

#### 4. *Confidence of Reality*

As a corollary to this last agreement of Marxism and Thomism both reveal a robust confidence in the attainment of reality. We have had occasion previously to note the lament of a modern thinker apropos of "the deep vein of Agnosticism as to the nature of ultimate reality, and of Scepticism as to the constructive power of reason" noticeable in current thought.<sup>16</sup> Both Thomism and Marxism are complete and integrated philosophies sure enough of themselves to apply their principles and to seek to make them work through the whole of reality.

"Whatever can be, can be understood," says St. Thomas simply.<sup>17</sup> We have but to recall the passage previously quoted in chapter one where he shows how the process of knowing contributes to the perfection of the universe. Because the specific being of one thing differs from the specific being of another thing any one being is imperfect as only a part of the total perfection achieved by the aggregate of all things. But here is the unique perfection of knowing; for it is the character of knowledge that the thing known in a sense exists in the knower. And the conclusion from this ideal of knowledge is that "according to this mode of perfection it is possible that the perfection of the entire universe exist in a single and particular thing." To open such a vista to the mind certainly bespeaks a confidence in its work, a consciousness of its worth and a conviction of its efficacy.

"Every mysterious, subtle and insidious difference," says Lenin in the Marxist tradition, "between the appearance and the thing-in-itself is an absolute philosophic fallacy. In fact each of us has observed the simple and palpable transformation of the 'thing-in-itself' 'into the thing-for-us.' This transformation is cognition."<sup>18</sup> Marxism, moreover, would not have the mere understanding of things considered as individual entities as true

<sup>15</sup> *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 54.

<sup>16</sup> Chapter I, p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> . . . quidquid enim esse potest, intelligi potest." II C. G., 98.

<sup>18</sup> Lenin, V, *op cit.*, p. 93.

knowledge of reality. It is akin to Thomism in a consciousness of relations, objective and subjective, relation between mind and things, between external realities and between concepts themselves.<sup>19</sup> "There are," as we previously quoted Maritain, "in Marxist epistemology a certain number of traits which do not displease a Thomist: its aversion to idealism, its affirmation of the reality of the external world, the rôle it grants to the body in knowledge itself (in the first degree of human knowledge) . . ."

#### 5. *Point of Departure*

But these points of agreement between Marxism and Thomism do not imply an identity of the two systems. Far from it! There is a chasm between both and the principal factor for its depth and impassability is suggested in the next line of the quotation from Maritain—"the importance (unfortunately principal) which it (Marxism) bestows upon material causality." Marxism is by predisposition and conscious choice a rigorous materialism. Thus orientated, all reality—God, man, society, and everything else—is explained and discussed in terms of matter alone. Thomism is realistic, yes, but not materialistic. St. Thomas, we know, pointed to out and out materialism and avoided it just as carefully as he pointed to and avoided extreme idealism.<sup>20</sup> Thomistic thought holds Marxism guilty of an extreme as violent and as erroneous as the extreme that same Marxism would combat. In that charge Thomism finds the source of the errors whereby Marxism vitiates the truth it perceived. Because Marxism is logical in that vitiation its mutilated truth reflects itself in the mutilated society it has erected.

On its own principles Marxism is forced to the conclusion that along with all else mind, the knowing process, knowledge and truth are entirely material. While indicating the Marxist concern for a theory of knowledge we saw from its own words the position to which it was pushed to secure this. It is sure of the mind and its activity; it is equally sure of its own materialism. It must reconcile both without doing violence to either. So it insists on

<sup>19</sup> Engels, F., *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>20</sup> Cfr. above, p. 70.



the independent character of mind and matter, yet lest mind elude its rigid materialism and introduce an insuperable problem, it holds a difference between mind and matter not of kind but of degree. So far it is consistent, but consistency, unfortunately, is not always the guarantee of reliability.

St. Thomas is also concerned with matter as well as mind. The above sentence was so framed because it is readily granted that Thomistic thought, framed in the Christian tradition, is genuinely concerned with the "things of the spirit"—vaporous nothings in Marxian ideology. Its concern with the mundane is generally more suspect. But St. Thomas, the realist, faced the same problem as Marxism, more keenly aware of its antinomies, just as concerned for its solution, and more respectful of the reality he faced.

Mind there was, he said, and matter there was. And mind apprehended reality, or rather mind assimilated reality.<sup>21</sup> Now he had to face the fact that material creatures differed from one another,<sup>22</sup> and further that they were set apart by the matter of the Aristotelian *ψυχή τὰ ἐν τῷ πᾶσι* *πᾶσα*—"anima quodammodo est omnia."<sup>24</sup>

But there is still the problem of matter. Matter is impervious and changeable and on that score St. Thomas recognized that should he conclude to the reality of matter and nothing else, then he would be in the same dilemma as Heraclitus (and by implication of all materialists, Marxists included) who, he says, was

<sup>21</sup> "Cognito fit per assimilationem cognoscentis et cogniti." I. C. G., 65.  
<sup>22</sup> "... esse specificum unius rei est distinctum ab esse specifica alterius rei, ideo in qualibet re creata huiusmodi perfectioni habitae in unaquaque re, tantum deest de perfectione simpliciter, quantum perfectus in aliis specielus invenitur; ut cujuslibet rei perfectio in se considerata sit imperium perfectionibus, invicem congregatis." *De Ver.*, q. 2, a. 2.

<sup>23</sup> The statement of this fact is implied by the problem Thomists set for themselves. Cajetan, one of St. Thomas' commentators, says: "Duo specifica reddatur incommunicabiles et quo primo realiter distinguitur ab ad 2; III, q. 77, a. 2.

<sup>24</sup> *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 1.

forced to deny any certitude to things because of the impermanent and changing character of the material world.<sup>25</sup>

St. Thomas' solution we have already indicated in the first chapter. The mind knows all reality, enriches itself with that reality. In a previous quotation from the *Contra Gentiles*<sup>26</sup> we saw how St. Thomas regards the intellectual process not as an "epiphenomenon" on the surface of life, but as the life process par excellence. Examining the material world in terms of its activity and distinguishing between transitive and immanent activity he ranges through the degrees of being and by a progressive dematerialization demanded as life becomes higher, he concludes to the immateriality and perfection of the mind and its life. "The immateriality of anything is the reason it is cognitive; and the mode of knowledge is proportionate to the mode of immateriality."<sup>27</sup>

This does not mean that man is divorced from and rendered independent of the material world. Rather he is a part of that world and in radical dependence on it.<sup>28</sup> Here Thomism and Marxism agree in their recognition of material causality. But the bridge Marxism builds to span the gap between mind and matter has such a low clearance that man must stoop so low in traveling under it as not to be able to lift his eyes from the material world. The bridge Thomism builds is high enough for man to walk with his feet on the ground and his eyes on the spiritual and immaterial.<sup>29</sup>

The immateriality demanded for knowledge implies also some degree of the same immateriality in the objects of our knowledge.

<sup>25</sup> *Cfr.* above, no. 11.

<sup>26</sup> IV, C. G., II. *Cfr.* Chapter I, pp. 4-5.

<sup>27</sup> "Immaterialitas alicujus rei est ratio quod sit cognoscitiva; et secundum modum immaterialitatis est modus cognitonis." II *De Anima*, c. 8. *Cfr.* S. T., I, q. 84, a. 2. "Relinquitur ergo quod oportet materialia cognita in cognoscente existere, non materialiter, sed magis immaterialiter. Et hujus ratio est, quia actus cognitonis se extendit ad ea quae sunt extra cognoscentem. Cognoscimus enim etiam ea quae extra nos sunt."

<sup>28</sup> Chapter I, pp. 8-12.

<sup>29</sup> "... intellectus species corporum, quae sunt materiales et mobiles, recipit immaterialiter et immobiliter secundum modum suum: nam receptum est in recipiente per modum recipientis." S. T., I, q. 84, a. 1.



Knowledge is an assimilation, a more vital process than the analogism of biological life. Analogically, just as the living body assimilates material reality, so in a higher sense does the mind assimilate reality too. But in the biological process the organism in assimilating changes the matter received so that it ceases to exist of itself; in the intellectual process the mind enriches itself with the form of the thing known, though that thing does not cease to exist outside of the mind knowing it. Material things, then, are the object of our mind and there must be in the material thing some element on which the mind can work.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, it is not the particularity but the materiality of the individual thing which resists intelligibility.<sup>31</sup> Just as immateriality is the condition of knowledge,<sup>32</sup> so separation of some sort from matter is requisite in the object of knowledge. Perfectly consistent with his whole philosophy, St. Thomas finds this element in the form of the thing.

How this comes about can be clearly seen. For whatever things bear such relation to one another that one is the cause of the other's existence, that one which stands in the relation of cause can have existence without the other, but the converse does not hold true. The relation of matter and form, however, is found to be of such kind because the form gives existence to matter, and, therefore, it is impossible for the matter to be without some form, but it is not impossible that there be a form without matter, for the form as form does not have any dependence on matter.<sup>33</sup>

There is, then, in things also an intelligible element capable of separation from matter. De facto, form is individualized in mat-

<sup>30</sup> "Scibilia naturalia sunt priora quam scientia nostra et mensura eius." *S. T.*, I, q. 14, a. 8 ad 3.

<sup>31</sup> "Singulare non repugnat intelligibilitati in quantum est singulare, sed in quantum est materiale, quia nihil intelligitur nisi immaterialiter; id quod repugnat intelligibilitati est materialitas." *II C. G.*, 75.

<sup>32</sup> "Ipsa immaterialitas substantiae intelligentis creatae non est eius intellectus, sed ex immaterialitate habet virtutem ad intelligendum." *S. T.*, I, q. 56, a. 1.

<sup>33</sup> *On Being and Essence (De Ente et Essentia)*, translated from the Latin by Clare C. Riedl (Toronto: St. Michael's College, 1937), C. 4, p. 32.

ter in the things of this world. But because it can be separated from matter it is intelligible in potency at least.<sup>34</sup> In this refined sense and by this accurate analysis St. Thomas can arrive at the conclusion that the unique prerogative of the knowing mind is its ability to become other than itself by the apprehension of the forms of things.<sup>35</sup>

The difference between the Marxist and Thomistic theories of knowledge can be further emphasized in many directions. One directly connected with their truth theories and hence of interest to our thesis has been chosen.

The whole trend of Thomistic thought evidences how highly the life of knowledge is held. St. Thomas by a progressive process of dematerialization arrives at the activity of thought immaterial in its origin and nature. Another characteristic of this life of the mind is its interiority. In line with the recognition of a twofold activity, transitive and immanent<sup>36</sup> and consonant with the general principle "the more immanent the activity, the higher the life"<sup>37</sup> St. Thomas is justified in extolling, as he does, contemplative knowledge.

The mind superior to matter, is distinct from it and dependent on it only in an accidental way.<sup>38</sup> Because of its superiority the

<sup>34</sup> "... formae autem in materia existentes non sunt intelligibiles actu."

*S. T.*, I, q. 79, a. 3; cfr. *I Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 1 ad 3; *De Ver.*, q. 10, a. 6.

<sup>35</sup> "Forma autem in his quae cognitionem participant, altiori modo invenitur quam in his quae cognitione carent. In his enim quae cognitione carent, invenitur tantummodo forma ad unum esse proprium determinans unumquodque; quod etiam naturale uniuscujusque est. Hanc igitur formam naturalem sequitur naturalis inclinatio, quae appetitus naturalis vocatur. In habitibus autem cognitionem sic determinatur unumquodque ad proprium esse naturale per formam naturalem, quod tamen est receptivum specierum aliarum rerum; sicut sensus recipit species omnium sensibilium, et intellectus recipit species omnium intelligibilium." *S. T.*, I, q. 80, a. 1. Cfr. Gilson, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

<sup>36</sup> "Duplex enim est actionis genus: una scilicet quae transit in aliquid exterius... alia vero actio est quae non transit in rem exteriorem, sed magis manet in ipso agente; sicut sentire, intelligere et velle; per huiusmodi enim actionem non immutatur aliquid extrinsecum, sed totum in ipso agente agitur." *S. T.*, I, q. 54, a. 2.

<sup>37</sup> *IV, C. G.*, II.

<sup>38</sup> *Q. D.*, *De Anima*, a. 15. "Anima non indiget sensibilibus ad intelligendum secundum suam naturam, sed per accidens."



life of the mind is self-contained. It is not essential that the product of the mind's meeting with reality—once that meeting has been consummated—be ordered to action.<sup>39</sup> Not that the mind does not return to reality and give direction to action—the denial of this phase would give the lie to all St. Thomas' practical philosophy. But the essential value of intellectual activity consists in the mind's ability to know reality and to seek this knowledge as an end in itself. The possession and contemplation of such knowledge produces the development and perfection of the mind.<sup>40</sup> Truth, therefore, will be discovered, and to a large extent, in this contemplative activity.

Marxism, as we have seen it, is obviously forced to an opposite conclusion. The implications which demand this are found in its conception of the nature of knowledge as essentially materialistic and destined solely for action.<sup>41</sup> Such a position would hold the ideal of contemplation for philosophy as not only incomprehensible but useless. Action on material reality is the concern of knowledge in the Marxist scheme. That means no independent life for the mind; material reality is the measure of the mind's worth both because the mind is a part and no more of that reality and because the function and worth of mind is judged solely in terms of practical results consequent on its application to the material world.

How far apart Thomism and Marxism stand here as each follows the logical development of its own principles is evident in the complete and off-handed dismissal of metaphysics—and religion—by Marxism.

There exists in the world—so the Marxists tell us—a vast "secteur," a vast province which is not yet submitted by science to man's domination: now, metaphysics and religion (for the Marxists do not distinguish the one from the other) are but a way of anticipating, in terms

<sup>39</sup> "Accidit autem alicui apprehenso per intellectum quod ordinetur ad opus, vel non ordinetur." *S. T.*, I, q. 79, a. 11.

<sup>40</sup> "Nam intelligere est perfectio et actus intelligentis. . . . Intelligere non est actio progressiva ad aliquid extrinsecum, sed manet in operante, sicut

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Chapter II, p. 50.

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of imagination, a supremacy not yet acquired in practice. Metaphysical reason refers to the non-dominated province, which it pretends to construct theoretically in such a way that it dominates it in the imagination. God and being qua being have been created for the sake of dominating this province which yet remains inaccessible. When real and practical domination replaces this imaginary domination, the illusory constructions of metaphysics and religion will vanish of themselves. And when will this occur? No doubt when the practical domination of the external world will be assured by such a high degree of material productive forces, that the advent of a society without classes and without individual increase in value will enter the domain of the possible.<sup>42</sup>

#### 6. *God, Man, Society*

As we follow further these two theories of truth and society we begin to see the consequences wherein both influence society in so diverse a manner. The ideas of God, man and society, as Thomism and Marxism present them, have been chosen to exemplify that divergence. These ideas can be traced, if we wish, down to the smallest details of daily life; but here our concern is with their general philosophic import and consequently only their broad bearings will be indicated.

God, for St. Thomas, is absolute Truth, the guarantee of intelligibility. Human knowledge in his theory consists in the apprehension of the thing known. We saw previously how things are understandable, at least in potency, for the mind. That is the proximate reason for their intelligibility. But St. Thomas goes much further than this in finding and securing the intelligible elements of the universe he so much insists on. Through the form, he says, a thing (a) has being, (b) is adequate to the divine intellect, (c) causes a true concept in the human intellect.<sup>43</sup> The alternative to this conclusion is that everything happens by chance. Had St. Thomas accepted this alternative he would have betrayed the intelligibility of which he was so certain.

No, that intelligibility points to pattern and design and a supreme Mind. Things are intelligible and the mind is intelligent

<sup>42</sup> Maritain, *J.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 52.

<sup>43</sup> *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 8. See no. 33, Chapter I.



and truth is attainable because they have their source in one first Truth. "Either truth, namely of the mind or of the thing," says St. Thomas, "is reduced, as into a first principle, to God Himself, because His being is the cause of all being, and His understanding is the cause of all knowledge."<sup>44</sup> Things are true "by one first truth to which each is assimilated according to its entity. And so, although there are many essences or forms of things, there is nevertheless, one truth of the divine intellect, according to which all things are called true."<sup>45</sup> The mind knows because "the soul does not judge of all things according to any truth, but according to the first truth inasmuch as this results in her, as in a mirror, according to the first intelligibles."<sup>46</sup>

Intelligibility for St. Thomas blossoms into supreme intelligence. This is a far cry from the irrational and mechanical universe of the Marxists. The ideas—and idea is another word for form<sup>47</sup>—of all created or possible reality are in the divine mind from all eternity. They are the infinitely many and varied forms and manners in which the infinite divine nature and being can be reflected and in a sense reproduced in created reality. Evidently when these ideas or logical forms become embodied in the objective reality of the universe, they become forms and structural elements of the universe. These forms then are the direct and

<sup>44</sup> "Utraque autem veritas, scilicet intellectus et rei, reducitur sicut in primum principium in ipsum Deum; quia suum esse est causa omnis esse. Cf. Chapter I, pp. 20-22.

<sup>45</sup> "Si vero loquamur de veritate secundum quod est in rebus; sic omnes verae, una prima veritate, cui unumquodque assimilatur secundum suam est veritas divini intellectus secundum quam omnes res denominantur verae." *S. T.*, I, q. 16, a. 6.

<sup>46</sup> "... anima non secundum quantumque veritatem judicat de rebus omnibus; sed secundum veritatem primam, in quantum resultat in ea, sicut in speculo, secundum prima intelligibilia." *S. T.*, I, q. 16, a. 6 ad 1.

<sup>47</sup> "Idea enim graece, latine forma dicitur. Unde per ideas intelliguntur formae aliarum rerum praeter ipsas res existentes. Forma autem alicujus rei praeter ipsam existens, ad duo esse potest: vel ut sit exemplar ejus cujus dicitur forma, vel ut sit secundum principium cognitionis ipsius, secundum quod formae cognoscibilia dicuntur esse in cognoscente." *S. T.*, I, q. 15, a. 1.

