120,000 Serbs die. On the night of August 29, 1942, the Franciscan student Brzica, using a special knife, cuts the heads off 1,360 men. On May 4, 1945, Poglavnik Pavelić says goodbye in Archbishop Stepinac's palace. . . . He dies December 26, 1954, in the German hospital in Madrid, having received the pope's blessing on his death bed [Heer, *Glaube*, 446-47].

Brother Devil's death camp was on the battlefield of the antiutopian struggle. Today that struggle finds its systematic form in the doctrine of

national security, which revolves around total antisubversive warfare. Antisubversive warfare is not antisubversive but antiutopian.

***The Anti-eucharist of the Blood of God:
Flesh and Blood without Bread and Wine***

On April 30, 1975, Amnesty International published, in newspapers in Frankfurt, the following note on Chile:

Yesterday it was reported that the 254 political prisoners in the Puchuncaví camp were severely tortured on Good Friday (March 3, 1975). Those tortured were mainly doctors, lawyers, and older prisoners. They were taken out of their cells after worship. Hooded marines began to torture them in the most abject way. Under the direction of their commander, the guards' orgy lasted from 9 P.M. until midnight. These persons were thrown against a barbwire fence, held under water in a lake, forced to eat filth, and subjected to the most demeaning kinds of treatment.

This sort of orgy is traditional for celebrating a ritual murder. First comes Good Friday worship, and then, in response, the crucifixion of the crucifiers. Regarding such accusations and criticisms, one could find replies in the Chilean press, like this one by Father Alfredo Ruiz Tagle:

We are often called to forgiveness, to understanding—in a word, to love. That is fine, but many of us do not want love to be confused with weakness. Since when does love mean only sweet words or attitudes and not basically harshness and self-conquest? For us Catholics the quintessence of love is the cross and there is no weakness there. On the cross there is harshness, there is manliness, there is Christ.⁴¹

Such an attitude leads to the mystique of the blood of God, as in the following case:

For his part the military vicar, Bishop Victorio Bonamín, praised the human dignity found in the lesson taught by Christ on the cross and said that "our soldiers are furnishing a channel for the blood of God so it may wash away the hatred of those who detest peace, tranquility, and the progress of the nation."⁴²

The same military vicar said on September 23, 1975:

When blood is shed there is redemption. God is redeeming the nation of Argentina by means of the Argentine army. . . . One may say of them [the military] that they are a phalanx of honest and upright persons. The army has become united in the Jordan of blood and thus it has assumed the leadership of the country.⁴³

When the crucifiers are crucified, the blood that flows is God's blood. It is human blood turned into God's blood through murder. The blood of the crucified crucifier becomes God's saving blood. That is where salvation is achieved; such is the real eucharist of antiutopian Christianity. Each Christian becomes this priest of God's blood and of the eucharist that changes the blood of the crucified crucifier into the blood of God. They are priests of human sacrifice. Massacring becomes a Mass: human blood for the divine majesty. The news item quoted above was headlined: "Catholic Church Exhorts to Peace"—the peace of antiutopia of course.

Moloch Made Christian

The anti-eucharist expressed in the words of Bishop Bonamín dates from time immemorial and has nothing specifically Christian about it. It is the legend of the murdered god—the one that always returns to live off the blood of its murderers. It is the legend of life from death, which expresses exactly what the god Moloch means in the Bible. It is a eucharist that ends up in a profusion of blood and flesh but offers nothing of bread or wine.

When the social world is conceived in such terms, resurrection does not have the slightest meaning. Moloch and his servants always return to live from the blood that flows when God's murderers are themselves murdered. In social terms they are what the eternal soul is in relation to the crucified body. If the world perishes, God's murderers perish in an eternal death, and yet Moloch and his servants now live eternally off the eternal death of God's murderers. Any concept of resurrection expresses only continuity and may therefore be ignored.

The result is a whole theology of *après nous le déluge*. Eternal values opposed to human life become independent of the human subject in human community—in Paul's sense they are "things of the body" (Phil. 3:3)—and they begin to devour humanity and the universe itself. In 1959 Father Gundlach said:

It is lawful to defend "higher goods," including religion, with the atom bomb, and "for a whole people to go down in defeat while showing its fidelity to God against an unjust aggressor" may be something so worthy it would be a duty. If the whole universe is destroyed in such a case, it continues to be "God, the Lord, who, in divine providence has brought us to such a situation and allowed us to reach that point and it is to God that we should give this witness of fidelity" and it is also God who "bears the responsibility" [Deschner, *Kirche*, 373].

This Moloch-made-Christian consumes humankind, the universe, and finally itself. Such a being becomes necessary from the moment that human values are conceived as eternal values superior to the human life of the person

in community. Thus they turn against humanity and devour it. If human beings are made for the Sabbath, at the end there are neither human beings nor Sabbaths left.

The Poor: Addicted to Pride

In Christian tradition such a way of conceiving values and the consequent sacrifice of humanity to them is called pride and arrogance, and is contrary to love. Antiutopian Christianity sees everything the other way around. It states that those movements that seek to subordinate values to human life are messianic and Luciferian, and that they are therefore vessels of pride and arrogance. Antiutopian Christianity massacres such movements out of sheer love for humankind, which really means these values, this Sabbath for which human beings are meant to live. The result is a remarkable picture of how pride and humility are distributed among humankind. Those at the pinnacle of power are always the humble; those down below suffer the temptation to pride. Heads of banks or large companies are the “humblest” sort of persons. The more one owns, the less one is tempted to pride. Indeed such a person is very prone to heed calls to do battle against the “proud” who may be threatening what one owns. The lower you go down the hierarchy of power, the closer you come to persons in danger of pride. This danger is acute among the poor, whom pride spurs to demand that their needs be satisfied. If they fall into this temptation to pride, the property owner—out of love and humility—wipes them out. The property owner may sin but cannot ever be proud. By contrast the poor person has few opportunities to sin but is constantly in danger of falling into pride. The antiutopian world is quite neatly arranged: virtue and humility on top, pride and arrogance down below.

Property owners can fall into pride only when they betray class solidarity. By joining those who demand that their needs be met, such persons share in their pride. Hence Father Hasbún, then director of the television station of the Catholic University of Chile, said of Allende: “Something that always struck me about him was his pride. . . . There is no doubt he was not under the action of the Spirit of God.”⁴⁴ In this fashion pride becomes the occupational sin of the oppressed and the poor.

In the antiutopian vision the temptation of pride is to demand that the needs of all be satisfied; the antiutopian conquers self to the extent that natural generosity gives way to unyielding harshness. In Opus Dei this is called the apostolate of not giving.

Death Internalized in the Suicide of the Oppressed

Antiutopian Christianity is a faithful elaboration of the ideology of domination with its underlying transcendent logic. There we can see the oppressor’s fear of the consequences of domination, and the effort to establish a

transcendent basis on which to lay the responsibility for these consequences. Establishing such a basis prepares the way for a mechanism of aggression that can destroy any of the oppressed who may resist, a gigantic kind of terrorism aimed at both dominator and dominated. The dominator becomes a rigid aggressor, at times even a killing machine. The dominated becomes one who, as much as possible, internalizes the need to be killed. This need to be killed can be further transformed into a kind of aggression that participates in the dominator's aggression; the result is the formation of antiutopian mass movements. But such aggression always leaves some groups out. In the European tradition up to and including the Nazis, it is the Jews who are left out. If they are unable to organize their own resistance or if they see no way out, they can only internalize their death. During the first Crusade whole Jewish communities committed suicide the moment crusaders attacked them (see Deschner, *Kirche*, 212-13).

A UPI report dated May 4, 1977, from Salvador (Brazil) narrates the following:

Authorities in the destitute state of Bahia, Brazil, today said that twenty-one members of the Universal Assembly of the Church of the Saints were arrested, and several of them freely admitted they had taken part in the sacrifice of children that occurred last Friday night on a beach in the town of Ipitanga.

Maria Nilza Pessoa, 22, the wife of the group's founder, told police authorities that the children had to die or else "they would have become thieves, liars, fortune tellers, or practitioners of *macumba*."

According to detectives, the children, who belonged to members of the group and whose ages ranged from eight months to eight years, were thrown into the sea during the ceremony. Those who managed to swim back to shore through the whitecapped waves were thrown back into the sea.⁴⁵

Naturally this ceremony takes place on a Friday. It is the internalizing of antiutopia in a people unable or unwilling to defend itself, and so the blood of these sacrificial victims becomes part of that saving torrent of "God's blood." Of course this sort of internalization of antiutopia by the oppressed can have many facets and stages, such as those analyzed by Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*.

The result is an antiworld, coherent in the way it forces life to take its direction from death. Total war against subversion is today the clearest principle on which this antiworld is based. Decisions about who must die are made according to this principle, with its basis in private property, and terror is used to ensure that such death is accepted. This is terror in the name of eternal values, where the sensuality denied the body returns in the sexual perversion of the torturer and the degradation of the one tortured. The eternal soul in its ethereal body can only weep for joy over the way Lucifer is suffering.

Antiutopianism thus gives rise to a new image of the awaited future. Whether explicitly Christian or not, antiutopianism is not mere conservatism. On the contrary, what it wants is that the world change in order to preserve existing society, a shift in the direction of antiutopia. The German sociologist Helmut Schelsky, writing in favor of such a shift, draws an analogy between contemporary society and the Roman empire, and speaks of how that empire was subverted by Christianity. He compares movements critical of contemporary bourgeois society (as a common denominator he calls them social doctrines of salvation) with the movement of Christianity during the first few centuries, and in the name of antiutopian Christianity he issues a call to persecution. He does not see damage to society coming primarily from organized revolutionary parties but rather from persons sympathetic to such social doctrines of salvation (that is, utopias) and who make up the masses among which such organized parties can operate and become significant. He feels he is facing "messianic" movements that threaten the legitimacy of the system, even though they do not attack the validity of the system directly:

Our knowledge of history, stretching over generations, enables us to recognize the probability that once again there is a new world-historic rupture, like that which took place when the religions of salvation arose in the first centuries of our era [Schelsky, *Arbeit*, 76].

He makes a very mechanical reference to Marx:

In regard to the new social religions of salvation, we are, in comparative terms, in the second or third century *post Marxum natum*. Hegel and the Enlightenment correspond to John the Baptist or the other prophets [ibid.].

Going back over history he says, "I am not very hopeful that this advance of a new religious movement can be stopped" (ibid.). Nevertheless, he concludes:

The only thing that can be done is to slow down the pace of history so as to perhaps preserve political institutions and the forms of life that depend on them for two or three generations more, but no one can predict, with anything like the degree of concreteness of real life, what will happen beyond that point [ibid., 77].

The Call for a New Diocletian

It is clear what kind of transformation Schelsky is calling for, the kind that will "preserve political institutions and the forms of life that depend on them." This conservatism does not take as its starting point a constitution or political liberties, but rather the existing social order built on private property

so as to then sacrifice political liberties to that order. That is why it can hint so openly at the need for a new Diocletian even though he could guarantee the survival of the existing order for only one or two generations more. *Après nous le déluge*. This new Diocletian (like the first one) will not be there to demand that the laws be respected (their validity), but will demand that citizens profess belief in the social order (its legitimacy). The new social religions of salvation view existing order as distorted, whereas in fact it is perfect and simply subverted by the hopes of such utopias.

These conservatives paint a picture of what existing society would be like if there were no such utopias. Their picture is the same one familiar in all conservatism, where you can see peasants peacefully tilling the soil, masters concerned for the lives of their servants, and servants respecting the life and dominion of their masters—the sort of tranquility threatened by utopian hopes.

They paint a heaven on earth brought about by the disappearance of utopian hope, where those who live accept such a life and those who die accept their death. Everything is peaceful and everyone lives to carry out their own destined role. It is class society without class struggle. If this anti-paradise is to come about, resistance to accepting one's fate must be wiped out. Again any resistance is diabolic (Luciferian) force and conservatives unleash their aggression against it, issuing a call for a new Diocletian. It is obvious that in the tradition of antiutopian Christianity this new Diocletian can be completely Christian—and indeed it is logical for him to be so.

The delusion of the Third Reich, a new version of the Nazi millennium, reappears. The deluded dream of a country where no one dreams any more; they hope for a society where no one hopes any more; they regard it as a liberation if there is no longer any liberation movement around. The reversal present in antiutopian Christianity penetrates into utopian hope itself. It promises a future where the utopian is wiped out, while all the time invoking the paradises of utopian thought. The coming of the Messiah is changed to its opposite: the Messiah comes to destroy and defeat any and all messianic movements and hurl them into the abyss. The Messiah now means liberation from messianism, just as heaven means the liberation of the body from bodiliness and sensuality.

In 1977 W. Horlache published his *Die grosse Utopie* ["the great utopia"]. It was directed against the Social Democratic Party in West Germany, and insisted: "It is still possible to go back: that is our 'principle of hope!'" The Nazis called their empire the millennium—with the idea that no one would ever again dare to speak of millennia. The neo-Nazis—a farce this time around—now speak of their principle of hope in order to say that when it comes, no one will speak of hope any more.

Above the gateway to the country toward which the antiutopians want to take us is written what Dante saw written over the gateway to hell: "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here."

Denunciation of the Antichrist: Lucifer Returns

Secularization of Christian Mysteries

The utopian dimension of the Christian message derives from its image of the new earth: drinking wine and eating bread again. And antiutopian Christianity is a product of its image of heaven: a place where you no longer feel the need for either bread or wine.

Both cases involve projecting a way of living toward the infinite, and life becomes the anticipation of that projection. The two images are correlated as polar opposites and their orientations are mutually exclusive.

Given these two starting points, the Christian mysteries also come out polarized. They all receive a utopian interpretation on the basis of the new earth and an antiutopian interpretation in the anticipation of heaven with an ethereal body.

Although each of the two images is a consequence of its own particular logic and they are mutually incompatible, in the individual person they are blended together. No one's faith is neatly defined in one direction or the other. When persons have to evaluate real situations, the images are joined together along with their options. The mysteries function as categories, the category framework being formed in the anticipation of either the new earth or of heaven. The Pauline option between the realm of death and the realm of grace or life is made within the mysteries and never outside them. The mysteries take on one meaning or another in anticipation. The problem of the fetish is at stake and is decided in these mysteries, where there is an ongoing choice between God and the fetish, God and Moloch.

Affirming belief in these Christian mysteries in the sense of the faith of simple believers is meaningless, as is the reply to Gretchen's question in *Faust*: "Do you believe in God?" The question is empty because it leads to no consequences for human action. But the question as posed from within the mysteries is different. God or Moloch is a decision, an option for action. To say you are a Christian is not an answer to such a question. The question remains because the answer only affirms the mysteries but not the category framework for interpreting them. If you say you believe in the Eucharist, you still have to say whether wine will be changed into blood or blood into wine.

The secularization of Christian mysteries does not mean that they simply disappear. The space they have occupied is mythical and it continues to be occupied despite secularization. The Christian mysteries gave their shape to this mythical space to such an extent that modern society—and particularly capitalist society—reproduces those mysteries in its own structures. The resultant social structure encapsulates a mental projection that coincides with Christian mysteries in their inverted form. That is, the fetish of those structures coincides with the antiutopian understanding of the Christian myster-

ies. Therefore they are reproduced despite secularization. Socialist structures have also arisen, and in the minds of those living in such societies they reproduce the image of the earth as in Christian tradition. These are not acts of belief but objective reflections of structures. They reproduce the way the mythical space of the mind is organized by Christian mysteries according to the patterns of social structures.

The secularization of Christian mysteries has not changed the fact that this mythical space exists. Social structures continue to be projected toward the infinite, and that projection continues to provide norms and behavior patterns toward those structures.

When the Christian mysteries are secularized, the question of the human being replaces the question of God. Yet affirming the human being continues to be as ambiguous as affirming belief in God. It is only the option between the abstract human being and the person in community that enables human activity to become concretely effective. Sheer abstract humanism is as ambiguous as belief in a purely abstract god.

In the Christian message this inversion within the mysteries themselves appears very early. It enters the Christian tradition with the name of Antichrist. Sometimes the Antichrist appears as the external enemy of Christians—for example, when the word is applied to the Roman emperor or to the Turkish sultan. But the tradition has tended to center rather on considering the Antichrist as the reverse of the Christ. In this Antichrist figure one can see the possibility of an *Imitatio Christi* in reverse, or as a mirror image where everything is exactly the same but backwards. This inversion is most clearly anticipated in the Pauline analysis of the two realms—the realm of death and the realm of grace or life—which are ways of organizing the whole of society according to opposite principles: life or death.

Certainly all the Christian mysteries can be reversed this way but, inasmuch as the reversals start with the same images, it is impossible to tell what is a reversal of what. A person looking at a mirror cannot tell the difference just by comparing images. By only looking at the images you can tell that there is a reversal but not which is the original and which the reflection. To do that you have to know where the mirror is.

There are many examples of the Christian mysteries in reverse. When the Cathari consider the sign of the cross as a sign of the Antichrist, this kind of reversal is the basis of their argument. When Luther calls the pope in Rome Antichrist he is making an allusion to the same issue. But some see the question the other way around. The Counter-Reformation sees the Reformation as Antichrist because the Christian mysteries seem to be turned upside down. In other cases something similar is going on. The Inquisition is to a great extent based on a particular understanding of a Satan who makes himself appear as God. Each image can mean its opposite: when the Virgin appears it can be a device of the devil, although never the other way around: when the devil appears it is always the devil. When the saints appear,

however, there is no guarantee. Rules for discerning spirits are devised to deal with these inversions, although totally limited to the subjective aspect.

There is a change at the end of the Middle Ages when bourgeois movements make their appearance. The question now becomes how to classify social movements and proposals for new societies. During the Middle Ages this problem was sidestepped: all social movements were treated as heresies regarding particular truths of the faith. Although the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation struggled over particular dogmas, such struggles later subsided. When liberal ideology appears, those conflicts have become meaningless. What is needed is a judgment on global ways of understanding the world.

Interpreting Worldviews with the Image of the Antichrist

At this point the image of the Antichrist begins to play a new role. Worldviews change by antithesis and not by step-by-step changes in the elements of a previous worldview. The change from medieval Christianity to bourgeois ideology does not take individual elements of the medieval worldview as its reference point but changes the principle for understanding the world as a whole. Particular elements are thereby affected.

The image useful for interpreting such processes is that of the Antichrist, now as applied to global worldviews. Those whose starting point is medieval Christianity understand the bourgeois revolution as an Antichrist. That is the origin of the Faust legend, which has Paracelsus in mind. According to the legend, Faust makes a pact with the devil with results that are astounding, but in the end he has to go to hell with the devil.

But medieval Christianity is not the only starting point for seeing this reversal. Enlightenment figures also see the change and express it with the image of Faust, but they do so in reverse. Faust makes a pact with the devil and so he is saved. This inverted understanding of the interpretation of the legend begins in the eighteenth century with Lessing. The pact with the devil is the pact with the negation of what went before, and by deceiving the devil a new option opens up.

From this moment on, the image of the Antichrist comes out of the sphere of theology and becomes the key image of the main ideologies from the nineteenth century until the present. There arises a secular theology, completely outside the churches and theological faculties. The churches and theology schools can take a position in reaction to the results of this thinking but they no longer have any part in formulating it. The key to theology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is no longer to be found in the theologians but in the philosophies that mark the path traced by different ideologies as they arise. Inasmuch as all these ideologies develop as reversals of previous ideologies, they all symbolize, and can be symbolized by, the image of the Antichrist. Key works and authors are Goethe's *Faust*, Marx, Dostoevski's "Grand Inquisitor," Soloviev's *Legend of the Antichrist*, Nietzsche's *Anti-*

christ. In the twentieth century one line takes off from Berdyaev and another from the neopositivist scientism of Karl Popper. With Ernst Bloch there begins a whole philosophy of hope.

