

This structure was built for certain quantities and for a certain production. Now these quantities are multiplied tenfold and production goes beyond the limits determined in the economic world. When the economists became aware of this, only two solutions were left: either totally rebuild the economic and social world (but this could no longer be achieved by theorists alone) or attempt a patch-up job and rein in technique to allow the liberal game to continue, i.e., the tangle of laws and the study of economic actions and reactions in a vacuum.

This latter solution led us to the fight against technique. Nevertheless, this fight betrayed an upheaval in the old liberal economy, since the obsession was no longer to produce but to maintain prices high enough to allow businesses to turn in a profit. This limitation of technical means happened in two ways: at first, in a disorderly fashion due to the inability of manufacturers to sell their products, an inability that was sometimes sanctioned by government purchases and the systematic singling out of products.

On the other hand, and rapidly, it happened by more precise means: government orders, the diverting of techniques towards useless products. As for government orders, this was the system of bonuses for non-production, for the non-growth of factories, for the destruction of machines and their non-replacement, for the restriction of the productivity of new machines.

These are all solutions that we can find in abundance in more or less all countries. The only question seemed to be of maintaining high prices, even if the State had to pay to maintain them.

There was a question which seemed incidental but soon became the main one: technique and rationalization entailed the discharge of a large number of workers. The liberals did explain that this was only a crisis to be followed by readjustment. Readjustment by the creation of new factories, by the creation of alternative work, which is to say that industrial workers diminished in number, and auxiliary workers grew in the same proportion.

But precisely this growth in numbers was nothing other than the endless creation of useless work: advertising services, distribution services. Needed only because of competition and the saturation of products of technique, the market required an adaptation that was ever more difficult to achieve, caught between high production and high prices, an adaptation which itself entailed the employment of a constantly growing number of individuals to obtain it.

In the final analysis, and this is the key point of the extreme development of the liberal economy, jobs and unproductive expenses multiplied. However, this multiplication did not manage to employ all discharged laborers. Unemployment resulted. After the abandonment of recent techniques, the abandonment of human workforces. Having reached this point, the liberal era, to attain some order, could only call for a stable organization which would check these consequences as much as possible.

Command economy, organized capitalism, whatever it is called, it is still, at a given moment, the very restriction that liberals allowed for from the beginning, of free competition and of laissez-faire, in the name of order and the common good.

Besides, this organized capitalism did not only belong to liberalism in theory, but also in fact to the whole American liberal idea. The point was to build a new rational order of production, eliminating the misfortunes, the destitution, and the discord of the old capitalism, without abandoning the old liberalism, but by introducing new elements into it.

Now the epitome of this modern liberalism was Fordism, the ideal circle of raising salaries by raising profits and raising profits by raising salaries. The eternal faith in this freedom which, once better reassembled and directed, must of necessity realize a brave new world.

The play of liberalism was not interrupted in capitalism organized on these bases. And we have effectively stayed in the line of national liberalism, foreseen by the great liberals, a restricted and controlled economy. The facts are known. In all countries, production controls, distribution bodies, etc., have multiplied.

his abandonment of the immediate principles of liberalism was accepted by liberals, since it was a matter of a readjustment. The great principles, faith in the automatic arrangement of a mechanical world, were not abandoned. But through this stage of command economy (a stage inevitably brought about by liberalism, as we have seen), we see fascism itself appear.

For it is now enough that these measures be stabilized, that the rules complement each other and become coordinated. Soon we see an edifice that the State controls more or less completely, and which seems to be a fascist State. And so, we see here one of the first aspects of this continuity: the influence of technique on the liberal economy.

The second aspect, narrower and more specific, is no less important since it also leads to the fascist political state.

It is fitting firstly to posit that the trade union is a necessary product of liberalism. By the simple play of economic forces, the labor union tends to form. For liberalism assumes economic forces that are completely separated from their material contingencies. When liberalism speaks of free agreement between the worker and the entrepreneur, it assumes equality between them. This having turned out to be false, to safeguard this equality, it was necessary to allow the weak to unite against the strong, so that the trade union appeared as a necessity.

