

THE SACRIFICIAL CYCLE AS A JUSTIFICATION FOR WESTERN DOMINATION: THE WESTERN IPHIGENIA IN LATIN AMERICA

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In the Western tradition, the Oedipus myth plays only an insignificant part. It was Freud who gave it meaning. This no-one had previously done. But the problem it deals with is everywhere present, although this can be perceived only if we start from the fact that the Oedipus myth is circular: Oedipus kills his father who in effect had killed Oedipus !

With this thesis as our starting-point, we discover that in the western tradition, Oedipus discusses his problems on the basis of the Iphigenia myth. This is the myth of the murder of the son or daughter, a murder committed by the person in power, who at the same time is the Greek king and Iphigenia's father. The Iphigenia myth (and other parallel myths) crops up throughout the tradition of the Enlightenment and corresponds to the nature of bourgeois society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Oedipus myth, which puts the murder of the father first, is very different. It corresponds to a historical period in which bourgeois society is confronted by revolutionary movements and it assumes that these are patricidal. Between the eighteenth and the end of the twentieth century a development takes place which is analogous to that carried out in ancient Greece from Euripides to Sophocles. Euripides as a man of Enlightenment writes about Iphigenia, Sophocles, the reactionary, writes about Oedipus. Euripides writes about the murder of the son or daughter, Sophocles about that of the father. In this latter tradition Racine, Schiller and Goethe draw inspiration from Iphigenia and Freud from Oedipus. Where there is revolution against bourgeois society, Oedipus becomes topical, whereas previously he was almost forgotten.

So long as the bourgeoisie were themselves the makers of revolutions and did not have to face any revolutionary movement, the Oedipus theme did not have much to say to them. When Euripides attacks the destructive Dionysiac insurrection he does so not in the name of Oedipus but, in his tragedy the Bacchae, in the name of Dionysus. His concern is with what we know in bourgeois society

as the fear of chaos. A mother appears who in her bacchanalian euphoria kills her son who is also the king. If you like, she murders her father in the form of her own son. The power structure is destroyed in the euphoria of an uncontrolled orgy. In that euphoria she does not even realize that in the person of her father, the «previous» king, she is killing her son. This tragedy might perhaps be an interpretation of the student revolt of the sixties of the present century, but not of the socialist movements which appeared with the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century.

The close relationship between bourgeois society and the myth of Iphigenia is not based on the fact that those in power, against whom the bourgeois revolution is directed, are censured for the murder of a son. This can also happen and at times is important. That can be seen in Schiller's drama, *Wilhelm Tell*. Gessler as the despotic father of the fatherland demands that Tell should shoot his son. He expects of course that Tell will kill his son when he fires the shot. Consequently it is Gessler, representing the tyrant, and not Tell, who appears to be the murderer of the son. By a happy shot Tell saves his son's life. Later, because Gessler has not stopped persecuting Tell, the latter by killing him kills the father of the country. But Tell is not regarded as a patricide, because he is struggling for a new father-authority, bourgeois society, which now has nothing to do with people like Gessler.

Schiller has a clear understanding of this context. Therefore at the close of his drama he brings in the figure of the "parricide". This parricide looks to Tell for solidarity by arguing that Tell himself had already killed his own father too by murdering Gessler. Nevertheless Tell turns him out of the door and accuses him of patricide, the worst of crimes. The arbitrary power against which the bourgeois revolution is directed is transformed in the person of Gessler into an infanticide.

But this picture does not show the importance of the myth of Iphigenia for the self-awareness of bourgeois society. It is used very differently. What in fact happens is that in its medieval orthodoxy's picture of Christ is secularized under the name of Iphigenia. In this process that picture's essential features are retained, despite the fact that it now loses its religious character. Perhaps indeed this medieval picture of Christ was already really an imitation of Iphigenia or was at least influenced by her and now once again comes close to its original form.

I. THE GREEK IPHIGENIA

The essential situation in Iphigenia's sacrifice is as follows. She is the daughter of Agamemnon the Greek king and his wife Clytemnestra. Agamemnon is in command of the Greek army which has gathered in Aulis to set out for the conquest of Troy. But the army is becalmed and cannot set out. The gods are asked why this has happened and Minerva (or Diana) the goddess indicates that only the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Agamemnon's daughter, can appease her

fury. The army demands this sacrifice. So Agamemnon brings Iphigenia to Aulis, deceiving Clytemnestra in order to hand his daughter over. Arriving at Aulis he sacrifices Iphigenia, the firstborn of his children, to the goddess Minerva. When the sacrifice has been made the wind changes, the army leaves, conquers Troy and destroys it.

The tradition of this sacrifice of Iphigenia has a long history to which we can look for its meaning. She becomes a central figure in Greek tragedy and has a profoundly seminal effect on the whole of Graeco-Roman tradition. In an equally central way the figure of Iphigenia again appears in the period of the Enlightenment and up to the present has not disappeared from western culture. At least in the cultural field the figure of Iphigenia turns out to be much more important than that of Oedipus. The myth of Iphigenia throws light on the place occupied by human sacrifice in the Graeco-Roman tradition and throughout western culture.

In *Agamemnon*, from Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, the oldest of the tragedies on Iphigenia, this sacrifice is still presented as a violent murder of Iphigenia in the name of the goddess. Iphigenia cries like an animal being led to the slaughterhouse:

Her father gave the word.
Limp in her flowing dress
The priest's attendants held her high
Above the altar, as men hold a kid...
Her father spoke again, to bid
One bring a gag..
Lest Atreus' house be cursed by some ill-omened cry.
Rough hands...cast
Her saffron silks to earth. her eyes
Search for her slaughterers ; and each
[sees...yet denies]
The pity her dumb looks beseech,
Struggling for voice.⁰⁰

Aeschylus brings out all the barbarism of this scene. Those carrying out the sacrifice are butchers and executioners and Iphigenia is a barbarian who rejects her death. The consequence is a brutal scene, but Aeschylus also interprets Agamemnon's situation as the tragic destiny of a father who has to sacrifice his child and has no other way out. Nor is Agamemnon a criminal in Aeschylus' eyes, but a tragic hero who has no way out other than to become a butcher and executioner. Iphigenia, really the only reasonable, sensible person in this scene of sacrificial euphoria, is presented in the role of a farouche, less than civilized person. Because she is so uncivilized, Agamemnon has to become a butcher.

In all the later development of the vision of Iphigenia's sacrifice, Agamemnon continues to be this tragic figure who had to sacrifice her against his will. I have found no writer who did not have profound understanding of this fate of Agamemnon's. But the development of the myth takes place not in relation to

him but in the character of Iphigenia. Step by step she, reasonable, wild and full of fury, still cursing her executioners in Aeschylus' drama, is transformed into a civilized being. More and more she adopts a positive attitude to her sacrificial death, until in Goethe's Iphigenia she becomes a redeemer of the world, a real Christ-Iphigenia.

Clearly however Agamemnon's situation in Aulis is similar to that of Abraham when he confronts his son Isaac to sacrifice him. Also, both myths certainly come from the same prehistoric age. It is worthy of note that in the development of the Iphigenia myth we never find the faith Abraham has, in his not killing his son. This is applicable both for Greek literature and for Christian, and even for liberal and Enlightenment literature. Abraham might as well never have existed. It would almost seem to be an axiom that the father who sacrifices his daughter is the victim of a tragic destiny to which he has to submit².

This relates to the situation in Aulis. The Greeks want to conquer Troy and Agamemnon is their commander-in-chief. Must they abandon conquering and destroying Troy simply so that Iphigenia will not be sacrificed? Is the common good not superior to private good? If men are sacrificed on the field of battle to win the war, why should not a woman be sacrificed on the altar? These are the arguments brought forward by the army in Euripides' tragedy to convince Agamemnon that it is his duty to sacrifice his daughter.

In neither this nor any later instance does the argument appear that Agamemnon would have been freed from his obligation had he not sacrificed Iphigenia. Were not the Greeks freed because they conquered and destroyed Troy? Was not the freedom of Greece made possible by their leader Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia? Assuredly Abraham, who through faith does not sacrifice his son Isaac, could never conquer and destroy Troy. If Agamemnon had been an Abraham and the Greeks had accepted his faith, they would not have conquered Troy. Was it worth the trouble? The whole of Greek, Christian and western tradition is firmly convinced that neither Agamemnon nor the Greeks had any alternative. This conviction testifies simply to the fact that neither does the western tradition itself in its present situation accept any alternative to this type of human sacrifice. Jewish history also demonstrates this. The Jews, while keeping Abraham's faith, can scarcely keep the Promised Land and are never able to win any war of conquest.

If Agamemnon had become an Abraham he would have been a danger to Greece and the entire western world. He would have had to flee like Abraham to look for a Beersheba. Despite the whole so-called Jewish-Christian tradition, I have not been able to find a single writer who would have proposed this solution to Agamemnon. Throughout all the centuries up to the present their watchword to Agamemnon has been suffering. He must not weaken.

As for Iphigenia, the situation is very different. No-one is happy with Aeschylus' presentation of her. She is therefore changed through the centuries and made more and more civilized and westernized. This savage, raging, screaming woman who curses her executioners is turned into a redeeming priestess, ultimately transmogrified into Goethe's Christlike Iphigenie a Christ-Iphigenia.