Not a single ideology makes its appearance without an explicit reference to the Antichrist. After World War II the dominant ideology of the Western world manipulates this image against communism ever more crudely. At present the magisterium has passed to the hands of military juntas in South America, the multinational corporations, and the secret services.

Naturally the image of the human being is the basis on which all these images of the Antichrist are developed. When persons speak of the Antichrist they always have in mind the forces threatening the human being. The Antichrist is always the transfigured antihuman.

In *Faust*, for example, the contrast is still not complete. Mephistopheles is part of the power of evil but he always creates good. He is against the human being, but against his own intention he must inevitably promote the good as represented in human good intentions. When he undertakes his long journey, Faust leaves behind his colorless life as a philosopher, and Mephistopheles leads him throughout all the facets of a sensual life in order to seduce him. He finally manages it at the moment when Faust can tell his people that, thanks to the help of Mephistopheles, security and freedom in their material life had now been realized. This is the moment when Faust loses his wager with Mephistopheles but it is also the moment when Faust can be saved because satisfying those needs is the only thing worth accomplishing. Faust therefore wins his wager the very moment he loses it. In Goethe the utopian leads to the land of paradise, despite all the diabolic activity pulling the other way.

In Marx the structure of the argument is still quite similar to the one in *Faust*. The antihuman in the figure of capital is destructive but it willy-nilly prepares the preconditions for liberation.

Nietzsche breaks with this tradition when he salutes the twilight of the gods and presents the antihuman as the true human being and himself as the incarnation of the Antichrist. He glorifies human destruction inasmuch as he sees inflicting death as positive human achievement.

However, it is Dostoevski and Soloviev who make the transition to the present conception of the antiutopian. For both of them the Antichrist brings about the promised utopia—yet at the same time empties it of meaning. Utopia seems to become meaningless in the very measure to which humanity brings it about. Utopia here means expelling God. Soloviev connects it to the pride of the utopia creator who refuses to recognize God and whom God ultimately destroys in the Messiah's last battle. Utopia here means the emptying of what is human, and the pride that leads to hell (this is therefore a return to the origins of the Faust legend).

Nevertheless, in Soloviev utopia is indeed set up; God intervenes because its creators do not recognize God. Ultimately there is no need for God to intervene. Hence Dostoevski's answer is more logical. Dostoevski calls the creator of utopia the Grand Inquisitor. Jesus comes to visit him and becomes

convinced that he has lost his own justification and so he goes away, leaving humankind under the inquisitor's rule. Soloviev and Nietzsche are thoroughly antiutopian thinkers. It is Nietzsche's thought that becomes decisive for Nazi ideology and its millennium of consummate antihumanity.

The new antiutopian thought after World War II does not take off directly from Nietzsche but rather proceeds along the lines of Soloviev whom Berdyaev had revived during the 1920s. Karl Popper's scientific thinking is of major importance here, although Popper describes utopian thinking differently. According to Popper the distinguishing feature of utopia is that it is unachievable. Because it is unachievable, any attempt to reach it leads not to it but to its opposite. The attempt to approach it leads further away. Utopia, wanting to set up heaven on earth, leads to hell. "The hubris that leads us to try to make a heaven on earth seduces us into changing earth into a hell." The utopian is linked to hubris, pride, and arrogance, and so leads back to the image of Lucifer.

Scientism and a New Inquisition

The nineteenth century does not see the devil as Lucifer, because utopia is legitimate and even if it is not wholly realizable, persons commonly believe it is possible to move in that direction. By the end of the century this situation begins to change, and today the notion of Lucifer as an apparent light that is really darkness has returned. Popper's scientism therefore reassumes an almost forgotten position—the tradition of the Inquisition, which was always anti-Lucifer.

Dostoevski's Grand Inquisitor does not have much to do with this tradition, although the title makes allusion to it. The inquisitorial tradition is antiutopian and not the result of reaching any utopia.

Popper's antiutopianism returns to this tradition. His return to the Inquisition rests on a foundation assumed to be scientific. It is especially the October Revolution and the rise of Stalinism in the Soviet Union that provides the empirical reference point for his position that utopian goals must inevitably lead to their opposite. The other examples he gives are the Puritans and the French Revolution, especially the period of Robespierre.

Popper comes to this conclusion when he inserts into the analysis of the utopian a radical separation that reduces the utopian to a collection of sheer abstractions. Along this line he says that piecemeal engineering works better to eliminate precarious situations than to reach abstract ideals; it struggles to eliminate misery directly, for example by ensuring everyone a minimum income.

Antiutopia is the result when the precarious situation that must be remedied is separated from the abstract determination of what conditions might make such a solution possible. As a matter of fact, any utopia arises out of such real situations and interprets them one way or another. To the degree it becomes a scientific projection, utopian thinking moves toward working out

the conditions under which these real problems might be solved. For example, it starts with situations of impoverishment, unemployment, and underdevelopment, explains them by going to their roots, and on that basis reaches conclusions on how those problems might be solved. This procedure leads to the conclusion that there is no solution as long as the existing system of capitalist property remains in effect. At that point the analysis leads to a demand that the property system be changed so that real situations of misery may be overcome.

This is roughly what Popper has in mind with his antiutopianism. He separates the two levels: solving concrete problems as opposed to demands for a change in the property system. This latter he calls the "abstract" and he takes his stand in favor of the concrete as opposed to the "abstract." He begins to struggle against this "abstract" and to speak in favor of the concrete. He merely speaks in favor of the concrete, but he does battle with the "abstract." However, inasmuch as what he calls the "abstract" is the only thing that will make it possible to arrive at concrete ends, such antiutopianism directly destroys any possibility of solving concrete problems, even though he continually talks about solving them.

For a long time conservatives have followed this same practice of painting pictures of an antiutopian paradise. Hegel used exactly the same argument regarding the French Revolution. Under the banner of the struggle against "abstractions," antiutopia tries to take over the concrete content of utopia in order to destroy any possibility of reaching it. These antiutopians then say, "We want to solve the problem of unemployment, impoverishment, underdevelopment; but that means laying aside any abstractions." What they call "abstractions" are the preconditions for solving such concrete problems. In this manner, antiutopian conservatives give every appearance of being responsible persons who want to solve concrete problems but, underneath it all, they are undercutting the only basis for reaching a genuine solution.

That is why such scientific antiutopianism becomes inquisitorial: what worries it most is thinking. By thinking, persons discover that the solution to concrete problems is possible only under social conditions that are not present as things are now. One who is hungry must eat. However, the connection between that hunger and a specific property system is not directly visible. Only a particular act of becoming aware makes it visible. The new inquisition is aimed at preventing that act.

To do this it must block those ideas that are involved in the act of becoming aware—hence the condemnation of all the theories that could lead to clarifying the conditions for solving concrete problems. This is the explanation for the antiutopians' stance of "problem-solving, yes; tools for doing so, no." They are like Czar Nicholas I who used to say "Geometry, yes; but without the proofs."

The result of this kind of focus is once again that earthly paradise described by Thomas à Kempis: "When it has come to this, that tribulation is sweet and pleasant to thee . . . then reckon that . . . thou has found paradise on earth" (*Imitation*, II, chap. 12, 11, p. 124).

With these two aspects of concrete problems and the conditions for solving them separated, antiutopian thinking devotes itself to opposing any discussion of these conditions, which it calls "abstractions." In utopia, antiutopians see nothing but "abstraction" and that is the source of all the evils in history. Utopia itself now becomes the Antichrist: "The utopian technologist becomes all-knowing and all-powerful. He becomes God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me" (Popper).

Hubris, pride, and arrogance once more appear linked to poverty and to those who want to overcome it; it is now the root of violence as well.

As these antiutopians see things, revolutions have been carried out in the name of abstractions and so abstractions are the source of violence. They see history as a peaceful movement that has been transformed into violence by abstractions and utopias. With utopias and abstractions—social religions of salvation—out of the way, history can return to tranquility. Hence they center their efforts on utopias and those who embody them. To get rid of such persons they are willing to use any means. Their notion of freedom mirrors McCarthy and Pinochet combined. Humankind is not freed unless it is freed of its utopias—which means ending any chance of solving its real problems.

Utopia, Human Feasibility, and Violence

Revolutions and their utopias always start as ways of solving the real problems that cannot be solved in prerevolutionary social structures. They arise in an atmosphere of violence that is due to the fact that real problems are unsolvable. Revolutions are carried out against regimes that cannot solve those problems and they aim at a change in the system that will allow new approaches to solving them. The French Revolution arose out of the problems of peasants and urban artisans. They were not following abstract principles; they were thinking of ways to solve their real problems. That is also how socialist revolutions arise: revolutions simply do not occur unless real problems reach a level of crisis.

What gives rise to the violence of revolutions is the violence involved in putting off solutions to real problems in the old regime. What revolutions propose and the way they unfold cannot be described simply in terms of violence. However, violence does occur in revolutions and as they go on their way the violence they have awakened must be overcome. Again, however, the violence comes not from the revolution but from the prerevolutionary society. The new society must not be judged on the basis of the violence involved in revolution but in view of its ability to solve the real problems that gave rise to revolution.

Antiutopian thought does just the opposite. Nevertheless, the rise of antiutopian thought is not completely unrelated to utopian thinking. Revolutions bring utopian proposals that cannot be fully achieved. Therefore, the old regime is replaced by a new one that must adjust to the realities of what is feasible. The revolutionary projection and its utopian content have to be

institutionalized. The revolution goes through its “Eighteenth of Brumaire.” There are two aspects to the revolutionary process: overturning an old regime, and setting up a utopian projection around which a new society may function.

The French Revolution revolves around an artisans’ utopia, but leads to a capitalist society where those artisans are turned into proletariat. The Russian Revolution revolves around a proposal to liberate the proletariat and so end all forms of human domination, but the result is a society with a new kind of domination—based, however, on meeting the basic needs of every member of that society. Nevertheless, that is what has happened to an original projection, conceived in utopian terms; the resulting society is not simply an approach to what was projected. In this case also there was an old regime, which prevented the solution of real problems; and the society that emerges should be measured by its ability to respond to those real problems.

It makes no sense to blame the revolution for the violence unleashed. By replacing the old regime with another, real problems have been solved and this fact must be the starting point for any critique. Unless the old regime is replaced, there is no solution for these real problems. However, a critique must focus on the reasons for the violence that arises and on what the chances for avoiding it are. In the antiutopian vision, however, the focus on violence leads to a condemnation of revolution, which is described as being the result of “abstractions.” Violence is therefore used to prevent revolution, and so the concrete problems that lead to it remain unsolved. Antiutopian activity leaves more and more problems unresolved and consequently the revolutionary eruption continues to build up.

Social revolutions take place because there are unsolved real problems in the old regime. They do not arise out of “abstractions.” Nevertheless, because revolutions involve finding what will solve real problems in a society that does not yet exist, they must think out what they propose in abstract terms. That being the case, this kind of thinking must deal with questions of what is really feasible, questions that cannot be answered except in the very act by which the new society is built. Hence prior to the revolution one can never know with certainty how the revolution will turn out. In utopian thought there is accordingly an inherent rupture—linked to the problem of what is feasible—and antiutopian thought can take advantage of this rupture. Regarding this rupture antiutopian thought begins to say that “those who want heaven end up creating hell,” and the Lucifer theme returns.

From Anticipating the Last Judgment to Determining the Last Day

If we compare the position we have already seen in *Faust* with the present scientific antiutopia, we may note a remarkable reversal in how the utopian is regarded. Faust has Mephistopheles contribute to building a “paradisiacal land”; violence along the way is due to arbitrary actions by Mephistopheles. In antiutopia today the very goal of a “paradisiacal land” is condemned as being the product of Mephistopheles, who is seen as Lucifer, full

of hubris. Violence is condemned as the direct result of having such a goal. The Antichrist is not one who heads toward the goal with violent steps but the one proposing the goal: whoever wants heaven will get hell. The goal itself is condemned.

This is how antiutopian thought shifts. It now heads toward hell with eyes wide open. Because it has condemned all the ways that really might lead to solutions, it must leave problems unsolved. By so doing, it is declaring hell on earth. Anyone who wants hell will get it. Thus antiutopian thought sees no alternative to declaring war on utopia: total war on subversion. Antiutopian thinking underlies that kind of warfare.

Utopia aims at accomplishing something. What it breaks with, and clashes with, is reality. That forces it to be self-correcting. Even if it comes to hell, the clash with reality forces it to go back. Utopia clashes with the limits of what is feasible in building up the world and can never go beyond those limits.

Antiutopia is different. It is not constructive; it is opposed to building up anything new and to any new society. Utopia clashes with the limits of what is feasible to build; antiutopia clashes only with the limits of what is feasible in terms of destruction. It does not have the same internal limit present in any attempt to direct activity in a utopian direction: if the utopian goal is an illusion, you will not attain it no matter what you do. You have to go back to proposing your goal within the limits of what is really feasible. Antiutopian action does not have such a limit. It goes on destroying and in the end destroys itself. It is within its own logic if it decrees the end of the world because it has not succeeded in having its way in history. If it cannot control history, it destroys it.

It is just this destructive dimension that utopian thinking does not have. Its continual tendency is to attempt to go beyond what is feasible and so it must continually return to what is feasible. Often violence is the result of overstepping the boundary of what is feasible, because no one knows where that boundary is without testing it. Antiutopian action, however, has no such boundary. Inasmuch as it does not transform reality, it does not depend on it. It openly chooses the alternative of refusing to change reality even if that entails destroying the universe. If all the means needed for that end are at hand, reality does not stop it from doing so. It is the very logic of antiutopian thinking to arrogate to itself the right to decide whether the world shall be ended.

Utopian thought cannot but make reality its ultimate reference point for all human acts. This reality is its "invisible hand," which ultimately gives utopia its direction. Antiutopian thought, on the other hand, goes further. It not only continually lives with the arrogance of anticipating last judgments, but even arrogates to itself the right to determine when the last day will be.

Theology Aimed at Life: Liberation Theology

Utopia and the Biblical God

A Theology of Life

Theological antiutopianism leads theology toward death. Theology becomes one big effort to justify the kind of life that lives by killing others. That is why its key symbol can be the crucifixion of crucifiers. It does not really have a readiness to be crucified, although that is how the first step is always presented. By averring their own willingness to be crucified, antiutopian theologians are simply pointing out who the crucifying enemy is. They then call for a crusade to crucify this crucifier.

This key image makes its appearance during the Middle Ages in a form that is already quite developed. It subsequently undergoes continual modification, although the original core always remains. Today the more usual form of the image is that of the Antichrist, an image that enables it to interpret particular social movements as being God's crucifiers and murderers. By conjuring up the Antichrist, antiutopian thought keeps alive the whole mystique of the blood of Christ as a mystique of the blood of God. At the same time, completely secularized forms of the crucifixion of crucifiers, based especially on the image of antinature, make their appearance. This image is employed against those same social movements against which the image of Antichrist is directed. The notion of antinature was worked out especially by geopolitics with its mystique of blood, which it called "blood and soil" (*Blut und Boden*). Wherever that idea appears, the ground is watered with blood. In all these instances violence is directed against human hope—utopia—and is replaced by a romantic vision of society with no hope, no utopia.

In complete contrast, theology as aimed at life—the basis of liberation theology—is the affirmation of human hope in all its forms, of utopia as

meaning *anima naturaliter christiana*. The god of antiutopian (and therefore antihuman) theology is one who smashes all human utopias, the “messiah” who destroys messianic movements, who stands as a rival to human beings, Zeus in the Prometheus legend. The theology of life affirms God as the secure basis for achieving human utopia beyond the limits of what is humanly achievable. Any utopia goes beyond what is humanly achievable and is a hope beyond human hope. The theology of life affirms that utopia is achievable beyond what can be demonstrated as humanly achievable, and that hence utopia is legitimate. This theology affirms a God who is able to guarantee that human hope will reach definitive success, and who is committed to humankind with a covenant and has therefore guaranteed that the human enterprise will be successful. Thus it cannot conceive of God as a rival to the human being. On the contrary, it condemns as an idol any image of God that enters into rivalry with the human being.

In relation to antiutopian theology, the image of God is here set right side up again. In antiutopian theology the human being approaches God by renouncing human hopes. When such theology speaks of liberation it does so in terms of crucifying the body, violating nature, renouncing the satisfaction of needs. It is not freeing the body, but freeing oneself of the body.

The theology of liberation is a theology of the body liberated by the satisfaction of needs and the enjoyment of pleasures; that is why it is called a theology of life. When human beings experience liberation in their real, material life, they can establish contact with God—and they do so. This is how such a theology understands Pauline bodiliness. This kind of human hope bears its transcendence within itself. Human hope transcends what is humanly achievable; it is endowed with a transcendence that is interior. In its very orientation toward real and material life, human hope finds its transcendence. Naturally this transcendence is not God but rather the “new earth.” God’s relationship with this transcendence is one of a power and a love committed to the fulfillment of this hope for real material life: the new earth.

That is why the image of the new earth appears also within the social sciences insofar as they devote themselves to analyzing the production and reproduction of real and material life. Social sciences cannot but draw it out: it is there.

That is also why the kind of transcendence that can be known through reason is not God, but the new earth. The same is true of the Christian message: transcendence is anticipated in love for neighbor. What is anticipated is not God but the new earth. However, in this anticipation of the new earth and through it (as the bodily bridge) we enter into dialogue with God and thus anticipation takes place in the Spirit. The Christian message, therefore, knows only one proof for the existence of God: that of the resurrection. Paul is quite explicit on this point (Phil. 3:21). For him Jesus’ resurrection is proof that the transcendence of the new earth is not in vain. The resurrection proves that God has power to conquer death and that in God we can do so. The point is not that God can raise from the dead because God

is Creator, but rather the opposite: because God can raise from the dead, God is Creator. The resurrection provides God's power; only as Creator does God have such power.

Transcendence and the Imaging of God

This way of seeing things is completely different from that found in the proofs for the existence of God based on the tradition of metaphysics where God is the transcendence knowable through human reason. That is how God comes to be regarded as the supreme being. The transcendence at which human reason arrives is understood as person, and that person is understood as God. Such is the image of God in medieval theology. However, subsequent philosophy gradually destroys the kind of metaphysics that serves as the basis for such an image of God. Kant is the first philosopher to remove the godlike character from philosophical transcendence. Transcendence becomes the moral law as understood by the eighteenth-century Enlightenment; from the existence of this moral law Kant then concludes to the existence of God. In Kant's vision, God is not the transcendence of human reason—that would be the moral law—but God's existence is implicit in such a law. God ceases to be an object of human reason.

Marx proposes a new earth as the transcendence of human reason. He is fully aware that with this step he is definitively replacing the supreme being known to theology. That is the source of his critique of religion: for the real, material human being, transcendence means the human being on a new earth, the realm of freedom. Human reason does not lead to the existence of any God. The only transcendence to which the light of reason leads is that of liberated human beings.

Marx believes the critique of religion is complete. Human beings as they become free are themselves the *raison d'être* of humankind. Marx does not attribute any religious meaning to the transcendence of the realm of freedom that he has brought to light. Indeed this is a kind of transcendence that is essentially different from that found in classical metaphysics. The question is whether the liberation of the human being on the new earth is achievable. The new earth—the realm of freedom—can be recognized as transcendent only by an act of judgment on whether it is achievable. Marx himself concludes that it is not achievable. The realm of freedom is transcendent: its realization is not something human beings can actually achieve.