But since we are in a regime of freedom, trade unions are very many and defend very specific interests, their decisions are only valid for their members. They are, as it were, within the liberal game as a more complete but unique piece, exactly like the owner and the entrepreneur. The equilibrium is supposed to take place on its own here again, between the entrepreneur and the trade union.

From this situation, a double process would develop, leading straight to fascist corporatism. This process comes first from the will to power of the trade unions, then from the agreements between trade unions and owners. For trade unions are looking for a bigger mass. This is

obtained by the merger of small trade unions, but it is elementary to observe that the larger a trade union is, the less active it is.

The reasons for this are many. I see two main ones: first of all, the more the trade union grows, the more it encompasses different interests which, being less and less precise, are less and less urgent, and are slower to drive it to act. On the other hand, the State takes the big trade unions into account, includes them in its calculations, binds them to itself with favors, and then a certain bourgeois wisdom leads the trade unions to grow weaker in their action.

In any case, once the trade union reaches a certain size, it is nothing more than an element of the economy, but not the moving element that constantly reacted to this economic force as a counterweight. It has become a stable element, with predictable reactions, which subsequently can be used whenever the State, in its goal of economic readjustment, decides to use it.

The State will be able to use trade unions all the more easily as it will have bound them even more to its form. In addition to the trade unions' desire for power, the permanent agreements between trade unions and owners accelerate this evolution. The most perfect model of this was that of the company unions in America. Due to the division and rationalization of work, trades multiplied, and unions were born in great numbers because they were trade-based.

Then groups of trade unions were created, under the bosses' influence, which united all the trade unions of one area of production with groups of bosses as governing bodies. This was a recovery of direct control of the trade unions, in the guise of giving them more power and abolishing the class struggle. But this centralization obviously offered a framework that was ready-made for the demands of organized capitalism.

With the State intervening to replace the bosses in their work of controlling the trade unions, intervening all the more easily since the trade unions were more powerful, all that was left to do was to carry out a relatively easy substitution. In most cases, this substitution was made with the consent of the bosses themselves and sometimes with that of the trade unions. The latter then withdrew into their trade and declared, as in Germany, that except for the areas of salary and the organization of work, they were ready to enter into collaboration with the State. They gave up on any influence on government policies and thought they would find an ease of their operation in State control (Leipart).

In fact, it must not be obscured that the whole system of corporatism, once it is stripped of misleading words, is nothing other than trade unionism crystallized in favor of bosses and the State. It meant a much more rigorous control of the person of the worker by means of the bodies that were initially meant to give him more freedom. The Italian corporation is nothing other than these company unions that Roosevelt was fighting. But the terminology changes. The words "bosses" and "workers" are suppressed, replaced with "directors" and "executives" or "leaders" and "followers."

It was claimed that in doing so the opposition between classes was suppressed. In suppressing the freedom of profit to replace it with professional control, it was claimed that profit itself was suppressed. The whole thing was covered up by formulas—for instance, that, thanks to the corporation, all men have the same civic right in national life. Incidentally, at the same time as this hardening of the framework of the worker's life, we see the birth of a legalization of big monopolies and trusts under direct control of the State. It hardly needs to be insisted that this is the inevitable counterpart of this hardening. In short, from the economic standpoint, we see two branches of liberalism lose their internal strength to grow to become the objects of an external force and give birth by an inevitable process to a different economy, a command economy within the framework of corporatism.

This is none other than the fascist economy. It is not in theories that this evolution was born. Mussolini, before 1922, had not thought of anything specific on this topic. What is worse still is that, in fact, the corporations correspond well to the old trade unions, and not at all to the corporations as described by the party's philosophers and instituted by the jurists. There was only one corporation instituted according to juridical rules: the show business corporation in 1934. The law on corporations only goes back to 1934.