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proper object of human intelligence and reason. By means of a variety of mental operations we succeed more or less perfectly in isolating them and determining them as the embodied ideas of the divine Architect, just as in human works of art we are able to recognize the ideas of the human artist that gave them birth. Thus and thus alone are we able to enter into the possession of truth.<sup>48</sup> In this sense St. Thomas' realism is idealistic.

Further the idea which forms every natural thing must also be the principle of matter, since matter is a sort of degeneration of mind. For the same reason it must be its end, and that helps us to imagine the final transformation of the world as depicted by St. Thomas. Begotten of mind, penetrated with mind, tending towards mind, the world may one day become more or less mind. The determinism of physical laws may be, to a great extent, provisional. Even the physical world may perhaps share, with the world of spirits, in the "liberty of the children of God."<sup>49</sup>

Marxism, rigidly held to exclude any non-material element from the universe, fell back on an anthropology—now outmoded—to explain the prevalent notion of God and a spiritual soul.

From the very early times when men, still completely ignorant of the structure of their own bodies, under the stimulus of dream apparitions came to believe that their thinking and sensation were not activities of their bodies, but of a distinct soul which inhabits the body and leaves it at death—from this time, men have been driven to reflect about the relation between this soul and the outside world. If in death it took leave of the body and lived on, there was no occasion to invent yet another distinct death for it. Thus arose the idea of its immortality which at that stage of development appeared not at all

<sup>48</sup> "Finis autem ultimus uniuscujusque rei est qui intenditur a primo auctore vel motore ipsius. Primum autem auctor et motor universi est intellectus. . . . Oportet igitur ultimum finem universi esse bonum intellectus. Hoc autem est veritas. Oportet igitur veritatem esse ultimum finem totius universi; et circa ejus considerationem principiaiter sapientiam insistere." *I C. G.*, 1.

<sup>49</sup> Scerifanges, A. D., *Foundations of Thomistic Philosophy* (St. Louis: Herder, 1931), pp. 179-180.



as a consolation but as a fate against which it was no use fighting, and often enough, as among the Greeks, as a positive misfortune. Not religious desire for consolation, nor the quandary arising from the common universal ignorance of what to do with this soul (once its existence had been accepted) after the death of the body—led in a general way to the tedious notion of personal immortality. In an exactly similar manner the first gods arose through the personification of natural forces. And these gods in the further development of religions assumed more and more an extramundane form, until finally by a process of abstraction, I might say of distillation, occurring naturally in the course of man's intellectual development, out of the many more or less limited and mutually limiting gods there arose in the minds of men the idea of the one exclusive god of monotheistic religions.<sup>50</sup>

Important as is the point that this position is based on false science, the fact is that Marxism, even though taxed with this charge and admitting it, would still be forced to a violent atheism:

... more profoundly, the discovery of historical materialism, as Marx conceived it, implies an absolutely atheistic position; because it implies a universal process of substitution of the dialectic of history for all transcendent causality, and for the universe of Christianity in general; it implies consequently an absolute naturalistic immanentism, by hypothesis exclusive of all divine transcendence.<sup>51</sup>

Thus do Thomism and Marxism stand apart on the idea of God. In the first chapter of this work we saw the position of man as St. Thomas envisioned it.<sup>52</sup> Man's worth in relation not only to the material world but to the whole universe is clearly delimited. He is at the summit of material creation; he is set apart from the rest of that creation by intelligence. He shares with higher creatures a life and activity that makes him unique. That life and activity give the tone to his perfection and happiness. It is not

<sup>50</sup> Engels, *F. op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>51</sup> Maritain, *J. op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>52</sup> Chapter I, pp. 6-13.

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material goods, nor sensual pleasure, nor is it even the practice of the moral and active virtues, good as this is, that is the final happiness of man; no, his final happiness is in the contemplation of truth, an activity shared by no other material creature save himself.<sup>53</sup>

In this emphasis is St. Thomas setting an unreal goal for man, turning his back on his real condition and disregarding his present place in a world of material reality? The balance we have noted before in the Thomistic scheme, its fruition in the Aristotelian tradition, is the sufficient answer to that charge. But before we present this aspect of St. Thomas' conception of man we might cite a modern witness who, in his own appreciation, indicates the direction it will take.

In sober Aquinas there is already the blend between this sense of the worth-whiteness and dignity of all that is specifically human, and the antique humanism of Aristotle. Thomas has hardly a trace of asceticism; his whole treatment of the flesh and its impulses is inspired by the Aristotelian principle of maintaining the supremacy of the most characteristically human part of man, his reason. For this reason, and this alone, is carnality to be regulated. Though the head of scholasticism reached to heaven, its feet were firmly planted on the solid ground of a humanistic appreciation of man's life as an organic union of soul and body.<sup>54</sup>

Marxism goes to the extreme of identifying man with the material; Thomism, though in opposition to this, has never made the mistake of completely identifying man with his intellect.

One of the surprises in store for the historian of Christian thought lies in its insistence on the value, dignity and perpetuity of the human body. The Christian conception of man is almost universally taken to be a

<sup>53</sup> "Si igitur ultima felicitas hominis non consistit in exterioribus, quae dicuntur bona fortunatae; neque in bonis corporis; neque in bonis animae quantum ad intellectivam secundum actum moralium virtutum; neque secundum intellectuales quae ad actionem pertinent, scilicet artem et prudentiam; relinquatur quod ultima hominis felicitas sit in contemplatione veritatis." III C. G., 37. Cir. S. T., I-IIae, 1-5; III C. G., 25-63.

<sup>54</sup> Randall, J. H., *The Making of the Modern Mind*, p. 117.



more or less thorough-going spiritualism. What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? To cultivate the soul, to purify, and thus to liberate it, and finally to save it—there, it would seem, is the whole end and effort of Christianity. Add to this that the Christian God is spirit, that man therefore can hold communion with God only in the spirit, that God, in short, would be adored in spirit and in truth—and how, after all that, should we not expect to see the Christian philosopher bringing all his forces to bear on the spiritual part of man, that is to say on the soul, and making little account of the perishable part, the blind and mindless body that knows nothing of God? But to the no small scandal of a goodly number of historians and philosophers the contrary turns out to be the fact.<sup>55</sup>

The confirmation of this is revealed in the above chapter one to which we have called attention as giving St. Thomas' basis for the worth of man. The mind's operation, he says, is an immaterial activity rooted in an immaterial substance. But withal, he breaks with Plato for disregarding the union of soul and body and thereby concluding to an erroneous theory of knowledge. The mind needs the body because its object is material things—"from material bodies and in material bodies it achieves its own intelligible perfection."<sup>56</sup> True to his own principles St. Thomas is very much aware of the sensitive and vegetative life of man and all their implications. In his general solution of that problem, while emphasizing the intellectual he demands, too, place for the life of the body.<sup>57</sup>

Marxism also very much aware of the material element in man's makeup ends by making it all. In line with its general position,

<sup>55</sup> Gilson, E., *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>56</sup> "Tantum se nostra naturalis cognitio extendere potest, in quantum et in corpora suam perfectionem intelligibilem consequantur." *S. T.*, I, q. 55, a. 2.

<sup>57</sup> "Unde dicendum est quod nulla alia forma substantialis est in homine nisi solo anima intellectiva, et quod ipsa sicut virtute continet animam sensitivam et nutritivam, ita virtute continet omnes inferiores formas et facit ipsa sola quiddam imperfectiores formae in aliis faciunt." *S. T.*, I, q. 76, a. 4.

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as we have already pointed out,<sup>58</sup> it regards as non-existent any spiritual or immaterial factor in man as well as in the rest of the universe. Man, in its own words, is a practical animal, a producing animal working on matter. In such a view it becomes clear why Marxism considers metaphysics and religion as vain imaginings that can only stultify progress. The material necessities of life and their production are the end of man. There is nothing more basic than these factors in the history of mankind, and insistence on any others beclouds the issue and acts only as a barrier to man's happiness. Existence of other factors is not denied but their primacy is vigorously questioned. Indeed, this is a consistent materialism!

It is a fact well known that Marxism arose as a protest against the inhuman condition of man in a capitalist society. By that much it is good. But it would purchase a more human law by laws of production that are in themselves anything but human; these are the laws of the machine and the machine can devour man. In a comparison between Marxism and National Socialism the ideal man of Marxism has been likened to the power which drives the machine while the ideal man of National Socialism is conceived as the perfect beast. The National Socialist race is a herd of wild beasts, the Marxist proletariat a power station.<sup>59</sup>

Marxism shows appreciation in a high degree of man's material work and its worth. Yet by its denial of transcendent causality it denies not only the Being that makes matter good in itself, but also the intellectual and spiritual basis in man that dignifies his work as distinctly human. What it fails to see is the implication of mind in the manufacturing and the machine. As M. J. Adler has shown manufacturing involves a grasp of the form of the thing and its duplication by imprinting that form upon many units of matter.<sup>60</sup>

Marxism thus supposes a philosophy of work at the same time that its radical materialism makes such a philosophy impossible.

<sup>58</sup> Chapter II, pp. 48-49.

<sup>59</sup> Watkins, E. I., *The Catholic Centre* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1939), p. 105.

<sup>60</sup> Adler, M. J., *What Man Has Made of Man* (New York: Longmans, 1937), p. 235.



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This same failure appears in the inability of Marxism to analyze the end of human activity—production somehow becomes its own end. Thus it jeopardizes its own accomplishment in the practical order by forfeiting its appreciation of the human dignity of labor to the mechanical necessities of industrial production. Its historical materialism and labor theory have strength in the order of the practical; they are, though, at the same time the cause of its fundamental weakness. It has truth but not enough. Marxism needs St. Thomas.

Finally, the divergence of thought so far indicated between these two philosophies emphatically continues in their theories of society. We might expect St. Thomas' ideal of the life of the mind to shine forth here—and it does. Disorder in human society arises "from the fact that the man at the head has no head"—a colloquial summary of a passage of St. Thomas.<sup>61</sup> Government of human society is not by sheer imposition of will or the clash of human passions but by the direction of reason.<sup>62</sup> Reason, too, settles the problem with which Marxism is so concerned—the unequal distribution of wealth. The regulation of material possessions is of utmost importance. But contrary to Marxism, Thomism considers private ownership the best system, the most orderly and the most peaceful.<sup>63</sup> A real injustice which aroused Marxism to such an emotional pitch that it lapsed into an extreme position, though appreciated by Thomism too, is treated with balance and understanding. Private property is recognized by reason and treated reasonably.<sup>64</sup> But a sufficiency of temporal

<sup>61</sup> "Illi qui intellectu praecinent naturaliter dominantur . . . in regimine humano ordinatio provenit ex eo quod non propter intellectus praecinentiam praest." III C. G., 81.

<sup>62</sup> ". . . in recta gubernatione multitudinis non permittimus quod homines principetur homini lex, quae est dictamen rationis, vel homo qui secundum rationem agat." In X *Libros Ethicorum*, lib. 5, lect. 6.

<sup>63</sup> ". . . per hoc (private ownership) magis pacificus status hominum conservatur, dum unusquisque re sua contentus est. Unde videmus quod inter orientur." S. T., II-IIae, q. 66, a. 2.

<sup>64</sup> ". . . proprietates possessionum non est contra just naturale, sed iuri naturali superadditur per adinventiorem rationis humanae." S. T., II-IIae, q. 66, a. 2 ad 1.

goods (*corporalium bonorum sufficientia*) is neither the primary nor the sole end of society.

We have seen St. Thomas' high ideal of man and in that high ideal he sets down the principle that the end of the state (the organ of society) depends on the idea of man.<sup>65</sup> Because man is an intellectual being the virtuous life of its citizens is the prime end of the state, the securing of material prosperity secondary.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, the state exists for men, not men for the state. This last is due to specifically Christian elements at work in St. Thomas' work. Aristotle, St. Thomas' Greek precursor, never fully arrived at that position. For him, and for pagan thought in general, the individual was subordinate to the state—the important thing was to be a good citizen.<sup>67</sup> But Christianity assigned to man a supernatural end, the enjoyment of God; and while St. Thomas admits and holds that the public good, the good of society, is, in general, more important than the good of an individual, this does not hold when the private good is of a higher order.<sup>68</sup>

All the above would seem to demand an excessive individualism productive of anarchy rather than order for society. But, no, man is a social being and that by his very nature:

Man is called by nature to live in society; for he needs many things which are necessary to his life, and which by himself he cannot procure for himself. Whence it follows

<sup>65</sup> "Unde secundum quod homines diversimodi existimant de fine vitae humanae, secundum hoc diversimode homines existimant de conversatione civitatis." In *Libros Politicorum*, lib. 2, lect. 1.

<sup>66</sup> ". . . ad bonum autem unius hominis vitam duo requiruntur, unum principale quod est operatio secundum virtutem. Virtus enim qua bene vivitur, aliud vero secundarium et quasi instrumentale, scilicet corporalium honorum sufficientia, quorum usus est necessarius ad actum virtutis." *De Regno*, lib. I, cap. 15.

<sup>67</sup> Cfr. *Politics*, 1252, a. 1-6.

<sup>68</sup> ". . . dicendum quod sicut bonum multitudinis est majus, quam bonum unius, qui est de multitudine; ita est minus quam bonum extrinsecum ad quod multitudo ordinatur." S. T., II-IIae, q. 39, a. 2 ad 2; ". . . homo non ordinatur ad communitatem politicam secundum se totum, et secundum omnia sua." Cfr. S. T., II-IIae, 21, 4 ad 3; *De Virtut. cardin.*, a. 4 et ad 3. Cfr. Gilson, T., *op. cit.*, Chapter 10 for a discussion of the origin in Christian philosophy of the exaltation of the individual.



that man naturally becomes part of a group, to procure him the means of living well. He needs this assistance for two reasons. First, in order that he may obtain the elementary necessities of life; this he does in the domestic circle of which he is a part. Every man receives from his parents life and nourishment and education; and the reciprocal aid of the family members facilitates the mutual provision of the necessities of life. But there is a second reason why the individual is helped by the group, of which he is a part, and in which alone he finds his adequate well-being; and this is that he may not only live, but live the good life, having everything which suffices him for life. Thus civil society aids the individual in obtaining the material necessities by uniting in the same city a great number of crafts, which could not be so united in the same family. And civil society also assists him in the moral life.<sup>69</sup>

St. Thomas, moreover, is optimistic of the bond of union between men. Man is naturally friendly to man. Proof of this natural friendliness between men may be had in the fact that a man by a kind of natural instinct, comes to the assistance of another man, even a stranger, who is in need—for instance, by warning him if he has taken the wrong road, or by helping him to rise if he has fallen, and so forth.<sup>70</sup> Our common human na-

<sup>69</sup> "Sciendum est autem quod quia homo naturaliter est animal sociale, non potest; consequens est quod homo naturaliter sit pars alicujus multitudinis, per quam praestetur sibi auxilium ad bene vivendum. Quo quidem auxilio indiget ad duo. Primo quidem ad ea quae sunt vitae necessaria, sine quibus praesens vita transigi non potest: et ad hoc auxiliatur homini domestica multitudo, cujus est pars. Nam quilibet homo a parentibus habet generationem et nutrimentum et disciplinam. Et similiter singuli, qui sunt partes domesticae familiae, se invicem juvant ad necessaria vitae. Alio modo juvatur, homo a multitudine, cujus est pars, non solum quantum ad corporalia, prout scilicet in civitate sunt multa artificia, ad quae una domus sufficere non potest; sed etiam quantum ad moralia . . . In X *Libros Ethicorum*, lib. I, lect. I.

<sup>70</sup> "Est autem omnibus naturale ut se invicem diligant; cujus signum est quod, quodam naturali instinctu, homo cuilibet homine etiam ignoto subvenit in necessitate, puta recovando ab errore viae, erigendo a casu et alii hujusmodi, ac si omnis homo omni homini familiaris et amicus." III C. C., 117.

ture and our common end is the basis of this charity.<sup>71</sup> In this vein St. Thomas concludes that justice alone is not sufficient to secure society peace. Justice, it is true, begets peace, but only indirectly by removing the obstacles in the way of peace. Peace results directly from charity.<sup>72</sup> Charity is thus the bond of society and without it society cannot be preserved.<sup>73</sup>

In Marxism we have likened man to the power which drives the machine and the proletariat to a power station. The comparison is justified in the conclusions of Marxism as to the nature of society. Reality, here, is simply productive society which, in turn, is entirely sufficient for itself and has no further end than its own being. We have noted how St. Thomas was concerned with the materially productive side of life. Marx, though, was so obsessed by it that his theory of society is the philosophical expression of a complete preoccupation with the economic and nothing more. Society is understood as having meaning only when identified with class, the class of exploited workers or proletariat. Nor is there even a glimmer of intelligence here because society is determined by historical causes.<sup>74</sup>

By contrast to Thomism's insistence on the virtuous life, private property and the natural bond of union between men, Marxism takes the opposite position of economic productivity, communism and class warfare as elemental in society. Granted that men fall into error and make mistakes, yet the life of the mind and the pursuit of truth brings with it for St. Thomas an optimistic view of man in which there is reason and expectation that men can live

<sup>71</sup> "Oportet enim esse unionem affectus inter eos quibus est unus finis communis." *Ibidem*.

<sup>72</sup> " . . . pax est 'opus justitiae' indirecte, in quantum scilicet removet prohibens; sed est opus charitatis directe, quia secundum propriam rationem charitas causat pacem. Est enim amor vis unitiva . . ." S. T., II-IIae, q. 29, a. 3 ad 3.

<sup>73</sup> "Homo naturaliter est animal sociale. . . . Societas autem inter homines conservari non posset nisi unus alium juvaret." III C. C., 131.