The image of God reappears if what is not achievable is declared to be in fact achievable. Marx does not say it is achievable, and so there is no image of God in his thought. But when such an affirmation takes place, the image must reappear. It might be said that the realm of freedom can be achieved by gradually approaching it over an infinity of time—but such an infinity is really a covert way of saying that the goal cannot actually be reached.

The Christian message starts with this statement: the new earth is achievable because the God who guarantees it is reliable. The key point is resurrec-

tion. It provides the image of what the new earth is: it is this real material earth without death. The resurrection is proof that God is committed to achieving it. That the new earth is transcendent and that God is committed to achieving it are not two separated statements; the resurrection has made them identical. When human reason is the starting point, however, they are separated. In analyzing the production and reproduction of real life, human reason comes to the image of the new earth—the realm of freedom; but reason has no way of dealing with the transcendence of this image. Reason cannot affirm belief in a God committed to achieving it and capable of doing so.

This is the explanation for Marx's atheism, which is an atheism of reason. However, it leads to a problem already implicit in Marx's own analysis when he says that the realm of freedom is not achievable.

Utopian Praxis in a Legitimacy Crisis

At stake is the whole question of legitimating a human praxis of approaching the realm of freedom when one realizes that achieving it is a goal infinitely far off. This is not merely a theoretical problem. Behind it stands the problem found in socialist societies and socialist movements in the capitalist world. Latent here is the possibility of a great legitimacy crisis for utopian praxis—and all socialist praxis is closely connected with this utopia. If utopian praxis is aimed at ends that cannot be achieved, why should there be such a praxis at all? The only way to solve this potential legitimacy crisis for utopian praxis is to insert Christian faith into it. This is not a matter of particular motivations but of the very basis for motivating human life toward the future. This is the ground for the possibility pointed out by Teilhard de Chardin that humankind might go on strike and refuse to work for its own survival. The encounter between socialism and Christianity is vital not only for Christianity but for socialism as well.

Indeed utopian praxis does not have absolute legitimacy in itself. It is the only kind of human praxis that is legitimate, but it cannot be legitimated by itself. For that, its goals would have to be achievable. But by its very nature utopia cannot be fully achievable. Utopian praxis continually undercuts itself when it is legitimated by its own roots; at that point it is in danger of becoming a myth and caving in. Its goals are intrinsically legitimate because utopia is the image of the complete liberation of the human being. This utopia needs no justification. But utopian praxis is different; even though it has no need to justify its goals, it must justify its praxis in relation to them. If the goals are not achievable, the finite steps taken toward such goals infinitely far off must be justified. Human reason may be able to propose liberation as the goal, but it cannot conclude that utopian praxis is justified.

It has been the perception of a legitimacy crisis for utopian praxis that has spurred liberation theology and the formation of numerous groups of Christians for Socialism. In any case, taking part in utopian praxis means

denying God as supreme being and as transcendence objectified.

Inasmuch as the utopia of human liberation is now the content of transcendence, the supreme being is abandoned. It is now recognized as an idol: something specifically human appearing as God. To go to a praxis of liberation therefore involves saying good-bye to the supreme being, whether in Marx's time or today.

However, the praxis of liberation now shows other aspects. To the extent the legitimacy crisis for utopian praxis becomes obvious, saying farewell to the supreme being ceases to be synonymous with atheism.

That utopian praxis should find itself facing such a legitimacy crisis constitutes the most radical refutation of the Marxist critique of religion. This refutation occurs within Marxist analysis, however, and in no way does it refute Marxism as a method. What it denies is that the method must take an atheistic direction.

This explains how there has developed a whole current of socialists who are beginning to integrate the Christian tradition into Marxist thinking itself. This can occur insofar as the utopia emerging from Marxist analysis—the realm of freedom—is a transcendent concept. The Marxist critique of anti-utopian Christianity remains completely relevant and the image of God to which Marxist analysis now leads is no longer that of the supreme being but rather the God of the Christian message. This is a God within the human praxis of liberation, one who can provide utopian praxis with a justification that goes beyond what is humanly achievable. From this perspective, something that is not humanly achievable can be declared achievable: the realm of freedom. This does not mean, however, that it is to be achieved by human effort, but rather that the coming of the kingdom can be hastened. The praxis of advancing and overcoming obstacles is Christian praxis insofar as hope in a kingdom to come is part of that praxis and its successes are related to that kingdom. From this viewpoint, such praxis is not hindered by being unachievable: God is committed to it. The success of this praxis is linked to the hastening of the coming of the kingdom (2 Pet. 3:12).

Freedom and Covenant

A problem already present in Paul now reappears in liberation theology. If God can bring about resurrection, and hence is powerful and Creator, human freedom vis-à-vis God vanishes. If God is Creator, God must necessarily be conceived as an arbitrary God and one who legitimates domination. God has the power to bring about the new earth—but what conditions does God lay down? Paul answers, "None." God wants human beings to be free as persons in community, and ultimately that community is humankind itself. God's decision that the human being be free is irrevocable.

These considerations are what lead to Paul's thought about the covenants. In the covenants God's essence changes. In the first covenant God gives up the legitimate right to be arbitrary, but remains one who legitimately domi-

nates: God lays down laws and directs the chosen people. In the second covenant God gives up legitimate domination. God enters into a commitment that cannot be reversed no matter what humankind may do. In the commitments of these two covenants God is changed, giving up domination and arbitrariness, both of which were divine prerogatives to the Creator. Giving up domination involves eliminating the law. This act of renunciation, according to Paul, is based on a voluntary act of love. Paul's recognition of God as Lord does not mean that human beings relinquish their freedom but that they recognize God as the foundation for the realism of freedom. But now God's word has been pledged.

As the Lord found in the Christian message, God is the one who makes human freedom something real and who provides a perspective for its utopian anticipation. To speak of the Spirit means speaking of the human being acting in hope, and exercising freedom, as a person in community. In the Christian message, God ceases to impose the divine will on the human being in any way. That is why Paul can state that the law has been done away with, and can conclude what human behavior should be with love for neighbor as his only criterion.

With the second covenant, the human being becomes sovereign. Liberation theology has returned to this idea. God's will and human liberation coincide completely. Because human liberation is the will of God, the imperatives of human liberation indicate what God's will is. The point is not to compare these imperatives with God's will to see whether they agree. They are God's will and the covenant is God's promise to bring liberation to complete fulfillment.

If human beings are created according to God's image, the best image of God that we can have derives from the liberated human being. For understanding God and God's will, human beings have no better resource than their own liberation. God is the one who makes liberation possible and the true God is the one found in the image of the liberation of the human being. This is all revelation has to say.

By contrast, a God who stands in constant rivalry with human liberation is championed by antiutopian theology. It nevertheless presents itself as liberation: one book calls it "liberation from liberation" (Galat-Ordóñez, *Liberación*). One chapter is entitled "Clear Confusion" (*ibid.*, 68). The authors should have made it the title of their whole book. To be liberated from liberation is the refrain of antiutopian theology. It means the same thing as the refrain of the Nazis, both the old and the new: emancipation from hope as the ultimate hope; the millennium as the era when nobody dreams of any millennium.

The Christian message conceives of human liberation—the anticipation of the new earth in the spirit—as liberation of the human being in community. Love of neighbor is the central criterion for human conduct, and the principle from which all concrete criteria are derived. A criterion is valid not because it comes "from above" but simply because it derives from love of neighbor.

This ethic is strictly immanent: it is God's will that it be immanent in this fashion.

Community among human beings may be lost in two ways. First, it may be lost when persons put their trust in a "thing of the body" (Phil. 3:3, Bib. Lat.), whether by acquiring wealth motivated by love of money, or by believing in justification through observance of the law (whether this law is "from above" or not). In these cases, God is denied because human beings are denied, and that is pride or arrogance. Second, community is lost in the misery of the poor. The poor experience lack of community in their lack of goods. The poor are poor involuntarily and cannot but yearn for community. This is what grounds the preference (predilection) for the poor.

The poor and the proud are interrelated in the loss of community. Because there is pride on the side of those who put their trust in a "thing of the body," preference is given to the poor, who are excluded from community. If the proud are to lose their pride, they must go to the poor. By bringing the poor out of poverty, the proud give up their pride.

Neither pride nor preference has anything to do with mere attitude. The fact that there is pride may be deduced from the fact that there are poor persons. From the existence of the poor one may conclude that others are proud. The point is not that pride is a vice and poverty a virtue: both are negative. However, the poor, because of their poverty, are objects of preference, whereas personal wealth leads to the condemnation of the rich because of their pride. Rich and poor confront each other as the proud and the preferred. Pride means losing God, because there is no relationship with God except through community.

Antiutopian theology comes on the scene to change this basic framework, by reinterpreting reality. It replaces palpable reality—the real, material life of human beings—with a reality made up of mental constructs, in whose name it condemns palpable reality. This method is applied universally and all the tenets and mysteries of the Christian tradition are reversed. In order to displace the human being from the center of history, the proponents of antiutopian theology must remove palpable reality as the center of human life. In Christian tradition God calls the human being to occupy the center of history, and to acknowledge this God who wants the human being to occupy such an exalted position, but now the image of God is altered so that there is rivalry between God ("true reality") and human beings (palpable reality).

Spiritualizing the Concept of Community

The fabrication of "true reality," which replaces palpable reality to the point that it disappears, entails a process of spiritualizing the concept of community.

Christian community, in Christian tradition, is of such a nature that it always and of necessity includes some measure of goods in common. "To be in the Spirit" means being in community with others with no distinctions—

but the material poverty of some is a palpable sign of the pride of others. There are rich insofar as there are poor. The existence of the poor shows that the others—the wealthy—do not live in the Spirit, whereas the poor for their part continue to have the Spirit by predilection, not by personal merit. The Spirit is objectively present in the predilection for the poor—simply because they are poor—and the pride of those who are not poor is condemned. If the rich are to live in the Spirit, they must open up their lives by means of a community of goods with the poor.

Of course this community is not *only* one of material goods. But if there is to be life “in the Spirit,” community must include a certain measure of goods in common. There is no substitute for sharing goods; it is the most important element. Refusing to share goods with the community is pride. It is the only sin for which the foundational Christian message recognizes the death penalty (Acts 5:1–12). This is community of goods in the fullest sense, having everything in common. Ananias’s refusal to share his goods is not treated as a sin of which he can repent. God punishes him with death. It is not a question of establishing an obligation that everyone must hold all things in common. However, once such a close community has been formed, withholding goods leads to punishment by death. “You have lied not to men but to God!” (Acts 5:4). By clinging to his possessions, he had abandoned the Spirit.

Attributing such extraordinary importance to sharing goods in community is necessary in order to avoid spiritualizing community. Community is constituted by real life. If material goods are not a part of it, community loses all concrete meaning. If they are included, the community is potentially community “in the Spirit.” But the community does not realize this potential unless there is some *sharing* of goods. Sharing goods is the ultimate test of community in the Spirit, its real foundation, what makes it possible. With sharing it can become what it is in potency, community “in the Spirit”; otherwise it can never be so. Community in the Spirit is a way of having goods in common.

Liberation from Poverty and Poverty as Liberative

It is only in this context that the importance of poverty in Christian teaching may be understood. Pierre Bigo expresses it when he says that “the rich are going to enter that homeland of the poor only if the poor ‘naturalize’ them, as Bossuet put it so well” (*Church*, 98). As long as the poor are understood ultimately as poor in the material sense and involuntarily so, what Bigo says means exactly what “the Spirit” means in the pristine Christian message. Bigo, who goes much further in his analysis of poverty than is common in the school of modern Catholic social doctrine, is not completely consistent: he upholds private property as a natural right.

Most social doctrine writers reverse the relationship of poverty and wealth with their unrestrained spiritualizing of poverty. Their spiritualization aims at severing the linkage between the idea of poverty and material, involuntary poverty. They refuse to accept the fact that only community of goods can

lead to community “in the Spirit,” and they accuse others of “economism,” “reductionism,” and the like. In order to do so, they have to change the meaning of the word “Spirit.” Instead of “Spirit,” they speak of spiritualization. Although this takes place with regard to all aspects of the Christian faith, its most serious and deep-seated consequences occur in the spiritualizing of poverty.

In the gospel, poverty is an evil, not a good. It is an evil the poor person suffers and wants to escape from. The very inability to escape makes that person poor. This poverty is what makes that person an object of predilection, and the person must suffer. Poverty crucifies, and pride is the crucifier. In no sense is crucifixion a good, and yet out of it are born predilection, promise, and hope. Predilection entails the hope that in the future there will no longer be poverty.

Spiritualizing poverty, however, makes it become a good, a virtue. In this regard Archbishop López Trujillo says:

Poverty is liberating. It gives a person a readiness to respond. It opens the person to God and to others. The beatitude of poverty in Matthew’s gospel and its direct mention of poverty of the Spirit is very demanding [*¿Liberación?*, 28].

Here we can see two steps in the transformation. Poverty “in the Spirit” now has nothing in common with the Spirit in whom community is the bodily bridge to dialogue with God. Poverty is now a spiritualization. Implicit in this reversal is another. Poverty is now a good, a virtue, with its corresponding predilection: “poverty is liberating.”

In the foundational Christian message poverty is enslaving, not liberating; by its very existence it cries out for liberation. Hence there is no liberation except through the liberation of the poor, which means liberation from poverty. López Trujillo, however, builds up the whole notion of poverty around the virtue of poverty. And he denies that there is any spiritualization:

It would be dangerous to minimize the ingredients of real poverty, spiritualizing what the Scriptures make a virtue in the poor. The poor person is also the one oppressed, the one enslaved [*¿Liberación?*, 24].

By this stage, however, poverty is no longer real poverty; rather, it has “ingredients of real poverty.” He says the oppressed are “also” the poor. Real poverty is not very nice. That is why López Trujillo speaks of “further evolution and clarification,” which lead to the conclusion that “the poor are now the pious” (*ibid.*). “Lack of goods”—material poverty—now changes meaning: “Lack of goods [can be accepted] because these goods enslave the human being and take away the freedom that should give meaning to human life” (*ibid.*).

His words should be read with close attention. What enslaves is not the

“lack of goods” but “these goods.” The slavery of wealth is not the slavery that some, by taking for themselves, impose on others, who consequently are deprived of goods, but a relationship solely between the person and the good. Property ceases to be a social relationship constituted objectively with other persons and instead becomes a relationship between property and the individual subject.

As seen in the gospel, poverty means something else: the master is the one who sets up a relationship between the person and goods, and the lack of those goods is what constitutes the slavery of the poor. Being enslaved by property is the other side of the coin of the slavery resulting from the “lack of goods.” But there is only one slavery—and the Spirit is the overcoming of that slavery. Spiritualization turns things the other way around: each individual works out a relationship with their own goods. Rather than overcoming slavery, they allow themselves to be enslaved. However, as owners see things, neither do they allow themselves to be enslaved by the goods they have nor are the poor enslaved by the lack of those goods. Everyone becomes “liberated from liberation.”

On the “poverty of spirit” in Matthew, Archbishop López Trujillo has this to say:

He no doubt wanted to emphasize—rather than ignore or minimize—the point that it was not enough to be in fact poor by lacking goods, but that to a degree one must consent to that lack as well [*¿Liberación?*, 24].

And so, “according to modern usage,” he makes a distinction between “being poor, as a demand of the gospel, and living in misery, which is an evil that should be overcome” (*ibid.*).

So now one must deserve to be poor. It is a virtue. On the side of the property owner there is the virtue of internal abnegation; on the part of the person who is really poor, the virtue of consent. Faith makes no demands connecting the two of them; each person works things out with God. The poor do not play a mediating role. On the other hand, there is no relationship between predilection, as understood in the gospel, and misery, which is rather an area for applied faith, and not for the faith itself. If faith is applied, the aim is to overcome misery; if it is not applied, misery is not overcome. But faith itself is not at stake. Misery is no longer an objective indicator of pride, or the loss of faith. Archbishop López Trujillo buys from the poor their evangelical predilection with a bowl of lentil stew. In fact, unlike Jacob, he does not even give them their stew. The preferred one, the firstborn, takes it away.

This is how to overcome “an exclusivist conception of poverty” (*¿Liberación?*, 63). There is no question of reductionism or economism here—reality itself is now gone.

After the military coup in Chile, Admiral Merino, a junta member, offered his understanding of this kind of poverty:

It is our honor to consider ourselves poor but honorable gentlemen because none of us holds property. . . . Our only interest is to serve Chile because we are and will continue to be solemnly poor.⁴⁶

Once the “exclusivist conception of poverty” has been overcome, everyone shouts “Hooray for the poor!” The very same gentlemen who lined up to be crucified, now come around again to appear as the gospel poor.

Those who wrote about “clear confusion” also have something to say:

Poverty as a spiritual attitude—which is certainly what the beatitude is about—consists in one’s putting confidence in God and not in oneself or in other creatures [Galat-Ordóñez, *Liberación*, 38].

At this point they do not even speak of poverty in spirit but speak plainly of “spiritual poverty.” And to leave no doubt, they make it explicit that they are excluding any bridge by which the human subject may enter into relationship with God, even trust in others. The subject that enters into relationship with God no longer has the least vestige of community:

From what has been said it is clear that material poverty cannot be confused with spiritual poverty. There may be those who are poor in material goods but who are not poor in spirit. That is the case of those who make a god out of money and covet the wealth they do not have. On the other hand, the possibility that persons rich in material goods may be genuine *anawim*, or poor in spirit, cannot be excluded [ibid.].

They could not say it more clearly. It is particularly the poor who “make a god out of money.” Once again poverty is spiritualized.

“Making a god out of money” is something that happens in fact. It means cornering wealth, not the *desire* to corner it. In metaphorical or symbolic terms, it may refer to the desire, but the assumption should be that those who have the attitude also have wealth. It is quite like the difference between killing and the desire to kill. Things have become so spiritualized here that there is no distinction between deed and desire.

This is simply another way of formulating a point already emphasized by Archbishop López Trujillo: the real poor person is one who is poor in spirit by consenting to poverty. When the poor consent to poverty, they transform misery (*dire poverty*), which is an evil, into poverty, which is a good. One cannot consent to an evil. In Christian teaching, misery is a sign of pride, and to consent to it means consenting to pride, to haughtiness, to arrogance. That is why that teaching does not conceive of the poor person as consenting to poverty. From Christian teaching one might arrive at the conclusion that the poor should forgive the rich their pride even as they suffer it. Forgiveness, however, does not mean consent.

Nevertheless, in modern Catholic social doctrine there is no call to the poor to forgive the rich for their pride, because one who forgives is thereby ennobled. The poor person is rather called to reconciliation. This means the poor are called to consent to their poverty and owners are called to forgive the poor if they do not so consent. When they do not consent, the poor fall into pride and owners must then grant forgiveness. Forgiving, however, does not mean giving in but “generously” helping the poor to consent to poverty. If the poor refuse to consent, it is a transgression. Owners may make concessions—and are conscience-bound to do so—but only insofar as these concessions do not endanger private property and inheritance rights. If owners do not make such concessions, they fall into sin. But that does not mean they are excluded from the faith. The issue is between owners and their possessions, not between owners and the poor. If owners are inwardly detached from their goods, they are in the faith; if they put their confidence in their goods, they are not in the faith. But this relates only to what is spiritual: interiorly. That is why the Cardinal of Santiago could say of the military junta’s statement of principles:

Its explicitly Christian inspiration is admirable and, despite some deficiencies in the way the Christian ideal for social and political life is formulated, it provides a basis for giving direction to civic and social activity.