Fascism, here again, appears as a simple modification of a state of affairs resulting from liberalism, but which was already nothing more than liberalism itself. On the political level, the process is identical. Liberalism thought that State intervention in politics should be reduced to a minimum. The State should intervene only to maintain theoretical liberties and to protect the individual within the limits of the common good, thanks to the army and the police. The only rule to follow resided in the notion of public order. But it was soon realized that this maximum of theoretical liberty led to a maximum of oppression of certain individuals by others. One was led, in the name of liberalism, to accept State intervention to restrict the oppression of some. And this was not anti-liberal.

On the contrary, the interest of the individual called for protection of the individual. But on this point, liberalism parted ways with individualism. For by renouncing the certainty of a pre-established economy that was to be realized by a maximum of freedom, liberals began to have social concerns. From the political point of view, this social liberalism is represented by social democracy. The latter manifests, in a state of mind which is peculiar to it, a mere development of liberal evolution. There is neither an abandonment of goals, nor an abandonment of liberalism, but the certainty that the State personifies general interests. Instead of admitting that particular interests coincide with the general interest, it is admitted that the latter should be defended by the State in the interest of individuals and their freedom.

Additionally, the State will enter the play of private interests to make it more precise and more equal. But this stage of social democracy is already a preparatory stage of fascism. In this social movement, the vague fear of Revolution plays as well. A reformism on economic and political bases was thus created. Everything that you grant to the workers will be so much less in revolutionary programs. Now, this fear of revolution which drove liberalism down the path of social democracy is indeed precisely a liberal fact. One postpones the Revolution less because

it is going to change something than because it will destroy the equilibrium which one has struggled to obtain, and above all, because by taking sides it will substitute a bias for liberalism's craving for objectivity.

How did social democracy announce fascism? With two signs: by the creation of new middle classes and by the dominant role in organization which it attributes to the State. Social liberalism leads to the creation, alongside the petty bourgeoisie deriving from the revolution (civil servants and rentiers) of a class of rich and comfortable workers. This is the American ideal. It is also the Bernsteinian reformism which contradicted Marxist theory, not on the fact of the creation of the proletariat, but on the fact that this new proletariat, while retaining exactly the same characteristics as the old one, could no longer be revolutionary because it lacked the desire to be independent.

The old petty bourgeoisie was replaced by this new class made up exclusively of subordinates, dependent on the higher classes, but whose dependence is voluntary and accepted because it offers material advantages which it would not have otherwise. This may well be, incidentally, the most serious failure that socialism could suffer. This class could not be directly reached by fascism, because it could hardly be reached by this particular ideal of fascism, suppression of freedom, for instance. But if fascism initially relies above all on the bourgeoisie, it has the means to reach this new middle class by using, in its turn, the methods of social democracy. The latter become a method of rule which comes to conquer the mass of well-off workers.

Furthermore, and on the psychological plane, it is certain that most of the myths of fascism easily affect this class, which after all brings about by its very creation a certain harmful spirit—cheap adventure, anonymous social duties, absence of guiding thought, of action, etc. If it is thus not an active element of the fascist fact, it is at least a passive element, ready to submit. On the other hand, I have said of social liberalism that it gave an enormous task of organization to the State. But this mission is imprecise. We went from a set of rules that were pretty clear—the State in the face of war, or the issuance of banknotes—to a forced extension, because the economy escaped man taken in isolation.

The State will, on the one hand, be in charge of organizing as well as it can interests which are too complicated to adapt to each other of their own accord. On the other hand (and this is only the complement of what has just been said), it will take charge of developing all national resources (incidentally, this is more or less what the liberals were saying when they entrusted the State with functions that private citizens could not fulfill).