<sup>74</sup> "But what I should like to note here is the typical procedure of dialectical materialism: this consists not merely in recognizing the importance of history, but in using the *history* of a thing, first in order to juggle away the *nature* of the thing, and then to *explain* the thing by replacing it by its history." Maritain, *op. cit.*, p. 45. Italics author's.



and live well together with the minimum of tension. Marxism, though, avows the release of blind forces—its own history is the best proof of that.

The tragedy of Marxism is above all manifest in the interior failure to which its first realizations have led of themselves in Russia, and the inner conflicts it cannot help engendering. The successive waves of terrorism in the Soviet Republics have, from this point of view, an extraordinary significance for the philosopher: communism which is a sort of economic theocracy, requires an extremely rigorous and tense discipline. But it can only seek this discipline through *external methods of pedagogy and constraint*. Now, without some sort of *interior ethics, implying and respecting the aspiration of the soul and of the person, without a vivid faith which communicates its fervour to the minds of people, no strong social discipline is possible*. And thus is inevitable the internal conflict between an anarchy of passions, ambitions, individual energies, employing no matter what means—an anarchy, continually reborn—and an "order" which ignores the very principle of order.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Maritain, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81. Italics author's.

## CHAPTER IV

### A CRITIQUE (CONTINUED)

#### B. OF TRUTH OF RACE

##### 1. *Contrasts*

The best way to approach National Socialism in our criticism of it is to regard it as "a tragic opposition between life and intelligence."<sup>1</sup> It is reason which decapitates reason in Marxist materialism; it is irrational instinct or biological mysticism which administers the blow in National Socialism. We have noted previously that National Socialism was essentially a dynamic movement in which theory followed rather than preceded events.<sup>2</sup> But while in Marxism man is forced to subject himself, his mind, his life, not to human but to technical exigencies, in National Socialism he grovels in the organic and biological.

When all other standards have been unmasked by scepticism of all doctrines, reason itself is robbed of its force. The anti-intellectual attitude of dynamism is not mere chance but the necessary outcome of an entire absence of standards. Man, it holds, is not a logical being; not a creature guided by reason or intelligence, but a creature following his instincts and impulses, like any other animal. Consequently reason cannot provide a basis for a social order or a political system. The barbaric element which reformist Socialism and moderate Marxism would place in safe custody under lock and key, is the one element that can change a social order. That is why revolutionary direct action has won the day against the responsible, non-revolutionary Socialism of the working classes, just as it has violently eliminated the middle class itself as the ruling class. Hostility to the things of the spirit, indifference to truth, indifference to the ethical conceptions of morality, honor and equity—all the things that can arouse the indignation of the ordi-

<sup>1</sup> Maritain, J., *Scholasticism and Politics*, p. 4

<sup>2</sup> Chapter II, p. 52.



nary citizen of Germany and abroad against certain National Socialist measures—are not excrescences but the logical and inevitable outcome of the National Socialist philosophy of violence. This hostility to the intellect, to individualism and personality, to pure science and art, is not the arbitrary invention of a particularly vicious system of racial philosophy, but the logical outcome of the political system of revolutionary direct action with violence as its one and only historic motor.<sup>3</sup>

With the National Socialist insistence on life and vitality as such Thomism would not quarrel. But when the *whole* life of man is staked out on the animal level Thomistic thought must draw back not only in disgust but in horror. That reaction, though, is not an unreal one implying a denial or even a disregard of the sensitive or vegetative life of man. True wisdom takes issue with the brutality—in the full sense of the word—of National Socialism because it is short-sighted rather than far-sighted.

The world of elementary values in nature, of physical courage, of simplicity, no matter if brutal and gross; of that sort of natural, if cynical candour by which the animal is not ashamed to exist nor has need to justify existence; the world of primitive feelings, of facts such as exist even in the horde, of the instinct of physical solidarity such as exists among robbers, of the need of being together and feeling together such as exists even in the great herds on the prairies—this world can indeed be disciplined by true wisdom, which does not despise it and which turns it towards transformations of the spirit.<sup>4</sup>

St. Thomas was well aware of the integral man. Because he was, he set for himself a fourfold consideration in his study: (1) of reason in which man has something in common with the angels; (2) of the sensitive powers in which man has something in common with the animals; (3) of the natural powers in which man has something in common with vegetative being; (4) of his body

<sup>3</sup> Rauschning, H., *The Revolution of Nihilism* (New York: Alliance Book Co., 1939), p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Maritain, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 14, 15.

### *A Critique (Continued)*

in which man has something in common with inanimate creation.<sup>5</sup> We have already had an indication<sup>6</sup> of how he orders all these forces in terms of life and life's activity. The key to the solution is a sentence which follows immediately the Thomistic analysis of the powers of man. "Ratio autem in homine habet locum dominantis, et non subiecti domini."<sup>7</sup>

National Socialism on the contrary is a betrayal of man. It may be said in general that at the back of the whole tactics and method of propaganda of National Socialism there is a complete contempt of humanity; the whole system is based on taking men as they are and pandering to their weakness and bestiality. Thomism defines man as a rational animal and is concerned with both words in the definition; the perversion of National Socialism is to have emphasized and concentrated on animal—and this of set purpose by its leaders. That perversion is all the more complete in that there are some among those leaders who, while they suggest and exalt irrational impulses, keep them under rational control and guidance.

The exploitation of envy and ill-will, of the lowest human instincts, the sowing of dissension between opponents, and the appeal to their ignoble qualities and notorious weaknesses have thus far unfailingly helped National Socialism to success, incidentally destroying the basis of a general sense of morality which was weak to begin with.<sup>8</sup>

Of set purpose National Socialism takes these irrational impulses—proportionally good as St. Thomas would have us understand—and not only pushes them to the fore out of all proportion but advances them as the sole norm of truth, life, and society. The ultimates, to the extent of being a religion, are Blood, Race and Soil.

<sup>5</sup> "Est autem in homine quattuor considerare, scilicet, rationem, secundum quam convenit cum angelis; vires sensitivas, secundum quas convenit cum animalibus; vires naturales secundum quas convenit cum plantis; et ipsum corpus, secundum quod convenit cum rebus inanimatis." *S. T.*, I, q. 96, a. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Chapter I, pp. 4-5.

<sup>7</sup> *S. T.*, I, q. 96, a. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Rauschning, H., *op. cit.*, p. 47.



For the best and deepest men of today religion is no longer dogma, no longer denomination; the divine secret reveals itself to us in the notions of Blood, Race, and Soil which are from everlasting to everlasting. The man who disavows these values or seeks to impair their eternal working disavows life and therefore God who is the source of life. Our religion would not be, if our Blood were not . . . .<sup>9</sup>

What prevents statements of the above nature from being utterly absurd is the kernel of reality and truth they contain. Again it is a case of St. Thomas' contention: there is no thought so false that it does not have some element of truth—falsity is not only the lack of truth, it is its very corruption.<sup>10</sup> Because he is a composite substance the physical component of man—his body—is essential to him. But it is untrue and disastrous to man to fix him on the physical level.<sup>11</sup>

Of a part with such a low estimate are the passions which National Socialism not only releases but exalts. The movement has achieved power in a blind faith<sup>12</sup> rooted in emotion.<sup>13</sup> This is ceaseless propaganda,<sup>14</sup> through hatred and even hysteria.<sup>15</sup> "The

<sup>9</sup> *Westdeutscher Beobachter*, Feb. 22, 1934, quoted in Micklem, *National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church*, p. 22.

<sup>10</sup> Chapter I, p. 19. Cf. S. T., II-IIae, q. 172, a. 6; *De Ver.*, q. 18, a. 6.

<sup>11</sup> "Unde oportet quod id quod est superioris potentiae, scilicet rationis, perficit virtutes morales." *De Ver.*, q. 24, a. 4 ad 9.

<sup>12</sup> Hitler, A., *Mein Kampf*, p. 229. "But in mankind, too, they are characteristics of only a few people or rather races according to the measure in which they originate from their feelings"; cf. pp. 408-409 for another expression of same attitude.

<sup>13</sup> "The great mass of a people consists neither of professors nor of diplomats. The small abstract knowledge it possesses directs its sentiments rather to the world of feeling. In this is rooted either its sensitive or positive attitude." Hitler, A., *op. cit.*, p. 407.

<sup>14</sup> "But least of all did one understand the very primary condition for all propagandistic activity as a whole; namely the subjectively biased attitude of propaganda towards the questions to be dealt with." Hitler, A., *op. cit.*, p. 236.

<sup>15</sup> Hitler, A., *op. cit.*; cf. Appendix 517-559 for examples of handbills of proceedings of the National Socialist Party and their appeal to hatred.

myth of the nation" says one who knows the movement intimately.

is the trick by means of which the masses can be kept in a state of exaltation and opened to influence by suggestion at any time. The solemn rite in which at meetings the masses are celebrated as the united nation is the technical preparation for making them ready for inflammatory slogans. In this atmosphere speeches addressed never to the intelligence but only to the subconscious instincts have their success. This alone explains the character of these speeches, which call forth either ecstatic enthusiasm or ecstatic fury. . . . Anyone who has had experience of the way in which a special style of oratory is cultivated, even by the pettiest officials of the party, will realize the deeper purpose of this style with its calculated effect on the masses.<sup>16</sup>

For St. Thomas, the primacy of the intellectual soul of man once established, there is required the following of the implications of that supremacy into the life of the whole man. The irrational factors of man's vegetative and sensitive life are similar to the same forces in plant and animal creation; but in man himself the light of reason suffuses them and in its glow they reflect a unique character in serving the integral life of man the rational animal.

## 2. *Complete Man*

Before going further in indicating the development of St. Thomas' thought along this line, it might be well to outline his schema of the whole man.

A. On the purely *organic* level there is (a) the ability to reproduce or hand down the biological life which was received through the process of generation; (b) the ability to metabolize or convert inert matter into protoplasm; (c) the ability to grow, resulting in physical maturation of the body.

B. On the *organico-mental* level there are (a) the somesthetic, olfactory, gustatory, auditory and visual abilities; (b) *sensus communis*, which enables us to synthesize the data of the external senses into perceptual

<sup>16</sup> Rauschning, H., *op. cit.*, p. 84.



wholes; (c) imagination, or the power of representing objects in their absence; (d) instinct, through which we are able to discriminate between the things that are useful and those that are harmful to the organism; (e) memorial ability, which revives events of past experience; (f) the power of locomotion, which makes behavioristic movements possible.

C. On the *rational* level there is (a) intellect, which forms concepts, judgments, and inferences; and (b) will, which is the responsible agent for volition, choice, determining tendencies, and controls.<sup>17</sup>

Certainly even this mere schema of Thomistic teaching on the nature of man should free it from the reproach of oversimplification and over-refined intellectualism.

But St. Thomas still insists on the primacy of mind. Life is evidenced above all in motion and knowledge.<sup>18</sup> And in both spheres, mind—and by consequence mind's quest truth—is in control for man. There is a level of sensitive knowledge in man but unlike the animal he does not remain on that level. In him sensitive knowledge precedes and serves intellectual knowledge.

In our knowledge there are two things to be considered. First intellectual knowledge in some degree arises from sensible knowledge; and because sense has singular and individual things for its object and intellect has the universal for its object, it follows that our knowledge of the former comes before our knowledge of the latter. Secondly, we must consider that our intellect proceeds from a state of potentiality to a state of actuality. And every power thus proceeding from potentiality to actuality comes first to an incomplete act. . . . We must therefore conclude that knowledge of the singular is prior as regards us to knowledge of the universal; just as sensible knowledge is prior to intellectual knowledge.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Brennan, R., *General Psychology* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), p. 431; cfr. *Q. D. De Anima*, quaestio unica, a. 13 of which this is a digest.

<sup>18</sup> "Vita maxime manifestatur duplici opere, scilicet, cognitionis et motus." *S. T.*, I, 75, 1.

<sup>19</sup> ". . . cognitione nostri intellectus duo oportet considerare. Primo quidem, quod cognitio intellectiva aliquo modo a sensitiva primordium sumit. Et quia sensus est singularium, intellectus autem universalium;

So, too, on the level of the sensitive appetites St. Thomas is not content with tracing their activity to natural instinct, he sets forward also their direction by reason.<sup>20</sup>

In man the sensitive appetites are naturally moved by particular reason. But this same particular reason is naturally guided and moved according to universal reason, since in syllogistic matters particular conclusions are drawn from universal propositions. Accordingly, it is clear that universal reason directs the sensitive appetites, which are divided into concupiscible and irascible; and these appetites obey it. But, because to draw particular conclusions from universal principles is not the work of the intellect, as such, but of reason, therefore the irascible and concupiscible appetites are said to obey reason rather than to obey intellect. Anyone can experience this in himself; for by applying certain universal considerations, anger or fear or the like may be modified or excited.<sup>21</sup>

neesse est quod cognitio singularium quoad nos prior sit quam universalium cognitio. Secundo oportet considerare quod intellectus noster de potentia in actum procedit. Omne autem quod procedit de potentia in actum, prius pervenit ad actum incompletum. . . . Est ergo dicendum quod cognitio singularium est prior quoad nos quam cognitio universalium, sicut cognitio sensitiva, quam cognitio intellectiva." *S. T.*, I, q. 85, a. 3.

<sup>20</sup> ". . . vires sensitivae dupliciter possunt considerari: uno modo secundum quod operantur ex instinctu naturae; alio modo secundum quod operantur ex imperio rationis." *S. T.*, I-IIae, q. 56, a. 3; ". . . irascibilis et concupiscibilis secundum se consideratae prout sunt partes appetitus sensitivi, communes sunt nobis et brutis; sed secundum quod sunt rationales per participationem, ut obediens rationi sic sunt propriae hominis; et hoc modo possunt esse subiectum virtutis humanae." *S. T.*, I-IIae, q. 56, a. 1 ad 1; ". . . rationale per participationem, non solum est irascibile et concupiscibile, sed omnino appetitum, ut dicitur: quia 'omnis appetitus obedit rationi.'" *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 58, a. 4 ad 3; cfr. II *Scot.*; d. 18, q. 2, a. 3 ad 4.

<sup>21</sup> "Unde ab ea natus est moveri in homine appetitus sensitivus. Ipsa autem ratio particularis nata est moveri et dirigi in homine secundum rationem universalem; unde in syllogisticis ex universalibus propositionibus concluduntur conclusiones singulares. Et ideo patet quod ratio universalis imperat appetitui sensitivo, qui distinguitur per concupiscibilem et irascibilem, et hic appetitus est ei obediens. Et quia deducere universalium principia in conclusiones singulares, non est opus simplicis intellectus, sed



Clearly, then, though there is a point of contact between Thomism and National Socialism in their agreement on the reality and vitality of man's animal nature, they are irreconcilable in fixing its worth. The preceding has indicated why this is so. And this fundamental disagreement reveals itself ever more and more. One constantly and consistently emphasizes the life of the mind and the quest for truth; the other yields, willingly or unwillingly, by the force of its position to irrational forces and brutality.

### 3. God, Man and Society

We can judge the extent of the cleavage by comparing, as we did in the preceding chapter on Marxism, the ideals of God, man and society as Thomism would have them and as National Socialism would have them. The general trend of thought, apart from particular arguments, should amply serve to prove the superiority of one over the other. In Thomism we find a philosophy so realistic and extensive that it can admit the irrational, analyze its worth, and assign its strength without surrendering to it. In National Socialism, on the other hand, only the cold surrender to the irrational can explain its excesses. National Socialism as a philosophical system "amounts to the belief that the use of violence in a supreme effort liberates creative moral forces in human society which lead to social and national renewal."<sup>22</sup>

Now, as we did comparing Thomism and Marxism, we can further emphasize the contrast between Thomism and National Socialism in their ideas of God, man and society. National Socialism is a philosophy of violence and we can expect to see that note reflected even in the above ideas. The over-all note of Thomism in the same ideas is briefly and admirably summed up in one of St. Thomas' commentaries. It is that of peace and order. Peace, he holds, is the tranquility of order. Order, moreover, is the proportionate and apt disposition of like and unlike and there is peace where all holds its proper place. First of all, rationis; ideo irascibilis et concupiscibilis magis dicuntur obedire rationi quam intellectui. Hoc etiam quilibet experiri potest in seipso; applicando huiusmodi vel etiam instigatur." *S. T.*, I, q. 81, a. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Rausching, *H.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

then, the mind of man should be subject to God. Then the lower powers and activities common to ourselves and animals must be subject to man, because by reason man is superior to the animals. Finally there should be peace between man and man for complete order.<sup>23</sup> From what we have said so far of National Socialism we may hope to find out what "creative moral forces" it liberates. At the same time, in the light of the above quotation, the superiority of the Thomistic life of reason should be revealed in contrast.

For St. Thomas reason—here again we repeat a previous theme<sup>24</sup>—discovers and demands God as the root and source of intelligibility. Life and non-life, mind and matter lead back to Supreme Life and Supreme Mind. But should there be any lack of clarity and injustice to St. Thomas' thought in making this point, the fault is in the present exponent. For that thought itself shows such balance and breadth, such appreciation of identity and diversity, such a hierarchical order, that intelligibility is established without sacrificing the diversity and independence of creatures, and least of all without the least hint or danger of identity of all in the One.

Immateriality is the key. The advance and perfection of material creatures through the non-living, into the living, on to the intelligent is on the basis of immateriality.<sup>25</sup> Thus we come to man whose unique life and activity demands an immaterial mind in an immaterial soul. But there we cannot stop.<sup>26</sup> True, because man has a rational soul united to a corporeal body, he is by the very fact of that union placed at the highest degree of bodily natures. But to preserve proportion in the order of nature,

<sup>23</sup> "Pax est tranquillitas ordinis. Ordo autem est parium dispariumque sua loca cuique tribuens dispositio. Ergo pax est in hoc quod omnes teneant sua loca. Unde debet mens hominis primo Deo subiecta esse. Secundo motus et vires inferiores, quae sunt nobis et brutis communes, subiecta esse homini; per rationem enim homo preceat animalibus. . . . Tertio ut homo pacem habet ad alios, quia sic totaliter erit ordinatus." *In Matthaeum*, cap. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Chapter I, pp. 20-22.