The situation with regard to the poor is different. If they do not consent to poverty or if they rise up against private property, they are beyond the faith. They are not simply making a bad application of faith; they have gone beyond the faith. Speaking of the Christians for Socialism, the same cardinal says they have taken a road that “in fact makes them reject their Christianity.”⁴⁷ The church of course is absolutely “neutral”: it preaches to all alike that private property is a natural right.

It is always the same groups who present themselves as the crucified, as the poor in spirit, and as those who forgive. The poor are not included unless they consent. It is not the poor who “naturalize” the rich in the land of the poor, but the rich who “naturalize” the poor in their own country. Archbishop López Trujillo confirms the point: “It is perfectly legitimate to do theology from the side of the poor. Work along these lines will be beneficial” (*¿Liberación?*, 108).

Christian faith is faith from among the poor. To say it is “legitimate” to do theology from the side of the poor misses the point. Taking the poor as a reference point is the criterion for the truth of the faith. It is not legitimate not to murder—murder is forbidden. It is not legitimate to love one’s neighbor—it is a commandment, the only commandment. To state that it is legitimate not to murder means it is also legitimate to murder. To say it is legitimate to love one’s neighbor means it is also legitimate not to love one’s neighbor. To say it is legitimate to do theology from among the poor means it is also

legitimate not to do so. This amounts to fracturing the faith by spiritualizing poverty.

Evangelizing the poor becomes robbing them of their soul. The poverty of the poor becomes the ideal for them in the sense that they consent to being poor. The poor person's soul is stolen and is replaced by another: the owner's. By consenting, the poor are led to participate in the pride of owners insofar as they reject community. Archbishop López Trujillo knows what this is all about. He praises Martin Luther King, Jr., with these words: "Closer is the example of Martin Luther King, the black man with a white soul, as the poet sang" (*¿Liberación?*, 59).

The poet who sang that was a white poet. This is the greatest insult ever given to Martin Luther King, Jr. Archbishop López Trujillo quotes it, intending praise. King does not have a black's soul but a white's. His soul is taken away and replaced by another. The black person gets a white soul; the poor person, an owner's soul; the union member, a scab's soul; the Jew gets an Aryan's soul. In South Africa and Rhodesia there are honorary whites. This is as insulting as calling López Trujillo "a bishop with a pagan soul." But that is not all: López Trujillo does not intend it as an offense but rather he presents this dehumanization as the pinnacle of civilization. His greatest offense is that he does not even mean to offend.

Palpable Reality and Symbolic Reality: Reality Turned Upside-down

Hypostasizing "True Reality"

In the antiutopian argumentation analyzed in the previous section, we find a particular way of reversing things, applicable to any social field. When it is employed, palpable reality evaporates. Starting with the values that guide human activity in palpable reality, it is always possible to construct a "true reality" in opposition to palpable reality by absolutizing those values. Fact then changes meaning and becomes pure symbol or merely one ingredient in this "true reality."

Let us look at an example of such a transformation. A particular death is murder if it occurs through an infraction of the norm "Thou shalt not kill." It is murder only in reference to this norm; otherwise, it is a death like any other. In murder there is always a murderer and a victim. The murderer always kills for some reason. Motives for murder can be reduced to a common denominator, hatred. Murder occurs because of the murderer's hatred.

This hatred can now be hypostasized. Murder took place because of hatred. Hatred ceases being the common denominator of the many possible murder motives and becomes an active subject. It was the murderer's hatred, rather than the murderer, that did the killing. This hatred does not come out of thin air; there must be a reason for it. The fact that the murderer killed the one murdered shows that the victim produced hatred in the murderer. The

hatred that led the murderer to kill was provoked or produced by the victim. The hatred provoked by the victim was working through the murderer. Therefore the murder victim is the killer: the victim provoked the hatred that caused the murder. Therefore the victim committed suicide. It was the victim's hatred that did the killing; the palpable murderer was only an agent of the victim's hatred. The more cruel the murder, the greater the hatred—a hatred that culminated in suicide.

The event itself has evaporated; the murder took place only in appearance. In "true reality" it was the hatred of the one murdered that did the killing: the murderer is only an agent of this hatred. Palpable reality has evaporated. As an example, Cardinal Silva Henríquez said the following about the slaughter that took place after the Chilean military coup:

There have occurred some events that we find regrettable. Nevertheless, the present is explained by the causes that provoked it. We saw how our country was becoming divided, how the unity of the working class was shattered, how ideological sectarianism was being imposed. . . . The military junta has been the first to regret the decision it made. Regarding this new government, whose position, in my opinion cannot be regarded as harsh anti-Marxist repression, the church has its own mission.⁴⁸

The present is explained by the causes that provoked it. There is a hatred on the part of the murder victim that provokes the murderer's hatred. The murderer murders, but actually does not really murder. In "true reality" what really happens is that the murderer is the means employed by the victim's hatred, and so murder is suicide. Indeed the murderer is the first to regret the murder carried out by the victim's hatred acting within the killer. So the murderer can say "I'm very sorry."

Palpable reality has disappeared. The murder is only apparent. "True reality" is appealed to and uncovers the suicide for which the killer served as an instrument. From the viewpoint of "true reality," to insist that the murder is palpable and real now seems to be sheer reductionism. Truth lies elsewhere.

Unquestionably this is one aspect of the fact. The fact has antecedents that are part of the explanation. But *one* antecedent does not explain it. It is the murderer's decision that makes one antecedent lead to murder. The antecedent does not decide. The murderer decides to kill and accepts the antecedent as motive enough. But to the extent that hatred becomes substance and subject, it bypasses this decision and so bypasses the murderer's responsibility. Palpable reality becomes a reality that is only apparent and symbolic. Acting subjects are replaced by substances such as hatred, love, reconciliation, power, violence, envy, and so forth. Personal subjects are simply vehicles for these dynamic substances. Human subjects are now their material props.

Such a transformation goes through the following sequence: out of various

possible motives, one is created on the basis of a norm, and a common denominator becomes the “true” acting substance, acting in the one who breaks the norm. This acting substance and the act of infraction are attributed to the person who was the victim of the infraction. Consequently, the one murdered is the murderer. “True reality” replaces palpable reality and reverses the original meaning of the norm. In palpable reality the murderer murdered the victim out of hatred, but in “true reality” the victim was killed by the victim’s own hatred, and that hatred was killed in the act of murder. In “true reality” it was not the victim who was killed, but the victim’s hatred. Here we have another “clear confusion”:

A Christian is allowed only that hatred that is commanded: hatred for sin. . . . The Christian is one who hates sin. What Christian, even one who is Marxist, could maintain that it is compatible with the faith to think that violence should be widely used as social surgery to eliminate the injustices of our continent? [Galat-Ordóñez, *Liberación*, 146].

Making wide use of violence as “social surgery” is just what hating hatred means. Indeed it is the only thing *not* allowed to a Christian.

Established Power and Powerless Power

The replacement of the real human being with acting substances is applied in a wide variety of ways. The issue of power is naturally the key for analyzing poverty and how to overcome it. Accordingly, the idea of power undergoes a similar inversion.

One who wants to accomplish something wants to have the ability to do so. The possibility of accomplishing something may be called power. Power is therefore an empty concept (like hatred in relation to murder or spiritual poverty in relation to palpable poverty). One who wants to establish a mode of production that allows everyone to live wants the ability to do so. Someone else, however, who wants to protect a capitalist mode of production, which does not allow it, also wants the ability to do so. Both are seeking power inasmuch as the ability to accomplish anything is called power. The owner who does not want to share seeks power in order not to share. The poor person who wants to live seeks power in order to live. Both are seeking power. There is thus a power struggle between the two sides. In this struggle the church suffers temptations:

The temptation to ally oneself with the established powers is the temptation of the high priests. But there is another and more subtle temptation, that of the zealous, the temptation to be allied with those powers committed to toppling the established powers in order to take their place [cf. Bigo, *Church*, 121].

Power is power to do something, whatever it may be. On the one side stand the established powers, and on the other, those who want to do something different—the ability to do so is power. According to Bigo, to want power is to fall into the desire for power, to fall into the temptation to power. Because one's desires are more important than reality, one who wants power is thereby a power. So there are two powers in contention: established power and the power committed to taking its place. Power is disputed between the two. There are powers that have power and other powers that do not. Both sides experience temptations to power:

Those in power are not the only ones who impose their yoke on the masses; it is also done by those who mobilize the masses not for the divine work confided to the apostles but for human enterprises, for reasons akin to the Galilean's [*Church*, 122].

The Roman empire is a power, as is Judas the Galilean. The power in command struggles against those who do not have power. The power in command is established and the powerless power is in concentration camps. The pull of temptation is strong for both sides. Those who are not in power have fallen into the temptation of power. The church also has often fallen: "Protected by the secular arm, defended by a 'civilization,' it launched into equivocal undertakings of a political character—the Crusades, the wars of religion" (*ibid.*, 120).

However, it will not fall into this new temptation coming from the powerless power: "Historically, each of the great revolutionary ideologies has been a source of temptation for the church's fervent members" (*ibid.*, 122).

The church has nevertheless held out until the powerless power has become a power with power. It will resist this time once more: "Today we see a similar temptation, regarding the second revolution."⁴⁹

What Bigo is telling us is that we must always resist the temptation to power coming from those who have no power. By struggling against this great temptation to power, Bigo finds himself inevitably on the side of established power. Not that he wants power, of course—he is on the side of established power by the very fact that he is resisting the temptation to power.

He finds the solution to the problem of power within power itself: "By choosing the last place, by accepting access to kingship only through death, and death on a cross, Christ has pointed out a way for all people in power" (*Church*, 93).

Once again we find the same trick. Christ chose the last place and it was quite obviously so. Equally palpable was the fact that the powerful had occupied the first place. The powerful occupied this first place no matter what they did, and the poor had the last place no matter what they did. That is what was obvious. Even if the powerful govern in the people's name and even if they conquer poverty, they continue to occupy the first place. If they call themselves "servants," they remain the number-one "servants." They can-

not take the last place unless they give up their own power. Once more Bigo conceives of a purely mental act whereby the powerful put themselves in last place and so merit the first place. Everything continues as before—nothing has changed.

But there is something new here: modern Catholic social doctrine is now on their side, offering the knowledge that the powerful are now first, because in “true reality” they are last. Palpable reality has been reduced to a mere symbol. By resisting the temptation to power coming from the powerless, and by recognizing that those who have power can conveniently be last when they are really first, the social doctrine defended by Bigo solves the problem of power. The powerful have detached themselves from their power interiorly, just as owners did regarding their possessions. They are now powers “in spirit.”

Christian Slavery

The problem of class structure is linked to that of power. The social doctrine upheld by Bigo scarcely mentions the dependence involved in class structure, although it maintains that relationships based on wages are not inherently unjust, a statement that is meaningless. When Bigo refers to the dependence of one human being on another, he points to slavery, a relationship of domination no longer found today:

A structure like slavery or social discrimination implies a countervalue that must be transformed if the affirmation of conscience is not to be worthless. . . . An authentic relationship can be established between a master and a slave; but the relationship cannot remain authentic if it does not include an effort to abolish the structure of slavery [*Church*, 138].

Here “slavery” means exactly what it normally means. It is palpable reality. “A political structure that incorporates slavery or racial discrimination is sin itself, for it is, of itself, iniquity” (*ibid.*, 131).

Bigo is faithfully describing how Christians in the Roman empire perceived slavery. That is why they called the dependence connected with sin slavery. Sin exists on two levels: outward (taking objective form in slavery) and inward. Inner dependence is called slavery because slavery is the life of sin given objective form. Recognition of outward sin—slavery—throws light on inward sin. Those who want to liberate us from liberation, however, see everything the other way around:

The bishops at Medellín are explicit and categorical when they make sin the one cause underlying the other causes of ignorance, hunger, dire poverty, oppression, and all social evils in general. These are nothing but *derivative slaveries* [Galat-Ordóñez, *Liberación*, 55].

The slavery within sin becomes true reality; real, palpable slavery becomes its symbol, its product. The fact that there is slavery vanishes and is no longer relevant. The partisans of clear confusion go on to say:

Indeed, if the master is a “good master” the very essence of outward slavery has been broken, even though the name remains. When the master is freed from his slavery to sin, slaveholding is dead even though the corpse is preserved. Hence Onesimus may remain inwardly free, despite his outward slavery [ibid., 77].

When the *master* is freed of the slavery of sin, slaveholding is dead. “True reality” has thoroughly swallowed up palpable reality.

The human being is free even when in chains. This is true in a potential sense, but freedom comes when the chains are broken. Slaves are slaves because their right to exercise their own will has been taken away. Whether the master is good or bad has nothing to do with it. A good master is preferable to a bad one, but he remains a master. Interior freedom means the readiness to break outward chains, but freedom becomes a fact only when the chains are broken. Inner readiness is necessary but it is activated only when the slave ceases to be a slave. For those who seek to conjure up a “true reality,” however, it is irrelevant whether the chains are really broken. Again reality vanishes. It vanished many centuries ago. López Trujillo arrives at the conclusion that “when Christian teachings are forgotten, persons fall into the abyss of slavery” (*Liberación*, 197).

Archbishop López Trujillo is a bishop in Colombia, which until a century ago was a center of one of the greatest slave empires in history. It fell into slavery as a direct result of being christianized. It is easy to forget that Christianity set up one of the most extensive slave empires in history. This did not happen because Christian teachings were forgotten. The whole Christian world—the popes, Catholic kings, hierarchies, and priests, with only a handful of exceptions—actively legitimated this empire. Christian teachings did not prevent anyone from maintaining slavery.

The “clear confusers” tell us why this happened. The conquerors said that palpable slavery was a mere consequence of the slavery of sin, and they saw the conquered American peoples as utter sinners who had not been baptized. They were in slavery to sin and their conquerors were simply imposing outwardly on them the palpable, real slavery that corresponded to their inner slavery. Because those peoples were in inner slavery, it was obvious to the conquistadors that they would have to be enslaved outwardly.

When those peoples were evangelized, their essential slavery, the slavery “of sin,” disappeared. The only thing left of their “outer slavery” was the name; the “corpse” was preserved. That corpse was preserved for four centuries. Any slaves who resisted fell into “reductionism” and “economism.” How important could outward slavery be, if inner slavery

had already been overcome? They were inwardly free. Therefore, by rising up or demanding their freedom they fell into "idolatry." They were attributing too much importance to concrete facts, and did not see what was happening on the level of "true reality." They were therefore "proud" and "arrogant."

Archbishop López Trujillo says that "perhaps our continent has been evangelized superficially" (*Liberación*, 65). That is just what the conquistadors said when slaves asked for their freedom. They strove to deepen the process of christianization, because the very request for freedom was proof of "idolatry" and "materialism." Slaves did not see that they were already really free, and the fact that they did not see it was an indication they still suffered from inner slavery, and hence deserved "outward slavery." Christianization was carried so far that they no longer had souls in their bodies. This slavery would never have been possible if slaves had a good knowledge of Christian teachings. No efforts were spared to inculcate these teachings and they were taken quite seriously. The issue here was faith itself and not simply the application of a faith already considered whole. Faith itself was idolatrous.

Nevertheless, we are told that "during the last century, when liberalism decreed that the slaves should be freed, it was unconsciously in debt to a Christian ferment" (Galat-Ordóñez, *Liberación*, 78).

Formal and Material Rationality: Canonizing Max Weber's Sociology

Bigo takes on the task of broadening this principle of domination to include modern society, although he does so in very general terms:

Two disparate logics are at work in economic society. . . . First, there is the logic of efficiency and production. It is primary, for productive activity must provide consumers with goods and services that are both cheap and of good quality. No system can lose sight of that fundamental law. But then economic society also obeys another logic: it aims at the betterment of all those who participate in production [cf. *Church*, 214].

He distinguishes "two disparate logics" and labels them. One of them is a "fundamental law" and is primary; the other is secondary. The fundamental law should not be confused with the fundamental right found in Bigo's social doctrine: it is just the opposite. Fundamental right is related to the second logic.

The second logic "aims at the betterment of all." It is symptomatic that this is not put first. Is not the satisfaction of needs the purpose of the economy? What Bigo here calls the "fundamental law" is but a condition that may be derived from the purpose of the economy—to serve everyone. The economy is the labor of human beings to reproduce their real life and it implies that goods be both inexpensive and of high quality. Bigo puts it the

other way around: what is simply a condition and should be a consequence is put first; the fulfillment of the purpose of the economy is put second.

Again this is the conjuring up of a "true reality"—here a faithful mirroring of neoclassical economic theory—which is then imposed on palpable reality, real human life. The principle of formal rationality—efficiency and production—becomes the substance around which human life may manage to reproduce itself—or may not. Production must be as efficient as possible; only later will it be decided who and how many can live from that production. "Efficiency" is not proven by the fact that everyone is enabled to live, but it decides who may live and who may not. It becomes a fetish and the demand that persons be allowed to live (real effectiveness in the economy means fulfilling this demand) can now be suppressed in the name of "efficiency." "Efficiency" now means relinquishing real efficiency for life. And all this is of the faith: "In the eyes of faith, ownership is only a condition needed for responsibility and freedom" (Bigo, *Church*, 244).

Ownership of course means private ownership. It is not really the eyes of faith that establish that point but rather the eyes of neoclassical economics, which Bigo is hypostasizing, and also the eyes of Max Weber. There is no reason for Bigo to canonize them. The eyes of faith cannot but determine that all persons have the right to live. The passage from Bigo quoted above is a faithful copy of the conclusions Weber reaches in his sociology. What Bigo calls the "logic of effectiveness and production" (this new "fundamental law" of his) is nothing but Max Weber's formal rationality. On the other hand, the other logic, which Bigo says is subordinated to the first, is simply what Weber calls material rationality. In Weber also the first is true rationality and the second is a rationality that cannot be proven scientifically and is therefore subordinate.

With this statement Bigo moves beyond the traditional framework of Catholic social doctrine, within which his earlier book on the subject had remained. In this traditional framework private property is legitimated along the lines of Enlightenment rationalism, although the representatives of this doctrine always invoke St. Thomas Aquinas as their mentor. We have already seen how this procedure is false. Bigo now follows the course of bourgeois ideology as it shifts the way it defends capitalist ownership. Max Weber no longer relies on Enlightenment rationalism to provide a basis for private ownership and in fact he replaces the word "ownership" with the concept of formal rationality. Catholic social doctrine seems to go along this same ideological line. By shifting the ideological line of reasoning in this way, Weber paved the way for the antiutopian ideology prevailing today in bourgeois societies. With this antiutopian ideological vision those who defend the right to live are condemned as enemies of rationality itself. In Latin America today this reorientation of social doctrine clearly constitutes ideological support for regimes that aggressively destroy all hope and for the military juntas that back them up. By taking up this kind of analysis, social doctrine can join the chorus, alongside the owners and the military juntas. They no

longer present themselves as defenders of private property but of rationality.

This confluence of Bigo's social doctrine and Max Weber's sociology is quite remarkable. Obviously Bigo's fiction of "true" reality is an extreme form of philosophical "realism," whereas Weber's sociology is the result of an equally extreme "nominalism." To the extent that both positions aim at the same object—making a judgment on the right to live—the two extremes come together and produce a new *coincidentia oppositorum*.