As a result, it is actually very difficult to discern a limit where fascism begins, where the State is organized. To coordinate production and develop national resources, the State will be led to take increasingly strict measures as the economic questions become more and more complex. The theory of State regulation of private industry, collaboration of classes in the corporative State—this is only the normal conclusion of liberal premises, once monopolies and State intervention are allowed. But on the other hand, this State can only perform its task with the

complete submission of individuals. Faith in the State is necessary due to the State's economic development.

The State becomes the absolute goal because it is the complete distributor. The "State above classes"—in the non-fascist state, this is called the "fatherland above parties" (Doumergue).⁴⁶ Once it is well catalogued and well accepted, we could substitute for the notion of the State that of the Fatherland and let out a great cry, invoking Hegel!

It would be rather curious to study the simultaneous birth of the nation and of liberalism. The fact of the nation had been taken into consideration before, but it does not seem that it entered into reality, as the expression of a whole. I obviously do not mean that the idea of the Nation produced liberalism, but I find this phenomenon strange enough to draw attention to it. For the nation assumed on the one hand an economy complex enough to be closed upon itself, and on the other, a certain mystique of the national which represented a superior value, the only admissible civilization.

Now, it is the complex economy which will entail liberal expansion by the desire to bring to the maximum the group's resources and to develop them for the group. On the other hand, the idea of superior civilization is also, appearances to the contrary, a liberal idea. One must not forget that liberal civilization assumes that evolution stops at a kind of optimum conducive to the development of production and of the individual. One need then only assume a withdrawal of the nation into itself and the legalization of this belief in the superiority of the nation over others. But we must go further. I am going to enter into a realm of more general politics.

For currently, whether a State is authoritarian and fascist or non-authoritarian and "liberal," I hold that this may have some abstract, juridical, etc. importance, to please the professors of public law. But in practice, in the circumstances that we have described, this has only relative importance. The centralizing liberal State and the fascist State are following the same technique. The trends of pure politics are no longer relevant because brutal facts, from which we can try to distance ourselves without success, impose certain forms of economy, certain forms of propaganda, and even certain forms of life.

Principles change, to be sure, and the German civil code will be based on new principles, but Krupp will remain at the head of a steel cartel because the steel cartel alone allows cheap enough sales, and steel exports competing with foreign steel enable the maintenance of a favorable balance of trade.⁴⁸ This favorable balance of trade enables the maintenance of the mark's value, which allows rearmament and well-organized propaganda, etc. I could multiply causal sequences of this kind. All governments are in the same position. Liberals had no choice but to recognize that, as economics now leads the way, principled politics follows. Fascism recognizes this as well but makes pronouncements and posits principles to justify this admission.

Saint Louis could give Guyenne back to the English but we cannot give Cameroon back to the Germans because there are land grant companies, shipping companies, insurance companies,

and railway companies that would have to be reimbursed or bought back.⁴⁹ Mussolini, for having neglected these technical rules a little too much, is on the brink of bankruptcy (barring the intervention of foreign money). And this equalization of all forms of government before these necessities seems rather typical of our era. We can no longer imagine a government which would neglect the press. This means of myth creation is quite evidently the very means of government but it imposes its type of government, abstract, ideal and uncontrollable, without which its role would no longer be necessary.

A government that would fail to employ it would be at the mercy of a campaign led from outside, precisely from that point where control and the concrete act of knowledge cease. We thus see the formulas of politics lose their meaning and turn into dead beetle carapaces, apparently intact but now holding substances of another nature, inert sand, minute, necessary, and innumerable technical achievements.

The Passage from Liberal to Fascist Society Finally, we must see how the passage from liberal society to fascist society takes place. To be complete, this would entail a preliminary study of the private juridical rules of these societies. Then we would have to consider society as a group of people ruled by certain institutions and, finally, to follow the evolution of these institutions and discern the physiognomy of the group in the one case and the other. I will only deal with this last point, namely, the social group aspect.