This began with Euripides, the great Greek Enlightenment figure. In his tragedy, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, when Clytemnestra, Iphigenia's mother, faces up to Agamemnon because she will never willingly accept the sacrifice of her daughter, Iphigenia herself intervenes with her and says:

Mother, listen now to me.
Anger against your husband is beside the point...
(you) must see he does not lose his good name with the Greeks...
I am resolved to die. Above all things, I want to act nobly
And renounce all cowardly feelings.
..The power of all Hellas now looks to me ;
All lies in my hand — the sailing of the fleet, capture of Troy...
All this deliverance I shall win by dying, and my name
Will be blessed and celebrated as one who set Hellas free.
And indeed I have no right toncling to life so passionately,
Since it was for Greece you gave me birth, not for yourself alone.
Why, ten thousand men face battle holding shields, ten thousand more
Rowing warships ; they're all ready, when their country has been
wronged,
To attack our enemies for the sale of Hellas, and to die.
And shall my one life now prove the obstacle to their resolve ?
Is this fair and just ? How could I answer them ? And one thing more...
*One man is of more value
Than a host of women.* And if Artemis has laid a claim
On my body, *who am I, a mortal, to oppose a god?*
This I cannot do. To Hellas, then, I dedicate myself.
Sacrifice me ; *take and plunder Troy.* For me, your victory
Shall be children, marriage — for all time my glorious monument.
Greeks were born to rule barbarians, mother, not barbarians
To rule Greeks. *They are slaves by nature ; we have freedom in our
blood.*³

In Euripides, Clytemnestra is the barbarian woman, raging and screaming, who curses the executioners. Euripides' Clytemnestra is Aeschylus' Iphigenia. Iphigenia, civilized and tamed, rebels against her mother Clytemnestra. She now wants to be sacrificed and faces up to her mother who wants to prevent her. Therefore her mother, not her father, is her enemy. The mother is actually the only reasonable person in this sacrificial euphoria. Euripides however considers her mad and incapable of realizing what sacrifice means because she does not rise to the occasion. She appears as a selfish, fiendish woman. After Agamemnon returns from Troy she kills him to take revenge for the death of her daughter. She herself declares she has taken a lover, Aegisthus, in order to revenge herself on Agamemnon. Nevertheless all subsequent literature interprets the situation the other way round and maintains that she killed Agamemnon so that she can go on living with Aegisthus.

In reality this new Iphigenia who sacrifices herself for love of her country leads to a new barbarism which is actually the barbarism of western civilization, justifying itself through her. Now it is not the rage of an adolescent girl resisting sacrifice. Instead of this girl — who is intrinsically right — a she-dragon has appeared who in the name of her self-sacrifice is prepared to conquer the entire world and destroy it. Willingness to sacrifice herself for love of her people has been changed into aggression against all who do not belong to that people and therefore against all who have no responsibility whatever for the fact that she will be sacrificed. Iphigenia, civilized and accepting that she will be sacrificed, becomes an aggressor against the whole world and becomes the motive for that aggression led by her father as the commander in chief of the Greeks:

One man is of more value//than a host of women...//...Who am I, mortal, to oppose a god?//...Sacrifice me; take and plunder Troy.
...//...(For) they are slaves by nature; we have freedom in our blood.

Now as the civilized Iphigenia, she develops the aggressive programme of the West. Also, she has a clear idea of what *hubris* is towards the gods. If she refused to be sacrificed, she would commit an act of *hubris*, arrogance and pride — she would be trying to be like God. This is the centuries-old question, Who is like God? Who has the right to reject a human sacrifice that God demands? When Iphigenia says, “Who am I, a mortal, to oppose a god?...” she is talking like the archangel Michael without knowing his name⁴

This is an Iphigenia who cannot even understand Abraham’s faith, which consists in not killing his son. From her point of view Abraham’s faith is an act of arrogance and *hubris* and with the Archangel Michael she will cry out to Abraham, Who is like God? If someone like Topisch today publishes a book entitled *Ser como Dios por la revolución* (“Being like God for the Revolution”) we still hear the voice of Euripides’ Iphigenia telling Clytemnestra her raging and screaming mother, in the underworld, “Sacrifice me; take and plunder Troy...they are slaves by nature; we have freedom in our blood” and “One man is of more value than a host of women.” Freedom consists in making slaves of the others; it is a matter for those who exercise power. Freedom does not mean that nobody is a slave. It means being able to make slaves and conquer.

The consequence is a cycle of sacrifice which takes in the whole of society. To conquer Troy, Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter Iphigenia, which is what the goddess Minerva and the army demand. Agamemnon has become a tragic hero who had to hand over his daughter in order to be able to conform to his destiny of conquering Troy. Once his daughter has been sacrificed it is no longer possible for him to back down. He has to conquer Troy or die. If he retreated after a defeat he would be nothing but an infanticide. Iphigenia’s sacrifice would have been in vain. She would have been murdered to no purpose. The prophet who first proclaimed that the goddess Minerva demanded this sacrifice of Iphigenia would have been a cheat and Minerva a powerless goddess. The heaven of the Greek gods would have fallen in. Once his daughter had been

sacrificed, Agamemnon had to conquer Troy so that the fruits of the sacrifice would be revealed. If he did not conquer, the sacrifice would have been in vain and the whole life of Greece would lose its meaning. Now Agamemnon is not fighting simply for Troy but for the meaningfulness of the sacrifice he made of his daughter. In killing Iphigenia, he does not think of himself as a murderer but maintains that he has sacrificed her. He therefore has to "kill" Troy in order not to be a killer. Should that not happen then the sacrifice of Iphigenia would be meaningless and Agamemnon would be nothing more than a killer — a murderer — and as such he would have to die.

Once his daughter has been sacrificed he has burned all the bridges behind him. He has turned a war of conquest into a problem of meaning, an existential problem of his own culture and that of all the Greeks. Through the sacrifice of his daughter a situation arises in which the whole world would lose its meaning if Troy were not conquered and destroyed. The sacrifice of Iphigenia is at the centre of the war of conquest. The victory shows that her death really was a sacrifice and not a murder, that the prophet really was a prophet and that the Greek Olympus and the goddess Minerva really exist. Everything is staked on the sacrifice. If Agamemnon had not won, Iphigenia would have died in vain. He had to conquer if her death was not to be meaningless. Therefore in Euripides' tragedy Iphigenia has to agree to be sacrificed to take this issue to its logical conclusion and so she herself raises the question of meaning when she says, "Sacrifice me ; take and plunder Troy...they are slaves by nature ; we have freedom in our blood." She affirms that her sacrifice is a self-sacrifice, but makes the conquest of Troy the condition for justifying it. Later as a priestess among the people of Tauris, her first question will always be, Has Troy fallen ? If it has fallen then her death has been a sacrifice and she has not died in vain.

Once the sacrifice has been made, the destruction of Troy follows ; it is the only possible proof that the sacrifice has really been legitimate. The fruit of the sacrifice is to be the destruction of Troy ; without that destruction her death would have been in vain. That is why all the dramatists condemn Clytemnestra, who denies the meaningfulness of Iphigenia's sacrifice but in so doing denies everything Greece meant. But if Agamemnon had lost the war against Troy, Clytemnestra would have had every reason to kill him.⁵

Euripides ends his tragedy *Iphigenia in Aulis* with a trick. Agamemnon sacrifices Iphigenia but Minerva hides her, abducts her without his noticing it and for her substitutes a sacrificial animal. It was enough for Minerva that Iphigenia was willing to sacrifice herself and so the story of Iphigenia has a sequel to her sacrifice. Minerva carries her to an island of the barbaric Taurians (the Crimean peninsula of today). There Iphigenia succeeds in becoming a priestess of Minerva's at the court of Thoas, the king of the Taurians. In the course of her duties she carries out an ancient rite of the Taurians which consists in sacrificing all foreigners to Minerva, particularly Greeks who are shipwrecked on the coasts of the country. Now she who was sacrificed to Minerva is the priestess who sacrifices others to the same goddess.

Now however she appears as a woman who accuses her father and all the Greeks:

I know it, alas ! who remember the blade,
To my throat by my wretched father laid⁶.

...

An unfatherly father by doom was allotted to me:
And ill's out of ill's rise ceaselessly...⁷

On the Greeks she says "Yea, for I hate all Greece, which gave me death"⁸

It looks as if she has already forgotten that in Aulis she had happily consented to her sacrifice at Agamemnon, her father's hand. Now she explains why she is sacrificing Greeks by the law of the Taurians:

...counting my hand
the murderer, but that he died by law
Of this land, since the Goddess holds it just?⁹
...This office hold I of the Goddess.
Bowed 'neath necessity, I must submit.¹⁰

Iphigenia has turned into a fury who hides behind a law. Now she sacrifices the Greeks, who had sacrificed her.

In the end her brother Orestes is shipwrecked with his friend Pylades on the coast of Tauris. Orestes has killed his mother Clytemnestra to avenge his father, whom Clytemnestra had killed. Pursued by the Eumenides he seeks salvation. Minerva had promised him this, should he bring to Athens the image of Minerva to which Greeks were sacrificed in Tauris.

After brother and sister recognize each other, Orestes asks Iphigenia for help. Once more she declares her readiness to sacrifice herself:

O then, I flinch not, though my doom be death,
So save I thee ! A man that from a house
Dies, leaves a void: a woman matters not.¹¹

She takes refuge on Orestes' ship with him and with the image of Minerva, but a storm prevents their departure. King Thoas looks out for them on the coast, to capture them and sacrifice them. Once again Iphigenia is face to face with a king who wants to sacrifice her. And once again Minerva intervenes to save her from being sacrificed. Minerva compels Thoas to let Iphigenia go and he submits to the Goddess's will:

... who hears the words of Gods,
And disobeyeth them, is sense-bereft¹².

But she does not abandon sacrifices nor does she find any freedom to refrain from sacrificing any person. She finds herself confronted by another law of Minerva's which this time forbids sacrifice and she submits to this law too. In the name of this new law Minerva declares she is against all human sacrifices:

This law ordain: when folk keep festival,
In quittance for thy slaughter one must hold
To a man's throat the sword, and spill the blood
For hallowing and the Goddess's honour's sake.¹³

Human sacrifices continue to be legitimate, only they are now forbidden! No vision appears of a freedom which consists in not sacrificing human beings.

Helped by Minerva, Iphigenia has saved her brother Orestes from the Eumenides. In this way she has forgiven her father for having sacrificed her and has condemned her mother who avenged her sacrificial death. She has entered wholly into the cycle of human sacrifice, which now loses its religious trappings. In its religious form human sacrifice is now represented symbolically while in its real form it is secularized. But it goes on happening as before. Minerva's law prohibiting religious human sacrifice, prohibits that alone. In its non-religious form human sacrifice is continued because no freedom not to sacrifice human beings has made its appearance. The death of Socrates is a secularized human sacrifice because it now has no religious form. The polis condemns him in the name of the law and he agrees to be sacrificed. He himself completes the sacrifice as a self-sacrifice and voluntarily takes the poison that kills him. But his death is still a human sacrifice.