The logic guiding Bigo and like-minded social doctrine proponents along the lines of this extreme realism, which ultimately coincides with extreme nominalism, is quite clear. If these two extremes were really to combine, the result would be the basic principle of socialist rationality that is formulated as "conscious control over the law of value." Bigo's position means that real life is subordinated to the law of value. He calls it "fundamental law." Traditionally, fundamental law was just the opposite: the right to live. Thus he affirms a rigid realism that leads him to agree with the rigid nominalism of Max Weber. Hence for him also the "unique adorable" is nothing but Max Weber's "harsh face of destiny." By formulating such an image of God and such an image of society, he is able to avoid the consequence of a *universalia in res* that would result from conscious control over the law of value. Human freedom cannot be assured except on the basis of the right to live. Bigo wants to affirm freedom in opposition to the right to live. The logic of his position leads him to become a destroyer of that same human freedom. And *gratia supponit naturam*.

Antimesianism: Is Humankind God's Rival?

Antimesianism is the culmination of all these inversions of true reality. Naturally even this antimesianism is carried out in the name of "true" messianism. This "true messianism" means completely freeing ourselves from liberation. That is how it is "freedom." It is true hope as opposed to hope in some kind of temporal progress. The antiutopians call real messianism "earthly messianism":

This is the meaning of the myth of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from their earthly paradise. Because they no longer saw their history as a covenant and made themselves rivals of God, nature became their enemy (Gen. 3:17); people rob each other of the fruit of their work and henceforth iniquity reigns and cuts human beings off from each other [Bigo, *Church*, 96].

Rivalry with God is something interior—human beings have made themselves rivals with God—and as a consequence the division of humankind becomes something real and palpable. It is not the palpable fact that makes human beings "rivals of God." It is not the fact that they have abandoned community out of pride that turns human beings against God. The fact is a

result. Pride exists without the fact, within the human being, prior to the facts that testify to its existence.

This conception of pride is essential to antimesianism. The inner act has caused the human being to lose the “earthly paradise” and the result is that humankind is divided. Through pride the human being becomes divided interiorly and exteriorly. Humankind is divided. Bigo says this conflict has its “source in a more primitive hostility brought into the world when man and woman gave up the even more magnificent gift of God’s friendship to become rivals of God” (ibid.).

Bigo calls this enmity, whereby the human being becomes God’s rival, the “mystery of iniquity” (ibid., 111). “People rob each other of the fruit of their work.” The key question is how this robbery is interpreted. Bigo begins with the biblical idea of what accumulating wealth means, individuals accumulating the wealth that belongs to everyone. He quotes Isaiah:

The Lord has sworn by his right hand
and by his mighty arm:
No more will I give your grain
as food to your enemies;
Nor shall foreigners drink your wine,
for which you toiled [62:8].

What Isaiah is proposing is a theory of exploitation. Wealth belongs to all; an individual who accumulates it is holding back other persons’ goods. The way to overcome exploitation is to give to producers what they produce. Yahweh is presented as the Lord who guarantees human beings the right to live from what they produce. That is why Yahweh says “*your grain.*”

There are two ways of dealing with riches: accumulating them individually or accumulating them in common and sharing them. This is true in both the Old and New Testaments. Nevertheless, Bigo intends to go beyond them. He invents another “true reality,” which he sets up with these words: “Christ’s thought is much more developed but its meaning is identical” (ibid., 96).

Bigo is quite aware that all socialist movements hold an idea of wealth similar to that described by Isaiah. Even though they do not get their idea from Isaiah—all the oppressed of the world have had and still have this concept—it is similar. Bigo has Christ go beyond this idea:

The point at which the gospel completely outstrips socialist doctrine is where it takes up accumulation as such, not confining itself to riches that result in social divisions but including riches accumulated without limit, so that they become a crushing burden on people and on society. The twelfth chapter of Luke features this teaching [*Church*, 99].

That is not how it is in Luke 12: Jesus there speaks of wealth as accumulated. The kind of concept of social wealth here used by Bigo begins in the

eighteenth century and is further developed by the founders of classical political economy. Its idea of “accumulation without limit” and its “crushing burden on . . . society” is developed by Marx and subsequently by Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and others. None of them, however, is speaking of a wealth that “crushes” on its own, but of modes of producing and consuming wherein social wealth is a crushing force.

Bigo now says that social wealth itself is a crushing force that dominates the human being: “wealth rises up before people and wins their adoration” (*ibid.*, 96). He speaks of how earthly goods are a “nothing . . . when they exceed real necessities” (*cf. Church*, 97). In the following passage he turns the relationship upside down:

Furthermore, riches are not genuine, they add nothing to the person but, rather, impoverish him by cutting him off from his fellowmen and separating him from himself. The final intuition sounds the most modern. . . . Wealth is not people themselves; if they attach themselves to wealth, they are alienated by it. Only the gifts of God really belong to them; they alone make a person a person [*ibid.*].

By riches Bigo here means social wealth. Accumulated wealth that separates one from one’s neighbor here is taken to be a consequence of attachment to social wealth. Such attachment to social wealth separates the human being from the self, and by such separation from the self, effects a separation from others. Wealth itself is the evil, not accumulating it.

Indeed, Bigo presents social wealth as a “nothing” when it goes beyond what is necessary, even when it is distributed equitably. Because there is no clear criterion for telling what is necessary, he adds that one always has too much if survival is assured. He does not conceive of how the ongoing development of human needs could be part of human development itself. The development of these needs is a nothing. He replaces that reality, which is a nothing, with “true reality”: the gifts of God.

In the entire biblical tradition these riches, which Bigo calls a “nothing,” are themselves the gifts of God insofar as human beings hold them in community. They can never be a “nothing.” When they are accumulated by individuals, they frame the life of the poor who have to die because they are lacking to them. They are the life of the poor alienated into the hands of the accumulators. They are never a “nothing.” Nevertheless, Bigo replaces them with the gifts of God. And these gifts of God are nothing but Bigo’s notion that social wealth is “nothing.” He sets God and social wealth in opposition to each other: “the ultimate origin of servitude is . . . that people, having refused to adore the one and adorable God, have made riches their god” (*Church*, 98).

On the one side he sets the “one and adorable God,” and on the other side social wealth and humankind, developing along with its needs, all this now given a human face and demanding adoration. Adoring the “one and ador-

able God” involves declaring that wealth is a “nothing” if it goes beyond needs.

At this point Bigo has finished the first stage in his antimessianism. It is critical that the source of iniquity not be division among human beings—as it is in the biblical tradition—but something prior. In the biblical tradition human beings live by transforming nature in order to serve their needs; iniquity means the private accumulation of these goods. The idea that persons develop themselves as they develop their needs fits perfectly, although it is not quite the same thing. Bigo, however, sets up something prior—the decision of human beings to pursue their own development by satisfying their needs and augmenting the social wealth implicit in that decision. Bigo calls this “pride” and “rivalry with God.” Whenever human beings seek to develop themselves on earth, they stand in rivalry with God. The only way to overcome it is to declare that social wealth is a “nothing.”

Adoring the Finite

On the societal level the opinion that social wealth is a “nothing” is analogous to the opinion, on the individual level, that the instincts of the body are the source of sin (where flesh and body are regarded as identical). Hence in the second part of his antimessianic critique, Bigo goes on to propose a social theory analogous to the theory of the antiutopian personal subject. This subject is one wherein the eternal soul dominates the perishable body. Bigo does this by stating that the whole real world is a field of symbols and the world of values is “true reality.” He takes this up in a chapter entitled “What Liberation?” Involved in this effort is a theory of fetishism, but it is the exact opposite of Marx’s theory. What the fetish is in Marx is for Bigo “true reality,” and what “reality” means for Marx is “the fetish” and the “idol” to Bigo. Bigo’s “one and adorable” is Marx’s “fetish.” Bigo declares that “iniquity consists in making passing figures and signs the ultimate reality” (*Church*, 144).

Marx could say exactly the same thing. In the Christian message we find that the human being is not for the Sabbath but that the Sabbath is for the human being. In Bigo, however, things are reversed. The Sabbath is “the ultimate reality” and the real life of human beings is “figure” and “sign”:

Christ and his church are often spoken of as sacraments, as they are. But Christ and the church are sacraments, efficacious signs of salvation, only because the world itself has been created in a symbolic form and that form is restored by Christ [*ibid.*, 111].

That is, the real world is sacrament of Christ, and Christ is sacrament because he restores to the world its symbolic and sacramental character. Therefore, Christ is “true reality” and the real world his symbol. The same is true of the church. The Sabbath is for human beings because it restores their character

of existing for the Sabbath. The fetish serves human beings because, when they surrender to it, it gives them back their true character of existing for the fetish. Christ is for humankind because he restores to humankind its true character of existing for Christ. I am a servant, because I restore to those I serve their true character of serving me. I am the last because I restore, to those who are first, their true character of being the last. Capital serves human beings because it gives them back their true character of serving capital. The state serves human beings because it gives them back their true character of serving the state. I am the one who is poor in spirit because I give back to others their true character of being subjected. I am liberation because I give back to others their true character of being unliberated.

There could be no better description of the fetish. This is its secret: rejecting freedom in the name of freedom. This amounts to stealing souls. This is just what the ideology of domination is. The list could be extended indefinitely so as to undermine all ideas of reality. Reality itself becomes a lie.

These servants of humanity go around everywhere offering their services: heads of state, bank presidents, bishops. They are the crucified, the “poor in spirit.” They are Christians who hate hatred, and who continually serve others by giving them back their true character in the name of “true reality.” They are implacable in persecuting the “fetishism” that dares to consider as ultimate reality passing figures and signs—that is, the real life of real persons. They persecute the source of iniquity, the rebellion of human pride against the Sabbath:

So the visible world is a sacrament, and a sacrament to be celebrated. That is what the liturgy means, especially the eucharistic liturgy: to signify the relationship of human beings to God at the very heart of their relationship with the world and with other human beings [Bigo, *Church*, 110].

Human beings and the world have their heart removed and replaced with a true heart. The real sin is to reject this transplanted heart and keep one’s own. That the human being should wish to remain human and not the shadow of some true human being, this is the source of iniquity, true original sin:

“You will be like gods,” the serpent said to the woman—and so two human beings attempted what every temptation invites us to do, to live their lives in the world as if it were the whole of reality, the absolute. They denied their existence as “symbolic” [ibid., 108].

The serpent says, “You will be like gods.” Who falls into this temptation? Those who say they want to be human beings, not gods; those who want to live palpable reality as it is and not as symbolic, not as gods symbolically incarnate in real life. These are the ones who fall into temptation. It is they who fall because, if human beings want to be human, and no god wants to be

God, the fact of wanting to be human and live life as real is proof that one wants to be God. On the other side, however, those who put themselves above real life, to become eternal god-souls symbolically incarnate in real life, are the ones who do not want to be gods. The one who does not want to be a god wants to be God, and the one who wants to be God does not want to. Inasmuch as the "true reality" of the human being is to be an imaginary god, one who does not want to do so wants to be God.

Desacralization of the World

Bigo then comes to his notion of the desacralization of the world:

Faith in creation and in the covenant, just because they completely desacralize the world, make it the very place in which to meet the one God, to come upon the One who is absolutely not the world, the place of his Incarnation. A laicized world is the other, and just as essential, face of reality. Only a secularized world can establish an authentic relation with God, for only it can be conceived as symbolic. And only a world that lives its relationship with God in this way and lives its existence as a symbolic field, can be totally desacralized [*Church*, 106].

Bigo takes two steps to arrive at desacralization. The first is laicization, which is opposed to the magic connected with specific natural phenomena of any sort. Then follows desacralization, which changes the laicized world into a world that symbolizes the symbolic incarnation of eternal souls. What Bigo calls the consecration of the world takes place in this step of desacralization:

Then let us recognize a consecration of the world, if you will, but a consecration that is desacralization, radical secularization, simply because it eliminates all confusion of the divine with the human; a true consecration, however, because it directs the whole of existence toward the divine term desired by every human heart [*ibid.*, 145].

That is, a magic of the world as a natural whole replaces the magic of specific natural phenomena. Whereas the magic that has been overcome bound human beings to their particular activities, this new magic seeks to tear away from human beings their own existence, transforming it into a "true reality" incarnate in symbolic and perishable reality. Bigo calls this the paschal dimension:

Existence is symbolic and . . . history is paschal, not because of something that the faith brings to them from without but by the very fact of the twofold touch of the creation and the incarnation [*ibid.*, 144].

Previously incarnation was thought to mean really becoming a human being. Now Bigo is saying that the true human being is the symbolic human

being and the real human being is symbolic of that true human being. Therefore the incarnation is symbolic. But as symbolic Christ is the real and true human being. The true human being is the symbolic human being. Christ becomes a human being symbolically. But because every human being is human symbolically, Christ truly becomes human. The definitive pasch is the resurrection:

It is *our* flesh that will rise, as Christ arose in flesh marked by the thrust of nails and lance. It is not a matter of physical, chemical, or biological continuity; death is not an appearance, a seeming. It is matter of an enduring sign of a definitive reality, of meaning for the spirit [ibid., 143].

Inasmuch as the final reality is “true reality,” palpable reality is swallowed up. As an ethereal body, it is eternal. The sign remains. Such a body is not palpable reality without death, but rather “true reality”—unaware of death—which swallows up the sign (that is, palpable reality). This is an eternal peace of corpses that will never decay.

Such is the second step in antimessianism. The third follows: “nothing in the Bible lends itself to substituting for this genuine hope and expectation of some kind of temporal progress” (ibid., 95).

Bodiliness no longer forms the bridge for dialogue with God. The true bridge is “true reality,” which constitutes “true” hope. This true hope is merely reflected in temporal progress, which in itself is nothing. “If there is ‘an appointed time’ (Gal. 4:4) it has its roots not in temporal progress but in an increasingly intimate encounter with God” (ibid.).

The encounter with God does not take place within temporal progress, but outside it. It is utterly angelic, soul to soul. Temporal progress is declared to be something merely finite. It is not considered to be open to transcendence; it is closed to it. It is opened to transcendence when palpable reality is changed into symbolic reality dominated by “true reality.” “Human activity has no meaning unless it is infinite. . . . When the person turns to adoring the finite, perversions begin” (ibid., 107).

Bigo now declares that discovering transcendence within temporal progress is “adoring the finite.” It is forbidden territory. We must rise up to the higher realms that govern palpable reality from above.

A key instance of Bigo’s argument regarding the “adoration of the finite” occurs in his interpretation of the temptations of Jesus:

The temptation that Jesus explicitly rejects is . . . the temptation to go the way of the satanic condition: to be worshiped, to attain a glory like Caesar’s, to become, like him, the deified master of the universe, “the Son of God” indeed but in a perverted way. The suggestion against which Jesus directly addresses himself is that, clothed in the full power

of his divinity, he do what he is able to do, overcome the world and make himself adored instead of being the humiliated and suffering servant [ibid., 74].

For Bigo the decisive point is that Jesus refuses to be the “deified master of the universe” in order to become the true Master of the universe. Satan wants to lead him to a deification of the universe:

On the whole, what we need to retain from the temptation episode is Jesus’ involvement at the heart of “the political” in a death struggle with the “Sovereignities and the Powers” (Col. 2:15), and with a mythology of power [cf. *Church*, 75].

If he had become engaged in politics, Jesus would have gone the way of the satanic condition as deified master of the universe. He opts for a “true messianism” that becomes involved at the heart of “the political.” In this “true messianism” Christ is also king but in a different fashion:

Jesus is truly king, that is, the Son of God, but his sovereignty is not domination. It is expressed in the subject of humiliation, arrest, torture, and death. It is complete reversal of the meaning of royalty. . . . His kingship must go through the darkness of humiliation and death, and can only be actualized in the mystery of the resurrection [*Bigo, Church*, 91].

Satanic adoration and adoration of the son of God are related as opposites: “demoniac adoration in direct contradiction to the adoration of God alone” (ibid., 92).

Jesus is this king. He becomes king through humiliation and the extinction of his palpable life; through resurrection he enters his kingdom of “true reality.” The palpable reality of humiliation and death becomes subject to Christ and to his sovereignty in “true reality.” Hence he can show the way to all existing powers:

His testimony has opened the way to democracy, contesting all forms of monarchy, of oligarchy, and of anarchy—all adversaries of democracy; it is also a protest against power that is exercised in the name of the people when it claims, in one way or another, to be absolute [ibid., 93].

Existing power has now become legitimate and can follow Christ. Within “true reality” it is a servant and, by exercising power within palpable reality, it can force everyone to subordinate palpable reality to “true reality.” “To refer power to a supreme authority, is, therefore, to demystify it” (ibid., 89).

On the contrary, that means mystifying it. Bigo makes his “true Christ”

fall into the temptation that the real and palpable Christ rejected. Because Bigo does not want Christ at the heart of the real and palpable life of human beings, he has put Christ at the very heart of domination—not, however, in the person of the one dominating, but in the abstract principles of domination. The dominator is now the administrator of these abstract principles, which come from turning the world upside down, the principles whereby palpable reality is subjected to “true reality.” Any principle of power emanating from that reversal is now “God’s law,” in particular the subordination of the right to live to the principle of calculated efficiency, the principle that constitutes the very essence of private property.

Bigo does not legitimate any sort of power whatsoever. He legitimates only this abstract power, which abandons palpable reality in order to return from above and impose its criteria. What he legitimates is power from above. This ideology of power is the kind of renunciation of power sought by the church:

Like Christ the community of his disciples renounces power, an essential principle for the secularization and autonomy of civil society. Their renunciation is also a negation of absolute power and provides the basis for a new society [*Church*, 93].

He therefore champions a Christ who is at the heart of politics without engaging in any politics. But because this is the true Christ, Bigo is defending the heart and essence of domination without exercising it. This is not throne and altar. These are the abstract principles of domination and antimessianic Christianity. Nevertheless, he rejects any power “that is exercised in the name of the people when it claims, in one way or another, to be absolute”—meaning, when reality is not treated as symbolic (*ibid.*).

For Bigo, treating the world as what is real is the new form of satanic adoration. Having established this starting point, he works out his explicit antimessianism. He calls this the exorcising of fetishes (*ibid.*, 199). He sets the legitimate domination of the abstract principles of “true reality” in opposition to the illegitimate domination that results from messianic movements. In Christ this illegitimate domination has been essentially overcome but it continually returns:

[It was] the end of the pagan world, which aureoled power with a religious nimbus. It was also the end of the Jewish world, of the time which identified the divine covenant with earthly domination. Both the pagan and the Jewish temptations keep on coming to life over and over again [*ibid.*, 78].

In fact Bigo considers both temptations to be the same. He sees fetishization as exercising power to serve an earthly messianism—with its basis in palpable reality—and that is what provides such power with a religious aureole:

Political society and economic society are contemporaneous and inseparable. To contest wealth is to contest power. [They are] two faces of the same biblical contestation [ibid., 93].

By making no distinctions he identifies the biblical critique of private accumulation of wealth with his own critique of social wealth. What the biblical tradition links together are domination and accumulated personal wealth. That is the context for interpreting the temptations. The wealth and power promised are the riches accumulated and protected by dominating power. They represent a breakup of the unity of the person in community and therefore a break with God.

There is not the slightest criticism of social wealth here. If wealth is held by persons in community, it can be understood as the wealth of the new earth, following the biblical tradition, because that is what the new earth is: holding everything in common, and enjoying the products of the work of some human beings without condemning others to death or excluding them from enjoying those products. The limit-image of the new earth may thus be pictured as a situation where one's pure human spontaneity, vis-à-vis oneself, others, and goods, cannot come into contradiction with anyone else's life or enjoyment of life. This image would be the ultimate expression of transcendence within real material human life. It is an infinity with finiteness.