On the juridical problem, I will only make two remarks. The first one has to do with property. It could be just a riddle. Here is a text: In the (corporate) State, private property is respected. There is no expropriation without indemnity. The State nevertheless retains the right to limit and direct the use of the means of production and to intervene in the distribution plan according to the public interest. It does not have the objective of seizing the means of production, any more than in any capitalist country.

Private property must remain the rule, and State property, the exception. Individual initiative is not replaced by State intervention. But the State retains the right to substitute for private initiative each time that this is necessary, to prevent it from developing in directions which would be harmful to public interest, and to direct it to obtain maximum benefit for the whole community. ⁵⁰ What a beautiful liberal harmony reminiscent of Adam Smith—a community of interests between property-owners and the community, even an identification of both interests under the paternal eye of a State that is only responsible for a work of direction and substitution, the liberal meaning of property. And yet these lines are taken from *The Economic Foundations of Fascism* by Einzig.

Not much has changed in the new system and the old juridical notions are perpetuated. The same goes for contracts, this second column of liberal legalism. We now see the notion of the autonomy of the will, which was all the rage, taken up by fascism. The contract is nothing but the expression of the individual within the framework of law. Now fascism too is, on a larger scale and more totally, nothing but this same expression of the individual within this framework of the State and of law.

The will remains the creator of law based on laws, and all the old liberal theories can reappear on this base alone. That is why I do not give much credence to the juridical transformations of fascism. It may make mass special laws against the Jews and others, proclaim that it is only based on the morality peculiar to its people, or refuse equality as a foundation of law and prefer the force which is realized within certain limits to some amorphous justice, but in spite of all this, Fascist law changes nothing. Property and the autonomy of the will are much more powerful realities than these formulas, and we find them in this allegedly new law. I will not dwell on this. The most difficult point is the study of the social forms of our two societies. We cannot study them in detail here.

Let us consider the different connections which individuals maintain in and through a social whole, under the liberal form and under the fascist form. Let us recall that two kinds of solidarity need to be distinguished (with Durkheim, I take the distinction under its most primitive form): a mechanical solidarity and an organic solidarity. In mechanical solidarity, the individual is coagulated to society, directly, with identical prejudices. He almost completely alienates his personality in favor of society. But the word "alienate" seems false because it is not by a voluntary act, but by his very nature that the individual thus finds himself subject to society. It is not a question of a choice but of a state.

At this moment, the individual is, as it were, unaware of himself. He is part of a collective consciousness of which he is but a momentary expression. The collective consciousness thus plays a double role in relation to the individual conscience. On the one hand, it plays the role of a kind of indisputable and transcendent natural law which completely dominates individuals, for whom it is a kind of untouchable truth.

On the other hand, it totally integrates the individual consciences and leaves them no freedom of action or of judgment. They cannot judge except via the criteria of the collective consciousness. In short, this mechanical solidarity is characterized by three features: first of all, by the fact that the individual is tied to the society as a whole, directly and without intermediaries; then by the fact that all his materials and methods of thought are provided to him by the collective consciousness; and finally, by the fact that the more this collective grows, the more the personalities of the members of the group diminish.

The most complete expression of this in society is penal law, as an expression of repressive law in general. Repressive sanctions are, in this form of society, the means to protect social resemblances. If there is repression, it is because there is a crime, and this crime consists essentially in a rupture of the mechanical equilibrium, of mechanical solidarity. Thus the more powerful this mechanical solidarity, the more it will tend to impose only one type of individual. Members of the society resemble each other more and more, and this resemblance is imposed under penalty of sanctions, with repressive law dominating all other forms of law.

Opposite this mechanical solidarity, we have organic solidarity. In this latter, individuals retain their personality, and organic solidarity is even intensified by the increase in individual

personality. It assumes a coming to consciousness of social necessity and a kind of voluntary act which would consist in the sacrifice of part of the person to society. But this assumes a much more nuanced, less general, and less abstract collective. Society can no longer be a whole, but it will be fractioned into numerous sub-groups in which individuals will find their good, their center.