II. THE CHRIST OF MEDIEVAL ORTHODOXY

In this Greek myth of Iphigenia there are clearly essential elements of the medieval picture of Christ. The more this picture is developed the more the Iphigenia of Greek tradition had to look like an *anima naturaliter christiana* (a soul Christian by nature). If we substitute God the Father for Agamemnon and Christ for Iphigenia the resulting relationship comes close to what the Middle Ages pictured. Of course in that scenario we have a father who requires this sacrifice of his son so that humanity can be reconciled to him. The God who calls for the sacrifice has become the father and the sacrifice he demands is now his own son. So the Son offers himself as a sacrificial lamb. The righteousness or justice of the Father prevents his forgiving human beings without such a satisfaction being offered.

Here the sacrifice can take place without a change like that Minerva effected with Iphigenia through the substitution at the last moment of a sacrificial animal, so that Iphigenia could go on serving in Tauris as a priestess. Now the son really is sacrificed and dead, but is raised from the dead. The whole sacrificial relationship has become transcendent. Iphigenia the priestess in the country

of the Taurians has become the risen Christ who is also a priest, but who is now the celebrant who sacrifices himself. Christ is now the priest who has not sacrificed any animal or any other person but himself. As he is God, this sacrifice has infinite value. Once made, this sacrifice, in which Christ has made himself the sacrificial lamb, now leaves no room for any other sacrifice. No other sacrifice could be compared with his. God the Father has accepted him and now everyone can be reconciled to him. From the sacrifice of Christ the logical necessity follows that he alone can be the ultimate sacrifice of all. No-one else could be accepted by God because God has received the satisfaction appropriate to him.

This does not mean the abolition of sacrifice. On the contrary it is raised to a higher level. It has the same quality as all previous sacrifices but is different from them in having infinite value. It sets aside all the other sacrifices because it is so great that now no other sacrifice can stand beside it. And God has accepted it. Such is the medieval theology of sacrifice — which we already find outlined in the latest letter of the New Testament, that to the Hebrews, for long wrongly attributed to Saint Paul. In Hebrews a sacrifice is set forth which has infinite value and replaces all imaginable sacrifices and redeems humanity. The claim made in the letter is now that after the sacrifice of Christ there can be no further sacrifice. Nevertheless this impossibility of new sacrifices is actually a consequence of sacrifice. No picture of a world without sacrifices actually appears, but what does appear is a world filled by a single sacrifice of infinite value. We find a world in which now everywhere without exception is subjected to the influence of this sacrifice. The semblance of a world in which there had been sacrifices emerges, but now there are no sacrifices.

What we find is a world without sacrifices which has become a reality because of the infinite fruitfulness of a single sacrifice: such is the medieval perspective. The essential fruitfulness of a human sacrifice in which the sacrificed human being is God continues to be the basis for this picturing of a world without sacrifices. From this the conclusion is drawn that there must never be any other sacrifice. Each new sacrifice would be a re-crucifixion of Christ. Thus the enemies of Christ and God come to be pictured as disdaining the infinite sacrifice of Christ, they despise his blood and crucify Christ afresh, because they do not submit to his sacrifice and do not make it fruitful for their own lives.

In this way the picture of a humanity without sacrifices is turned upside down and becomes an attack on those who continue making other sacrifices or otherwise despise the blood of Christ and therefore crucify him afresh. Now these enemies of Christ have to be put down in order to create a humanity which does not re-crucify him; new, finite sacrifices replace his infinite sacrifice. Christ is made the Lord of History to whom everything belongs because he has redeemed everything.

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ (as High Priest) had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat

down at the right hand of God, then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us ; for after saying

“This is the covenant that I will make with them
after those days, says the Lord:
I will put my laws in their hearts,
and write them on their minds,”
then he adds,
“I will remember their sins and their misdeeds no more.”
Where there is forgiveness of these,
there is no longer any offering for sin.

(Hebrews 10:11-18)

But what are these people doing who resort once again to pre-Christian sacrifices ?

For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then commit apostasy, since they crucify the son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt. (Hebrews 6:4-6)

The idea that those who crucify Christ abandon him and do not believe in him thus acquires an extremely aggressive undertone: Christ must never be crucified afresh ; but they do re-crucify him ; therefore they become enemies of God, accused of flogging, scourging and insulting him. There must be no other sacrifice, but they sacrifice Christ afresh — that is to say that if they carry out sacrifices of a pre-Christian type this is regarded as crucifying Christ afresh.

For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries. A man who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace ? For we know him who said “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:26-31).

There really is something fearful in the idea that it is fearful to fall into the hands of the living God. What is proclaimed in this is the crucifixion of those who crucify — the central instrument of domination in the Christianized Roman Empire, the Christian imperium. This letter to the Hebrews gives an extreme interpretation of Abraham's faith as a readiness to kill his son Isaac: it is the same letter as highlights Jephthah among examples of faith (Hebrews

11:32-34). Jephthah sacrifices his daughter in gratitude for a victory in war. This story of Jephthah would appear to be analogous to the sacrifice of Iphigenia by Agamemnon.

Of course the letter to the Hebrews was written when Christianity was still not an imperial religion but was persecuted by the Empire. It is therefore primarily directed against apostates from the faith. But as the Empire gradually became Christian it embraced these very ideas and interpreted them from its own point of view. Also it is probable that the Empire became Christian precisely because it was able to embrace them and turn them into an imperial ideology. In this way Christianity facilitated a completely new justification of imperial authority.

Now the Empire struggled against all who resisted it, regarding them as crucifiers of Christ. Everyone not subjected to the authority of the Empire was given the status of a crucifier of Christ so that as such they could be crucified. The Roman Empire had not expected that imperial aggressiveness would be legitimized by the crucifixion of the crucifiers — this unsuspected legitimation which turned Christianity into such a valuable tool for the imperial authority. Now, that same «Christianized» Empire was struggling for a world in which there are no longer any sacrifices. Those against whom it was struggling continued sacrificing and therefore despised the blood of Christ. The sequel to the statement that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God was that it was even more fearful to fall into the hands of his representatives on earth, the Christian Empire.

In the Middle Ages, therefore, human sacrifices actually returned — so that there would be no more human sacrifices! Every enemy was regarded as a crucifier carrying out human sacrifices. Those enemies therefore had to die so that there would not be any such sacrifices. Burning at the stake came into fashion for those those who continued to crucify Christ and went on making other sacrifices. The stakes were prepared in front of cathedrals and when the flames appeared the faithful chanted the *Te Deum*. They did not even notice that they were performing human sacrifices in a religious and not a secular manner. But they believed they were creating a world without human sacrifices. The armies of the Christian Empire were constantly dedicated to crucifying crucifiers — and thus enlarging the Empire. When they discovered America they noted that in those cultures human sacrifices took place. And so they began — in front of their cathedrals! — to prevent those who were committing human sacrifices from doing so. And all the while they were singing the *Te Deum*. Once again few of them realized that they were carrying out human sacrifices so that there would be no more human sacrifices.¹⁴

The Christian armies thought they were engaged in the final struggle against human sacrifices, against those who were re-crucifying Christ. The point of the struggle was that the fruitfulness of the infinite sacrifice of Christ should not be lost. So they undertook human sacrifices so that Christ's sacrifice would not lose its infinite value of ensuring that there would never again be human sacrifices.¹⁵

Once again the sacrificial cycle is closed, although in a context of transcendence. A sacrifice has taken place and it must not have been in vain. The person sacrificed died for the salvation of the whole world. Unless he brought that salvation, he died in vain. Those who despise the blood of this infinite sacrifice want it to be in vain. But if Christ died to no purpose then everything is a great lie. The fact of the sacrifice means there is no turning back, all the bridges are burned. We are no longer dealing only with Troy ; now the whole world is to be conquered so that Christ will not have died to no purpose: if he has, there would be no God ; he would turn out to be a great fraud because now we would not be able to know what we are living for. Those who do not believe in God want this infinite sacrifice to have been in vain and want God simply to have been his Son's murderer. The whole world has to be conquered to prove that God exists. For the sacrifice to be meaningful, proof of its meaningfulness is needed, and the conquest of the whole world is that proof. Thus too out of the mouth of this Christ of medieval orthodoxy it is the Christianized Iphigenia who cries, "Sacrifice me ; take and plunder Troy. They are slaves by nature ; we have freedom in our blood".

Abraham's faith, however, was not faith in an original sacrifice so fruitful that it would eliminate all other sacrifices. It was a world without sacrifice and therefore also without the original sacrifice. It would seem that this faith of Abraham's did not exist in the Middle Ages. But it does continue to exist ; only it has been transferred to hell under the name of Lucifer ! In reality the Middle Ages was struggling against this faith of Abraham's which is also that of Jesus. It was looked upon as a Jewish faith and the struggle against it led to hatred of the Jews. On this Friedrich Heer says :

From the fourth to the twentieth centuries the Christians' murderous hatred of the Jews was, at bottom, directed against the Jew Jesus, of whom Christians despaired, whom they hatred and blamed — with the Devil and the Jews — for the heavy burden of history. The Jew Jesus was killed off in thousands of images : Christ, the emperor and king of Heaven, assumed imperial, papal, royal and Jupiter-like features. Such was still the case in Michelangelo's time. The Jew Jesus was to blame...

A psychoanalytical investigation of Christian theologians and laymen, of princes of the church and their flocks, might often provide an insight into this abyss in the depths of the soul where there is hatred for the Jew Jesus¹⁶.

Jesus the Jew for whom the second divine Person, heavenly emperor, the Kyrios, the God Jesus Christ is substituted.*

* This phrase is included as part of the quotation in the Spanish but is not in the context of the English version [Translator's note.]

This Jew, Jesus, is the very Jesus who had Abraham's faith, and is the real adversary of Christians who struggle against him in their own world. All those whom the Empire crucifies as crucifiers of Christ are the very people in whose name Jesus worked. The aggressiveness and activity on the part of the Christian Empire is the result of its struggling against this faith and condemning it. So Abraham's faith is not absent. The forces of the Empire make their appearance only because they are fighting against this faith.

The Jewish people find no answer to this. They are shut up in ghettos and shut themselves up in them. The outcome is a mystical theology of suffering from which there is no possible way out except the very distant hope of divine vengeance, never firmly proclaimed nor foretold in any way. An infinite prospect of suffering appears and this in turn produces a feeling of guilt directed rather against themselves.