This transcendence within real life is the opposite of domination and accumulated wealth. The kind of transcendence outside real life that Bigo proposes simply means putting Christ at the heart of domination. Hence this inner transcendence must be understood as the kind of transcendence that exterior transcendence tries to replace.

Certainly Marx never formulates any sort of explicit transcendence. He thinks he has finished the problem when he has dealt with external transcendence. But it is just as true that by following Marx's line of thought and his critique of fetishism, although one may never formulate any sort of transcendence outside real life, one may do so within real life. This can be done if the realm of freedom is understood as transcendent. That is what liberation theology has done and that is just what Bigo wants to condemn. Hence he speaks of this transcendence as "adoration of the finite."

Bigo no longer attacks Marx's critique of religion as a rejection of transcendence. He now realizes that there is a kind of transcendence in tune with Marx's thinking that liberation theology has taken up. Bigo's critique is now aimed at this transcendence itself. He does not go after Marx's atheism, which he regards as unimportant. He takes aim at the kind of transcendence that Marx's line of thinking can produce, quite conscious that Marx's atheism is not the only conclusion to which his method may lead.

Bigo thus changes the object of his critique. Previously he criticized Marx's atheism, charging that it was inherent in his thought. Now that he knows it is not inherent, he shifts his own critique to Marx's critique of fetishism, so that along with Marxism he can attack those Christian currents that have arisen

within the overall movement of Marxism. This shift can be explained by the very existence of liberation theology within the socialist movement. Ultimately it is the existence of this theology of liberation that proves that atheism is not inherent in Marx's method.

The existence of liberation theology forces Bigo (and all antiliberationist theologians) to attack the kind of transcendence that may result from applying Marx's method. Bigo thus says this transcendence within real life is false, and can then make accusations of the "adoration of the finite" and of "idolatry," and the like. Because this was the conclusion of his previous antimesianism, directed at Marx's explicit critique of religion, he can now make the transition to antimessianism.

Antiutopian Antimesianism

Messianism is considered to be false transcendence. Overcoming messianism is "true messianism." Messianism means falling into the satanic temptation. Such is Bigo's conclusion. Hence the messianic movement is "pride," "arrogance," "earthly idolatry." It is the mystery of iniquity. Now he can really go on the attack:

Without the "mystery of iniquity," every person would have been a Christ and the whole human race would have been the church. Once iniquity was consummated, Christ and the community of his disciples are necessary to restore its symbolic structure to existence and, by that very fact, its structure of liberty and relation [*Church*, 111].

He now tells us plainly that messianism and making real life the basis for understanding life are the true crucifiers. That is where the "mystery of iniquity" lies. Because of them the will of God that all should have been "a Christ" has not been fulfilled. "Iniquity" prevailed—Christ was crucified. But along with his disciples he continues in history so as to restore to palpable reality its "symbolic character." To take palpable reality as real reality and place Christ within that reality means crucifying Christ. Hence it is the Antichrist.

Christ and his disciples struggle throughout history to return to palpable reality its true character of being a symbolic reality; they must struggle against iniquity, which treats palpable reality as the place to live and seeks transcendence within real life. This is how Bigo sees the sides line up.

This struggle between Christ and "iniquity," however, takes place on the level of "true reality" even though it is carried out within symbolic (that is, real and palpable) reality. Iniquity struggles within (palpable) symbolic reality, in order to define reality as palpable. By declaring reality to be real, it is struggling on the level of "true reality" where it is viewed as "adoring the finite." The adoration of the infinite and the adoration of the finite do battle on the level of "true reality."

Because Bigo does not “engage in politics,” he is not very worried about what this struggle means on the level of palpable reality. The fact that the effort to make life take on a symbolic structure finds obvious allies in earthly struggle does not concern him very much. The struggle is purely religious. It is plain that there are earthly powers supporting this return, indeed all the powers in the capitalist world today. For Bigo, however, these powers in the modern world have subjected themselves to the supreme being. They are demystified powers that take their reference from a supreme authority. They are legitimate powers (*ibid.*, 89). By taking a supreme authority as their reference point, these powers, with their worship of the “one and adorable” God, completely free humankind from fetishism (*ibid.*, 104). Hence Christ is on their side. These powers struggle alongside Christ because they also want to restore to life its symbolic structure. Christ struggles against iniquity, not on behalf of these powers. Bigo, moreover, washes his hands: he is responsible only for the religious aspect. He does not get involved in politics.

After defining how the contending sides line up, Bigo goes no further. He has provided categories for identifying who God’s enemy is, but he does not point to any specific example as filling out this image. Nor does he explicitly issue a call to crucify the crucifiers, although it is implicit in his arguments.

At this point the pawns come out to join the fray. They paint the enemy’s face in ever more livid colors. In the end the enemy is the same as it has always been for Catholic integralism. The Protestant and the Jew are found to be at the bottom of things. Marx describes the proletariat as “universal negation”; López Trujillo says it is “an extrapolation from the Hegelian universe, mixed with sober Lutheranism, which he concocts with his ‘messianic’ brain” (*Liberación*, 267).

If Marxism is messianism, it must have much in common with the Jewish tradition and hence antimessianism cannot but be anti-Marxism and anti-semitism as well. Ultimately it is antisemitism that provides a transition to the myth-making inherent in anti-Marxism. Hence these critics continually speak of Marxism as a secularized messianism. In this mythology Marxism is a crucifier because it is the new form of Jewish messianism, which is also a crucifier.

Two elements are singled out: violence and rebellion against God. Violence is what appears in palpable reality and it is symbolic of what appears in “true reality”—that is, “pride” and rebellion against God. Thus Archbishop López Trujillo says this about Max Scheler:

The interpretation offered by the Jew, Max Scheler, is curious and not very different from that proposed by those who argue in favor of conflict. He seems to be a Jew full of resentment, who wants to burn his enemy’s hair “piously” in the name of love [*Teología*, 96].

This is the residue of two thousand years of the propaganda of Christianity against Jews, accusing them of the very ritual murder that Christians were

carrying out against them. But here we find the key formula for summing up any socialist movement: “full of resentment, [they] want to burn [their] enemy’s hair ‘piously’ in the name of love.” The only purpose this type of propaganda serves is to provide an image of the enemy as the incarnation of iniquity—not simply of evil but of love turned into hatred—that is, iniquity. To present an enemy in this manner removes all dignity, any possibility of respect. The enemy is simply perversion incarnate. When the enemy is so presented, any type of insinuation or inflammatory accusation will seem appropriate. The enemy is perversion incarnate: “guerrillas who entertain themselves by playing soccer with the broken heads of innocent peasants” (Galat-Ordóñez, *Liberación*, 133).

What such images describe is hatred incarnate in persons who become vehicles of hate and the very presence of hatred. On the level of palpable (symbolic) reality, they are sheer violence; on the level of “true reality,” they are sheer hatred, which is the other side of pride. They commit the prototypical sin of humankind. Another of these critics, after speaking as though from Marx’s mouth, says, “In the preceding pages we were invited to come up to the surface to see his *sun*, which spills its light everywhere. . . . Marx whispers to us: *venite adoremus*” (López Trujillo, *Liberación*, 179). He no doubt has Lucifer in mind.

Antimesianism is therefore facing hatred and struggles against it: “A Christian is allowed only that hatred that is commanded: hatred for sin. Taking the point further, the Christian is one who hates sin” (Galat-Ordóñez, *Liberación*, 146).

Until now the idea was that Christians love their enemy. But now we must conclude that loving one’s enemy means hating hatred. That is the way to reconciliation. Archbishop López Trujillo argues the point, citing a passage from Paul:

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near through the blood of Christ. It is he who is our peace, and who made the two of us one by breaking down the barrier of hatred that kept us apart. . . . [He wanted] to create in himself one new man from us who had been two and to make peace, reconciling both of us to God in one body through his cross, which put that hatred to death [Eph. 2:13–17, Bib. Lat.].

On the cross he killed hatred, the barrier that kept us apart. Hence, López Trujillo concludes that “it is love, the power of the cross, that reunites and overcomes divisions, in a demanding conversion process, and not in antagonistic conflict” (*Liberación*, 116).

The power of the cross is the love that overcomes hatred. But the archbishop has twisted the text, which says just the opposite. He makes Paul say just the opposite of what he really says, by suppressing the decisive phrase of the passage: “In his own flesh he abolished the law with its commands and

precepts" (Eph. 2:15). This phrase belongs right after the phrase, "the barrier of hatred that kept us apart." Some pages before, López Trujillo has said explicitly, "the kingdom of God becomes manifest where persons become obedient to the law" (*ibid.*, 108, n. 1).

Paul says that abolishing the law is what makes the kingdom present. In his view hatred lurks behind the law, as a consequence of sin. On the cross, Christ put hatred to death by abolishing "the law with its commands." Hence López Trujillo's conclusion is false. Love does not kill hatred, and the cross by itself is not love. Hatred is put to death on the cross through the elimination of the law, not through its observance. This abolishing of the law is the channel of love.

López Trujillo holds that the Christian is one who "hates hatred." At most one could say that the Christian is one who hates the law, although such a notion does not exist in the Christian message, where being a Christian means opening the way for love by abolishing the law. That is why the cross is not love. Suffering the cross opens the way for love, but inasmuch as love means resurrection, the law is abolished on the cross, and resurrection replaces the law with love.

However, because López Trujillo is speaking on behalf of domination, he cannot speak of abolishing the law. He speaks of observing it and does not hesitate to falsify things in order to attribute his own opinion to Paul. López Trujillo seeks reconciliation through the strict observance of the law. This is the scandalous reconciliation of military juntas, one in which he takes part.

If the law is not abolished, one must hate hatred. Forgiving one's enemy now means loving the kind of reconciliation that consists in obeying the law. The conservative romantic vision of peace as liberation from liberation, and of true messianism as the destruction of messianism, now comes on the scene. The antiutopians present it as the refusal of violence: "As we see it, the gospel, more than natural ethics, obliges us to reject all bloodstained violence" (López Trujillo, *Teología*, 47).

Any preaching of nonviolence must deal with unemployment and impoverishment or it will be cynical and hypocritical. Unemployment and pauperization are doing violence to whole peoples. Thieves and murderers also advocate nonviolence. Does a thief preach violence? A thief wants to steal in peace. Murderers do not preach violence either; they want to murder in peace. Even Hitler wanted to conquer the Soviet Union peacefully. He described the Soviet partisans who defended themselves in the same terms used today about guerrilla groups in Latin America. Murderers everywhere want peace. When preaching peace one should make sure one is not preaching the peace of thieves and murderers.

After the military coup in Chile, the public health system was systematically dismantled and salaries in real terms were reduced to half of what they had been, but the incomes of the upper 5 percent of the population doubled. This was a deliberate mass murder. This money is the blood of the poor. The murders committed by the military, and by the police paralleling the military

example, were needed to maintain the murderers' "peace." These two forms of murder are partners. Preaching the peace of these upper classes and military juntas, their kind of national reconciliation, means preaching the "peace" of thieves and murderers. They have declared war on their peoples. Naturally, like all conquerors they do not want victims to defend themselves when attacked. That is why they speak of peace.

That is also why they only appear to repudiate violence. They repudiate violence "except in the case of 'manifest, long-standing tyranny' " (López Trujillo, *Teología*, 47). They never condemn violence pure and simple. They always want to maintain a *reservatio mentalis*, even though they try to hide it as much as possible. Bigo says, "Force is sometimes necessary in the service of justice; violence, never. In what does the intrinsic malice of violence consist? In being its own justification and a law unto itself" (*Church*, 289).

He creates another term. He condemns violence but not force. It would not be wrong to interpret this rejection of violence in the case of persons who are defending their right to live. The idea is that violence may be employed to block any regime that would not regard palpable reality as symbolic and might threaten private property. That is, violence may be used to deal with "iniquity."

At the *Te Deum* that the cardinal of Santiago celebrated for the military junta on September 18, 1974, he said this regarding the church:

It accompanied the conquistadors, supporting them in their legitimate aspirations and offering its own resources for the purposes of teaching and civilizing, but its main concern went out to the ones conquered. Both were offered the faith to draw them away from their idols.

If the conquistadors' aspirations are legitimate, there is no problem of violence.

Belligerent Pacifism

Beneath all the hypocritical preaching of pacifism and nonviolence, there is really a covert call to this very violence. The preachers of peace are calling to war. This is actually the most effective way to preach war. They speak of Christ and iniquity doing battle on the level of "true reality," where Christ crucifies his crucifiers; this battle takes place in palpable (but symbolic) reality. Of all possible ways of inciting to violence for its own sake, this is the most evil. What might constitute a situation where violence is justifiable is utterly obscured, but the emphasis is on the assertion that such situations exist. There is no doubt of what kind of situation this propaganda is referring to, but its proponents never point to it by name.

What is most striking in all the analyses of violence found in the social doctrine defended by Pierre Bigo and others is that they never raise the question of why the most bloodstained forms of violence ever known have

invoked the name of Christianity. All the authors are alike in completely ignoring this history of Christianity as a history of violence. They universally condemn violence, but then never mention those cases where it was employed in the name of Christianity, or to transform reality into "symbolic reality." If such authors live in Latin America, they pay not the least bit of attention to the violence of military juntas. They paint a picture of a peaceful world, disrupted by the violence of Marxists, a violence they present in the most horrifying fashion possible. All their descriptions of such violence are identical with those the military juntas use to justify their own violence.

Because they do not analyze this violence—and much less its roots—it never occurs to them to ask why the violence of the military juntas all over the continent today is being carried out by men who claim to be Christians, a claim validated by church hierarchies. Their Christian faith is such that they regard the use of this violence as putting their faith into practice. They know the teachings of Christianity, and what they read there is their duty to apply violence. This is plainly violence for its own sake. They call it total war against subversion. No hierarchy on the continent has called this violence illegitimate. Some have criticized it for its excesses, but never have they called it illegitimate. No one has cast any doubt on the faith of these Christians. They are applying their faith and it is their faith that impels them to act this way.

The social doctrine analysts do not even notice the violence of Christians in Latin America. They look for excuses for avoiding the issue. The chief such pretext is found in the effort to attribute violence to those persecuted by the military juntas. They make detailed lists of such kinds of violence, thereby becoming ideological advocates for the military juntas. Thus they sacrifice the very populations the military juntas are sacrificing. Both sides are in tacit agreement. In the gospel message it is Herod who is condemned and the Zealots who are admonished. The Zealots' violence is not condemned. The social doctrine analysts reverse the gospel message: they condemn the Zealots and admonish Herod.

However, a right to employ violence can be acknowledged only to defend the right to live. Indeed, this is the only natural right that the human being may not renounce. Exercising this right to defend one's life is in no way arbitrary. It may not be relinquished. Nevertheless, defending the right to live is the only situation where the social doctrine expounded by Bigo condemns violence with no *reservatio mentalis*.

The right to live is only the other side of a duty: the obligation to live. This duty to live is part of real life and may not be replaced by any kind of life on the level of an artificially constructed "true reality." Duty obliges one to live one's real life and to offer that life only where the life of others and commitment to real life demand it. Such a stand may lead to a refusal to engage in any violence, but that refusal cannot be to serve anything except real life.

The social doctrine of Bigo is aware of a similar fundamental right, one

that provides the basis for its doctrine: the right of owners to defend their property. It is only in this case that this social doctrine has no difficulty in recognizing the right to employ violence. It regards the defense of property as the only case where violence may be employed justifiably. It denies the same right to those who seek to defend their economic life. Property, yes; life, no.

Ultimately, the question is: Who have the right to defend themselves by using force, owners defending their property or persons defending their life? Bigo's social doctrine answers that only owners have such a right and that others do not. If one supports real life, however, the answer must be the opposite. Persons may invoke such a right to defend their lives but property owners may not do so to defend their property.

The answer given by social doctrine writers is always hypocritical. They sense the shame implied in their answer. Speaking of the relationship between owners defending their property and persons defending their real life, Bigo says: "If we want to avoid violence on one side or the other, the mobilization of each group must not be done in such a way that it does away with every chance for their coexistence" (*Church*, 212).

In appearance Bigo is calling for a commitment on both sides: property owners should respect everyone's life and everyone should respect owners' property. Covertly, however, he is saying something else—namely, that even where private property is incompatible with the right of all to live, the agreement should be upheld. The apparent neutrality vanishes in such a case. He is saying that private property should be maintained even when it is incompatible with the right to live. He is therefore giving owners the right to use force to defend their interests, in the last resort. This is the peace that comes through observing the law instead of abolishing it.

Private Property Properly and Badly Understood

To be sure, the social doctrine writers always insist that they are not defending private property as it exists: "Some have thought they could see in the defense of private property (rightly understood) support for its abuses and injustices that 'cry out to heaven' " (López Trujillo, *¿Liberación?*, 93).

What they are defending is private property (rightly understood). Private property (rightly understood) is private property with full employment, decent pay, affable owners, no underdevelopment, no destruction of nature—private property that promotes the family and the independence of the individual. That is true private property. Real private property, the palpable kind we know, is property badly understood. It is the "symbolic" existence of true private property. The social doctrine defended by Bigo therefore continually criticizes private property (badly understood), reproaching it for not being true private property. This is the only sort of criticism owners accept, because it confirms them in their ownership. At this point the very act of criticizing private property justifies it.

Because real private property is always private property (badly under-

stood), Bigo's social doctrine justifies it even when appearing to criticize it. It is only in this fashion that it has been able to provide inspiration for popular movements that always end up frustrated. It accepts all the demands of the people and says they pertain to true private property (properly understood), but it then demands that these demands be subject to real private property (badly understood). It proclaims the right to live on the level of "true reality" and that this is indeed the essence of true private property (properly understood), and then goes on to deduce the obligation of the people to be subjected to real private property (badly understood) and presents this as the true realization of the right to live. This is how it can say that the justifiable violence of owners in defense of their property is ultimately the defense of everyone's right to live. In the name of the defense of property, a defense presented as the true defense of life, it denies persons their inalienable right to live and to defend their life.

In order to arrive at such a conclusion, faith must be entirely reversed in the form of antiutopian Christianity. It is only a faith reversed in this fashion that may come to such a conclusion. Everything must be changed: God, Christ, the spirit, all the mysteries of the faith, the relationship of the person to the self, and even the sacrament of the Eucharist. By taking hold of the faith and turning it inside out, property owners have made it their own. This "true reality" has then been superimposed on all reality, and palpable reality is swallowed up in the process. By creating a confusion of tongues, a tower of Babel is erected with private property as its foundation, and this time the tower does reach to the heavens, replacing the biblical God with the "god of the philosophers."

If the real human being is to recover the right to live, there must be a corresponding recovery of the faith. Marx destroyed the god of the philosophers but he did not find the biblical God. A critique of the god of the philosophers is a necessary condition for recovering faith so it may serve human life.

Affirming life involves affirming both everyone's duty to live and everyone's corresponding right to live. Because life is a real and material life that cannot be replaced by any "true or spiritual life," this is the verdict that must be pronounced over property: a property system is legitimate only insofar as it is compatible with the real material life of all. It must be compatible with the need of all to ensure their life by their labor. Insofar as private property is incompatible with this demand, it is illegitimate.

This duty/right to live may therefore clash with the property system. To the extent that such a clash takes place, there is a duty/right to change it. In the last resort—and only in the last resort—this means the right to use force to carry out that change. It also implies the obligation of owners to allow such a change regarding property. This is a right that the people can demand. If violence is to be avoided, owners must give way, keeping their own duty/right to life just like everyone else. But the right to life is never a right to property; it is always the right to real, material life, concrete life.