<sup>25</sup> *IV C. G.*, II; cfr. Chapter I, pp. 4-5.

<sup>26</sup> "Inter alias vero intellectuales substantias humanae animae infimum gradum habent." *III C. G.*, 18.



a place must be reserved for intellectual creatures not united to bodies.<sup>27</sup> Even here we cannot stop. In the angels understanding and being, mind and life, are not the same thing. So once more we must ascend to the Being in whom mind and life are one and the same—who because He is supremely immaterial is supreme Mind.<sup>28</sup> The perfection of man points to his imperfection; the mind that lifts him above the rest of material creatures points to his subordination and completion over and above himself.<sup>29</sup>

So man must not only go out of the material; he must go out of himself to find himself. Peace is the tranquility of order. The mind, which for St. Thomas makes man so superior to the rest of material creatures, in the next breath notifies him of dependence. The intellect in whose light matter becomes intelligible and pliant does not enforce but rather discovers intelligibility. In discovering that intelligibility man comes face to face with its implication. That is why St. Thomas can so reasonably and so naturally come to the awareness of supreme Intelligence which, as he shows, is the beginning and end of all intelligibility.<sup>30</sup>

"First of all then the mind of man should be subject to God." God is also invoked by National Socialism. Now the associations attached to the word God in the culture of the West are part of the Christian tradition in which St. Thomas lived and worked and to which he contributed so much. That tradition cannot but recoil from the blasphemous use of the name of God in National Socialism. Given its philosophy, though, nothing more could have been expected.

The exponents of National Socialism have expended all their

<sup>27</sup> "Natura superior in suo infimo contingit naturam inferiorum in eius supremo. Natura autem intellectualis est superior corporali. Oportet igitur quod, sicut corpus perfectum sui, quae est anima intellectiva, supremus in genere corporum, ita anima intellectiva, quae unitur corpori, sit infima in genere substantiarum intellectualium. Sunt igitur aliquae substantiae intellectuales non unitae corporibus, superiores secundum naturam ordinem animae." II C. G., 91.

<sup>28</sup> "Unde cum Deus sit in summo immaterialitate sequitur quod ipse sit in summo cognitions." S. T., I, q. 14, a. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Cfr. Chapter I, pp. 6-8.

<sup>30</sup> I Sent., d. 19, q. 5, a. 2; cfr. Chapter I, p. 20.

energies to rationalize the irrational. "To rationalize the irrational"—such a phrase bespeaks horrible perversity. Alone of all material creation man has mind and when by inversion that mind is placed at the service of irrational forces instead of in command of them the repercussion reveals itself up to the most exalted of ideas—the idea of God.

God is invoked, but only in virtue of the testimony, if I may say so, of these elementary fibres and of the desire of nature written in the biological elements of the human being; and He . . . is invoked against the God of the spirit, of intelligence and love—excluding and hating this God. What an extraordinary spiritual phenomenon this is: people believing in God, and yet do not know God. The idea of God is affirmed, and at the same time disfigured and perverted. A God who will end by being identified with an invisible force at work in the blood, is set up against transcendent Being.<sup>31</sup>

Does this seem exaggerated? Well, previously<sup>32</sup> we have already quoted an authoritative exponent of National Socialism to the effect that "for the best and deepest men of today religion is no longer dogma, no longer denomination; the divine secret reveals itself to us in the notions of Blood, Race and Soil which are from everlasting to everlasting." In 1936 in an article "Conflict of the world views, the philosophical basis of the National Socialist programme," published simultaneously in two official Party organs, the following appeared:

The supreme value that we serve is the People; hence for us the service of the People is the service of God. We believe and know that there is a God who has made our People. There is an ultimate and unfathomable meaning of all existence, call it destiny, original force or God—all these words mean the same thing. Every philosophy implies an ultimate decision before God. This decision faces us all as we are bound by the unbreakable fellowship of destiny, of history, of country, and before all, by common blood.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Maritain, J., *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>32</sup> Above, p. 94.

<sup>33</sup> *Der Frankfurter Student und Der Hessische Adademische Beobachter*, quoted in Micklem, *op. cit.*, p. 141.



There are sentences in the above such as "Every philosophy implies an ultimate decision before God," with which Thomism could hardly take exception. But the process which identifies God with the racial soul,<sup>34</sup> with irrational factors in man, concludes to a God as irrational as the all-important notions in National Socialist thought. That is what is meant by the horrible perversity of the phrase—"to rationalize the irrational." In St. Thomas all things, man included, is subject to God. In National Socialism, not only is God subject to man, worse, he is the summary of the exaltation of the irrational.

Coming now to the idea of man, again and again we have seen how St. Thomas evaluates man's worth and importance precisely because he is an intelligent being.<sup>35</sup> Both Thomism and National Socialism agree on the irrational factors within man. After that, though, agreement ceases. For St. Thomas reason takes command, and that part of man common to himself and the brute animals is guided not by blind instinct but by the control of mind.<sup>36</sup> Here again the breadth and balance of St. Thomas is evident. In the previous chapter we indicated how aware St. Thomas was of material causality and yet how he avoided the extremism of Marxism in the application of that causality. Now again St. Thomas is just as conscious as National Socialism of the lower powers of man. As a matter of fact to protect the independence of those forces St. Thomas makes a distinction between a control despot or persuasive depending on their nature.<sup>37</sup> But

<sup>34</sup> Cfr. Chapter II, pp. 54-55.

<sup>35</sup> In the light of what is to follow we might quote this apt summary of St. Thomas: "Anima autem quae est in plantis, habet infimum gradum inter potentias animae; unde ab ea denominatur, cum dicitur nutritiva vel vegetabilis. Anima autem bruti pertingit ad altiore gradum, scilicet, qui est sensus; unde ipsa anima vocatur sensitiva, vel quandoque etiam sensus. Sed anima humana pertingit ad altissimum gradum qui est inter potentias animae, et ex hoc denominatur; unde dicitur intellectiva, et quandoque etiam intellectus, et similiter mens; in quantum scilicet ex ipsa nata est effluere talis potentia, quia est sibi proprium prae aliis animabus." *De Ver.*, q. X, a. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Cfr. no. 20 above.

<sup>37</sup> "... alia ratione regitur corpus ab anima, et irascibilis et concupiscibilis a ratione. Corpus enim ad nutum obedit animae absque contradictione in his in quibus natum est ab anima moveri. Unde Philosophus

always as inferior under superior they follow reason and reason's behest, the while retaining their own function.<sup>38</sup> National Socialism can be called, "the philosophy of violence," because the violence it does the dignity of men reflects itself in action. St. Thomas extols peace, for "the lower powers and activities common to ourselves and animals must be subject to man, because by reason man is superior to the animals."

Finally, what has so far been said evidently points to a profound disagreement between Thomism and National Socialism in their theories of the nature of society. More particularly, though, the comparison between the two in this case can be emphasized because of St. Thomas' teaching on the supremacy of mind and mind's object. The ultimate end of humanity, as of the individual, is contemplation. And this is true of man's life on earth, insofar as such a life is feasible.<sup>39</sup> Intelligence constitutes man's most precious possession and for society thinkers occupy the first place in the ranks of men. Out of the superabundance of their contemplative life these are in a position to pass on their light to others, to be "illuminators" of humanity.<sup>40</sup>

This does not imply that St. Thomas' thought is of such tenuous refinement that men of affairs or practical men are to be elimi-

dit (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1254b, 3) quod 'anima regit corpus despotico principatu,' id est, sicut dominus servum, et ideo totus motus corporis refertur ad animam; et propter hoc in corpore non est virtus, sed solum in anima. Sed irascibilis et concupiscibilis non obediunt ad nutum ratione; sed habet proprios motus suos, quibus interdum rationi repugnant: unde Philosophus (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1254b, 4) dicit quod 'ratio regit irascibilem et concupiscibilem principatu politico' quo, scilicet, reguntur liberi, qui habent in aliquibus propriam voluntatem." *S. T.*, I-IIae, q. 56, a. 4 ad 3.

<sup>38</sup> "... naturaliter appetitus inferior sequitur motum appetitus superioris, nisi aliquid repugnet. Et ideo non potest totaliter deficere motus irac in appetitu sensitivo, nisi per subtractionem, vel delititatem voluntarii motus. Et ideo ex consequenti etiam defectus passionis irae vitiosus est, sicut et defectus voluntarii motus ad puniendum secundum iudicium rationis."

*S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 158, a. 8.

<sup>39</sup> "... sicut bonum unius consistit in actione et contemplatione; ita et bonum multitudinis secundum quod coniungit multitudinem contemplationi vacare." *III Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 1 ad 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*.



nated or even disregarded in human society. They have a place, indeed an important place, and their worth is admitted, but because of the supremacy of mind, they must look for direction to men of intellectual worth.<sup>41</sup> Just as disorder in the individual occurs if the lower powers take precedence over the mind, so, too, there is disorder in human society if intellectual pre-eminence is disregarded.<sup>42</sup>

The perversion of National Socialism is, then, to take man and root his life, his activities and his goal in the irrational—in the sensual and even vegetative. So we might expect that as St. Thomas looks to intellectual leadership in the guidance of society, National Socialism cannot but demand the perfection of the brutal and unreasoning in its leaders. The development of the elite of National Socialism has but one result—the individual emerges from his years of training as a splendid animal thinking only of Hitlerism and possessing the technical equipment for furthering the cause. The degradation of human society consequent on this training reveals itself in extremes of brutality and violence, of hatred, vengeance, envy, ill-will, licentiousness, robbery. We catalog these as vices but it must be remembered they are virtues in the National Socialist scheme. No wonder “all these motives and methods have set in motion a ruin of the national character on a scale hitherto unimaginable, which must inevitably recoil in the end on the ruling elite themselves.”<sup>43</sup>

It might be alleged that National Socialism with its professed concern for inculcating honor and nobility in its members coincides more with the virtuous life of Thomism than does Marxism

<sup>41</sup> “Virtus autem intellectiva de se est ordinativa et regitiva: unde regimena intellectivæ virtutis in eodem, virtus operativa sequitur voluminatis moventur membra. Idem etiam apparet si in diversis existant: ab illis qui in virtute intellectiva excedunt.” III C. G., 78.

<sup>42</sup> “Sicut autem in operibus unius hominis ex hoc inordinatio provenit quod intellectus sensualem virtutem sequitur . . . ita et in regimine humano inordinatio provenit ex eo quod non propter intellectus præeminentiam ali- quis præceat, sed vel robore corporali dominium sibi usurpat, vel propter sensualem affectionem aliquis ad regendum præfertur.” III C. G., 81.

<sup>43</sup> Rausching, H., *op. cit.*, p. 47.

which sacrifices man to a productive society. But one is as irreconcilable with Thomism as the other. The original error of National Socialism in subordinating the life of mind to animal and physical life carries over and reveals itself in a society to whose inevitable outcome St. Thomas has pointed. Again we repeat with him that just as disorder in the individual occurs if the lower powers take precedence over the mind, so, too, there is disorder in human society if intellectual pre-eminence is disregarded.<sup>44</sup>

If further emphasis be needed, we might take an outstanding example of National Socialist thought and legislation in the practical sphere which startlingly indicates this brutalizing of man in society. It is the application of the laws of breeding to the whole German nation. These laws, incidentally, were advanced and drawn up by a former veterinary, Darre, the Minister of Agriculture. They propose the establishment of *Zuchavarten* (offices of breeding control) whose duty it would be to keep records of German breeding. By the mating of the best German blood—and we have seen what blood means in National Socialist thought—and by compulsory sterilization of the unfit the perfect society is to be realized. If there is any logic in the glorification of irrational instinct, here it is.

The irrational mysticism of National Socialism reveals itself again in its further program of action. “The inclination of Western civilization to anarchy,” implicit, as we have seen, in its present thought, is pushed to violent conclusion in National Socialism. On a stupendous wave of wild mass emotion it has consumed the institutions of private property, and all the elements of culture in its own society. Not content with this destruction, the disorder and anarchy which it conceives as the life of man, has impelled it to world revolution, the “eternal war” many of its leaders consider to be the future condition of human society. We cannot but compare this ultimate expression of creation by destruction with St. Thomas’ final end of peace and order between man and man as the complete expression of human society.

In summary, once again to enforce the contrast between Tho-

<sup>44</sup> Above, no. 42.



mism and National Socialism, we repeat St. Thomas: Peace is the tranquility of order. Order, moreover, is the proportionate and apt disposition of like and unlike and there is peace where all holds its proper place. First of all, then, the mind of man should be subject to God. Then the lower powers and activities common to ourselves and animals must be subject to man, because by reason man is superior to the animals. Finally, there should be peace between man and man for complete order.<sup>45</sup> We have indicated, we hope, the superiority of Thomism to National Socialism in achieving the tranquility of order wherein man is at peace with God, himself and his fellow men. The measure and goal of that tranquility is St. Thomas' ideal of knowledge and truth.

#### C. OF TRUTH OF MAN

##### 1. *Humanistic Summary*

Our final evaluation—that of Humanism—demands a quite particular approach. There are in Humanism the extremes of thought characteristic of Marxism and National Socialism, but these extremes are generally carefully masked when Humanism comes to enunciation or action. Concepts and words, God, truth, justice, man, enriched by centuries of Christian thought, are ever on the lips of Humanists. But by its own process Humanism has emptied those ideas of their original content. We will find much of the current materialism and appeal to the irrational revealing itself just as clearly in Humanism as in Marxism and National Socialism in spite of surface indications to the contrary. Humanism is, as we previously remarked, in great measure Anglo-Saxon; and nowhere is this racial trait more evident than in the sentimentality with which it enunciates the irrational and the respectability with which it clothes the vicious. That is why we must be on our guard; it retains the overtones of our thought while at the same time offering in reality perversions of that thought.

Humanism is what we might call the professedly respectable summary of the modern philosophy which we outlined in the

<sup>45</sup> Above, no. 23.

second chapter.<sup>46</sup> Its adherents, of course, disown the violence with which Marxism and National Socialism have taken elements of that thought and pushed them to their logical conclusion. Humanists appeal to the same elements, but in many cases they have neither the moral nor intellectual courage to apply them in their full strength. But that does not mean there is no kinship between the three systems of thought. There is a basic relationship which, among other things, we hope the present examination and criticism of Humanism will show.

As the summary of modern thought Humanism is of a piece with the principles, conclusions and spirit of that thought. In it we find the exaltation of the scientific method, the substitution of hypothesis for conclusion, and the adoption of the methods of particular sciences to arrive at general philosophical tenets.

Where is the quarrel with Humanism? Look at the fifteenth and last point of the Humanist Manifesto: "We assert that humanism will (a) affirm life rather than deny it; (b) seek to elicit the possibilities of life not flee from it."<sup>47</sup> In the light of all we have said about St. Thomas' thought that is eminently his ideal too. The affirmation of life and the eliciting of its possibilities—by that much Humanism and Thomism agree; the nature of that life and its complete realization—there the two are irreconcilable. But worthy of note before we go on to the details of the conflict is this fact: just as Thomism, even while criticizing, incorporated and complimented the best of Marxism and National Socialism, so, too, its censure of Humanism is sure enough and sympathetic enough to take exception not in terms of outright denial but of Humanism's weak lack of complete affirmation.

##### 2. *Thomistic Divergence*

One of the fundamental defects of Humanism is as old as philosophy itself and it is one of which St. Thomas was very much aware. It is, in brief, the union of naive realism with absolute relativism. No doubt there are many nuances in the way this is presently expressed, but beneath them all lies this basic error.

<sup>46</sup> Chapter II, pp. 36-47.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Chapter II, p. 62.



Pragmatism and Instrumentalism, for example, in spite of all their supposed refinement, are but modern rephrasings of this very, very old mistake. St. Thomas summarized it in two sentences. "The first philosophers who delved into the nature of things thought there was nothing in the world besides the material. And because they saw that all bodies were changeable and because they thought them to be in a continual flux they concluded that we cannot have any certitude of the truth of things."<sup>48</sup> For such thinkers the theory of the absolute "flux" of things and of the impossibility of affirming unchanging truth was a necessary consequence of their materialism.<sup>49</sup>

This criticism by St. Thomas of earlier thinkers is just as applicable today to the modern thought of which Humanism is the summary. Indeed, the science and scientific method in which Humanism places so much confidence is far more advanced and far more productive than the crude science of the earlier Greek thinkers. The error, though, is not on the scientific level but on the philosophical level. And on that level Humanists are just as wrong as their predecessors.

To appreciate St. Thomas' criticism we must once again return to his teaching on the life of the mind and its quest—truth. For him the primitive thing in intellectual knowledge is a certain transparent identifying of mind with reality. This fact dictated the progress of his philosophic thought. On the one hand, it will consist in the ability to distinguish between the thing in itself and the conditions of its perception. On the other hand, it will mean distinguishing intelligence itself from material essences the conception of which actualizes it. In this twofold task—it is the contention of Thomism—modern philosophic thought has failed. The certitude of the Thomistic answer—and its worth—is based on St. Thomas' sure answers in the same twofold work. Those

<sup>48</sup> ". . . primi philosophi, qui de naturis rerum inquisiverunt putaverunt, nihil esse in mundo praeter corpus. Et quia videbant, omnia corpora nobilitudo de rerum veritate haberi posset a nobis." *S. T.*, I, q. 84, a. 1.

<sup>49</sup> "Et ita cum res materialiter in anima ponerent, posterunt omnem cognitionem animae materialem esse, non discernentes inter intellectum et sensum." *S. T.*, I, q. 84, a. 2.

### *A Critique (Continued)*

answers are expressed in his teaching on the degrees of abstraction in knowledge and the immateriality of the mind.