On the other hand, with the individual thus keeping a kind of graduated autonomy, going from the complete autonomy of one part of his person to a complete adherence to society through adherence to beliefs of varying degrees of generality, one sees that the individual plays an important role because a considered adherence is constantly at stake. One can no longer speak of pre-existing collective beliefs. These are more or less conscious and are formed little by little as a creation of the will. They thus no longer appear as an abstract and superior element, but as immediate and concrete.

To better oppose this second solidarity to the first form of our three terms:

- 1.) the individual here is no longer directly tied to society as a whole but to its parts,
- 2.) collective beliefs are differentiated according to the functions that need to be fulfilled. There is a parallel strengthening of the personality and of organic solidarity, and
- 3.) finally, the model expression of this solidarity is to be found in restorative law, that is, the law which expresses an equilibrium between individuals taken as particular individuals, as in civic law, for example.

The model par excellence of restorative law is the contract. This restorative law is incidentally expressed either in a law of reality, which will be a relation to things (property law), or in a law of cooperation (commercial, administrative law, etc.). There is no necessary chronological succession from the first type to the second. Neither of the two is tied to a specific social type, for instance, the mechanical solidarity of an authoritarian society or the organic solidarity of a liberal society. But then there is no opposition between individualism (or rather, personalism) and universalism, as the fascisms would have it.

One cannot separate the individual from the whole social group and the evolution of this group. To have attempted this separation and to have wanted to consider the individual in himself, on the one hand, and the society in itself on the other, was tantamount, within an artificial ideology, to separating two necessary elements of a synthesis.

One lost sight at that point of the existence of this synthesis, and these detached elements were viewed as though they had a life of their own, identical to their real life. It was supposed that the individual taken in his pure state was identical to the individual immersed in society and the laws that were derived by reasoning about this isolated individual were thought to rightfully apply to the social individual. The same error, only in reverse, was happening with society. A society

without people, living by and for itself and which revealed laws of the social body without repercussions, it seemed, on the individuals composing it.

When fascism proclaimed the superiority of the social body and of the State, it was merely asserting more forcefully this separation that liberalism has prepared in favor of the individual. On the contrary, from the moment that the action and reaction of individuals and of the social body are viewed as being characteristic elements of sociability, the forms of sociability will depend on the modifications of these actions and reactions. Now, these modifications take place in time.

Onto the division of mechanical vs. organic solidarity is now grafted a division of the social body according to duration, where the mass can be distinguished from the group and from the abstract collective (von Wiese), with the mass being an essentially temporary unity, the group having a certain duration based on the impression that the members of the group can have of feeling bound to each other in a very concrete fashion either by a duty or by a goal to attain—and the abstract collective being, for its part, permanent, and based on a notion of mission of an ideological (and thus abstract) order; a notion common to all the participants and which they consider eternal.

Of these three notions, only one is necessary for my purposes: the notion of the mass. I will thus retain, aside from the division between organic solidarity and mechanical solidarity, the notion of mass which combines with it, insofar as it could represent one just as well as the other. In order for there to be a mass, three conditions have to be met: a group of people differing in condition, nature, etc., who entertain some representation of unity (though this unity need not be of a long-term necessary character); to be distinguished, consequently, from the crowd, or from the horde.

The meshing representation of the unity of all the individuals of the mass can have very different reasons: a common interest, an economic or social situation (e.g., a group of unemployed people), or a feeling caused by the outside world, either of satisfaction or of discontent (e.g., the crowds of February 6). We thus perceive that it is necessary to distinguish between abstract masses and concrete masses. Abstract masses are those which passively receive external influences or suggestions, which are identical for all. They are but a mass whose expression resides outwardly, in statistics, and inwardly, in the reaction that an individual within this mass can have to a phenomenon, a reaction that happens to be identical to that of any individual in this mass (e.g. the viewers of a film, the readers of a newspaper [Gurvitch]).