Micha Josef Bin Gorion in his Jewish biblical legends tells a legendary story about the sacrifice of Isaac which illustrates this situation.¹⁷ He does not say what period this legend comes from, but there can be little doubt that it is medieval in origin.

He shows us Abraham going up Mount Moriah with Isaac. They meet Satan who tries to tempt them with the following words:

God will never affront a human being by saying to him, Go and kill your son.

As we can see, Satan's temptation is the opposite of what Abraham's is according to the Bible. Abraham's temptation here lies in the danger of believing that the *call* for the sacrifice of his son could come from God. But in the new situation the temptation is to be of the faith of Abraham (i.e. to be Jewish) *and* to believe that the call to sacrifice his son may be something God demands. In the legend Abraham resists the temptation to *reject* the sacrificing of his son.

We can understand why: the issue is the meaning of the suffering of those Jews who lived through one pogrom after another but at the same time believed that because they were children of God and of Abraham their suffering could only be the will of God. God sacrifices his children, Abraham sacrifices his son. But the sole thing they have is faith in the God of Abraham. Consequently they conclude that the *temptation* is to believe that God cannot do that; but that means that Abraham's *temptation* would be to believe that God could not demand the sacrifice of Isaac. They persist in the idea that their suffering comes from God.

This is understandable, although it leads us to abandon any resistance that would have been the product of Abraham's faith. In reality they abandon Abraham's *faith*, which consisted in not killing his son. Their hearts seem to have been crushed by medieval Christianity so that now they cannot even contemplate their own freedom. And so they adopt an interpretation of the sacrifice of Isaac which actually comes from Christianity and is the prevailing one in the Christian Middle Ages.

The legend tells the story of the sacrifice from this perspective:

On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off of which God had told him: above there was a column of fire which stretched from earth to heaven, and a cloud which was on the mountain concealed the glory of God... And Abraham realized that his son Isaac was a burnt offering that was pleasing to God.

When Isaac asks where the animal is for the sacrifice, Abraham answers him by saying:

“My son, the Lord has chosen you to be an innocent sacrifice instead of the lamb.” Isaac said, “I shall do all the Lord has ordained bravely and joyfully.” And Abraham went on to say, “My son, openly confess whether there is not a thought in your heart against this command and whether you are not trying to find a way of escape”. Isaac answered his father Abraham and said, “By the living God... no leg of my legs, no part of my flesh is trembling at this word, I have no evil thought, my heart is joyful and courageous and would like to say, Praised be the Lord who has chosen me this day as a burnt offering”.

Abraham rejoiced greatly at these words of Isaac... Isaac said to his father, “Bind me firmly, Father and chain me and then put me on the altar so that I cannot move nor escape when the knife enters my flesh, and so that I do not blaspheme the altar of burnt offering... be quick, Father, and hasten to fulfil in me the will of the Lord our God”. The hearts of Abraham and Isaac rejoiced ; in their eyes were bitter tears but in their hearts was happiness.

After God had prevented the sacrifice of Isaac and Abraham had sacrificed an animal instead of his son, he sprinkled

the altar with the blood of the lamb and said, “That is for my son, and may this blood be accepted by the Lord as if it were the blood of my son”.

The point here in regard to Isaac is the idea of perfection held by those Jews who were faced with the outbreak of a pogrom. They do not want to have doubts about their God. So they can see no other way out than to look on this death as if it came from God’s hands. They therefore see it as a punishment for their sins, even although they themselves have not the slightest idea of what the sins in question might be.

Poliakov quotes a text which comes from this period of the Middle Ages and expresses this resignation:

No prophet, no sage or wise man can conceive why the sins of the community were found so grave that death alone could expiate them, as if the community itself had shed blood. But in truth He is an equitable judge and the fault is ours !” “Our sins permitted the enemy to triumph ; the hand of the Lord weighed heavily upon his people...”¹⁸

And this in fact led to the acceptance of an interpretation of the sacrifice of Isaac which was that of the Christian Middle Ages and motivated the Christian persecution with which these Jews were confronted. A Jewish prayer from this period, also quoted by Poliakov, may illustrate this:

“May the blood of the reverent be our merit and our expiation for us, our children, and our grandchildren, for all eternity, even as the sacrifice of Abraham, who bound his son Isaac on the altar in order to sacrifice him. Let these just, these pure, these perfect men become our advocates before the Lord, and may He soon deliver us from our exile... Amen !”¹⁹.

This prayer means the same as the legend quoted above. Abraham sacrifices Isaac and Isaac sacrifices himself in that he of his own free will takes upon himself this sacrifice. When that is done a logic of sacrifice emerges. Clearly this Isaac is patently like the Iphigenia in Aulis of Euripides and like the medieval Christ. It has no relation to the Abrahamic sacrifice of Isaac. Abraham’s freedom is not even something that continues to be a possibility for the Jews in their own minds.

But the Jews do not turn their mystical theology of sacrifice aggressively outwards as happens in Christianity. When the latter interprets the sacrificial death of Christ as the redemption of humanity, it makes it necessary to render that sacrificial death fruitful for all humanity and therefore turns against all who despise the blood of Jesus in his sacrificial death. The Jews are selected as the common denominator of all these enemies who continue to crucify Christ, so that this aggressiveness is primarily directed against them. The Jews do not create an opposing aggressiveness other than by directing the aggressiveness that is the result of the sacrifice against themselves.

The legend quoted, telling how Isaac happily awaits his father’s knife, is an interpretation of self-destruction when confronted by a threat to which the Jews do not know how to react. But this whole sacrificial situation intrinsically implies the motivation for the collective suicide of whole Jewish communities — killing each other and their children too when they see the outbreak of the pogrom. At the same time they are behaving towards each other like Abraham and Isaac.

Poliakov describes this situation as follows:

In particular, the sacrifice of the children, massacred by their own parents, is identified with the sacrifice offered by Abraham, and the story of the patriarch and his son becomes, under the title of the Akeda (the sacrifice* of Isaac), the very symbol of Jewish martyrology. One of the most tragic passages in the Chronicle of Solomon Bar Simeon relates

* sacrifice: literally “binding” (Hebrew *aqedath*)

how Isaac the Pious, Jew of Worms, baptized by force, leads his two sons by night to the synagogue, slaughters them upon the altar, returns to his house and sets it on fire, and finally ignites the synagogue and perishes in the flames²⁰.

Here we see a spiritual destruction in line with the only response to the Christian aggression that was aimed at non-Christians. The Jews turn against themselves with the same aggression as Christians direct against them, by internalizing it; and we find a spiritual — or introverted — destruction which paralyses the ghetto imposed from outside and makes it worse, because it is a self-imposed ghetto.

When Christianity was brought by force to America it paralysed the indigenous inhabitants in similar fashion.

Thus Euripides' Iphigenia is Christianized and translated into the religious language of the Middle Ages. Now we do not have the Iphigenia who sacrifices the Greeks in the country of the Taurians out of hatred for Greece. She has been transformed into the Christ in whose name human beings are sacrificed for love, while the Christian imperium fights for a world without human sacrifices. Both carry out human sacrifices but the meaning has been turned upside down. That explains why the Christian Iphigenia does not have even the slightest awareness of the fact that she is performing human sacrifices. In consequence her conscience does not react against what she is doing. Rather, her conscience urges her on to make these human sacrifices. And so there emerges a Christianity which for reasons of conscience cannot give up human sacrifice. A Christ-Iphigenia has truly been created.

III. THE IPHIGENIA OF BOURGEOIS SOCIETY

The Christian imperium finds its logic in the expansion in order to crucify crucifiers which we call a crusade. From the sixteenth century onwards, this logic was increasingly replaced by the logic of bourgeois society, put into practice and interpreted by the bourgeoisie of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a law of God in the sense of "I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds ... I will remember their sins and their misdeeds no more" (Hebrews 10:16f., cf. Jeremiah 31:31f.). This is the law of the market, which at least since John Locke is assumed to be both a law of God in this sense and a natural law. The imperium is now bourgeois and becomes the representative of this natural law. A Christian guise is no longer a necessity for the empire, which can be secularized on the basis of this natural law.

THE SECULARIZATION OF THE MYTHICAL HEAVEN OF THE MIDDLE AGES

The bourgeois thinkers of this period say that God himself wrote this law in the hearts of human beings. Bourgeois secularization of the mythical heaven of the Middle Ages through the Enlightenment was to continue using these myths and give them a secularized form, organizing them around the natural law. Secularization gives the medieval mythical world such a form that the latter loses its religious character and seems to be the product of reason itself. In this way, however, it is maintained and universalized beyond the frontiers where the Christian religion holds sway. Portuguese and Spanish colonizing was Christian; subsequently English and all other colonizing neither was nor needed to be Christian. When the mythical world is secularized and linked to bourgeois natural law, the religious element is superfluous even though it can and does have a supporting role to play.

Instead of Lucifer-Satan we find chaos; and natural law, which is simply the law of the market, struggles against this chaos. Chaos has all the characteristics of this Lucifer-Satan and some others too. Natural law saves from chaos which frequently continues to take the name of Lucifer. Today everyone knows that Lucifer is chaos and that chaos is called the very devil. What everyone does not know is that Lucifer is one of the earliest names for Jesus. Nor do they want to know it because there is no wish to know that Jesus of Nazareth himself — the Jesus whom Friedrich Heer calls Jesus the Jew — was plunged into this chaos. He remains in hell, even though this has been secularized as chaos.