In the first place St. Thomas obviated the confusion of modern thought by the distinction wherein the hierarchy of sciences is established. His teaching is but the explicit formulation of Aristotle's thought on the same subject.<sup>50</sup> Science, all science, has for its object, the matter with which it deals, being. But sciences differ according to the relation the intellect bears to the objects presented to it. More than that, the speculative sciences are divided according as the mind views the objects presented to it as variously removed from conditions of matter and motion.<sup>51</sup> For instance, three men may consider a rainbow differently. One may be interested in its physical components—the number of colors, the cause of their refraction, the weather conditions required for its appearance, etc. Another is preoccupied with the angle of curvature and its mathematical relations. Still another will look

<sup>50</sup> *Cp. Anal. Post.* I, 28, 87a 38-87b 4; *Phys.* II, 2, 193b 23-194b 15; *Le Anima* I, 1, 403a 25-403b 19.

<sup>51</sup> "Quaedam igitur sunt speculabilia quae dependent a materia secundum esse quia non nisi in materia esse possunt; et haec distinguuntur, quia dependent quaedam a materia secundum esse et intellectum, sicut illa in quorum definitione ponitur materia sensibilis: unde sine materia sensibilis intelligi non possunt: ut in definitione hominis oportet accipere carnem et ossa; et de his est physica, sive scientia naturalis. Quaedam vero sunt quae quavis dependant a materia secundum esse, non tamen secundum intellectum, quia in eorum definitionibus non ponitur materia sensibilis, ut linea et numerus; et de his est mathematica. Quaedam vero sunt speculabilia quae non dependent a materia secundum esse, quia sine materia esse possunt: sive numquam sint in materia, sicut Deus et angelus, sive in quibusdam sint in materia, et in quibusdam non, ut substantia, qualitas, potentia et actus, unum et multa et huiusmodi; de quibus omnibus est theologia, idest divina scientia, quae praecipuum cognitorem in ea est Deus. Alio nomine dicitur metaphysica, idest transphysica, quia post physicam discenda occurrit nobis, quibus ex sensibilibus competit in insensibilia devenire. Dicitur etiam philosophia prima, in quantum scientiae aliae ab ea principia sua accipientes eam sequuntur. Non est autem possibile quod sint aliqua res quae secundum intellectum dependant a materia, et non secundum esse: quia intellectus quantum est de se, immaterialis est: et ideo non est quantum genus philosophiae praeter praedicta." *In De Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1.



at it, not in its physical manifestation, nor in its mathematical curvature, but in its character as an existing thing.

These three men *know* the same thing. But in each case they *know* it differently. In each case there is scientific knowledge but in each case the knowledge is different. Moreover, there is a progressive advancement of knowledge from the physical to the mathematical to the metaphysical. That is what Thomism means by degrees of knowledge dependent on the way the mind views the objects presented to it as variously removed from matter and motion.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, with the progression of knowledge there is not disjunction but continuity. Too, the respective spheres of knowledge not only complement each other; they are dependent one on the other and there is a hierarchy of importance among them. Withal, each retains its own independence, its own subject matter and its own set of principles.

Now, one of the main reasons why knowledge and truth are what they are for modern philosophy is because that thought has hopelessly confused these three degrees of knowledge. The origin and history of that confusion would entail too long a digression here.<sup>53</sup> Its reality, though, needs no more than a casual examination of present thought to verify it. We have already indicated it in the very words of modern philosophers.<sup>54</sup> The consequence has been a belittlement of true wisdom and an inversion of true science.

In the last two centuries science has advanced far and preoccupied human thought more and more. Eminently successful it assumed to answer even ultimate questions. First the method of experiment achieved such splendid results that it begot a crudely materialistic outlook on all reality. Only what we can see and

<sup>52</sup> Cfr. Maritain, J., *A Preface to Metaphysics* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1930), pp. 78-86.

<sup>53</sup> Cfr. Gilson, E., *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: Scribners, 1937), Chapters 2 and 3; Maritain, J., *Science and Wisdom* (New York: Scribners, 1940), Part One; Maritain, J., "The Conflict of October, 1941, pp. 527-538; Maritain, J., "The Thomist, Vol. III, p. 4 pp. 162-183; Adler, M. J., "God and the Professors," *Science, Philosophy and Faith, and Religion* (A Symposium), New York, 1941, pp. 120-138.

<sup>54</sup> Chapter II, pp. 38-40.

touch is of concern, it said. Then that same method led still further and eventually demanded another evaluation—this time mathematical. The physical theory concludes that since the physical or material is real and the atom and laws of natural phenomena are the ultimate irreducibles, metaphysics is impossible because it does not deal with the empirical or the tangible. The mathematical theory, on the other hand, rules out metaphysics only indirectly; though admitting the need of a higher science it rests satisfied with the demand that this be ordinative.

But the fault is not all on the side of the scientists. They wish to synthesize and order their finding, and if they are guilty of the abuse of the scientific method, it is because too often current philosophy cannot meet them on any common ground. "We shall find," says A. N. Whitehead,

that since the time of Hume the fashionable scientific philosophy has been such as to deny the rationality of science. This conclusion lies upon the surface of Hume's philosophy. . . . If the cause in itself discloses no information as to the effect so that the first invention of it must be entirely arbitrary, it follows at once that science is impossible, except in the sense of establishing entirely arbitrary connections which are not warranted by anything intrinsic to the nature of either causes or effects. . . . But scientific faith has risen to the occasion, and has tacitly removed the scientific mountain.<sup>55</sup>

That philosophy, confronted with the conquests of modern science, betrayed not only science but itself as well. Faced with the alternatives of (1) ignoring the new science; (2) consideration of its findings and an appreciation of its conclusions; (3) an attitude of subordination—it yielded to the last.

To substantiate this charge we have but to refer back to the treatment of current thought in the second chapter. There we saw how philosophers adopted the methods of science and how scientists left their own field to philosophize. Philosophers themselves criticized their own principles by the canons of science; scientists amplified their principles into philosophical conclusions.

<sup>55</sup> Whitehead, A. N., *Science and the Modern World* (Cambridge University Press, 1933), p. 4.



Instead of the quest for truth philosophy rested satisfied with the formulation of hypotheses. Truth became, "the expedient in our way of thinking" and right, "the expedient in our way of acting." Thus Pragmatism contended. The success of natural science so intoxicated the philosophers that they identified knowledge with scientific knowledge. Methods and findings of particular sciences were exalted into absolute systems. In summary, as an example of the general spirit of this trend, we cite Professor Dewey:

Science is not constituted by any particular body of subject matter. It is constituted by a method, a method of changing beliefs by means of tested inquiry as well as arriving at them. It is its glory, not its condemnation, that its subject matter or belief develops as the method improves. There is no special subject matter or belief that is sacrosanct. The identification of science with a particular set of beliefs and ideas is itself a holdover of ancient and still current dogmatic habits of thought which are opposed to science in its actuality—and which science is undermining.<sup>56</sup>

But is "science undermining"? Compare with this St. Thomas' teaching on the degrees of knowledge. In his scheme all the sciences—metaphysics is a science too—are a knowledge through causes. That is at once an explanation of their unity and diversity. Whereas the physical and mathematical sciences only tell us, "that a thing is," metaphysics tells us, "what the thing is."<sup>57</sup> Because metaphysics answers the "what" its object has universality and objectivity higher than any of the other sciences. Knowledge is for St. Thomas as we have insisted again and again an apprehension of reality so intimate that mind and object become, as it were, one. As the glance of intelligence is directed to the singular and contingent things apprehended by the sense, it can evoke the world of corporeal substances and their properties, or it can evoke the ideal world of extension and number, or

<sup>56</sup> Dewey, J., *A Common Faith*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>57</sup> "Sed inter omnes maxime dicimus scire illum, qui cognoscit quid est res, non autem qui scit quanta est, vel qualis et quid possit facere vel pati." *In III Meta.*, lect. 4.

### *A Critique (Continued)*

again it can evoke the world of being as being and the principle of all reality.<sup>58</sup>

This last inspection is the science of metaphysics. For St. Thomas surely affirms not only the physical and mathematical sciences but the science of metaphysics as well. And not only does he affirm it, he places it at the summit of science. Metaphysics considers all things entitatively and is the science of the whole reality; the other sciences consider things quantitatively or qualitatively and are the sciences of partial reality. Metaphysics defends the principles upon which the various sciences are based, because all other principles are founded on the first principles which are the immediate and *per se* intuitively known principles of metaphysics.<sup>59</sup> Thus does Thomism avoid at once the betrayal of science and philosophy and the pitfall of the absolute relativism characteristic of modern thought.

A second general note of present philosophy is its naïve realism. Once again we appeal to the Manifesto. The first point holds that the universe is self-existing and not created; the second holds that man is a part of nature and has emerged as a result of a continuous process; the third holds that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected. In flat contradiction to all this is St. Thomas' proofs of the immateriality of the mind. Here in sum are the two contrasting answers to the second problem of a theory of knowledge—the distinction of intelligence itself from material essences the conception of which actualizes it.

### 3. *Humanistic Failure*

Really, though, Humanism's theory of mind has no place for such a problem. With the foundation it claims it does no more credit to man's mind than Marxist materialism or National Socialist irrationalism. Remember, modern philosophy obligates itself to keep within the bounds of modern science. And modern

<sup>58</sup> Cfr. Maritain, J., *The Degrees of Knowledge* (New York: Scribners, 1938); Veatch, H. B., "Some Suggestions on the Respective Spheres of Science and Philosophy," *The Thomist*, Vol. III, p. 2, April, 1941, pp. 177-216.

<sup>59</sup> Cfr. Casey, J., *The Primacy of Metaphysics* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1936).



science takes a low estimate of human intelligence. Whether present thought exalts the evolutionary findings of biology into the philosophical system of emergent evolution, or surrenders to psychology and considers mind's activity as "projections" of our lower nature, or whether it summarizes the two and offers a psychological, evolutionary and pragmatic account of reason, the result is the same—"the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected."

It is a curious irony that this surrender of philosophy to biology and psychology has reinforced the very irrationalism it seeks to combat.

The irrational tidal wave is in reality the tragic wheel of rationalistic humanism; it reacts against a humanism of reason closed up in itself, but it does so by making man open to the powers from below, and shutting him off from higher communications and the spirit which liberates, and walling the creature up in the abyss of animal vitality.<sup>60</sup>

For if beliefs are primarily means of adaption to an environment, what becomes of truth, of even science itself? It can only be a specific form of biological adaption, differing in degree and not in kind from the rest of material life. Truth in any other sense, the absolute truth of the older thinkers, is meaningless in an evolving world.

Moreover, the analysis of the actual processes of the mind leads only—says Humanism—to the discovery of all the irrational elements that determine its thought and action, until amid the play of impulse, habit and emotion, all those tendencies now placed in the "unconscious," the voice of reason is quite drowned out. All our thoughts are but more or less concealed rationalizations, the reasons we invent for believing what we really think because of very different influences. Humanism uses fairer words and appeals to more exalted sentiments; but on its own premises it is so little removed from Marxist materialism and National Socialist irrationalism that its opposition to these is

<sup>60</sup> Maivtain, J., *Scholasticism and Politics*, p. 6.

### *A Critique (Continued)*

more an emotional and aesthetic rebellion than an intelligent appraisal and rejection.

The plea of Humanists for a "fuller life," "a brave new world," "the affirmation of life rather than the denial of it," is answered by St. Thomas in a simple phrase. Life, he holds, adds something more than merely existing and intelligence adds something more than merely living.<sup>61</sup> Once again we repeat with him—the activity of the mind is life, the highest form of life. In the hierarchy of material things man stands apart from the rest. The difference which Humanism ascribes to an "extreme thickening or packing," "thickened systems in space and time,"<sup>62</sup> St. Thomas finds in the immaterial activity of a spiritual soul. The background of that immateriality, its nature and its function we have already alleged.<sup>63</sup>

"Life," says Humanism, "is not a peculiar kind of entity or force, to be found in living things and which make them living. It is only a term for certain ways of acting and behaving of certain systems we call organisms. . . . Human purpose is a development of pattern in nature as this has attained the thickness and complications made possible by intelligence and memory. We are here at a very high level of evolutionary organization and we should expect the novel."<sup>64</sup> Life adds something more than merely existing, and intelligence adds something more than merely living, maintains Thomism in contrast. There is the difference. On the philosophical level St. Thomas does justice to philosophy and science and exalts the mind of man; on the scientific level Humanism compromises both, vitiates the truth of each and degrades the mind of man.

#### 4. *God, Man, Society*

As is to be expected, when we carry over our comparison of Thomism and Humanism in their ideas of God, man and society

<sup>61</sup> " . . . vivere addit supra esse, et intelligere supra vivere." *De Ver.*, q. X, a. 1 ad 5.

<sup>62</sup> Sellars, R. W., *Rédigion Coming of Age* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), p. 223.

<sup>63</sup> Chapter I, pp. 9-12.

<sup>64</sup> Sellars, R. W., *op. cit.*, pp. 173-174, 224.



we find their principles carrying them farther and farther apart. Both theories are by reference to man, his place, his worth, and his end. The strength of Humanism, unfortunately, is confined to its adjectives; the worth of Thomism is in its principles.

Though Humanism shies from the militant atheism of Marxism and the identification of God and race of National Socialism there is nothing in its own scheme to demand this. God is not an independent reality; rather, as the deity of monotheism emerged, imagination "magnified the powers of this divine agent and made him superlative, omniscient and omnipotent; and on the other hand, it socialized and ethicized him. *In this fashion man projected into the universe his own sense of personal agency.*"<sup>65</sup> Such is the conclusion of Humanism behind the pretentious façade of modern science. We have but to go to that science to be convinced of the essential similarity of the appeal to the irrational, whether it be Marxism, National Socialism or Humanism which is doing the talking.

Definitely in the Humanistic spirit is Sigmund Freud a modern psychologist who has had profound influence on Humanists themselves. For him "scientific work is our only way to the knowledge of external reality."<sup>66</sup> When men speak of God, he says, this is but the subjective projection of "illusions . . . derived from men's wishes . . . fulfillments of the oldest, strongest and most insistent wishes of mankind"—the longing for parental protection.<sup>67</sup> Knowledge of God far from being the perfection of men's minds, is comparable to a diseased state of which they are, unfortunately, unaware. "Each of us behaves in some respect like the paranoiac, substituting a wish-fulfillment for some aspect of the world which is unbearable to him, and carrying this delusion through into reality. . . . Needless to say, no one who shares a delusion recognizes it as such."<sup>68</sup> Or, for another modern psy-

<sup>65</sup> Sellars, R. W., *op. cit.*, p. 159. Italics author's.

<sup>66</sup> Freud, S., *The Future of an Illusion*, p. 55.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem.*, pp. 52, 54-55.

<sup>68</sup> Freud, S., *Civilization and Its Discontents* (translated by J. Riviere) (London: Hogarth Press, 1930), p. 36.

chologist, "God is our own longing to which we pay divine honors."<sup>69</sup> "Psychologically, God always signifies the greatest value, hence the greatest sum of libido, the greatest intensity of life, the optimum of psychological activity."<sup>70</sup>

We could, too, go to physics for the Great Mathematician or to biology for the god who is tending towards deity, or else organic with a progressing world. The god of the Humanists changes in direct proportion to the popularity of particular sciences. If we give more space to the god of psychology, it is because Humanists highly favor that science at present. In any event man is the measure of all things, god included.

Man is the measure in Thomism also. Because of the immaterial faculty of the mind he can know and recognize truth. By that much he is the norm of truth. But he *recognizes* it not *fabricates* it. The desperate expedients of Humanists to retain some shred of intelligibility for a universe they conjure in a welter of irrational forces reveal their insecurity. St. Thomas, to return once again to his teaching, is serenely confident of the intelligibility of that same universe—an intelligibility which mind discovers and which is guaranteed by supreme Mind, God.

The intelligible species which our mind shares are reduced, as into a first cause, to some principle, intelligible in essence, namely God. But they proceed from that principle by the mediating forms of sensible and material things from which we acquire knowledge.<sup>71</sup>

Man is the measure for Humanism. "God is the first measure of all things"<sup>72</sup> for Thomism. Man is the source of knowledge and truth in Humanism. Given that man were not knowledge and truth would still remain in Thomism. But granting the impossible, and eliminating the mind of God and the mind of man,

<sup>69</sup> Jung, C. G., *Psychology of the Unconscious*, p. 52.

<sup>70</sup> Jung, C. G., *Psychological Types*, p. 222.

<sup>71</sup> ". . . species intelligibiles, quas participat noster intellectus, reducuntur in primam causam, in aliquod principium per suam essentiam, intelligibile, scilicet, in Deum. Sed ab illo principio procedunt mediantibus formis rerum sensibilium et materialium a quibus scientiam colligimus."

*S. T.*, I, q. 81, a. 4 ad 1.

<sup>72</sup> ". . . Deus omnium entium est prima mensura." *III C. G.*, 12.



then there would be absolutely no knowledge or truth.<sup>73</sup> Humanism denies the reality of God in the interest of man. Thomism affirms the reality of God in the completion of man. In the name of life Humanism ends in the irrational. In the name of life Thomism affirms the intelligible and supreme Intelligence.

Man, Humanism holds, is not only the measure but to an in-  
definable extent the master and creator of reality. This ideal, though, must be understood in the light of the third point of the Manifesto—"the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected." "The humanist," says an exponent, "takes the living, intelligent organism as the basic reality and follows psychology in revising the notion of mind from immaterial substance, or stream of ideas, to functional activities which are conscious."<sup>74</sup> Noteworthy in that explanation is the phrase "living, intelligent organism." Humanists also speak of the mind-body problem. But we would be mistaken if we thought because Humanism uses such expressions it has solved or is even aware of the basic problem it implies. Fundamentally, as we have pointed out, Humanism is a rephrasing of a very old materialism. It variously expresses its theory of the mind of man, but a common thread in all these explanations is an absolute disinclination—more a determination—to explain intelligence on any other terms than materialistic ones. To give weight to its pronouncements it speaks with the refined language of modern science, but, as its voice rises to give emphasis to its contentions, the harsh and raucous tone of a crude materialism is audible.