Their mass is indeed abstract, because they have no idea of the identity of their reactions, their role consisting in no longer being anything but a receptor which will in turn emit certain stimuli. Their representations will never be more than a coming to consciousness of this mass, and not a break with it. However, only this coming to consciousness would risk preventing the passage from abstract mass to concrete mass. For let us suppose that an individual experiences, in uninterrupted succession, the creation and destruction of participation in various masses (office,

cinema, café, newspaper, jazz). We will see gradually taking place the production of a complete integration of the individual in these successive masses.

A mechanical solidarity is born. Now suppose that such an individual receives a sufficiently strong stimulus within whatever given mass to proceed to exteriorization, and, for example, to action. Because he is in the same state as all the individuals who make up this very precise mass (like the reader of the daily news), all the individuals of this mass will respond identically to this stimulus. Even without an individual command, all the readers of *L'Action Française* will congregate at the Place de la Concorde on February 6.

Let us proceed with our suppositions. If all individuals belong to identical masses which take up their life entirely, if, consequently, they live in a state of abstract mechanical solidarity, and if these individuals receive the necessary stimulus, they all react in the same direction. But here, this will no longer be just the behavior of one evening, this will be a global exteriorization in their life itself. They will become the expression, no longer of a series of abstract masses, but of a series of actual, realized, concrete masses, which is exactly what is called fascism. And so we find ourselves back in the heart of our question: fascism appears, from the standpoint of forms of sociability, as a transformation of abstract masses into concrete masses within a mechanical solidarity. But this is, after all, the synthesis of all that I have said up to this point: liberalism and individualism prepare this transformation by a creation of abstract masses and by a constantly growing mechanical solidarity.

For it may well be said that all liberals were wrong in thinking that their doctrine led to increased individual self-awareness. Instead of seeing man, they saw stick-figure outlines of man, and their doctrines were based on these stickfigure outlines. The break in the frameworks that was attempted in the name of these outlines has only yielded a nearly pathological void. All the systems that the recognition of a sovereignty should have allowed to operate have disappeared. And the constitutional bodies that are collapsing due to liberal individualism now yield a brutal opposition between the individual and the sole sovereignty of the State. The sub-groups still resisting, like the family, are atrophied. Now, by virtue of liberalism, we are really in the presence of one of the features of a mechanical society. Instead of finding ourselves in a *civitas solis*, we find ourselves before a model of society which Durkheim assumed could only be found among Australians and Fuegians.

We have seen that the most developed, extreme function of a mechanical society is the repressive function. Now what is developing, instead of the repressive function, is a preventative function. In the name of common sense, in the name of the common good, in the name of common morality, a type of common man (*homo rationalis vulgaris*, as the *Petit Larousse* will one day call it) tends to be created. And we tend toward this both voluntarily and involuntarily: voluntarily by the creation of an internationalism of morality, of law, of civilization, of literature, of art which gives averages of morality, juridical statistics to determine the value of a legal rule, a priori-ism in civilization, all-purpose literature and utilitarian surrealism in art.

These notions are either too abstract or too elementary, obedient both to the oft-denounced scission between the real and thought, and to the belief in the superiority of large numbers. But they are pernicious notions in any case, because they become implanted in people's lives, and those who do not accept them are considered abnormal. The abnormal are to be identified and cared for in observation facilities, houses of correction, etc. A personal domain is left for them so long as this personal domain in no way changes their character, nor their life, but is limited to dreams, to the ideal, to the "mystical," to introspection, etc., to everything directed towards the inside, and never goes out.

Once this ideal man is created, its model will be spread on every occasion by the enormous means of persuasion at our disposal. A million men cannot be wrong, declares a shaving cream whose name I forget. They are accepted truths. Opening a newspaper is enough to breathe this air, a women's advice column or matrimonial personal ads. Liberalism has brought about a social amorphism which is probably without historical precedent. It has allowed the creation of these abstract masses of which I have just spoken, of this life in masses and solely in masses, where the life of man is wrapped within a series of overlapping circles which totally absorb the individual.