Natural law like the law of the market, keeps chaos in check. Wherever threatened, it sees the threat of that chaos and also the threat of despotism. Chaos leads to despotism which is simply ordered chaos. Nevertheless despotism is any resistance to the laws of the market or any attempt to intervene in them. A new law of God appears, secularized as natural law, and replacing the religious law of the medieval Christian imperium. Now all those who do not live under the law of the market or who resist are regarded as enemies of mankind — Locke above all says “enemies of the human race” — like those who despised the blood of Christ in the Middle Ages. While in the Middle Ages those who resisted the dominant power as crucifiers did so only to be crucified, now the slogan was, despotism for those who want despotism, slavery for those who want to make us slaves, death for those who want to kill us. John Locke was the first to formulate this reversal and remains the classic for this secularization. (Afterwards Saint-Just said it: no freedom for the enemies of liberty. Popper also says so: no tolerance for the intolerant.) There are always those who do not wish to live under the law of the market or who resist it and who want to set up a despotism, who want to make us slaves, those who want to kill us, those who are intolerant. So the conclusion is that they must be subjected to despotism, must be made slaves, killed, deprived of freedom; and there must be intolerance. John Locke recognizes three legitimate authorities: patriarchal power in the family, political power in the state and despotic power towards those who do not have property, particularly slaves.²¹

Despotism is everything which does not submit to the laws of the market, all societies which are not market states. Legitimate despotic power is absolute and has no laws, and is necessary to act as a check against this other despotism. For John Locke and Adam Smith practically every country in the world except England is a despotic country. The North American Indians, the Africans throughout Africa, all Asiatic societies are illegitimate despotisms. The despotic power of the free countries is a legitimate power over against them. It is a counter-despotism which will destroy all despotisms²². Adam Smith did not have any doubt whatever that the despotic power exercised by the bourgeoisie was even more despotic than those it wanted to overcome. But since it was the despotism of freedom it was a preferable despotism. Hence he can say:

The law, so far as it gives some weak protection to the slave against the violence of his master, is likely to be better executed in a colony where the government is in a great measure arbitrary than in one where it is altogether free. In every country where the unfortunate law of slavery is established, the magistrate, when he protects the slave, intermeddles in some measure in the management of the private property of the master; and, in a free country, where the master is perhaps either a member of the colony assembly, or an elector of such a member, he dare not do this but with the greatest caution and circumspection. The respect which he is obliged to pay to the master renders it more difficult for him to protect the slave.²³

He gives a highly interesting example:

When Vedius Pollio, in the presence of Augustus, ordered one of his slaves, who had committed a slight fault, to be cut into pieces and thrown into his fish pond in order to feed his fishes, the emperor commanded him, with indignation, to emancipate immediately, not only that slave, but all the others that belonged to him. Under the republic no magistrate could have had authority enough to protect the slave, much less to punish the master.²⁴

The argument from progress is needed so that a free society can be presented as the best society. Smith feels so sure of the effect of this progress that he is not even perturbed by the fact he himself emphasizes, that the counter-despotism of the free country is more despotic than the despotism it is trying to overcome. From the standpoint of this progress, there will no longer be any despotism.

The absolute law of the market as it confronts chaos therefore carries with it the idea of harmony and so of progress. Together the ideas of the harmony of the market and of progress secularize the heaven of the Middle Ages. They become a counterweight to the human sacrifices which the despotic power of the natural law of the market demands for the suppression of chaos. Adam Smith introduces us to this cycle:

...in civilised society it is only among the inferior ranks of people that the scantiness of subsistence can set limits to the further multiplication of the human species; and it can do so in no other way than by destroying a great part of the children which their fruitful marriages produce.

...

It is in this manner that the demand for men, like that for any other commodity, necessarily regulates the production of men; quickens it when it goes on too slowly, and stops it when it advances too fast. It is this demand which regulates and determines the state of propagation in all the different countries of the world, in North America, in Europe, and in China; ...²⁵

He describes the human sacrifices which bourgeois society has to make to overcome the despotism which bourgeois society considers to be a tyranny carrying out human sacrifices. It sees its own sacrifices as anti-sacrifices, that is, as sacrifices which ensure that finally there will be no more sacrifices. At the same time they are sacrifices which ensure progress and are justified because of it.

Hayek clearly exposes this case of sacrifice:

A free society requires certain ethics to be reduced in the last resort to the maintenance of living beings: not of all living beings, because it might be necessary to sacrifice individual lives to preserve a greater number of other lives. Therefore the sole moral rules are those which the "calculus of lives" implies: property and contract.²⁶

This sacrificial thinking is very general in bourgeois society. Nietzsche himself exposes it:

Will the essence of true morality consist for us in considering the immediate, most direct consequences our acts may have for other people and deciding our behaviour in line with these consequences?... This is a narrow, bourgeois ethic; but an ethic nonetheless. It seems to me it would reflect a higher and more discerning idea, if we looked beyond those immediate consequences for our neighbour and encouraged projects of wider scope at the risk of making the others suffer, for example... Accepting that we have a spirit of sacrifice in relation to ourselves, what reason is there to stop us from sacrificing our neighbour along with ourselves, as has been done up till now by states and monarchs, sacrificing the citizen "in the general interest" as used to be said? We ourselves also have general interests and perhaps they are the most general interests. Why is there no moral right to sacrifice some individuals of the present generation for the advantage of the future generations if their distresses and worries and despair and waverings and mistakes should be necessary so that a new plough-share may open up furrows in the ground and make it fertile for all?...

By sacrifice, in which all of us are included — ourselves as well as our neighbours — we would strengthen and elevate the feeling of human power, even supposing we achieved nothing more. This would already be a positive increase in happiness.²⁷

The picture of underlying progress had already been described by John Locke, who says of progress in technical and economic achievements,

that he agrees contemplation of these works affords us the occasion to admire, reverence and glorify their Author, and when appropriately handled they could be of greater benefit to humanity than the monuments of exemplary charity raised with so much effort by the founders of hospitals and hospices. Those who first invented printing, discovered the compass or publicized the virtue and proper use of quinine have done more to further knowledge through the offer and augmentation of useful assets and have saved more people from the tomb than those who have built colleges, workhouses and hospitals.²⁸

In this way the human sacrifice practised by bourgeois society is twice mentioned. On the one hand an anti-sacrifice is involved, through which the sacrifices produced by despotism become fruitful for bourgeois society. On the other hand, there are sacrifices which are necessary to make progress possible, with the result that human life would be increasingly respected. All these sacrifices are presented as sacrifices through which a society without sacrifices will emerge. Hayek can therefore say that bourgeois society demands certain “absolute powers which should be used justly to prevent and limit all absolute power in the future”.²⁹

This leads to the sacrificial cycle in its bourgeois form. Bourgeois society conforms to an original sacrifice effected by all despotisms in history, as it regards all non-bourgeois societies as despotisms. The issue is that of a prior sacrifice not carried out by bourgeois society but by the societies against which it struggles and which it considers despotisms. It perpetuates the medieval myth of a primary sacrifice in the crucifixion of Jesus, a Christian sacrifice, but one implemented not by Christians but by those who rejected Christ. Bourgeois society presents itself as a society which through the market economy is potentially a society without sacrifices. All the sacrifices in history (it suggests) have been carried out to receive their meaning from bourgeois society. In so far as there is a threat of a return of despotism, bourgeois society too is despotic, but in the form of a despotic power struggling despotically against despotism. Hence it carries out sacrifices which are necessary so that in the end there will be no sacrifices. Such sacrifices in the last resort come from the fact that there has been despotism and that despotism is still a threat.

So while bourgeois society criticizes violations of human rights, it always does so against these supposed despotisms, to demonstrate that its own infringements of human rights are the necessary outcome of its struggle against violations which in turn are committed by the others. From this standpoint,

bourgeois violations of human rights cease to have any significance and bourgeois society ends up by being a society with no moral conscience in relation to its own violations of those rights.

This sacrificial cycle is a secularized equivalent to that of the Middle Ages. In the Middle Ages the reversal of sacrifice emerged on the basis of the picture of Christ in orthodox Christian theology. In bourgeois society all this is secularized and prevails now in its secularized form. Undoubtedly this same sacrificial cycle underlies even Stalinist socialism; only the reversal is made not on the basis of private property as a natural law of the market but on that of state property and planning. In this instance the promised future society with no more human sacrifices is no longer the harmony of the market but is now called communism. Stalinism turns out to be the application to socialist society of the schemes analysed by John Locke and Adam Smith. This whole sacrificial cycle can be found in the speeches for the prosecution by A.J. Vishinsky, the procurator of the Moscow trials in the thirties. The initial sacrifice in the name of which all the victims of sacrifice in world history are epitomized is Kirov, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Leningrad, who died in 1934 when an attempt (probably organized by Stalin himself) was made on his life. Vishinsky called the accused mad dogs and animals, names used already by John Locke for such enemies and also to be used by the present President of the United States of America, Bush, to describe Ghadaffi when making the ideological preparations for the air attack by the United States on Libya. New words have been added nowadays, such as "cancer". It was still unknown to John Locke, and also to Vishinsky. But in the Middle Ages it had already been used by the Inquisition to refer to heretics, whom they called "plagues". Long before that Cicero used the word "dung" for those who revolted under Catiline. In the twenties this word was again used in the Soviet Union for the enemies. Even in Costa Rica in 1985-1986 the campaign against drug traffic was carried out using the same slogan: "Drug traffickers are human dung. Condemn them!" From Cicero's "dung" and the medieval "plague" and the wild beasts and mad dogs of Locke, through Stalin's "lackeys of monopolistic capitalism" and Nazism's "parasites", right up to the "cancer" of the dictatorships of national security and the Government of the USA we find inflammatory words, applied respectively to the enemies of the Roman Republic, the crucifiers of Christ and the enemies of humanity in modern western society. Stalinism justified forced labour in concentration camps with the same arguments as those with which John Locke justified forced labour by slaves; and it was Stalinism itself which used the same arguments to explain the abolition of forced labour as had been used by Adam Smith or de Tocqueville of slavery in their day. There is no fundamental difference.³⁰

Once this sacrificial cycle has been closed, nothing is unlawful. Any human sacrifice, any violation of human rights is justified and no moral conscience in the world can legitimately interfere. Although we find a consciousness of guilt, this is turned into a matter for psychiatry and no longer connected with the real reasons for that guilt.

Human sacrifice even becomes a moral obligation. That happens today in the repayment of the Third World's foreign debt which has become a real genocide costing more and more human sacrifices and progressively destroying nature.³¹

Where there is argument today in the creditor countries against this genocide, we daily run up against a frightening question: Is it morally lawful to suspend this genocide? The question is not, Is it lawful? but, Should we intervene to stop it? Is it lawful not to pay debts? Do we not have to safeguard the ethics of payment? What will happen if suddenly debts no longer need to be paid? Do we not have to consider international order? Where is the morality if this kind of genocide cannot be carried out?