Thomism does not quarrel when Humanism speaks of man as part of nature. The recognition of that fact by Thomism should by now be quite clear. It is just as aware of material causality as Marxism.<sup>75</sup> Likewise it is as conscious of the lower powers of

<sup>73</sup> ". . . unde, etiam si intellectus humanus non esset, adhuc res diceretur veræ in ordine ad intellectum divinum. Sed, si uterque intellectus, quod est impossibile, intelligeretur auferri, nullo modo veritatis ratio remaneret." *De Vr.*, q. 1, a. 2.

<sup>74</sup> Sellars, R. W., "In Defense of the Manifesto," *The New Humanism*, Nov.-Dec., 1933, p. 11.

<sup>75</sup> Chapter III.

man as National Socialism.<sup>76</sup> But unlike both it retains balance and proportion and never becomes over-conscious when treating these elements. So, too, Thomism is just as conscious of science and its contribution as Humanism. But, aware of the degrees of knowledge, it betrays neither its own method and thought nor scientific method and thought. The issue which Humanism makes, "which asks us to adhere to science and forsake philosophy or which in the name of philosophy requires a false apologetic for science" <sup>77</sup> is false.

Because that issue is false, Humanism is neither philosophy nor science and its theory on the nature of man and his worth ends by making man as unrecognizable as Marxism or National Socialism does. The highest form of activity it can really conceive for man is life on the organic level. For that reason it must perforce resort to some such explanation as the following to explain man's mental activity: understanding is a firmly established complex, "handed down to us through the ages, to the organization of which countless generations have labored with the same necessity with which the nature of the living organism, in general, reacts to the average and constantly recurring conditions of the environment."<sup>78</sup> For St. Thomas, "living adds something to mere existing and intelligence adds something to merely living." St. Thomas gives us the whole man, the material creature, the living organism and the intelligent being. Humanism falls as far short of the life and worth of man as do Marxism and National Socialism. Man, claims Humanism, is an organism whose perfection is adaptability to physical environment.<sup>79</sup> Man, says St. Thomas, is an intelligent being whose happiness is the enjoyment of truth.<sup>80</sup>

Naturally such contrasting views reflect themselves again in the Thomistic and Humanistic ideas of society. But the contrast is

<sup>76</sup> Above, pp. 91-95.

<sup>77</sup> Adler, M. J., *What Man Has Made of Man*, p. 208.

<sup>78</sup> Jung, C. G., *Psychological Types*, p. 383.

<sup>79</sup> "Humanism recognizes that man's religious culture and civilization, as clearly depicted by anthropology and history, are the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment and with his social heritage. The individual born into a particular culture is largely moulded by that culture." Cf. Chapter II, p. 61, Fourth point of Manifesto.

<sup>80</sup> III C. G., 37; cf. above, Chapter III, no. 53.



in principle not in terminology. Humanism speaks here in terms long familiar and sacred to the people of the West: the dignity of man, the ultimate value of the individual and the meaning of human life, justice, law, equality, freedom and so forth. The Humanist Manifesto echoes with such terms.<sup>81</sup> But, because the man of whom it speaks is a caricature of real man, the society which it plans is a caricature of real society.

Humanists are outspoken in their criticism of National Socialist society and are critical too—though in a more guarded way and with a far less unfriendly tone—of Marxist society. But much of the criticism by which we took exception to these two philosophies is equally applicable to Humanist society. Its concern for the dignity of man, for the worth of the individual, is as weak in deed as it is strong in word, because that eminence is a fundamental assumption which its own principles fail to sustain.

Humanism has no individual goal to give individual meaning to an individual's life. For St. Thomas man's pursuit of truth leads him outside and above any political community. The genesis of the goal he sets for each man is, as we indicated,<sup>82</sup> due to specifically Christian elements at work in his thought. But it is truth—in this case supernatural truth complementing natural truth—which here determines the nature of society and man's relation to society.

Yet, as we have also seen,<sup>83</sup> St. Thomas realizes that man by his very nature is a social being who can only achieve his complete perfection in union with his fellows. Humanism might retort that it, too, has the same conviction. But because of its implicit identification of mind with matter—its explicit denials to the contrary notwithstanding—and its evolutionary, organic view both of man and society, the ideal it sets is far from the Thomistic one. The society St. Thomas envisions is set apart from Marxism's materially productive one and National Socialism's brutal animal one because in it the perfection of man is primarily the perfection of his intelligence and the direction of his material wants and lower powers in the light of the mind. The society

<sup>81</sup> Cp. Points 13-15, Manifesto, Chapter II, p. 62.

<sup>82</sup> Chapter III, p. 87.

<sup>83</sup> Chapter III, pp. 87-89.

Humanism envisions breaks down in the same achievement because, far from freeing itself from the materialism and irrational factors of Marxism and National Socialism, it is the intellectual heir of modern philosophy just as truly as are the other two. A further tangible proof of this is the coincidence of the social programmes of Humanism, Marxism and National Socialism.<sup>84</sup> Thomism stands above and apart from these three philosophies of society: Humanism, Marxism and National Socialism stand together, for they arose in the same intellectual atmosphere and reflect the same currents of thought.

<sup>84</sup> Cfr. Chapter II, pp. 61-62.



The truth they really have is only partial truth. The harm comes because they make it absolute truth and build on it the society of men.

Communism insists on the material factors in the life of man. Thomism does not deny them. National Socialism fosters the lower powers and elements in man. Thomism does not deny them. Humanism exalts science and its discoveries for the worth of man. Thomism does not deny them. But what Thomism does deny is that the material alone is the happiness of man, that the cultivation of the brutal is the happiness of man, that findings of science and their application and no more are the happiness of man. Life and happiness in its highest reach is for Thomism the satisfaction of mind in the quest for truth.

Significantly enough we have in St. Thomas himself an apt summary of his agreement and disagreement with Marxism, National Socialism and Humanism in terms of the wisdom which guides the affairs of men. There is true wisdom, he says, and there are other forms for which he uses the name of wisdom too, but which are really counterfeits. The end or good toward which one points makes the difference. If one makes material goods the end, then there is *earthly wisdom*. If one is concerned only with bodily excellence, then there is *animal wisdom*. If one exalts man alone, then there is *diabolical wisdom*, so-called because it is an imitation of the pride of the devil.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ". . . bonum dicitur dupliciter: uno modo quod vere bonum, et simpliciter perfectum; alio modo dicitur aliquid esse bonum, secundum quamdam similitudinem, quod est in malitia perfectum sicut dicitur bonus latro, vel perfectus latro. . . . Et sicut circa ea quae sunt vere bona, invenitur aliqua altissima causa, quae est summum bonum, quod est ultimus finis, per cuius cognitionem dicitur homo vere sapiens; ita etiam in malis est invenire aliquid ad quod alia referuntur, sicut ad ultimum finem, per cuius cognitionem homo dicitur esse sapiens ad male agendum. . . . Quicumque autem avertitur a fine debito, necesse est quod aliquem finem indebitum sibi praestituit; quia omne agens agit propter finem. Unde si praestituit sibi finem in bonis corporalibus, vocatur sapientia animalis; si autem in aliqua excellentia, vocatur sapientia animalis; si autem in aliqua excellentia, vocatur sapientia diabolica, propter imitationem superbiae diaboli." S. T., II-IIae, q. 45, a. 1 ad 1.

## CHAPTER V

## ST. THOMAS AND THE SOCIAL ROLE OF TRUTH

## A. WISDOM AND TRUTH

## 1. Introduction

The degradation of man and the release of such consuming irrational forces consequent on the three philosophies of society we have examined raise the question as to how far mankind at present cannot only recover but rediscover the truth. We have insisted again and again that the harm of the falsity we criticized is the partial truth of which it is certain. There is indirect evidence of the strength and motive force of truth in the assurance with which Marxism, National Socialism and Humanism enunciate their principles and demand allegiance to them. These systems have vitality. In the very nature of things the false alone can never be responsible for that.

These philosophies have some truth and we have been concerned not to deny the truth they have. If nothing else did, the constant recurrence of the word "truth" in the exposition of these three systems would raise the problem of what truth they can allege and what its worth might be. Truth must mean something to man when such disparate philosophies, disparate in a measure among themselves, and disparate by comparison with Thomism, all have this in common—they all speak and act because they are true. They follow, then, an absolute—truth.

Man can discover or think he discovers many absolutes. But there is only one true absolute. There are many partial truths. All are important. To find and recognize truth is man's highest concern and greatest completion. Of his nature man discovers truth by degrees. But degrees mean a scale, and a scale means a standard, and a standard means an absolute. Here is our point of departure from Marxism, National Socialism and Humanism.



2. *Wisdom*

In introducing the conception of wisdom are we straying from the specific concern of this chapter, the social rôle of truth? We think not. And to strengthen that conviction we might consider briefly St. Thomas' ideal of wisdom and its integration with our present topic.

Philosophy, we were at pains to point out in the last chapter, is a true knowledge—a science in its own right. As such it is the highest science and identified with wisdom. Not only does it, like all the other sciences, physical or mathematical, demonstrate conclusions through principles, not only is it a knowledge through causes, but it is knowledge and demonstration through the highest cause and the first principles.<sup>2</sup> The quest of the mind for truth and its perfection by it is achieved progressively and in varying degrees by the three most important intellectual virtues, wisdom, understanding and science. Depending on the emphasis, knowledge is variously designated by one of these three names.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>"... sapientia est quadam scientia, in quantum habet id quod est commune omnibus scientiis, ut scilicet ex principiis conclusiones demonstrat; Sed quia habet aliquid proprium supra alias scientias, in quantum scilicet de omnibus iudicat, et non solum quantum ad conclusiones, sed etiam quantum ad prima principia; ideo habet rationem perfectioris virtutis quam scientia." *S. T.*, I-IIae, q. 57, a. 2 ad 1.

<sup>3</sup>"... virtus intellectualis speculativa est per quam intellectus speculativus perficitur ad considerandum verum; hoc enim est bonum opus eius. Verum autem est dupliciter considerabile: uno modo, sicut per se notum; alio modo, sicut per aliud notum. Quod autem est per se notum, se habet ut principium et percipitur statim ab intellectu; et ideo habitus perficiens intellectum ad huiusmodi veri est habitus principiorum. Verum autem quod est per aliud notum, non statim percipitur ab intellectu, sed per inquisitionem rationis; et se habet in ratione termini. Quod quidem potest esse dupliciter: uno modo, ut sit ultimum in aliquo genere; alio modo, ut sit ultimum respectu totius cognitionis humanae. Et quia 'ea quae sunt posterius nota quoad nos, sunt priora, et magis nota secundum naturam,' ut dicitur (Aristotle, *Physics*, Bk. I, C. 1, 184a 16-20), ideo id quod est ultimum respectu totius cognitionis humanae, est id quod est primum et maxime cognoscibile secundum naturam. Et circa huiusmodi est sapientia, quae 'considerat altissimas causas,' ut dicitur (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bk. I, Cs. 1 & 2), unde convenienter iudicat et ordinat de omnibus, quia iudicium perfectum et universale haberi non potest nisi per resolutionem ad primas causas." *S. T.*, I-IIae, q. 57, a. 2; cfr. I-IIae, q. 68, a. 7; II-IIae, q. 4, a. 8; q. 47, a. 5; *Virt. comm.*, aa. 12 & 13; *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 16.

To indicate the order and relative importance of these three intellectual virtues St. Thomas compares their hierarchy to the hierarchy of the vegetative, sensitive and rational souls in man. And just as the rational soul of man is superior to his vegetative and sensitive souls, virtually containing them and subsuming their activity, so wisdom is superior to science and understanding and in its own light subsumes the principles and conclusions of the other two.<sup>4</sup> Thus wisdom implies the highest reaches of truth—concern for truth is its end, and since truth is the ultimate end of the universe, wisdom has the greatest of all possible concerns.<sup>5</sup> So wisdom is for St. Thomas the summit of knowledge and truth and he describes the wise man as one who knows all even the difficult through cause and certitude, one who becomes aware of himself in his search, and one who orders and persuades others.<sup>6</sup> The strength of wisdom is in its subject matter, being as being, and in the first indemonstrable principles consequent on this study.<sup>7</sup> It differs from all other sciences and arts and stands above them because of these indemonstrable principles which are at once its own foundation and the foundation of all other knowledge down to the lowliest physical science.<sup>8</sup> Though these prin-

<sup>4</sup>"Unde si quis recte consideret istae tres virtutes non ex aequo distinguuntur ab invicem, sed ordine quodam; sicut accidit in totis potentialibus, quorum una pars est perfectior altera, sicut anima rationalis est perfectior quam sensibilis, et sensibilis quam vegetabilis. Hoc enim modo scientia dependet ab intellectu sicut a principaliori; et utrumque a sapientia sicut a principalissimo, quae sub se continet et intellectum et scientiam, ut de conclusionibus scientiarum iudicans, et de principiis earundem." *S. T.*, I-IIae, q. 57, a. 2 ad 2.

<sup>5</sup>"Oportet igitur ultimum finem universi esse bonum intellectus. Hoc autem est veritas. Oportet igitur veritatem esse ultimum finem totius universi; et circa eius considerationem principaliter sapientiam insistere." *I C. G.*, 1; cfr. *III C. G.*, 47.

<sup>6</sup>"... ille sapiens dicitur qui scit omnia etiam difficilia per certitudinem et causam, ipsum scire propter se quaerens, aliis ordinans et persuadens." *In I Meta.*, lect. 2.

<sup>7</sup>"... ad Philosophum potius pertinet consideratio dignitatum, in quantum ad ipsum pertinet consideratio entis in communi, ad quod per se pertinent huiusmodi principia prima, ut maxime apparet in eo quod est maxime primum principium, scilicet quod impossibile est idem esse et non esse." *In III Meta.*, lect. 5.

<sup>8</sup>"Modus de quo est cognitio in scientiis est duplex. Unus modus







arriving at that happiness. Though in this life wisdom has only an imperfect grasp on its object, it does hold it in some degree, and by that much is nearer happiness than prudence.<sup>13</sup> For that reason wisdom commands prudence and prudence ministers to it.<sup>14</sup>

### 3. *Three Wisdoms and Their Deficiency*

We can now return from this consideration of wisdom to St. Thomas' division of true wisdom from earthly wisdom, which we applied to Marxism; from animal wisdom, which we applied to National Socialism; from diabolical wisdom, which we applied to Humanism. The detailed criticism—the problem of the previous two chapters—of these three philosophies in the light of Thomistic thought furnishes more than enough justification as to why St. Thomas might hold Marxism, National Socialism and Humanism to be counterfeit wisdoms ill-suited to guide men in individual or social life.

In the Thomistic ideal of wisdom there are three touchstones whereby he judges the above false wisdoms and finds them wanting. The first is his statement: "He therefore who simply considers the highest cause of the whole universe, which is God, is especially called wise."<sup>15</sup> The second is the statement: "Moreover in the realm of human acts the highest cause is the common end

<sup>13</sup> " . . . prudentia considerat ea quibus pervenitur ad felicitatem; sed sapientia considerat ipsum objectum felicitatis, quod est altissimum intelligibile. Et si quidem esset perfecta consideratio sapientiae respectu sui objecti, esset perfecta felicitas in actu sapientiae. Sed quia actus sapientiae in hac vita est imperfectus respectu principalis objecti, quod est Deus; ideo actus sapientiae est quaedam inchoatio, seu participatio futurae felicitatis; et sic propinquius se habet ad felicitatem quam prudentia." *S. T.*, I-IIae, q. 66, a. 5 ad 2.

<sup>14</sup> " . . . prudentia non imperat ipsi sapientiae, sed e converso. . . . Non enim prudentia habet se intrinsece de altissimis, quae considerat sapientiam; sed imperat de his quae ordinantur ad sapientiam, scilicet quomodo homines debeant ad sapientiam pervenire; unde in hoc est prudentia, seu politica, ministra sapientiae; introducit enim ad eam, praeparans ei viam, sicut ostiarius ad regem." *Ibidem*, ad 1.

<sup>15</sup> "Ille igitur qui considerat simpliciter altissimam causam totius universi, quae Deus est, maxime sapiens dicitur." *S. T.*, I, q. 1, a. 6.

of the whole of human life."<sup>16</sup> The third is the statement: "It is the part of the wise man to order: ordination of things only comes about through the knowledge of the relation and proportion of the ordered to one another, and to something higher which is their end; for the order of things to one another is in direct proportion to their order to an end."<sup>17</sup>

The three above quotations set the pattern for the formation of the ideas of God, man and society. We have already pointed out how sharply Thomism differs from Marxism, National Socialism and Humanism in these ideas. Moreover the difference has its origin in divergent ideas of knowledge and truth. Wisdom, as St. Thomas points out, does not demonstrate its self-evident principles. It can, though, and does dispute with its opponents whenever it can find common ground with them. If this is not possible, it can at least point out their failure. That is precisely how Thomistic wisdom approaches, examines and criticizes the philosophies of Marxism, National Socialism and Humanism.

Such is the strength of its wisdom. That fact goes a long way too, incidentally, in explaining the present phenomena of the resort to name-calling by the adherents of these three false wisdoms in establishing their position. "It is a certain satisfaction," says J. Maritain,

for the mind to attain to positions and oppositions so absolutely primordial, that whatever respect and amenity is felt for the person of their contradictors by the philosophers, the latter will have to renounce all possibility of courtesy, and to exchange offensive words. As long as one is not reduced to denying one's opponent the right to exist intellectually, there is no real radical philosophic conflict.<sup>18</sup>

But to return to the ideas of God, man and society as Thomistic

<sup>16</sup> "In genere autem humanorum actuum causa altissima est finis communis totius vitae humanae." *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 47, a. 2 ad 1.