Café group and club group, sports group and occupational group. He takes on one character in one place, and another character in another milieu. He is no longer himself, he is essentially the social man, obtained by preventative means, the one from whom society no longer has anything to fear; on the contrary—he can only stabilize it, and this is certainly what will happen. In this neo-mechanical society, the shock that will bring about the appearance of concrete masses will be all the easier as the amorphism becomes more complete. And likewise, the notions of sacrifice and heroism will be all the more easily exalted as the individual loses a sense of his own value.

Fascism appears, from the social standpoint, as a better-arranged amorphism, more voluntary than the other, liberal one, but of the same nature, belonging to the same type of society. This type could be called inferior, even though it is rather difficult to pass a value judgement on social forms. It is a type of mass which will never attain the superior type of the group, since there is no genuine organic solidarity in this inchoate society; and still less that of the abstract collective, which assumes for everybody a personal and individual coming to consciousness of the mission that the group may have to fulfill. Of course, this can seem paradoxical after what I have said of the mass, which is an essentially temporary gathering, but we must not forget that the technical means at the disposal of governments allow them to keep crowds in this state of artificial and temporary union, as in a kind of icebox. There is a constant recreation of the mass by exterior means.

Fascism is thus the worthy son of liberalism. It keeps all the features of its father, but along with the features of its mother, technique. Liberal society was rolling along on its own and seemed balanced, when an element came up to trouble this balance, namely, technique. Liberal society was not made for it. It reacted, trying at first to integrate, then to stop technique. It could not

assimilate it because technique was in full progression, while society seemed fixed within bounds which it liked to think were unalterable.

The adjustments liberal society made to technique broke apart one after another. It then tried to master them, but for this, it had to use violent means, and above all it had to know the point to which things had come. Liberal society was incapable of this self-evaluation because its methods and its wishes were still too vague and uncoordinated. In the face of this need to take stock, in the face of the prevailing common mentality, only one reaction was called for: fascism.

Of course, the development of technique was merely its material condition, and we have already considered all the intellectual factors and all the spiritual resignations which were necessary to come to this point, and which liberalism had long been preparing. That is why, to play its role, fascism will have to be essentially demagogic, which, in fact, it is. It will have to take up and proclaim all the commonplaces of liberalism, reassemble all the juridical and intellectual creations of liberalism and raise them to the level of institutions.

It will have to present itself as the factor of reconciliation of all average individuals around an average individual who will represent them better than each of them. It is essentially a stabilizing element which, having found a situation, takes up all the elements of this situation, puts them in order, reclassifies them. It petrifies what was struggling and gives an exact account of what is done. It is a pause within a decadence. It is a period of disappearance of liberalism, but not at all because it has reacted against liberalism: because it arose in the decadence of liberalism to confirm this decadence and bring it to the knowledge of all.

We cannot see in fascism a mere suspension of the normal evolution of liberalism towards another form, perhaps wholly different. This ring which fascism has forged around the decaying values of liberalism is not made to be eternal. If we can have confidence in some power, it is in technique itself which has been the occasion of this ring, but which will also be the factor of its breaking. Technique has neither reasons nor any capability to stop.

To regain control over it, man would have to take a distance from it himself, and it is not fascism that will help him there. As for us, for now, we must watch it accomplish its work, and wait, for we are too small. De Tocqueville gave an admirable description of fascism when he wrote roughly one hundred years ago:

'Democratic societies which are not free may be rich, refined, ornate, even magnificent, and powerful in proportion to the weight of their homogeneous mass. They may develop private virtues, produce good family-men, honest merchants, respectable landowners . . . but there are things which such societies . . . can never produce, and these are great citizens, and, above all, a great people . . . (because) one's love for despotism is in exact proportion to one's contempt for one's country.'