Behind these arrogant questions is the mean kind of conscience of the creditors who know very well that these debts really are the result of a huge fraud. But that conscience is voiceless. The western conscience speaks only when it is required to renounce genocide. It proclaims that this is impossible for reasons of conscience. Genocide is actually committed so that they can have a moral conscience. We have a morality that calls for human sacrifices and the West has no intention of violating that morality. It commits genocide for moral reasons, duty compels it to do so: Is it morally lawful not to commit genocide? That is the question the West asks. Its morality demands more human sacrifices than any earlier society. The West finds Abraham's faith intolerable. Is it lawful for Abraham to refuse to sacrifice Isaac when the angel speaks to him? Will it not be the voice of the devil? When the voice of his faith makes him reject the sacrifice will it not be the voice of a maladjusted conscience? Will it not be the voice of Utopia? This is how the West thinks.

Those who impose this western morality see themselves as veritable Agamemnon's, tragic heroes predetermined by fate to impose the law without regard for the consequences. They can admire the morality of those capable of carrying out the genocide with untrembling hands. And in truth are they not sacrificing themselves by fulfilling the tragic duty of sacrificing others? Is it not really Agamemnon who sacrifices himself when he sacrifices his beloved daughter? Would it not be better to talk about Agamemnon's sacrifice instead Iphigenia's? When he who loses his most beloved daughter kills her; is it not a sacrifice on his part to give her up? Will this sacrifice of Agamemnon's not be a much greater sacrifice than that carried out by Iphigenia? Goethe's Iphigenia says to the goddess Diana, "She chose my place of refuge; here she keeps me/ perhaps to bring sweet joy to my old father/ whom by my seeming death sufficiently she punished".(32) Iphigenia offers herself so that she can console her father for the sacrifice he made in sacrificing her.

And are not our banks making this tragic sacrifice when they collect the Third World's foreign debt and submit to being accused and find no-one understands at all the moral necessity that obliges them to commit genocide? They are the ones with the tragic drama in their hearts — not those who have to die as a result! The slaughterers who carry out sacrifices really are sacrificing themselves by sacrificing others.

When the fearful trumpets of Handel's *Messiah* sound and the choir triumphantly sings "The heathen tremble..." we ought to tremble for the fate of the heathen. After the Messiah was sung in London for the first time the troops went out to conquer India where the heathen were trembling already. The Messiah came to trample over India. Jesus was also in India but not with this Messiah. The boot was poised over him too. Nowadays, all the countries which once fell under the heel of those boots have to pay for what is supposed to be development aid from those countries which colonized them a long while ago in the name of some foreign debt or other. To pay for this supposed aid they had to hold back or back-pedal on their development which in any event was precarious in itself. They were put in debt by being robbed and in the name of paying the debt they are being robbed again. But the West always sees the question as one of fulfilling the moral content of some law. Accompanied by the trumpets of the Messiah who has done all this, the choir goes on singing, "The heathen tremble". Would we not have to run to their aid in the end ?

THE CRISIS AND COLLAPSE OF LEGITIMACY

The West has to keep killing in order not to be killed — like Agamemnon after the sacrifice of his daughter. Not to be a murderer, Agamemnon had to conquer Troy. If he did not, the sacrifice of Iphigenia would not be a sacrifice but a murder. The Grecian skies would have fallen in on him. He had to murder in order not to be a murderer. The West has destroyed continents, cultures and whole peoples. It has carried out huge human sacrifices which from its standpoint were necessary to destroy despotism and bring liberty through the market.

All these huge sacrifices are sacrifices only if the market — meaning the conquest of despotism in all its forms — is what the West is upholding. This is the only way in which it can maintain with the appearance of reason that there are necessary human sacrifices and violations of human rights if one is to get beyond, and make an end of, the human sacrifices and violations of human rights by the despotisms against which it claims to be struggling. This would mean sacrifices on the altar of humanity which are really antisacrifices — leading to a future for humanity in which there would no longer be any sacrifice.

But the West has to go on sacrificing so that this future may come, because so far it has not happened. Should the West not continue to do so, all these earlier sacrifices committed in the name of a society without sacrifices would have been carried out not on the altar of humanity but on that of dehumanization. Nor would any of them be a sacrifice, but murders and crimes. So the West has to continue with sacrifices in order not to be criminal, it has to kill in order not to be a killer. Otherwise the heavens above the West would fall on it.

If the natural law of the market, in the name of which all this has been done, were itself the despotism of human sacrifices and violations of human rights,

then colonizing of the world would not have been a civilizing act nor the “white man’s burden”, but a war of aggression against whole continents — not a defensive war but one which has trampled over the whole of humanity. Turning Africa into a hunting-ground for slaves and America into one vast household of slaves would then simply be a great crime. Then the West would be confronted with the debris of what it thinks is its culture. The West has carried out sacrifices and continues to do so ; and it has to go on doing so, so that past sacrifices continue to be meaningful. This leads to a frantic expansion of the market as a supposed sphere of humanity. The more the market violates human rights the more it has to expand so that the resultant violations of human rights continue to look like necessary steps on the road towards humanization through the market.

Expanding the market also means accusing all the countries which do not submit to this market madness of constant violations of human rights, in order that these violations themselves can be understood as a condition for not succumbing to the despotism of those countries. Consequently the socialist countries have to look like despotisms so that the actual violations of human rights appear to be necessary steps to prevent despotisms of that kind and therefore seem to be sacrifices on the altar of humanization. To keep this whole process moving as a promise of utopia, the precondition is still the thesis that the expansion of the market is necessarily the expansion of the sphere of humanization.

This entire sacrificial cycle and therefore the legitimacy of bourgeois society collapses when this expansion of the market has to be halted because its logic leads to the destruction of nature and humanity. A collapse of this kind would require the reconstitution of society — not, in fact, a pragmatic adaptation but really the de-westernizing of society.

We have experienced a legitimacy crisis of this kind. In 1975 the South Vietnamese army collapsed in a few days despite the fact that from a military point of view it could continue to operate. This collapse was not simply the result of military defeat. The United States of America’s war had been declared a just war in which US soldiers in Vietnam were the defenders and the Vietnamese defending their own country in Vietnam were the aggressors. Ideologically speaking, the war in Vietnam was treated like all the previous colonialist wars, that is, as just wars by the colonial power against the colonized peoples who were regarded as aggressors. Therefore the Vietnam war was seen as part of the sacrificial cycle of bourgeois society.

When the war was lost, this justification was also lost. What seemed previously to be necessary human sacrifices to prevent despotism and enlarge the sphere of the humane market utopia became meaningless sacrifice and therefore a crime. This led to a crisis of legitimacy in the USA itself, the Vietnam syndrome. In the USA there was a struggle against this syndrome by means of a forced aggressiveness which in fact succeeded in preventing this past being faced. In South Vietnam on the other hand the result was the collapse of legitimacy because that reaction was not possible.

We come across the same phenomenon in Nicaragua in 1979. On 19 July Somoza's military machine collapsed in a single day although it could have continued to function in the military sense. This too is connected with a collapse of legitimacy as a result of which Somoza was turned into a criminal instead of a guarantor of liberty supported by the USA.

Something very similar happened in Germany in 1945 with the collapse of the Nazi Reich. The system collapsed in a few days despite the fact that it had been supported to the end by the great majority of the German people. Again a collapse of legitimacy took place which was of a such a kind that now the very same Germans could not understand why they had supported a system of this kind. Everything which before the end of the war seemed to be a necessary human sacrifice now took on its true form: murder and crime.

Much more dramatically a crisis of legitimacy is emerging today in the Soviet Union and the other Soviet countries. Possibly this is an example of what awaits the bourgeois West at the moment when its own crisis of legitimacy — which it still succeeds in concealing today — comes into the open. Here we have the crisis of a sacrificial cycle as constituted by Stalinist society. It is a wholly western sacrificial cycle which has its focus in state ownership and planning as opposed to the bourgeois cycle based on private property and the market. If we consider this difference in the abstract it turns out to be identical with the bourgeois sacrificial cycle. Instead of the human sacrifices of the despotisms of bourgeois imagination we are presented here with the human sacrifices of capitalism which tries to win by introducing economic planning as an area of humanization and which in its utopian sense also promises a society without sacrifices — “communism” as it was called. The violations of human rights in socialism also look like necessary sacrifices without which this utopian future cannot be guaranteed. Once we enter this sacrificial cycle, there has to be killing if one is not to be a killer.

The more the planning carried out in the Soviet Union turned out to be inefficient, the more this sacrificial cycle entered a crisis. The sacrifices carried out still did not seem to be meaningful and the future they supposedly ensured no longer seemed such a glorious future. Consequently they become crimes. What previously in the Stalinist view seemed necessary sacrifices on the altar of a still more humane future now turns out to be criminal. So people start talking about Stalin's crimes. Once the legitimacy of this crisis is called in question, it cannot be recovered unless replaced by an even greater aggressiveness — as happened in the USA in response to the Vietnam syndrome. It would seem that the Soviet Union does not have the potential of necessary authority for that solution, but possibly it has also preserved a degree of humanity which prevents its being adopted. Consequently the last resort is to establish a new society resting on another legitimacy. Only in this way can a total collapse of legitimacy be avoided.

Analysing this instance of the Soviet Union one can foresee what consequences may affect bourgeois society should the market have to be put on trial

as planning has been put on trial in the Soviet Union today. But we are now faced with that necessity. The praises everywhere sung today of the efficiency of the market economy are unjustified. Those who sing these praises know this and that is why they sing so stridently. They are concealing and postponing the threatening crisis of legitimacy in the market economy. An unrestrained policy of market expansion is taking place to hide the fact that this policy is leading to the destruction of humanity and nature. Hence the policy of the total market economy: killing so as not to be a killer.

Since the forties of this century no decade has been as destructive as the eighties. At the end of the seventies it became increasingly clear that the economic system had to be adapted to the needs of ensuring the life of human beings and nature. Since the "Limits of Growth" of the Club of Rome it had been clear that only a reasonable balance between the market economy and planning guided by these aims could solve the problem.