<sup>17</sup> " . . . ordinare sapientis est: ordinatio enim aliorum fieri non potest nisi per cognitionem habitudinis et proportionis ordinatorum ad invicem, et ad aliquid aliud eius, quod est finis eorum; ordo enim aliorum ad invicem est propter ordinem eorum ad finem." *II C. G.*, 24.

<sup>18</sup> Maritain, J., *Scholasticism and Politics*, p. 53.



wisdom discovers them and as Marxism, National Socialism and Humanism discover them. Thomism's position and opposition is so absolutely primordial and strong that it can complement while criticizing and reinforce while rejecting. On the basis of its own principles it knows why it accepts what is true in these philosophies, just as it knows why it must take exception to what is erroneous in them. It has no need or inclination to resort to injurious terms for its own justification and right to criticize.

We have already given its answer to Marxism, National Socialism and Humanism on the all-important and truly wise ideas of God, man and society. For Marxist materialism the concrete dialectic of history is the complete explanation of reality. It posits intelligibility, and then, because of its militant atheism, denies the source of that intelligibility. It is wise in the recognition of material causality. In its over-emphasis of that same causality, though, it spoils, and the result is a counterfeit—earthly wisdom.

So, too, its view of man suffers from the same defect. Prudence is identified with wisdom because its concern is the highest cause of human action—the common end of the whole of human life. Marxism says much, and says it wisely, of the economic factors affecting the life of man. But here again it does not say enough; and because it does not say enough, what it does say does not ring true.

Man knows and knows the truth, says Marxism. But all he knows is material reality and truth as the domination of that reality. True wisdom, though, shows that there is a province of reality which cannot be dominated. Moreover the mind of man and its quest point to the immateriality of that province. There is a part of man which is left unsatisfied by mere empirical knowledge and merely empirical achievement. To call the "secteur" of metaphysics a fiction, as Marxism does, is itself a fiction whose disastrous result cannot but reflect itself in determining the common end of the whole of human life. There is a materialism and there is a realism, and the materialism demanding such a view as the above is untrue to the matter of which man is a part and on which he works. In its theory and practice there is hollowness. The true wisdom of St. Thomas—which he holds to be the

possession of all men who can see by the mind—not only affirms itself in its cool examination but points out the disservice Marxist materialism does to the nature of man. Setting a goal far short of his true worth the result is a counterfeit—earthly wisdom.

If, moreover, the determination of the end of human life is the great factor in determining the nature of the society and the state,<sup>19</sup> the Marxist view of man cannot but reflect itself in Marxist society. For Marxism the goal is the economically productive society—that and no more. All effort, mental, moral and material as conceived by Marxism, falls under the blight of that overshadowing ideal. We have contrasted already<sup>20</sup> the order—which St. Thomas sees it as the duty of the wise man to achieve—in Thomistic and Marxist society. For St. Thomas, because man is an intelligent being, he must demand and work for his own individual pre-eminence, a natural and social bond between himself and other men, and a virtuous life in society. With but earthly wisdom as a guide Marxism looks only to economic productivity, communism, and class warfare in achieving the perfect society. Thomism's strength is in the intellect of man directing under the guidance of truth. Marxism's weakness is the conviction of the control of blind forces that of themselves must inevitably destroy man.

National Socialism corresponds to the next false wisdom St. Thomas lists—animal wisdom. Just as the strength and weakness of Marxism is an overbearing materialism whose description is earthly wisdom, so the strength and weakness of National Socialism is a brutal vitality whose summary is animal wisdom.

The first norm of wisdom we gave above was the explication of the idea of God. The unalterable opposition between Thomism and National Socialism in that task—even their mere comparison—reveals not only the weakness but the perversion of animal wisdom in the ideal it sets. In the words of a previous quotation: "A God who will end by being identified with an invisible force at work in the blood, is set up against transcendent Being."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Chapter III, pp. 87-88.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Chapter III, pp. 88-90.

<sup>21</sup> Chapter IV, p. 101.



Animal wisdom not content with glorifying the irrational goes further and deifies it.

There are irrational factors in man's composition. True wisdom does not deny this. But where Thomism finds and extols immateriality and intelligence in man, National Socialism never goes beyond the organic and biological. In Thomistic wisdom intelligibility whose source is Supreme Intelligence suffuses the universe and guides the life of man. In National Socialism a blind and brutal force drives man on, and the "ultimate and unfathomable meaning of existence" is the God of race who would not exist if race and blood did not exist.<sup>22</sup>

National Socialism does not deny God explicitly as does Marxism. But because it, too, is of the earth only and a caricature of true wisdom, its God is a terrible caricature of the true God. The German philosophy of society we have called animal wisdom and in that sense we have applied the adjective "brutal" to it. But no animal, save the rational animal, man, could so pervert reality as to offer the ultimate National Socialism does. In an applied sense there is animal wisdom and animals have it; but when we adopt the phrase "animal wisdom" for National Socialism we imply a falsity brute creatures could not have and which man offers only because he prostitutes the mind which alone is capable of such excess. Sadly enough, only because of the intelligence which he scorns can man even reach such a denial.

That original falsity and denial of National Socialism introduces disorder from the beginning. So there is no wonder if there is further disorder in the idea of man. If National Socialism's God is irrational, we can but expect that its idea of man will be irrational, too. For Thomistic wisdom what is most important in man is on the level of intelligence. For animal wisdom what is most important in man is on the level of the organic and sensitive. One roots human action in reasoned and ordered control—"ordinare sapientis est."<sup>23</sup> The other gives free rein to impulsive and emotional excess.

True wisdom, indeed, does not deny the strength of impulse and emotion. And this is true even when they are disordered, as they

<sup>22</sup> Chapter II, pp. 54-55.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. no. 17 above.

must be when they become the norm of man's activity. Wisdom which is a question of order demands the subjection of what is common to men and animals to what is proper to man, the guidance of mind. Impulse and emotion have their own direction and their own function. Whether they are to be noble or ignoble depends on whether they guide or are led.<sup>24</sup> In either event they are real in their own right. Their conquest and government by mind is the order of true wisdom; their complete domination in their own strength is the disorder of animal wisdom.

Finally, there must be so much difference between the society of true wisdom and the society of animal wisdom. Order and peace is the theme of one; war and strife is the explicit aim of the other. Even though we did not actually see the hatred and cruelty and callousness National Socialism has unloosed in the world those brutal emotions lay frightfully near the surface of its philosophy. We could not but know that it needed only the lightest of touches to quicken them into activity. The impulses and emotions of man, we have said, have their own strength. Left to follow their own devices instead of the guidance of reason they end by consuming man and wrecking society.

Yet their strength is the strength animal wisdom relies on. With that wisdom for direction the ideal of the stable order of society yields to an ideal of unending warfare. That is precisely the ideal of National Socialism—world revolution and "eternal war."<sup>25</sup> But man being man, the quest of truth for true wisdom is diverted in animal wisdom, not to the temporary satisfaction of brutal hungers, but to the insatiable and perduring lust for power. Again it is a case of man's inability to be other than himself even in the very denial of his worth.

<sup>24</sup> ". . . homo et equus in hoc convenient quod est sensibile, non tamen oportet quod anima sensibilis sit unius rationis in homine et equo: quia homo et equus non sunt unum animal in specie; unde in homine anima sensibilis est multa nobilior quam in aliis animalibus quantum ad principales actus . . . in omni enim toto potestativo potentia inferior superiori conjuncta perfectior invenitur, ut potestas propositi multo excellentior est in rege. Anima autem sensibilis in homine per essentiam conjungitur anime rationali. . . ." II *Sent.*, d. 18, q. 3 ad 4.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Chapter IV, p. 105 ff.



True wisdom uses prudence—wisdom in human affairs—to order the relations of men. Animal wisdom, a counterfeit, uses cunning, also a counterfeit, in the hope of achieving the same end. But that cunning is carnal—grasping and shot through with self-interest. It is as changeable and explosive as the irrational powers in man that spur it on. Thomistic wisdom orders, considers the highest cause of the whole universe, the common end of the whole of human life, in the light of unchangeable principles. Animal wisdom brings only disorder, debases the highest cause of the whole universe and the common end of the whole of human life.

In completion we applied the diabolical wisdom of St. Thomas to the last philosophy of society we examined, Humanism. St. Thomas uses this designation because such wisdom is an imitation of the pride of the devil. Of course, to speak of the devil sounds very naïve to modern ears. Given the general attitude of Humanism it is very easy to see why. Seven centuries ago, though, St. Thomas, in characterizing a certain false wisdom as diabolical, pointed to a state of mind which agrees too clearly with that of Humanism to be merely coincidental.

Before going further we might examine just what St. Thomas means by diabolical pride. He says:

In another way one may desire to be like unto God in some respect which is not natural to one; as if one were to desire to create heaven and earth, which is proper to God; in which desire there would be sin. It was in this way that the devil desired to be like God. Not that he desired to resemble God by being subject to no one else absolutely; for so he would be desiring his own non-being, since no creature can exist except by holding its existence under God. But he desired resemblance to God in this respect, by desiring as his last end of beatitude, something which he could attain by the virtue of his own nature, turning his appetite away from supernatural beatitude, which is attained by God's grace.—Or, if he desired as his last end that likeness of God, which is bestowed by grace, he sought to have it by the power of his own nature, and not from Divine assistance according to God's ordering.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> "Alio vero modo potest aliquis appetere similis esse Deo, quantum ad hoc in quo non natus est assimilari; sicut si quis appeteret creare caelum

In the light of the above quotation we can now proceed to Humanism which we described as diabolical wisdom. Humanism says man is the measure—the measure of truth, of God, of man, of society. To appreciate the factors which vitiate Humanism and justify its inclusion as a false wisdom two phrases of the preceding quotation might be emphasized. Characteristic of diabolical pride is a desire to resemble God. But that desire is not (1) a desire of resemblance in the sense that "he desired to be subject to no one else absolutely; for so he would be desiring his own non-being, since no creature can exist except by holding its existence under God." It is (2) a desire or resemblance "by desiring as his last end of beatitude something which he could attain by the virtue of his own nature, turning his appetite away from supernatural beatitude, which is attained by God's grace."

Bringing the parallel to Humanism we find in it (1) the idea of God, and (2) the avoidance of complete submission to the import of that idea by the contention that it is realized in the God of emergent evolution who is tending towards deity or in the God of the psychologists which is a projection into the universe of man's own sense of personal agency.<sup>27</sup> The inversion this implies has been indicated in a comparison of the norms of knowledge and truth of Thomistic wisdom and diabolical wisdom. For St. Thomas, as we have shown, the divine Mind is that measuring and not measured (*mensurans, non mensuratus*), while the human mind is that measured and not measuring (*mensuratus, non mensurans quidem res naturalis, sed artificialis tantum*).<sup>28</sup> Hu-

et terram, quod est proprium Dei, in quo appetitu esset peccatum. Et hoc modo diabolus appetiit esse ut Deus, non ut ei assimilaretur quantum ad hoc quod est nulli subesse simpliciter; quia sic suum non esse appeteret, cum nulla creatura esse possit, nisi per hoc quod sub Deo esse participat. Sed in hoc appetiit indelitate esse similis Deo, quia appetiit ut finem ultimum beatitudinis id ad quod virtute suae naturae poterat pervenire, avertens suum appetitum a beatitudine supernaturali, quae est ex gratia Dei.—Vel si appetiit ut ultimum finem illam Dei similitudinem quae datur ex gratia, voluit hoc habere per virtutem suae naturae poterat pervenire, avertens suum appetitum a beatitudine supernaturali, quae est ex gratia Dei." S. T., I, q. 63, a. 3; cfr. I-IIae, q. 73, a. 5; II-IIae, q. 46, a. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Cfr. Chapter IV, pp. 116-117.

<sup>28</sup> Cfr. Chapter I, p. 14.



manists making man the sole measure of truth must perforce consider him to an indefinable extent the master and creator of reality. Yet the dilemma of retaining some aspect of intelligibility, which even the beloved science of the Humanists craves, is revealed in the recurrence of the idea of God—always a new one of course—in all the shades of thought of diabolical wisdom. If man is the measure there is no goal outside himself to which he need tend. Withal, one of the main weaknesses of Humanism is its vacillation. At present its adherents are at the mercy of ever-changing current science or are abjectly submitting themselves to an all-powerful state as the absolute. Let the demand be man as the measure; the great weakness of diabolical wisdom cannot but reveal itself if there is compliance to that demand. Man is that measured and not measuring and that implies intelligence, intelligibility and supreme Intelligence. And in Humanism, too, there is the fact of man realizing his own nature in spite of himself. For implicit in Humanism's course, even though it is surrender to the wrong absolute, is the proof of man as that measured and not measuring.

The same diabolical wisdom in its excessive demands for man betrays him. True wisdom, to be sure, places man on an eminence where he is also in a position to make demands. But that eminence is in accord with his nature. He does not make truth, he discovers it. In the discovery he lives, and his vitality is the highest form of vitality—the life of the mind. The rightful activity of that mind safeguards not only itself but guides and directs in fullest measure of achievement all the inferior powers which also develop in the composite, man.

Diabolical wisdom, we say, in its excessive demands for man betrays man. Theoretically it will hold itself subject to no norm. The norm it is forced into fixing we have already indicated.<sup>29</sup> It categorically states that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected. The upshot is that man is described in terms of unconscious forces and drives, of adjustment to a universe essentially blind, of a materialism and an irrationalism that differ only in refinement of expression from the materialism and irrationalism of Marxism and National Socialism.

<sup>29</sup> Cfr. Chapter II, pp. 59-66.

Moreover, the society which diabolical wisdom would establish does no more than reinforce the harm. Once again, though, man's inability to be totally untrue to himself evidences itself. Humanism would have man the measure of all things. Yet the craving of man for an absolute outside himself, as much a part of him as his blood and bones and flesh, finds its substitute in the society Humanism proclaims. The individual man is completely subordinated to the mass entity. His life, his liberty, his happiness is only achieved in a process of growth indistinct from that of the community, the end beyond himself.

Thomistic wisdom, as we have pointed out,<sup>30</sup> while fully aware of the social nature of man, safeguards the worth and liberty of each person by establishing an individual goal to give individual meaning to the individual's life. With Humanism the dignity of man is a fundamental assumption. In Thomism the dignity of man is an explicitly established premise. As a matter of fact much of the drive of Humanism in this regard comes from the residue of a heritage which Thomism retains in its full strength. All Humanism can offer is its attenuated implications. The pride of diabolical wisdom falsely overestimates; the true humility of Thomistic wisdom rightly indicates.

## B. THOMISTIC WISDOM AND APPLICATION TO SOCIETY

### 1. *Faith in Truth and Science*

Eduard Benes, former president of Czecho-Slovakia and considered an outstanding political thinker, lists four prerequisites for an individual's "life worth living" in society. They are:

Faith in truth and science,  
Respect for universal moral principles,  
Honesty and reliability of the pledged word,  
Belief in human dignity.<sup>31</sup>

The purport of the rest of this chapter will be to show how ad-

<sup>30</sup> Chapter III, pp. 87-88; Chapter IV, pp. 119-121.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in *The World We Want to Live In* (A Discussion edited by Everett Ross Clinchy), (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1942), p. 81.



mirably Thomistic teaching on truth aids in the direction of achieving these goals.

The worth of Thomism for the first requisite, faith in truth and science, has been suggested in the criticism it made of Humanism and the supplement it offered to that thought. Thomism denies neither the truth of philosophy nor the truth of science. Humanism denies one and nullifies the other.

The main weakness of Humanism as we saw it was a disproportionate exaltation of science and a consequent belittlement of philosophy. It closes itself off from the field of highest truth either by adopting the method of science in the particular problems of philosophy or by relying on the findings of science alone to achieve the complete happiness of man. Fortunately there is increasing realization that the method of science and the discoveries of science are of themselves insufficient. The problem is the use to which they are put. Science of itself can never answer that question.

It is here that Humanism fails completely. So wedded is it to the scientific method, so bound up is it with the methods of particular sciences, that what is hailed as a distinctly modern achievement ends in nothing else than a disservice to science. There is true science and by this much science is truth. But at its highest it is only a partial aspect of truth. The concern of man and society is complete truth. The full apprehension of truth, moreover, guides as well as completes scientific truth. Humanism, though, by its narrow view has shut itself from the fullness of truth. More than that, it has perverted scientific truth by demanding of it and for it a function of which it is totally incapable.

Thomism's appreciation of the degrees of knowledge obviates that mistake and guarantees the whole truth which is its most important concern. Holding the field of philosophy and the field of science to be separate departments, it justifies and limits each. There is a consequent clarity, a consequent appreciation of the function and result of each. Instead of disastrous independence there is harmonious interdependence.

Thomism takes issue with Humanism's claim that there is only one science—the science of phenomena. If that be true, there is no wisdom; the intellect is a slave in the service of sensitive ap-

prehension. The Thomistic teaching of the life of the mind, to which we have constantly recurred, can never permit such a conclusion.

If positivism old and new . . . does not understand that metaphysics is authentically a science, a knowledge of a perfected and completed type, it means that they do not understand that the intellect *sees*. For them, sense alone is intuitive, the intellect having only a function of connection and of unification. Let them be silent! for we cannot say "I," we cannot utter a noun of the language, without testifying that there are objects in things, that is, centers of visibility, which our senses do not reach, but which our intellect does. Of course there is no *angelistic*, intellectual intuition, in the sense of Plato and Descartes—I mean an intuition which does not need the mediation of the senses; of course there is nothing in the intellect which does not originally derive from sensible experience. But it is precisely the activity of the intellect which disengages from this experience and brings to the fire of immaterial visibility in act, the objects which sense cannot decipher in things, and sees.<sup>32</sup>

Thomistic realism maintains and saves all the truth discerned in the science of phenomena. And it does so because it complements and defends those sciences by its own wisdom—the wisdom of philosophy. In the realm where the sciences are at home it is their duty to decree what is true and what is false. Thomistic wisdom has no desire to intrude there. But that same wisdom demands for philosophy a higher place in the edifice of knowledge because its purpose, which is concerned with primary causes, reveals to it realities that are more profound and more essential.