All currently recognized values, including the property system, must come from the duty/right to live. They should not be derived from any “true reality,” which in the end always consumes real life. The human being is not for the Sabbath; the Sabbath is for the human being. Hatred is killed by abolishing the law, not by obedience to the law. To conjure up a “true reality” is to set up a new law, behind which sin will be lying in wait. Hatred is defeated by love, and love abolishes the law.

A theology of life—the basis for any theology of liberation—must deal with these demands. Its main object is not social structures, about which it has little say. Its main concern is the subject—the person in community. It must strive to form a subject existing for life and not for death—a subject able to live and make a discernment between social structures on the basis of their capability to serve life, a subject able to defend its right to live. This really means converting hearts, converting hearts toward life and rejecting the conversion of hearts that leads to death. The aim is a conversion toward a subject that liberates its body and is aware that such a liberation cannot be achieved unless it is made available to everyone. If such a possibility does not exist, the subject will again become a subject ready to put others to death, and therefore to orient its own life toward death.

Such a theology is as class-conscious as the duty/right to live. The duty/right to live is valid for everyone and is not (nor can it be) exercised to serve any particular social class. The duty/right to live is universal. However, insofar as the property-owning group cuts off the duty/right of others to live, the universal duty/right confronts those owners. Despite the fact that this duty/right is universal, it becomes the battle flag of one group against another. In order to carry out that universal duty/right, the challenging group must prevail so as to ensure that the property system will be compatible with their right. This is accordingly a class struggle that a subject striving for life must undertake. It is a legitimate struggle and indeed is the only legitimate struggle.

A Neutrality That Is Not Neutral

The fact that the duty/right to live is universal offers no grounds for adopting neutrality regarding class struggle. López Trujillo says “it should be clear that *vis-à-vis the common good*, with all the demands for justice it makes, the church must offer itself generously, and in this sense its contribution cannot be neutral” (*¿Liberación?*, 89). That would be perfect if he did not understand the “common good” to mean defending property rather than the duty/right to live. He goes on to say:

In many cases the word of the gospel may have an influence on social life, as well as “political implications.” But these implications do not mean that the neutrality of the church is thereby broken [ibid].

He presents the position of the church as the opposite of what it really is. It is not neutral—and this is what is alleged to be its neutrality—its “true” neutrality. If this hypocrisy of “true reality” is set aside, the fact remains: the church is not neutral. According to López Trujillo, it takes a position in favor of private property and against the right to life. He uses the fiction of a “true reality” to hide this position, which he does not dare to take openly.

Bigo leaves no doubt about where the real and palpable neutrality of “true” neutrality ends up:

The definitive schema is not always in question when timebound choices are made. . . . Yet cultural choices issue from Christ and the community of his disciples only insofar as they have to do with paschal meaning [*Church*, 145].

The paschal meaning is nothing but the denial of the universal duty/right to live and its replacement by private property. It is Christ at the heart of domination. When this is threatened, neutrality ceases and a class option is taken. Bigo takes a clear position against the duty/right to life, committing the faith to this position. This is plainly a class stance but one that is illegitimate, a class stance on the side of domination. He implicates the avarice of property owners in the heart of the church itself:

The church’s mission is nothing less than to give meaning to existence, all existence; it is only that and all that. All existence belongs to the church, for there are no sections of life not included in the paschal mystery [*ibid.*].

All existence belongs to the church. These writers want to swallow up everything. Is it not the other way around, that the church belongs to everyone?

Servants Who Travel First-class

The “clear confusers” accuse Christians for Socialism of arguing that the church should accept this idea: “So that we won’t ‘miss the train,’ the church should modestly hop on after it has begun to roll—in the last of the third-class cars” (Galat-Ordóñez, *Liberación*, 188). Certainly not! “Modestly”?!—certainly not! And certainly not at the end of the third-class cars. Everything belongs to the church: it is the servant of all. So it travels first class, in the lead coach. Better yet: let them send a Mercedes Benz. The church is so modest it deserves nothing but the best.

The confusers add another accusation against Christians for Socialism: “Their final proposal may be summed up as forcing the church to accept the temptation of an earthly, carnal, and zealot messianism, the temptation that

Christ rejected” (ibid., 195). That the satanic temptation means asking that the church modestly get on in the last third-class car is an utterly novel interpretation!

For his part Bigo is willing to evangelize socialism, not in the form of powerless power, to which he feels no temptation, but as power dealing with another power:

After all, to hold goods in common, to share in the same condition as other people, ought not to be anything to frighten Christians but, rather, something to gladden their hearts. Who first preached this sort of communism? And if the church must continue to be aware of the violence of Marxism, it must also implant the gospel in this new world—and the church can do that only by recognizing the values of the gospel [*Church*, 297–98].

Who first preached this “communism”? *We* did! Two thousand years ago! We are the ones who know what communism is. We are going to preach to socialist countries! We are going to hold classes. Who could do better than we, with all our experience! Marxists have known about communism for scarcely a hundred years; we have two thousand years behind us.

There is no reason for us to take our seat modestly in the last third-class coach. We can serve better in a Mercedes Benz. All is ours. Even if liberals freed slaves when Christians opposed it, really it was we who did it. If communists manage to protect real human life when Christians resist, again it is really we who do it. Everything is ours, including what others accomplish on this insipid level of palpable and symbolic reality. They are our puppets. When they act, we will refer to them in terms such as these: “This *new prophet* preaches the deification of the human being” (Lopez Trujillo, *Liberación*, 172); “God is liquidated in the name of human divinity” (ibid., 173); “the battle between Marx and God” (ibid., 174); “deified immanence” (ibid., 179); “absolute values are denied” (ibid., 201); “the human being’s secret desire for divinization” (ibid., 199); “we see here a vast inversion: the human being is not the image of God but God is the image of the human being” (ibid., 202); “religious categories, such as redemption, go flying around” (ibid., 246); “deep down Marxism is messianic” (ibid., 271); “fleeting sorcery” (ibid., 272).

Once it has been achieved, we will ask, “Who first preached this communism?” We, the servants who travel first-class. Bigo does not want to preach socialism in socialist countries, nor does he want to preach private property. He wants to preach the essence of private property, what he understands as the paschal meaning of existence and what in economic terms means subordinating the fundamental law of the right to live to the formal calculation of efficiency. At great length Bigo proposes the slogan of “joint management” as the new revolution the socialist countries must go through.

A Call to Collective Suicide

There is a permanent orientation of life toward death in the stance that changes palpable reality into symbolic reality, subjecting it to the fiction of "true reality." Everything contributes to assuring that life means nothing but a sickness heading toward death. Values are hypostasized into absolute values, until they consume reality itself. Once again the confusers say it as clearly as could be:

But even if Marxism were in practice the only option that might be politically successful in our countries, that is no reason why the Christian should climb aboard the Marxist train—just because it is the only one going anywhere—with no thought about where it is going, or how much the ticket costs, [as] if the criterion justifying the Christian's socio-political decision were that of pragmatism. . . . They should not go beyond the bounds of what is allowed by the magisterium of the church [Galat-Ordóñez, *Liberación*, 112–13].

These new crusaders charge against the holy sepulcher head on. At least the confusion is clear. Their logic is quite coherent. Taking absolute values as different from real and material human life means demanding the collective suicide of humankind for those values. It does not matter what these absolute values are. The very fact that they are absolute implies the collective suicide of humankind. If the Sabbath is not for human beings but human beings for the Sabbath, there will be neither human beings nor Sabbaths. Absolutizing values vis-à-vis real human life means sacrificing humankind. It is only in the name of such absolute values that human beings may feel justified in destroying the universe.

There is an image of God that goes along with this collective suicide, the God of arbitrariness and of legitimate domination, who lays down such absolute values—that is, the law. By the logic inherent in absolute values, this God becomes Moloch.

Father Gundlach already said there could be cases where the Christian faith would have to be defended by the destruction of the universe. If that happened, the responsibility would fall on God. The confusers now tell us when this collective suicide must be carried out: when there is no other solution for political and social problems except socialism. What Gundlach thought without saying, the confusers state without thinking it through.

What is being announced is the greatest human act of rebellion against God, inasmuch as it is the greatest rebellion against the human condition (which means accepting and living real material life). This is a rebellion that must arrogate to itself divine dignity, the dignity that the biblical God of the new covenant has given up. Against the biblical God, they raise up a god who no longer exists and in the name of this god they take on themselves the right

to deliver the final verdict over creation and the real existence of humankind. They are incapable of being creators but they are willing to destroy the world. The power to destroy creation is as great as the power to create it. By negation they become an anti-Creator. They rise up to the heavens in order to consume the earth.

How Christianity Ennobles Real Life: Absolutized Values versus Historical Materialism

Abstract Norms and Absolute Values

Absolute values have to be *made* absolute. When Cicero puts on his toga and cries out "Virtue!," persons begin to act in the name of absolute values. This is a signal to massacre a peasant movement that has taken advantage of Catiline's conspiracy in order to claim its land.

When values are made absolute they are hypostasized. To absolutize values does not imply any esteem for them but rather the greatest contempt. The "silent night" of absolute values is the night of the "long daggers."

When values are absolutized they are turned upside down and so turned against human life. Values are fetishized in the name of an imaginary true life and the result of contempt for real life. The fetish of this imaginary life lives off the real life of human beings by killing them. God is construed to be standing over all this, a God of hosts (armies), Providence, Lord of history, who demands this human sacrifice. To absolutize values brings on the four horsemen of the apocalypse. To absolutize values is actually the most absolute way to relativize them and have them serve particular societies. Hence it means the most absolute disrespect for values.

To absolutize value in no way means insisting on the norms of human life in common. It is not "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal." To absolutize values leads to the opposite: "Kill, steal!"—not killing just anyone or robbing from just anyone, but only those who refuse to absolutize values. There is no greater contempt for values than that expressed in their absolutization.

Simplifying things, we may say that two norms sum up what life in common should be. "Thou shalt not kill" expresses simple respect for human life, and "Thou shalt not steal," respect for the means of life. Respect for the means of life always includes respect for some system of institutionalized property: only within some such system can the means of life be ensured. Such norms are present in any kind of life in common: they are the values that hold together a common life. Even a band of thieves observes certain norms, although not vis-à-vis outsiders.

These two norms—"Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal"—are very general, not at all concretized. Both of them function in societies whether socialist or capitalist, feudal or slaveholding. What they prohibit is the chaos that ensues when human beings are engaged in outright struggle

with one another, but these norms have no positive content. Inasmuch as no society can permit the chaos of unrelenting struggle—it would cease to be a society—these norms appear in all societies.

These abstract norms for human life in common cannot be absolutized, although real life is impossible unless they are observed at least relatively. But in their abstract form there is no way to ensure that they be observed, because it is not at all clear what they mean. They must always be made concrete. If a patient dies in an operation, that operation leads to death. Only when the norm is made concrete is it possible to see whether it was murder. In some societies it is indeed viewed as murder, but not in others. Where a magical view of the world obtains, it appears to be murder; where the outlook is secularized, it does not. Even though in both cases an abstract norm—“Thou shalt not kill”—is in effect, the value is made specific in different ways, related to the way life as a whole is viewed.

If a business is nationalized without compensation, someone loses what has heretofore served as a means of livelihood. Here likewise it is only by making the norm “Thou shalt not steal” specific that one may judge whether or not theft is verified. In the context of the capitalist property system, it is theft; in the context of a socialist property system, it is a legitimate measure whereby the means of production may be made to serve real human life. The same abstract norm is in effect in both property systems, but the value concretized in it is different and fits in with how life as a whole is conceived in the particular society.

To absolutize values is to refuse to render specific the abstract norms of human life in common in a way that serves the demands of real life. In the case of a doctor, it would mean adherence to a magical view of the world, and in the case of property, insisting that private property be treated as a natural right. In such a case the value (as a norm made specific) is working against the real life of human beings even though the value has its origins in the demands made by this same real life. The value is raised to the level of a rigid principle set over human life. It is no longer a norm that must be made specific for life, but an absolute value or principle. It does not state “Thou shalt not kill” but “Operations are forbidden.” It does not state “Thou shalt not steal” but “Nationalizing a business without compensation is forbidden.”

An abstract norm of life in common can be absolutized only in the form of an expressed value. During the eighteenth century conservatives held this absolute value: “A child should not be vaccinated against smallpox” (Justus Möser).

In the absolutizing process, values are reversed. “Thou shalt not kill” is reversed to mean “Let die.” “Thou shalt not steal” is reversed to mean “Let human beings die of exploitation.” To absolutize a value means demanding that the human being die so that the value may live. The value becomes the expression of a fetish, a Moloch. As absolutized, value is always expressed in this form: Let the human being die so that the value may live. The form is permissive rather than active. Nevertheless, it becomes active toward those

human beings who refuse to accept death in the name of absolute value. It takes on the form, "Kill them!"

The fiction of "true reality" is useful for arriving at this active form. Without such a fiction it would be impossible to justify human death to serve the life of absolute value. With this "true reality" serving as reference point, real death is now declared to be true life. To refuse to respect this "true reality" and to insist on respect for real reality now becomes the sin of "pride" or "lack of humility." In correlation to this sin of pride the image of God is construed to be that of the one who is most deeply insulted by such "pride," for this God is the one who has created the world as a symbol of "true reality." God accordingly commands those who absolutize values and create "true reality" to kill the proud. Absolute value now takes on its active form.

Making values absolute is the way fetishization is expressed in the realm of values. Hence it is part of a process embracing society as a whole in all its expressions. Land (in feudal society) and capital (in capitalist society) are the bodily existence of the fetish; absolute values are its soul.

***Christianity and Historical Materialism:
The Biblical God and the God of the Philosophers***

Destroying fetishes means destroying the way values are absolutized and recovering human freedom so that values adequate to real human life may be generated. This is an ongoing process whereby the abstract norms of human life in common are made specific in such a way that they serve real human life. It means stating that values are ultimately dependent on the production and reproduction of real life.

That is why historical materialism is the theory for destroying fetishes. As a method, Engels describes it in these terms:

The determining element in history is, in the last resort, the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted.⁵⁰

If such were not the case, there would be no life, because life cannot exist unless real life ultimately determines values. Absolute values cannot be made eternal, because that would mean collective suicide. Hence throughout history eternal values have always been short-lived. That situation changes the moment humankind has the power to destroy the earth. Even that, however, would not make absolute values eternal, but would rather bring about the collective suicide virtually anticipated when values are absolutized.

Marxist method follows from what Engels says. It is the analysis of human life in the production and reproduction of real life—no more, no less. The "normative" expression of real life is the right to live. Marx speaks rather of its "practical expression" and does not use the term "normative."

This is what it means to accept Marxism as a method. The results of

Marxist analysis are accepted insofar as they result from this method and the kind of analysis based on it. Archbishop López Trujillo to the contrary notwithstanding, even Marx can make mistakes. When liberation theology uses Marxism as a method it is also saying that atheism does not necessarily follow from this method, contrary to López Trujillo's position: "It is obvious that Marxist methodology is utterly integrated into the Marxist system as a whole: feeding on its 'ideology,' on its conception of the human being" (*Liberación*, 219).

The method is the conception of the human being and therefore it does not "feed on" any such concept. The Marxist system is elaborated by means of the method, not the other way around. May a Christian appeal to Marxist "methodology" with no risk whatsoever to faith? (*ibid.*, 207). The very question is absurd. Nothing can be done with no risk whatsoever, not even entering a monastery—where indeed many have lost their faith. What López Trujillo wants to prevent is a method that might analyze real human life to serve that life. He recognizes that to accept this Marxist method is to refuse to absolutize and hypostasize values. The only thing this method blocks is interpreting real life to serve some kind of "true life," thus undermining real life. Hence he says that "Ambivalence is the ever-present shadow that accompanies Marx's humanism wherever it goes: it denies absolute values, and yet it makes a value of this sort out of a partial truth" (*ibid.*, 201).

Marx says that human beings have to really live—in palpable reality—in order to have values. Values, therefore, can only be a way of furnishing the means for real life. This does not mean that persons can live without values, keeping them only as decoration. It means that only life-enabling values are necessary and that those that are incompatible with life must be given up. These latter are eternal values.

Hence Marx does not affirm any partial truths: real life is not partial. You either live or you die—you do not live a little or partially. Therefore real life is not any sort of absolute value. It is the ultimate basis for all values.

The method is applied by understanding life as real. That is the source of the theories: the theories of value, of surplus value, of classes, and of the state. All these theories form a whole, whose core is the method. The method therefore expresses the criterion of truth: real life. When this is applied as the criterion of truth, the result is the theory of values and, accordingly, the theory of fetishism. There is no critique of religion apart from the critique of fetishism.

If Marx assumes that the critique of fetishism is of itself the critique of religion, he does so because he accepts the kind of interpretation of Christianity that López Trujillo presents. That is an error on Marx's part, but there is no reason for López Trujillo to blame Marx:

Unfortunately, the name of Christianity has often been extended so as to justify an economic tyranny, an accusation made so often by Marx; *this was not done according to the gospel*, but in open opposition to it. We have often wondered what Marx's attitude would have been had he

been acquainted with Christianity in its fullness through the living witness of convinced Christians [*Liberación*, 196].

Marx was not so naïve as to reject a moral precept simply because it was not observed. He never accused Christianity of not living up to its precepts, but of doing so. His accusation was that economic tyranny was a fulfillment of the gospels and that is why his doubt was over the faith itself and not its application. Failure to apply the gospel would not have been any argument.

Marx's conclusion is correct if the gospel is given López Trujillo's reading. If he were to read the gospel the same way today, Marx would discover that Christianity in its fullness is that of the military juntas. The fact that the military juntas sometimes oppose Christianity is simply an inconsistency on their part. The only thing that might make Marx recognize his error would be the existence of liberation theology and of Christians for Socialism, who read the gospel another way. López Trujillo, however, continues to speculate: "If Marx had known the teaching of Saint Thomas regarding private property with its eminently social function . . . how would the young humanist of Trier have acted?" (*Liberación*, 196).

In the first place, he would have found out immediately that Saint Thomas had no such teaching and that it is being attributed to him with no foundation. Second, the issue is not whether private property has any social function, but whether as a structure it can fulfill such a function.

Real life is material life, the interchange of human beings with nature and with each other. Historical materialism declares that this real life is the ultimate basis for all human life. In order to live, human beings must make their real life the ultimate basis for life. It is curious that this position is criticized as "reductionism" or "economism." It is actually something quite obvious. Even when real life opens out toward a religious life, real life remains the ultimate basis. Any image of God that is incompatible with real life will be a fetish; the true God cannot be anything but a God that is compatible with real human life. The only God like that is the one discovered in connection with the transcendence involved in real life. That God is the God of the Bible. Even though Marx himself does not come to this conclusion, the path of his method leads that way. Nothing else matters.

However, the enormous value placed on real life in historical materialism has a critical correlate in the Christian message. In the Christian message the resurrection means a resurrection of human beings in their real life. The ennobling of the human being in the Christian message points to the same aspect of real life that historical materialism takes as its reference point. The resurrection does not point to absolute and eternal values, nor to the "pasch" of "true reality." Nor is it a resurrection of structures. It means that life becomes real life without death. This is why Christianity could spread as the religion of the Roman slaves. It is inconceivable that an antiutopian Christianity could have produced similar results. Contrary to the way the forces of domination absolutize values, esteem for real life has always been the starting point for the ideologies of the oppressed.