If however an equilibrium of this kind is needed, then we find not only a crisis of legitimacy in socialist society which was unilaterally guided by central planning but also one in bourgeois society which has been unilaterally guided by market criteria. The socialist countries began with a policy of solving this crisis by a new relation between the market economy and planning and made a start with the restructuring of all their life-styles. On the other hand the capitalist countries plunged into a deadly course, responding to the problems of the market economy with even more of the same — with a total market economy. When the socialist countries began to seek rational solutions, the capitalist countries became irrational and moved into an unqualified ideology of the market system. In this way they concealed the crisis of legitimacy which was appearing and exchanged it for an unlimited destruction of human beings and nature. Through this policy of a total market economy which was promoted by the Reagan government, the eighties of this century became a decade of genocide in the Third World for the recovery of the foreign debt, and made a holocaust of nature.

What we need is a balance between the market economy and planning, channelling the market in such a way that human life and nature are safeguarded. That means making an end of the commercial utopia of the market as a sphere for a humanization that takes place automatically through the logic of the market. The other side of the coin was represented by a policy which thought it could automatically bring about communism in socialist countries as a sphere for humanization through the logic of planning. The crisis of legitimacy is in fact the result of a realization that neither plans nor planning nor the logic of the market economy contain an automatic humanizing element of themselves. This crisis needs to be recognized if we are to be able to create a new society. But the bourgeois West really shows not the slightest readiness to do this. By its policy of a total market economy it is becoming the "wild west" of today's world.

In this kind of crisis of legitimacy, however, human sacrifices which were seen as a necessary step towards achieving the market utopia become crimes. The victims who are held in check by the West's belief in its own innocence come back as the Furies, the Eumenides. Instead of being able to recover the debts of the Third World, the West here finds itself confronted with its own guilt, and a debt that can never be repaid — with the guilt of having cruelly and brutally destroyed a whole world in a centuries-long process. But without this confession of guilt the West cannot change nor can it develop a proper relationship to its own market economy.

Instead of accepting this fact the West suppressed its growing awareness of guilt by the aggressive policy of a total market economy. The market economy of the bourgeoisie has flourished while achieving its destructive work. One way of suppressing this awareness of guilt has been to highlight the problem of abortion. Here there has been talk of victims, whereas the real sacrifice is being carried out among the peoples of the Third World and in nature.

The bourgeois West plunged into a race towards death against its own guilt. It kills in order not to be a killer. It seeks to follow this path to the bitter end. No secret speech by Khrushchev can be revealed. No Gorbachev dares to appear. It may be that the guilt is too great to be confessed. The West is incapable of confessing its guilt, just as incapable as the Roman Catholic Church itself, which is always asking the rest of the world for appropriate confessions of guilt but has never been able to say more about the Inquisition and the burning of witches than that these should be regarded as mistakes. A crime has become a mistake. Was it a "mistake" to turn Africa into a hunting-ground for slaves? — or to colonize India? Was the slave empire in America, first Christian, then liberal, and now centuries old, a "mistake"? When Hochhuth wrote *The Vicar of Christ* he was answered only with propaganda whitewash which later evolved into an aggressive continuation of what was already taking place. In this context the Soviet Union seems to be the solitary exception.

In Central America tourist publicity material from New Orleans, USA, invites people to visit a luxury restaurant under the headline, "Discover New Orleans with Lacsá":

Follow in the footsteps of the past and visit the old cotton plantations. This is a must. One of the most renowned is Houmes House, at Burnside, about an hour from New Orleans. If you go there, do not miss eating in one of the best restaurants of the region, The Cabin. This is situated where many years ago there was a slaves' cabin. The food is delicious and when in season lizard meat is on offer. Why not try it?³³

Certainly the waiters here are black, the descendants of those who were slaves here. In this way guilt is repressed. Shall we also open a luxury restaurant in one of the huts of Bergen-Belsen and offer tourists a taste of wild boar? Perhaps in Vorkuta (a Russian concentration camp in the north-west polar Urals region) too?

The problem is that sacrifices must not be turned into crimes. So the destruction has to go on till the whole world ends. Now the bourgeois West is crying as Iphigenia cried, the cry of all victims of sacrifice, in so far as they can be kept in check and their death can be wrongly used by the executioners who sacrifice them: "Sacrifice me ; take and plunder Troy... for they are slaves by nature ; we have freedom in our blood".

THE ENLIGHTENMENT IPHIGENIA

Once the medieval sacrificial cycle had been secularized, the medieval Christ could also appear in a secularized form. This happened at the time of the Enlightenment, when use was made of the original name of Iphigenia. Racine, Schiller, Goethe and many other writers created a new Iphigenia who was now more in keeping with bourgeois society.

Euripides' *Iphigenia* in Aulis survives this process almost unchanged, just as it survived the Middle ages. A father sacrifices his child and the child endorses the father's will, accepting this sacrifice, affirming it and delivering herself (or himself) up. Thus when Schiller writes an *Iphigenia in Aulis* this turns out to be simply a free translation of Euripides' *Iphigenia*. But the same theme appears also with other names. Thus Kleist's *Der Prinz von Homburg* is also an Iphigenia in Aulis, but Prussian and military. The sacrifice is under way but at the last moment a messenger from the king arrives on horseback and interrupts it because the king considers good will on the part both of the sacrificer and of the victim to be enough.

The problem is still that of Iphigenia in Tauris, as presented by Euripides, namely, How does Greece see itself once the sacrifice has been made? Euripides' answer is no longer a solution. While Schiller writes something like a free translation of Euripides' original play, Goethe's drama, *Iphigenia auf Tauris* is completely changed even although inspired by Euripides.

Goethe presents the world as it is after Iphigenia's sacrifice. His answer is a world without human sacrifices. Sacrifice ceases to exist and there is no longer any need to sacrifice anyone. Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris* becomes a priestess who carries out human sacrifices which are later forbidden by the goddess Minerva and replaced by a simple symbolical act. Instead of this, Goethe's *Iphigenia auf Tauris* as a "divine priestess" frees herself from sacrifice, so that from now on sacrifices never have to be made. In this way she is completely Christian and medieval. Goethe has Christianized her in order to secularize her at the same time.

Goethe's Iphigenia as a divine priestess turns Tauris into a paradise with no human sacrifices, and in the end will extend this paradise to all Greece. The messenger of Thoas, King of the Taurians asks her:

Who has by sweet persuasion year by year halted the gruesome sacrificial custom of offering to Diana on her altar the life-blood of each foreign prisoner condemned to die a death without reprieve, and sent them to their homeland once again ?

And, without victims for blood-sacrifice antique, has not the goddess, rather than being enraged, most liberally bowed to your gentle supplications ? Does not winged victory in joyful flight hover above the host ?³⁴

In Euripides the goddess is Minerva but Goethe calls her Diana. This goddess Diana, who gave the Greeks victory over Troy because they had sacrificed Iphigenia now gives them victory because Iphigenia has done asway with sacrifices. But she keeps on giving victories.

King Thoas however decides to reintroduce human sacrifices for the goddess Diana after Iphigenia rejects his offer of marriage. He then wants to start them again with two foreigners, Greeks, who have been captured and who turn out to be Orestes, Iphigenia's brother and his friend Pylades.

As a priestess Iphigenia speaks to them while as yet she does not know them. Her central question is, "Did Troy fall ? Assure me that it did, dear friend !" And Pylades answers, "Fallen it has !"³⁵ Iphigenia feels relieved. Her sacrifice has been meaningful. Hence too the conclusions she draws from it: that she should establish a world with no sacrifices. When she recognizes Orestes and he confesses he has killed his mother, Clytemnestra, she intends to seek satisfaction for him — as Troy has fallen, the sacrifice offered by Agamemnon was not a murder but killing Agamemnon was murder. Iphigenia defends Agamemnon's right to sacrifice her and rejects Clytemnestra's right to take vengeance on Agamemnon for Clytemnestra's daughter's death. Iphigenia therefore takes the side of Orestes, who had killed Clytemnestra.

She ascribes her rescue by the goddess, who puts a sacrificial animal in her place, to the fact that she herself had been offered up as a sacrifice.

With my mother they enticed me into the camp and dragged me to the altar and to the goddess offered up my head.

She was placated, did not want my blood and wrapped me in a cloud to rescue me. And in your temple here I first revived, restored to life.³⁶

From here she goes on to explain why she is abandoning human sacrifice:

Before the altar I have trembled too in the solemn ambience of an early death, kneeling. The flashing knife already sought to skewer my beating breast. My inmost self dizzily trembled and my eyes went blind and — I was saved ! Are we not then to grant unfortunates the mercy gods showed us ?³⁷

Iphigenia, Orestes and Pylades prepare their flight, which they want to achieve by deceiving King Thoas. But at the crucial moment in the flight Iphigenia visits Thoas and confesses everything because she wants to be honest and not to lie. Thoas is persuaded, abandons his sacrifice of Orestes and Pylades and lets them go in peace.

Desisting from sacrifices has persuasive force and creates peace for everyone. The first sacrifice produced reconciliation and from this comes a world without sacrifices. Schiller, without mentioning the connection with Iphigenia, provides a similar solution to the same problem in his *Wilhelm Tell*. Tell sacrifices his son, also without killing him, and from the sacrifice comes the Rütli oath which also establishes a society without sacrifices.

Goethe's *Iphigenia auf Tauris* shows us a wonderfully harmonious world in which human sacrifice has been liquidated by its own logic. Here we have a world with no enemies, and which is therefore so harmonious. Everyone voluntarily submits to the divine influence exercised on them by Iphigenia. Troy is destroyed and the world has no more reasons for fighting. The sacrifice has achieved two things at once: the destruction of Troy and the emergence of a harmonious world without sacrifices. Here we have a bourgeois ideology: the destruction and colonization of the entire world create the conditions for unlimited harmony with such a force of conviction that everyone will submit to it. All the sacrifices become fruitful which different despotisms have carried out in the course of history in their struggle against bourgeois society.

Goethe's play is a superficial and merely apologetic pamphlet. In the thirties of this century it could have been presented in the Moscow theatres with the same usefulness to the Stalinists as when it was presented in the nineteenth century in the service of the bourgeoisie. The problems which the play conceals could only be made evident if we were to suppose it had a different ending.