With such an ideal philosophy justifies itself, the while safeguarding and respecting the autonomy of the physical sciences. What we have so far said about knowledge, truth and wisdom as St. Thomas envisions them, indicates how this can be achieved. For it is the philosopher who must know and justify the principles of the other sciences. It is the philosopher who establishes not only his own limits but the boundaries outside of which scientific

<sup>32</sup> Maritain, J., "Science, Philosophy and Religion," *Science, Philosophy and Religion* (A Symposium), p. 175. Italics author's.



disciplines cannot step without being false to themselves. It is the philosopher who protects the other sciences against the hidden domination of unconscious metaphysics, and in that way safeguards their liberty and autonomy.

Thus does Thomistic wisdom by contrast with Humanism contribute to the first point we have set down—faith in truth and science. And more, on the natural level it guarantees rational conviction of the two. The function of the wise man is to order says St. Thomas. A comparison of Thomism with Humanism is one appreciation of how it satisfies its own demand. In the strength of its principles we cannot only criticize the disorder of modern thought, but we can offer a hierarchy of knowledge which saves the fullness of truth.

## 2. *Respect for Universal Moral Principles*

In the consideration of the above second point we might reintroduce a division of truth which we briefly indicated in the first chapter. It is a division, given and used many times by St. Thomas, into truth of life, truth of justice and truth of doctrine. Such a division serves to emphasize the results rather than the nature of truth. And just as previously we used the contrast of Humanism to bring into relief the contribution of St. Thomas to the first requisite of society, so here we shall continue the contrast of Thomism with Marxism and National Socialism as we study what his wisdom means in respect for universal moral principles.

In reviewing what we have said of these divisions of truth by St. Thomas, truth of life can be considered as true human existence within the individual unit of society.<sup>33</sup> Truth of justice may be described as true sociability or the adequate fulfillment of personal obligations to one's neighbor and to society. While the truth of life is personal, the truth of justice has for its concern others. Truth of doctrine is the communication of knowledge, practical or speculative, infused or acquired.<sup>34</sup>

These divisions of truth indicate its scope. For truth in action is coextensive with the whole of man's activity: it ranges across

<sup>33</sup> *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 109, a. 2 ad 3; cfr. Chapter I, pp. 17-18.

<sup>34</sup> *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 109, a. 3 ad 2; cfr. Chapter I, p. 18.

the whole of his personal and social life. The fact that St. Thomas examined and defined truth in terms of such general realms evidences clearly how he appreciated its sweep. Not the least of his services to truth, and society too, is his fidelity in doing so.

Truth of doctrine demands that truth defend itself by every means available to it. One way of doing this we have already shown. In the strength of its own sure wisdom it must take exception to anything that distorts it. Thus it is that we have found Thomistic wisdom in opposition to the earthly wisdom of Marxism and the animal wisdom of National Socialism.

One way to appreciate the strength and surety of Thomistic thought in that task is to contrast its calm appraisal of Marxism and National Socialism with their hysterical rejection of thought opposed to their own. Thomism finds and admits elements of truth in the systems it criticizes; Marxism and National Socialism deny flatly any truth but their own. Thomism holds that truth is universal, the common possession of all who seek rightly. Marxism and National Socialism restrict truth until it becomes atrophied—the truth of class or the truth of race.

The social consequences of these various systems in this rôle of truth quickly reveal themselves. Certainly one phase of respect for universal moral principles is mankind's whole-hearted subjection to truth wherever it can be found. That Marxism and National Socialism restrict truth is shown in their actual, absolute and working negation and exclusion of what does not suit their narrow view. The weapons to this end are force and hatred. The excesses of the two in the "liquidation" of intellectuals, in the suppression of schools, in the censorship of reading, in the direction of the arts—all in terms of class or race—confirm in practice the direction of their principles.

Now the rejection of error forms an active part of the truth of doctrine. The contrast, though, in the way Thomism achieves this and the way Marxism and National Socialism do is striking. In itself it is a convincing argument of the superiority of the wisdom of St. Thomas to the other wisdoms. The forces released by them in society are just as restrictive as the truth of class and the truth of race. They defend their wisdom by hatred, abuse and



brute force. It is a truism to say that all of these are corrosive not only of the individual but of society. Thomism has no need of such a course. Respect for its self-evident principles demands not only their acceptance but their defense too. But, as we have said and shown, the defense is in terms of calm appraisal not hysterical rejection.

We can also compare Thomism, Marxism and National Socialism in the sphere of the truth of justice. That truth implicates all our relations with others. It involves not only our ties with those immediately near us, not only our ties with our state or nation, but, much wider, our ties in the union of all mankind. We have criticized truth of class and truth of race as narrow and restrictive and that criticism is especially applicable in the present case.

There can be no respect for universal moral principles—here those that affect the relations of all men—in Marxism and National Socialism because by the force of their position they cut themselves off in theory and practice from regard for them. Universal embraces all mankind. The earthly wisdom of Marxism ends in the restriction of the sum total of truth and justice to one class, the proletariat. The animal wisdom of National Socialism ends in the restriction of the sum total of truth and justice to one race, the pure Aryans. The fact that both Marxism and National Socialism demand and introduce strife, warfare and even death in society should occasion no surprise. In the measure they have restricted truth they have excluded those who do not and cannot agree with them. Not content with excluding them, they would eliminate them. The disruptiveness of Marxism and National Socialism is only too evident in the present day as proof.

Thomistic wisdom abhors such exclusiveness. That is the reason it takes issue with Marxism and National Socialism and characterizes them as earthly and animal wisdom. But it is much more than critical. In the conviction of truth natural to all men and evident to those who truly seek, it finds a common basis not only for national but for international society as well. Its principles provide a common fund of knowledge in which all can meet, refine, exchange and pool their thought for the betterment of all.

Thomism shows its fidelity to the truth of justice even in the

very way it separates itself from Marxism and National Socialism. Its quarrel with these two philosophies of society is on the plane of principle. Sure of its own wisdom and convinced, further, that there is no knowledge which is totally false, it respects the highest right of every man—the quest for truth. Its ability, moreover, to disengage the true from the false in Marxism and National Socialism gives concrete proof of more than lip service to this ideal.

Finally, where earthly and animal wisdom fail in the truth of life, Thomistic wisdom amply fulfills. Truth of life we have defined as true human existence within the individual unit of society. The partial aspects which Marxism and National Socialism seize and emphasize as complete truth set the complete existence of man either on the material or animal level. Not only does this truncate his individual life, but the result in society is, in one form or another, the complete and annihilating subordination of the members to the whole. Much more, the bond of union can never have any higher form than brute force and terrorism.

St. Thomas, because he takes a higher view of man, takes a higher view of society and the bond of union within it. In this higher view of man, also, he retains the individual worth of each member, the while demanding the utmost of all for the perfection of societal living. Thomistic thought does not deny the corporeal; its difference from Marxism and National Socialism comes in the acknowledgment of the spiritual and immaterial.

On that plane it is moral principles that guide and direct and set the goal of man. On the plane Marxism and National Socialism are content with, material production or animal vitality are the driving forces and the whole life of man.

### 3. *Honesty and Reliability of the Pledged Word*

We have but to return again to our first chapter to find St. Thomas' contribution to the third requisite for society—honesty and reliability of the pledged word. There, what he says of the virtue of truth, the relations of truth and justice and the norms to judge untruth furnish exact standards in the application of



truth to social living.<sup>35</sup> What he does say, moreover, is in terms of truth itself, not in the blunted terms of class or race.

Truth as a virtue demands the special ordering of our acts, words and deeds as a sign to the thing signified. The comparison of simplicity and duplicity instituted by St. Thomas and the identification of the virtue of truth and simplicity throw light on its nature and function. By duplicity a man pretends one thing and intends another. By the virtue of truth—identified with simplicity—there is complete harmony between interior sentiment and exterior deed. We must depend on the virtue of truth to eliminate the deception and pretense which sunder social relations. In this light, because man is a social being, the virtue of truth is strictly demanded and society cannot perdure without it.

St. Thomas also relates this virtue to justice, thus emphasizing anew its social character. He can do so because the virtue of truth implies relation to another as justice does and establishes an equality as justice does also. The difference between the two is further lessened in the fact that the virtue of truth is annexed to justice.

The norms of untruth as St. Thomas sets them forth are another indication how concerned he is for the adjustment of truth to social life. Inherent in his analysis of the apprehension of truth is an implication of the basic maliciousness of lying. "Falsity can be in the intellect," he says, "not only because the knowledge of the intellect is false, but because the intellect is conscious of that knowledge, as it is conscious of truth."<sup>36</sup> Not only does a man know, but he knows that he knows and recognizes the adequation of knowledge to reality.<sup>37</sup> Because such is the operation of the mind, when a man recognizes falsity yet proclaims it as truth he is being false both to himself and to those whom his words reach. And his fault is a conscious and deliberate one.

<sup>35</sup> Chapter I, pp. 23-25; 33-34.

<sup>36</sup> "... falsitas in intellectu esse potest non solum quia intellectus falsa est, sed quia intellectus eam cognoscit, sicut et veritatem." *S. T.*, I, q. 17, a. 3.

<sup>37</sup> "... intellectus reflectitur supra actum suum, non solum secundum quod cognoscit actum suum, sed secundum quod cognoscit proportionem ad rem..." *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 10.

Thus it is that St. Thomas considers a lie not only as unjust but as unnatural.

With such a firm standard St. Thomas examines carefully the various kinds of untruth and shows exactly the harm they do to social living. Dissimulation, hypocrisy, calumny, perjury, untruth connected with the process of law—he brings all under his careful scrutiny. Already we have seen much of his concern to guarantee truth for itself. Here he wishes to safeguard its transmission in society. The extent of his grasp is evidenced in the precision by which he goes from the demands of the virtue of truth to all the forms of untruth and the harm they are responsible for in society. Both positively and negatively he reinforces the third requisite demanded for society—honesty and reliability of pledged word.

#### 4. *Belief in Human Dignity*

For the consideration of the above fourth requisite we return to our starting point in this work—St. Thomas' teaching on the life of the mind. What Thomistic thought has to offer for the conviction of human worth stands out clearly in a final review of the teaching we have repeated again and again in the course of this work.

In the scale of being of which we are a part we discover a progressive advancement from mere existence to vital action and on to intellectual activity. All material beings have this in common—that they exist. A class is set apart further by the possession of life in some form or another as well as existence. Another class is set apart again, not only by the possession of existence and life, but by a share in intelligence, the distinct life of the mind.

Any judgment of man and his activity, then, which disregards his unique prerogative of the life of the mind or slights it by overemphasis on his share in the lower levels of existence, is treason to him. Thomism's disagreement with Marxism, National Socialism and Humanism as philosophies of society has its origin in this charge: these systems are guilty of gross understatement on the true nature of man. That it can and does substantiate that charge it has been the burden of the previous chapters to prove. The mistake of Marxism is not in concerning itself with the ma-



terial existence of man; the error is in confining man and his whole life entirely to this level. The mistake of National Socialism and Humanism is not its recognition of the sensitive life of man; the error is in speaking of man and all man's activity in terms of animal existence.

Thomism recognizes and admits the material existence of man. Thomism recognizes and admits the sensitive life of man. But the contribution of Thomism is its insistence on the recognition and admission of much more—the quest of man for all knowledge and truth which set him apart from the rest of the material universe. The fact of man's ability to make that search is his greatest prerogative. The attainment of what he seeks—truth—is his highest perfection. Any goal short of this leaves man unsatisfied and eventually betrays him.

Here is St. Thomas' conviction of human dignity. "The human person," he says, "signifies that which is most perfect in the whole of nature."<sup>88</sup> That conclusion summarizes all the ample proof he gives of the unique activity of man's mind, all the implications he finds in that activity, all his care in defining and analyzing, all the applications he makes of that activity to the individual and social life of man. With his original premise that life adds something to merely existing, and intelligence adds something to merely living, he gives a dignity and stature to man that is really the index of his true worth and the norm of the society wherein he finds his completion.

<sup>88</sup> " . . . persona significat id quod est perfectissimum in tota natura." *S. T.*, I, q. 29, a. 3.

## CONCLUSION

"Men," says E. Gilson,

are most anxious to find truth, but very reluctant to accept it. We do not like to be cornered by rational evidence, and even when truth is there, in its impersonal and commanding objectivity, our greatest difficulty still remains; it is for me to bow to it in spite of the fact that it is not exclusively mine, for you to accept it though it cannot be exclusively yours. In short, finding out truth is not so hard; what is hard is not to run away from truth once we have found it. When it is not a "yes but," our "yes" is often a "yes, and . . ."; it applies much less to what we have just been told than to what we are about to say.<sup>1</sup>

That is in a measure the psychological explanation of the state of affairs today. Truth has no real existence. There is your truth and there is my truth. But there is no truth that is yours and mine both. Every man's truth is true for him. But no man's truth is true for every man.

We cannot, we have not the right to accuse all those who differ of bad faith. But in the light of truth we can hold them in error and point to the sources and dire results of that error. Today a great section of society needs unity in the face of ever mounting threats to the basic assumptions on which it was founded. It is a truism to say it must be as one if action is to be effective. Moreover,

the cause we are defending is far more fundamental than any form of government or any political creed. It is bound up with the whole tradition of Western and Christian culture—the tradition of social freedom and citizenship on the one hand, and that of spiritual freedom and the infinite value of the individual human person, on the other. No doubt Democracy as an ideal

<sup>1</sup> Gilson, E., *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: Scribners, 1937), p. 61.



does stand for those things and is the outcome of this tradition. But in practice modern democratic culture often represents only a debased and secularized version of this ideal and in many respects, as de Tocqueville saw more than a century ago, it prepares the way for the coming of the new mass order which achieves political form in the totalitarian State. What we are defending, in short, is not democracy but humanity. The basis of our unity—the common ground on which we are all agreed—is not a matter of political opinions, it is our resistance to a system which we feel to be inhuman and opposed to everything that Christian men hold dear. We can no longer, alas! say “civilized men,” for we are faced with the grim fact to which the Liberal optimism of the last century shut its eyes—the fact that a society can become inhuman while preserving all the technical and material advantages of an advanced scientific civilization.<sup>2</sup>

What is true life? What is true liberty? What is the true pursuit of happiness? When all citizens answer those questions or have the answer to them, they will meet and unite on the level of human minds satisfied with the identical answer. Obviously, though, one of the first objections that suggests itself is: well, if truth is so difficult of attainment, how are we going to find it and answer those questions we so desperately need to answer?

The present answers are frightening to contemplate even in mere statement, apart from any consideration of their implications. One of the fruits of St. Thomas' truth theory is the previously quoted sentence which summarizes his ideal of man: “The human person signifies that which is most perfect in the whole of nature.” Contrary to this, with the present debasement of truth which we have pointed out in the body of this work has come a consequent debasement of man himself.

Truth in the contemporary scene has been reduced to a mere matter of convenience, a fictional and arbitrary convention, to a mere “ideology,” “derivation,” or “rationalization” as a by-product of economic, sensual or other drives and residues.

<sup>2</sup> Dawson, C., *The Judgment of Nations* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1942), pp. 186-187.

### Conclusion

With the degradation of truth man is debased from the sublime seeker after truth as an absolute value to that of the hypocrite who uses “truth” as a beautiful smoke screen for the justification of his impulses and lust, profit and greed. In so far as modern philosophy propagated these conceptions, it has its own poisonous aspect and contributes to the depreciation of man and of truth itself.<sup>3</sup>

Thus we have the current conceptions of man, the logical consequences of such thinking. Man is “an electron-proton complex,” “a combination of physico-chemical elements,” “a reflex mechanism,” “a variety of stimulus-response relationship,” “a psycho-analytical libido,” “a predominantly subconscious or unconscious organism controlled by alimentary and economic forces.”<sup>4</sup> Even as a mere summary, is not the above a justification of our statement that present answers are frightening to contemplate? And comparing all the above with St. Thomas' “A person is that which is most perfect in the whole of nature,” which of the two mutually exclusive solutions can guide and elevate man in the crisis of civilization now upon us?

Remember, too, St. Thomas' teaching on truth has no need to resort to the tactics of its modern opponents in personal abuse and name-calling. As a matter of fact the strength of its position is revealed, among other ways, in the profound pity it feels for the above aberrations of the highest faculty of man, his mind. Those aberrations paved the way for the present chaotic war. And those aberrations, unless corrected, cannot but deepen the confusion and suffering of man.

So confident is Thomistic thought of its worth that it offers itself as the best correction of such aberrations. Its appeal is made not in the strength of the might of arms behind it, but on the value of its true principles. In those true principles man can hope for the satisfaction of his mind; by their practical application he can achieve peace and happiness. If they are rejected man betrays himself and condemns himself to incessant anguish.

<sup>3</sup> Sorokin, P., *The Crisis of Our Age* (New York: E. P. Dutton Co., 1942), p. 246.

<sup>4</sup> Cfr. Sorokin, P., *op. cit.*, p. 121.



Since revolutions are now so popular, the revolutionary character of truth might be considered. Error and truth both effect revolution. One, though, is destructive; the other is constructive. One must compromise with passion; the other refuses to do so. One is so uncertain of itself as to border on the hysterical; the other is so sure of its ground as to even pity the misled. One promises immediate results; the other emphasizes human limitations. One ultimately and inevitably betrays man; the other is the only assurance of his perfection. One insists on breaking with the past; the other is rich with the continuity of human thought.

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