In this sense there is a correlation between Marxism and Christianity. That element, which as real life is the ultimate basis of historical materialism, is in the Christian message, the eternal, that which dies and is then resurrected: real material life. In the Christian message this is a transcendence within real life. This same transcendence appears as a limit-concept in Marxist analysis: the realm of freedom. Both reach this transcendence from completely different starting points. Hence Christianity is not the "truth" present in Marxism. Marxist analysis comes to conceive this transcendence as a conclusion of its theory of society and as a way to guide praxis. For its part the Christian message arrives at the same point by imagining transcendence as achieved. This message came down from heaven to earth but was unable to take hold. The fact that Christianity was unable to remain a message of liberation and became antiutopian Christianity may be explained (and is historically comprehensible) as due to the lack of a concept of praxis. When Marxists worked out praxis they discovered within it a transcendence that had been largely lost in the Christian tradition. With this rediscovery, Christianity can once more propose the liberation found in its origins.

This kind of correlation does not reduce Marxism to Christianity, nor does it reduce Christianity to Marxism. The specific element in Marxism is praxis that leads to transcendence within real life. The specifically Christian element is hope in the potentialities of praxis, going beyond what can be calculated to be humanly achievable. The connecting link between them is real material life as the ultimate basis for all human life.

Notes

1. “ ‘To encourage the others.’ The reference is to the simultaneous emergence in the 1850s of the Taiping revolt in China and the craze for spiritualism that swept over upper-class German society. The rest of the world was ‘standing still’ in the period of reaction immediately after the defeat of the 1848 revolutions” (*Capital* I, 164).
2. In chap. 5, below, there is an analysis of the Pauline concept of bodiliness.
3. “*Res sacrosanctae, extra commercium hominum*, ‘consecrated objects, beyond human commerce’—in this case, the Phoenician virgins” (*Capital*, I, 229).
4. Marx is thinking of a weaving mill with power-looms working side by side.—TRANS.
5. Translated from the Spanish edition (*Curso de economía moderna*, Madrid, 1965, 49) of Samuelson’s work; the passage does not occur in either the 1st or 7th English edition.—TRANS.
6. “By love possessed—Goethe, *Faust*, part 1, Auerbach’s Cellar in Leipzig, line 2141” (*Capital*, III, 517).
7. This and all subsequent quotations from Samuelson’s *Economics: An Introductory Analysis* are from the 7th edition.
8. “Day of Calamity,” *día del infortunio*; the phrase occurs in the Spanish edition, but not in the English.—TRANS.
9. From the Preface to the German edition (Tübingen, 1974, viii) of Popper’s *The Poverty of Historicism*; it does not appear in the English edition (Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1961).
10. *Qué Pasa*, Santiago, Chile, Dec. 7, 1973, 9.
11. Karl Popper, *La sociedad abierta y sus enemigos*, Buenos Aires, 1967, 255.
12. This and all subsequent quotations from Friedman’s *Price Theory* are taken from the 4th edition.
13. Quoting Donald N. Michael, *The Next Generation*, Random House/Vintage, New York, 1965.
14. The author is using an earlier mimeographed version of this report, which differs in some respects from the published English version.—TRANS.
15. This paragraph does not appear in the published English version of the report; see note 14, above.
16. See note 15, above.
17. See note 15, above.
18. See, e.g., “The Brazilian Gamble: Why Bankers Bet on Brazil’s Technocrats,” *Business World*, Dec. 12, 1977.
19. This sentence is from a preliminary version, in Spanish, pp. 31–32.
20. The *New American Bible* has been used for Bible quotations in the present volume. However, there are times when its wording does not parallel that of the *Biblia Latinoamericana* used by the author, and does not serve his purpose. In all such cases,

the wording of the *Jerusalem Bible* (JB) or an English translation of the *Biblia Latinoamericana* (Bib. Lat.) has been given and so identified.—TRANS.

21. *La misión social del cristiano: Conflicto de clases o solidaridad cristiana*, Equipo de Reflexión Doctrinal y Pastoral, Santiago, Chile, May 5, 1973.

22. According to *El Mercurio*, Santiago, Chile, Oct. 25, 1973.

23. The author here makes Pierre Bigo, a French Jesuit who has taught and lectured extensively in Latin America and whose commentary on modern Catholic social teaching has been widely read, his interlocutor. His argument thus depends to a great extent on how accurately Bigo's work is a reflection of that social teaching—or at least of its implicit inner logic.—TRANS.

24. J.V. Stalin, *Works*, Foreign Languages Publ. House, Moscow, vol. 12 (April 1929 to June 1930), 1955, 342.

25. The quotes from Pope Paul VI are from *Populorum Progressio*, nos. 23 and 22; see Gremillion, *Gospel*, 394.

26. *Christliche Gesellschaftslehre*, Kevelaer, 1975, 48; he quotes Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 113, 9.

27. Cf. *The Missal in Latin and English*, Westminster, Md., Newman, 1958.

28. See W. Windelband, *Lehrbuch der Philosophie*, Tübingen, 1921, 218.

29. Quoted in Deschner, *Kirche*.

30. *The City of God*, New York, Modern Library, 1950, 685; scriptural reference: 2 Cor. 11:14.

31. *Frankfurter Rundschau*, April 19, 1975.

32. *Herder Korrespondenz*, 77.

33. Scriptural reference: Dan. 5:25.

34. *Excelsior*, San José, Costa Rica, July 19, 1977.

35. *Excelsior*, Aug. 2, 1977.

36. Peter Weiss, *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade*, New York, Atheneum, 1980, 28–29.

37. In a publication of the Equipo de Reflexión Doctrinal y Pastoral, Santiago, Chile.

38. *Excelsior*, San José, May 24, 1977, according to an Associated Press report.

39. *La República*, San José, Costa Rica, May 15, 1977, according to an Associated Press report.

40. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, Carlyle-Wicksteed trans., New York, Modern Library, 1932, 128–29.

41. *El Mercurio*, Santiago, Chile, June 8, 1974.

42. *Excelsior*, San José, April 10, 1977, according to an Associated Press report.

43. Centro de Información América Latina, *Boletín* 2, 1976, 82.

44. *Qué Pasa*, Santiago, Dec. 7, 1973.

45. *La Nación*, San José, Costa Rica, May 5, 1977, 19–A.

46. *La Tercera*, Santiago, Chile, Sept. 19, 1973.

47. *El Mercurio*, Santiago, Chile, Oct. 25, 1973.

48. *El Mercurio*, Oct. 25, 1973.

49. Translated from the Spanish translation of Bigo's work, p. 125.—TRANS.

50. Letter to Joseph Bloch, Sept. 21, 1890, quoted in Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol. 1, *The Founders*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1981, 339.

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Indexes

Compiled by William E. Jerman

Index of Topics

Many of the topics listed in this Index are from, or related to, the writings of Karl Marx. Concepts closely linked with other authors may be found more readily in the Index of Names.

- Antichrist, 20, 126, 144, 151, 187, 209, 218-20
Antigod, 143
Anti-Messiah, xix, 40, 187, 246-49, 252, 256-59
Antisemitism, 186, 208, 210
Antiutopia, 74, 185-86, 188, 203, 210, 221, 225; internalized, 213-15
Antiworld, 214
Argentina, 119, 142, 211
Arms race, 112
Atheism, 230, 255
Authority, 146-47, 149, 189-90; illegitimate but valid, 144-47, 150-52
Avarice, 25, 84
Battle of the gods, 69, 71
Bodiliness, xiii, 129, 227, 252
Brazil, 115, 119, 214
Calculability, 64-66
Calvinism, 151
Capital, xiii, 28, 35, 62, 164, 171, 173; human and nonhuman, 80-83, 89; and nonowners, 28-32; and owners, 33-38
Capital fetishism, xviii, 27
Capitalism, 33, 72; mercantile and industrial, 44
Cathari, 151, 209, 218
Catholicism, 43-44
Charity, 95-97
Chicago schools of economics, 74, 76
Chile, 113, 119, 142, 194-97, 211, 235, 239, 259
Christianity, 10, 19, 69, 73, 126, 154, 176, 185, 229, 268
Christians for Socialism, 159, 229, 265, 272
Church, 240-41
Class(es), 28, 121
Class structure, 144-46
Class struggle, 159
Colombia, 243
Coming of the Lord, 131-32
Commodities, 4, 17, 20, 21
Commodity fetishism, xvi, 9, 59
Commodity relationships, 6-7, 15, 22, 25, 53, 181
Communications, 100
Communism, 56, 59, 266
Community, 157-58, 183-84, 232-33
Competition, 107
Conscience, 166
Consumption, 193-94
Cooperation, 105, 111
Counter-Reformation, 209, 218
Covenant, 230-32
Cross, 189
Crucifixion, 127, 137, 150, 184, 188-90
Crusades, 188, 208-9, 241
Cuba, 113
Death, 130, 133-36, 140-42, 195-96, 213-15
Decolonization, 98
Depravity, 195-96
Desacralization, 251-54

- Destabilization, 113
 Dictatorship, 121
 Division of labor, xv, 2, 62, 87, 174-76;
 international, 99-101; social, 8-9
 Domination, 15-52
 Ecology, 104
 Economics, 63, 65-66
 Efficiency, 245
 Ethical imperative, 64
 Ethical principles, 109
 Eucharist, 193, 212, 217
 Exchange-value, 6, 17
 Faith, 44, 91, 102, 136, 183; in freedom,
 77-78
 Fascism, 93-94, 122, 188
 Fetish, xiii, xv, 15-16, 60, 70
 Fetishism, xiii, 8, 74, 83; analysis of, v,
 ix, 57, 63, 190; theory of, xiv, xv, 2,
 60-61, 75, 125
 Food production, 114-15
 Freedom, 2, 36, 53, 67, 93, 120, 230-32;
 to murder, 75-77; and necessity, 54-55,
 57; as transcendental self-projection,
 55-58. *See also* Realm of freedom
 Future, 60
 Gnosticism, 139, 143, 154, 185
 God, 178, 230-31; and the devil, 71-73;
 power of, 132, 142; rivalry with 246
 Good Friday, 211
 Great Britain, 124
 Green revolution, 114
 Hell, 192-93, 196
 History, 14, 52
 Hoarding, 23-27, 140-41
 Holiness, 132
 Hope, 130
 Hubris, 50, 70
 Humanism, 56, 120
 Human rights, basic and liberal, 119-21
 Human rights violations, 123-24
 Humility, xx, 44, 49-50, 70
 Ideology, 120, 122; false consciousness,
 61
 Image of God, 228, 270
 Incarnation, 251-52
 Individualism, 50
 Industrialization, 114-15
 Infinity, 23-24, 25, 59, 181
 Inheritance, 167-68
 Inquisition, 218, 221-23
 Interdependence. *See* Trilateral Commis-
 sion
 International Monetary Fund, 108
 International monetary system, 106
 Islam, 208
 Jacobism, 151
 Japan, 106
 Judaism, 139, 185, 208-9, 214
 Justice, 198, 200
 Just wage, 172
 Keynesianism, 164
 Labor, 27, 30, 35-36. *See also* Division of
 labor
 Labor unions, 88-89
 Last Judgment, 205-6, 208, 224-25
 Latin America, 117-18, 123, 245, 261
 Law, 134-35, 145, 180
 Liberal democracy, 122-23
 Liberalism, 76, 91-92, 98, 120-21
 Liberation, 150, 153, 187-88, 190, 233-37
 Liberation theology, v, xi, 176-78, 226-
 27, 230, 255, 264
 Life, xii, 141
 Love of neighbor, 136-37, 147
 Machine(s), 36, 82
 Market, 49, 78-79
 Materialism, historical, 21, 272-73
 McCarthyism, 92-93, 118
 Messiah, 40, 183, 186, 216
 Messianism, 256-57
 Money, 19, 36, 85, 140, 170; a commod-
 ity, 16
 Money god, 140-42
 Monopoly, 88-89, 105-6
 Morality, 133, 136
 Multinational corporations, 101, 112
 Murder, 31, 75-77, 208
 Mysteries, Christian, 217-18
 Myth of the cave, 15, 60
 National security, 116
 Nation-state, 101, 105, 106-9
 Naturalism, 56
 Natural law, 65, 164, 174
 Needs, 63, 65
 Neutrality, 264-65
 New democracy, 116-18, 119, 122-23
 New earth, 136-38, 180, 228
 Order, 146, 163
 Original sin, 47, 164, 250
 Pacifism, 260-61
 Philosophy, traditional, 3, 228
 "Physical-metaphysical" objects, 4
 Political economy, classical, 83, 84, 90-
 91; Marxist, 177; neoclassical, 76, 83,
 85, 90-91; and theology, xi
 Polytheism, 72, 143
 Poverty, 108, 109-13, 114, 165, 172, 233-
 37; biblical, 171-73

- Power, 240-41
 Predilection, 199-200, 203
 Price(s), 84, 90
 Pride, 50, 142-44, 187-88, 213, 232
 Private property, 120, 160-62, 175, 177, 186, 262-64
 Production, capitalist, 27, 48, 53, 73
 Property, 160, 162, 179
 Protestantism, 43-44
 Puritanism, 45, 151
 Racism, 93-95, 121
 Rationality, 244-46
 Realm of freedom, xx-xxi, 52, 54-55
 Reformation, 218-19
 Religion, 10, 14, 32, 51, 71, 193; critique of, 4, 19, 56, 228, 255
 Repression, 115
 Resurrection, 127, 132, 150, 188-90, 228-29
 Revolution, 151, 223-24
 Right to use the goods of the earth, 158-59
 Sabbath, 249-50, 267
 Sacrament, 249-50
 Sacrifice, 181
 Salvation, 73, 191, 215
 Scholasticism, 65
 Scientism, 74, 220, 221-23
 Sensuality, 196
 Sin, 133-34, 138, 154, 187, 242
 Slavery, 82, 83, 121, 137, 242-44; illegitimate but valid, 147-50
 Social activity, 63, 66-67
 Social behavior, 21-22
 Socialism, 123, 125, 229, 266
 Social science, 64
 Social teaching, modern Catholic, 162, 172, 176, 186, 237, 242
 Society, bourgeois, 23; capitalist, 26, 172-73; precapitalist, 11-12, 26; Robinson Crusoe, 12-13; socialist, 14, 16, 55-56, 59, 60, 111, 229
 Sociology, 244-46
 Soul, 130
 Soviet Union, 111
 Spirit, 37, 130
 Subject(ivity), 143, 178, 180-82
 Suicide, 267, 270
 Superfluity, 166-68, 171
 Technetronic era, 101-2
 Technology, 32, 53
 Theology, 219; of life, xii, 226-27, 264
 "Thing of the body," 188, 212, 232
 Thrift, 48
 Torture, 31, 123
 Totalitarianism, 123
 Transcendence, 61, 126, 228; within real life, 58-60
 Trilateral Commission, 98; and catastrophes, 103-5; and interdependence, 99-101, 104, 107, 110, 119-20, 122
 Trinity, 37, 71
 Trust, 141
 Underdevelopment, 115
 Unemployment, xix, 90, 172
 United States of America, 103, 106, 113, 116, 121, 123
 Uruguay, 119
 Use-value, 5, 17, 63, 84
 Utility, 86-87
 Utopia, 116, 183, 223-24, 225, 228-29
 Value(s), 19-20, 23, 25, 27, 33-35, 64
 Value judgments, 62-63
 Vietnam, 113, 116, 123
 Violence, 198, 225, 259-60
 Visibility of the invisible, 3, 61
 Wages, 65
 West Germany, 106, 118
 Workday, shortening of, 54-55

Index of Names

- Allende, Salvador, 51, 113, 213
 Apelles, 185
 Aquinas, Thomas, 153, 169, 245; on property, 159-61
 Aristotle, 6
 Armando Molina, Arturo, 204
 Augustine, St., 186
 Bengsch, Cardinal, 189
 Bentham, Jeremy, 91
 Bernanos, Georges, 208
 Bigo, Pierre, 167-70, 174-76, 188, 191, 203, 233, 240-41, 244-56, 265; on law, 178-81; on private property, 262-64; on Thomas Aquinas, 160-65
 Bloch, Ernst, 220
 Bonamin, Victoria, 211
 Bonilla, General, 97
 Brecht, Bertholt, 25
 Brzezinski, Zbigniew, 101-2, 111, 116
 Carter, President, 98-99, 102, 124
 Catalano, Friar, 207
 Columbus, Christopher, 16, 22

- Dante, 207, 216
 Döpfner, Cardinal, 187
 Dostoevski, 219-20
 Engels, 57, 151
 Faust, 73-74, 220, 224
 Fessard, G., 202
 Feuerbach, 4
 Fichte, 144
 Friedman, Milton, 36, 40, 49, 83-85, 92, 126, 167; on charity, 95-98; on freedom, 85-86; and happy fetishism, 74-83; on marginal productivity, 86-88; on monopoly formation, 88-89; on nonintervention, 92-93, 95; portfolio-subject and preference-subject, 78-80; on racial discrimination, 93-95
 Geyer, Florian, 209
 Goethe, 19, 193, 219
 Gundlach, Father, 212, 267
 Hasbún, Father, 51, 213
 Hayek, F.A., 49-51, 70, 75
 Heer, Friedrich, 210
 Hegel, 27, 45, 215
 Hephaestus, 202
 Hitler, 95, 96, 188
 Höffner, Cardinal, 170
 Horlache, W., 216
 Huntington, Samuel P., 117-18
 Ibañez, Paco, 199
 Ibañez Langlois, José Miguel, 195-97
 Jesus Christ, 127-28, 184, 197, 198, 199, 253-54
 Joan of Arc, 209
 John, St., 19
 Juriéev, Dionis, 210
 Kant, 228
 King, Martin Luther, Jr., 238
 Livy, 139
 López Trujillo, Alfonso, 212-2, 234-38, 243-44, 257-60, 264-65, 271-72
 Lorscheider, Cardinal, 204
 Lucifer, 184-86, 189, 192, 197, 202
 Luther, Martin, 20
 de Maistre, Joseph, 37
 Meir, Golda, 208
 Mephistopheles, 73-74, 220, 224
 Merino, Admiral, 235
 Mill, James, 69
 Mithras, 139
 Moloch, 212, 217
 Mondale, Vice-President, 99
 Möser, Justus, 269
 Nicholas I, Czar, 222
 Nietzsche, 69, 70, 73, 126, 219, 221
 Nilza Pessoa, Maria, 214
 Onesimus, 147-48
 Origen, 154, 185
 Paul, St., 128, 130, 179, 187, 192; on bodiliness, 129-32, 154; on law and the Spirit, 143; on the liberated body, 133-44, 182; on slavery, 147-49
 Paul VI, Pope, 169
 Pavelié, Poglavnik, 210
 Philemon, 147-48
 Popper, Karl, 41-42, 74, 75, 118, 125, 220, 223
 Prometheus, 202
 Proudhon, 151
 Rockefeller, David, 98
 Ruiz Tagle, Alfredo, 211
 Samuelson, Paul, 34-35, 38-40, 46-47
 Satan, 184-86, 189, 205
 Scheler, Max, 257
 Schelsky, Helmut, 215
 Schiller, Friedrich, 57
 Schneider, Reinhold, 73
 Shakespeare, 24, 28
 Silva Henríquez, Raúl, 197-98, 200-201, 204-5, 239
 Soloviev, 219-20
 Stalin, 160-61
 Thomas à Kempis, 191-93, 222
 Vance, Cyrus, 99
 Weber, Max, 63, 69-72, 74, 125, 151, 244-46; sociology of, 64-68
 Weiss, Peter, 203
 Wiener, Norbert, 41
 Young, Andrew, 102, 103, 112, 115, 118



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