The harmonious ending depends wholly on the fact that Thoas the king of the Taurians allows himself to be persuaded by Iphigenia not to carry out more sacrifices and to let her leave with her brother. Let us suppose he had not been persuaded. In that situation he would have taken Iphigenia and sacrificed her. Orestes and Pylades would have escaped and would have made war on Tauris. It would have been a war against human sacrifices and for the harmony of this new world without sacrifices. Once they had captured Thoas they would have burned him at the stake, facing the temple, showing that now human sacrifices really had ended. As a result Greece would have conquered a new colony through a just war in defence of humanity and humanization.

It would have been one of those wars of which the bourgeoisie has made hundreds and which they continue to make to defend humanity and be given dominion over the whole world as a reward. The war conducted by the USA against Nicaragua was justified in this way. The same goes for the war against Panama at the end of 1989 which as a Christmas present for the Panamanian people turned that country once again into a US colony. The conquest of North America was justified in the same way, with the extirpation of almost the whole indigenous population. The colonialists only carried out just defensive wars against the peoples of the countries they colonized, and defended humanity and humanization, receiving the whole country as their reward. We can still see this today in any "Wild West" film. The bourgeois conquerors have never waged a

single unjust war. Clearly if Goethe had chosen an ending of this kind, his play would reveal much more of what we can now see happening. But assuredly it would not have become a better play. It would simply have been turned into the screenplay for a Wild West film.

SACRIFICE AND THE PACT WITH THE DEVIL

Afterwards Goethe looked for a solution in a very different way. In his *Faust* there is also the murder of a child. Gretchen (Margareta) kills her son who is also Faust's son. But this time the sacrifice of the child is not in answer to the demands or the machinations of a goddess. Now the sacrifice of the child is the outcome of a pact with the devil, not with gods. It is fruitless in the end and is nothing more than a disaster caused by that pact. Although this is still not a discovery of freedom, Goethe is now nevertheless glimpsing the way towards it. In the beginning of freedom there is a man — Abraham — who rejects sacrifice and a god who acknowledges that rejection and accepts it as faith. Hence any sacrifice is a disaster, it is the result of a pact with the devil and never a source of fruitfulness. This is true even should the pact with the devil be unavoidable.

Faust goes on seeking to create a paradise on earth but now he knows that he has to deceive the devil in order to achieve it. Thus Goethe, the divine Olympian, finally comes down from Olympus and creates what is perhaps the most realistic portrayal we have of this problem. The aged Goethe sums it up as follows: *nemo contra deum, nisi deus ipse* — there is no-one against God but God himself.³⁸

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Aeschylus, *The Oresteian Trilogy*: 1. Agamemnon. Trsl. Philip Vellacott, Penguin Books, 1959, p. 50f.
- ² see Hinkelammert, Franz J., *La fe de Abraham y el Edipo Occidental*. Ed. DEI, San José 1989.
- ³ Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis*. Transl. Philip Vellacott, Penguin Classics, 1972, pp. 417-419. Emphases by the writer of the article.

⁴ The first Christians reacted against this vision of God and denounced it as the Beast:

And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and a the whole earth followed the beast with wonder. Men worshipped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it? (Rev. 13:1-4)

Of course *they* did not say "Who is like the Beast?" but the writer does not want to repeat the blasphemy. What they said was, "Who is like God?" because they regarded the Beast as their god. On the other hand the devout writer imputes to them what their inmost thoughts really were: "Who is like the Beast?"

Nowhere in the New Testament do we find the Archangel Michael saying "Who is like God?" It is an invention of the Middle Ages, a recovery of Greek hubris against the Jewish-Christian tradition. Power and domination cry "Who is like God?":

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world — he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him...the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God... [A loud voice from heaven proclaimed:] But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows his time is short. (Rev. 12:7-12)

So the archangel Michael cries,

For the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God

What accusation did this dragon make against Christians? Clearly of wanting to be like God. But from the Middle Ages onwards the whole of Christian orthodoxy has cried with the dragon and with the Graeco-Roman tradition, "Who is like God?" It would look as if the archangel Michael lost this battle. He will have to go out and fight it again.

When in Euripides the actors say, "Who am I, a mortal, to oppose a god? — who would dare quarrel with such a powerful deity?" — do they not seem like Christians? But in Revelation at least, it is the Beast who is speaking. Here too the total inversion, or reversal, of what happened in Christianity is noteworthy. Something similar has happened with the name Lucifer which was originally a name for Christ and has become the central name for the Devil. See Hinkelammert, Franz J., *Las armas ideológicas de la muerte*, Ed. DEI, 1981, pp. 225f. Christianity has set aside its own origins, interpreted them as if they were hell, is struggling against them and sees the devil in them.

⁵ On this situation René Girard talks about the "sacrificial crisis". See his *Violence and the Sacred*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1977. By the same author: *The Scapegoat*, same press. (Spanish translations: *La violencia y lo sagrado*, Anagrama, Barcelona, 1983 and *El chivo expiatorio*, Anagrama, Barcelona, 1986.)

⁶ Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*. Loeb Classical Library. Heinemann. p. 353.

⁷ op. cit. p. 353.

⁸ op. cit p. 381.

- ⁹ op. cit. p. 329.
- ¹⁰ op. cit. p. 333.
- ¹¹ op. cit. p. 365.
- ¹² op. cit. p. 407.
- ¹³ op. cit. p. 407.
- ¹⁴ See Gutiérrez, Gustavo, *Dios e el oro en las Indias* ("God and the Gold of the Indies"), CEP, Lima, 1989. Gutierrez is one of the few to have worked out the part played by this anti-sacrificial use of sacrifices in the conquest of America. He demonstrates it in particular in the confrontation between García de Toledo and Bartolomé de las Casas. According to García de Toledo, "The result of the campaign of "sacrifice" — which "all the theologians" had been deceived into joining — would have meant a return to the initial deception of idolatry. The writer's scandalized comment is: 'consider what a subtle trick was played in order to go back to the darkness of unbelief and idolatry and human sacrifices and eat human flesh and live like animals' " (page 66). According to Gutierrez, Sarmineto de Gamboa stresses that even a great deal more. Consequently the *conquistadores'* idolatry of gold appears eclipsed by their seeming opposition to idolatry. The conquistadores carry out human sacrifices, but they interpret and experience these as if they were acts against idolatry and against human sacrifices.
- ¹⁵ I think Rene Girard does not perceive this inversion or reversal of human sacrifice, and this is what leads him to believe that Christianity actually did initiate a society without sacrifices. That was certainly so at its beginnings. Nevertheless the inversion re-established sacrifice, as something in which the "scapegoat" loses its sacral character and is turned into sheer negation, while the sacrifice is imperceptible as such to the very people who carry it out.
- ¹⁶ Heer, Friedrich, *Gottes erste Liebe. Die Juden im Spannungsfeld der Geschichte*. Ullstein Sachbuch, Frankfurt/Berlin 1986, p. 548. E.T. God's First Love. Christians and Jews over Two Thousand Years. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970, p. 425.
- ¹⁷ Micha Josef Bin Gorion [= M.J. Berdyczewski], *Sagen der Juden zur Bibel*, ("Jewish Biblical Legends"). Insel Verlag, Frankfurt on Main, 1980. "Von der Opferung Isaaks" ("On the sacrifice of Isaac") (pp. 113-121)
- ¹⁸ Poliakov, Leon, *The History of Anti-Semitism*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1974, vol. I, p.85 (E.T. of *Histoire de l'Antisémitisme*, Calman-Lévy, Paris, 1955. The Spanish original of the present article is translated from the German, *Geschichte des Antisemitismus*, Worms, 1979, vol. I).
- ¹⁹ *ibid.*
- ²⁰ op. cit. p. 86.
- ²¹ John Locke, *Essay on Civil Government*, section 173.
Nature gives the *first of these* — viz., *paternal power* to parents for the benefit of their children during their minority, to supply their want of ability, and understanding how to manage their property (By property I must be understood here, as in other places, to mean *that property which men have in their persons as well as goods*.) Voluntary agreement gives the second — viz., political power to governors, for the benefit fo their subjects, to secure them in the possession and use of their properties. And forfeiture gives the third, *despotal power* to lords for their own benefit over those who are stripped of all property. (Emphases by author of article.)
- ²² See Gallardo, Helio, "La Revolución Francesa y el pensamiento politico" in Pasos (DEI), No. 26, 1989.

- ²³ Smith, Adam, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Wm Benton. Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., Chicago 1982, p. 253.
- ²⁴ op. cit., p. 254
- ²⁵ op. cit., p. 34
- ²⁶ *El Mercurio*, 19-4-81, Santiago de Chile. Interview. Hayek granted this interview when visiting Chile to take part in a conference of the Sociedad de Mont Pellerin.
- ²⁷ Nietzsche, Friedrich (re-translated from the Spanish, *Obras Inmortales*, Visión Libros, Teorema, Barcelona, 1985, vol. II, pp. 712f.). Nietzsche does not criticize the progress that should be criticized. Progress as understood by Locke and Smith is also upheld by Nietzsche. What he criticizes is solely the direction of progress in regard to ethical universalism.
- ²⁸ Locke, John, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 2 vols. Dover, New York, 1959, vol. II, p. 352.
- ²⁹ Interview quoted.
- ³⁰ In the speeches of Vishinsky, the prosecutor general in the Moscow trials, neither Hegel nor Marx appears but rather we find the liberal tradition holding good, with state property taking the place of private property. Vishinsky says not a word that might remind us of Hegel but he says a lot that is reminiscent of John Locke and Adam Smith. Pirker, Theo, *Die Moskauer Schauprozesse 1936-1938*, dtv, Munich, 1963.
- ³¹ When the candidate of the Partido de los Trabajadores (Labour Party) for the presidency of Brazil was talking about a visit to Europe in 1989 it is said he was urged to prevent the destruction of the Amazon forests because they were the world's lung. He replied that the foreign debt was his bronchial pneumonia.
- ³² Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris* Act I Scene 3 (fresh translation from the German)
- ³³ See *La Nación*, San José, 8.12.87
- ³⁴ Act 2, Scene 1: fresh translation from the German
- ³⁵ Act 2, Scene 2: translation as above.
- ³⁶ Act 1, Scene 3: translation as above.
- ³⁷ Acts 5: Scene 3: translation as above.
- ³⁸ *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, beginning of chapter 4.