

Harold Byron was already on his way to achieving a detachment which, when his state of mind changed (Lady Jersey's party is the convenient date, I believe) could be utilized in *Beppo* and *Don Juan* with entirely different effects. 'Childe Harold at a little distance stood', begins one of the stanzas in that poem, and it was that magnificent little distance between the word and its open-faced meaning that Byron managed to keep free in *Don Juan* for the insidious intention. And this was something the Carolines could do in the same way, but not the Augustans.

MARIUS BEWLEY.

THE MORAL BASIS OF POLITICAL CONFLICTS

I PROPOSE to enquire in this paper how far and in what sense the political conflicts of the present time involve a fundamental divergence in moral outlook. That there is such a divergence is widely held, though there is much difference of opinion about its precise nature. According to some the division is between those who attach ultimate value to the individual and those who attach ultimate value to the community. According to others the difference is between those who accept a universalist morality binding on all mankind and those who believe that moral rules are relative. Others again think that the difference is not about ultimate ends but that opposed views are held about the right relations between ends and means.

In approaching this question we have at the outset to face the view that moral differences, if they exist, are really irrelevant to the situation to-day. The forces engaged in the struggle for mastery are, it will be said, strictly amoral. No doubt both sides talk in moral terms and claim to be acting in defence of their rights. But this moral appeal is only made, so it is suggested, because it is psychologically useful, because it is recognized that people will not be ready for extreme sacrifices unless they are convinced that right is on their side. The moral appeal is thus used as a ruse for the multitude to hide the naked search for power.

This issue is certainly raised in an acute form in any attempt at interpreting totalitarian mentality, whether in the Nazi or Communist form. Was the Nazi movement the expression of a sheer lust for power, or was it rooted in a certain moral and historical outlook, in resentment felt by the Germans against the injustice to which they were supposed to have been subjected by the Allied and Associated Powers, in the belief in the ultimate superiority of German culture, a superiority so great that to secure its triumph the sacrifice of ordinary moral standards was justified? Or consider

the Communist case. Is the present conflict between the U.S.S.R. and the Western world rooted in ideological differences or is it merely a game of power politics? Is Russian diplomacy merely carrying on, in the new world setting, the old Czarist drive for expansion or is it in essence a desire to spread Communism? Is it, so to say, Russian expansionism or Communist universalism?

Put in this form the question hardly permits of an answer. It raises problems of historical causality which in the present state of sociological knowledge we have no adequate means of resolving. We do not know how to compare the strength of ideas with that of other social forces. Nor can we ascertain with any confidence what were the motives which impelled the leaders and the people they led in these terrifying mass movements. Some of the leaders, no doubt, were power maniacs, utterly devoid of moral sensibility; others were moral fanatics; others again are not perhaps themselves moral fanatics, but rather disillusioned, uncertain, incapable of resolute action and thus inclined to admire certainty in others and to be carried away by a sort of borrowed fanaticism, the fanaticism of the loyal follower. Of the masses who are led a similar analysis is no doubt possible. It remains true all the same that in all cases the moral appeal is thought necessary, if enthusiasm is to be inspired and a readiness for sacrifice and devotion to the cause to be inculcated and sustained. The moral factor is thus, to put it mildly, not negligible.

The case of the communists presents some new features. Here again there is no doubt of the importance attached to the moral appeal. Their writings abound in uncontrolled and savage moral condemnation; they are inspired by a relentless hatred of tyranny and injustice. Yet in theory 'scientific' socialism regards all morals as reflecting the class struggle and presumably subject to an ineluctable law of social development. 'Whoever', says Trotsky, 'does not care to return to Moses, Christ or Mohammed; whoever is not satisfied with an eclectic hotch-potch (*i.e.*, the ethical theories of the philosophers), must acknowledge that morality is a product of social development; that there is nothing immutable about it; that it serves social interests; that these interests are contradictory; that morality more than any other form of ideology has a class character'.¹ The morality of the bourgeois age is designed to inculcate submission to the powers that be; the morality of the proletariat is of the sort which is necessary for the revolution and while the struggle goes on there can be no supra class morality, whatever may be the case when classes have disappeared. In the interim 'morality serves politics'.

It is hard to say how far such doctrines can be taken seriously. Those who do not believe in ineluctable laws of social development will be equally sceptical of any law supposed to determine the changes which morals have undergone. It would be idle to pursue this further. From the practical point of view, that is to say, when

¹*Their Morals and Ours*, p. 13.

a question arises as to what is to be done, the so-called law of development turns out to be even less helpful than the despised Categorical Imperative. The point is well illustrated by the Trotsky-Stalin controversy. With some show of consistency Trotsky does not condemn the Stalin policy on moral grounds. 'Stalinist frame-ups are not, he says, 'a fruit of Bolshevik "amoralism"'; no, like all important events in history they are a product of the concrete social struggle, and the most perfidious and severest of all at that: the struggle of the new aristocracy against the masses that raised it to power' (p. 23). Stalinism is explained as a deviation from the true path of proletarian revolution. It is 'an immense bureaucratic reaction against the proletarian dictatorship in a backward and isolated country', a new Bonapartism with its own 'Thermidor'. It is the height of intellectual and moral obtuseness, we are told, to identify the reactionary police morality of Stalinism with the revolutionary morality of the Bolsheviks (p. 23). Trotsky, however, does not explain how this reactionary bureaucracy emerged out of the dictatorship of the proletariat established by the Communist party or how its emergence can be reconciled with the ineluctable law of social development. To describe it as reactionary can only mean that it is not in harmony with this law, or as Trotsky puts it, it is already condemned by history. This presumably would mean that it is destined to fail. But this Trotsky does not know and makes no attempt to show. In the long run he condemns Stalinism because in his view it is morally wrong, because 'it has regenerated the fetishism of power in forms that absolute monarchy dared not dream of' (p. 23). In other words Trotsky does not really decide on policy by asking who is going to win but rather by asking who ought to win. It follows that differences in moral outlook are not mere reflexes of class conflict but are also regarded as capable of providing guidance for the direction which class conflict ought to follow. Trotsky, like others who profess to despise morals, is a moralist *malgré lui*.

In short the moral factor must be reckoned with in any attempt at interpreting social change, though it may be impossible in the present stage of sociology to estimate its precise importance. It can be safely said that so far no one has succeeded in formulating any ineluctable laws of social development and that there is no reason to doubt the efficacy of the human will in bringing about social changes. This has an important bearing on the present conflict between the West and the U.S.S.R. What the Russians intend to do and by what considerations they are likely to be guided are thus questions of the greatest importance. The decision is not fore-ordained. There are no certain dynamic laws governing the expansion of empires. There is nothing which drives them inevitably to extend their zone of influence. They are guided by beliefs and the hopes and fears which these inspire. In the case of the U.S.S.R. the most plausible hypothesis is that, apart from the possible influence of some power maniacs, its counsellors are influenced by the belief that a conflict between them and the capitalist world

is, in accordance with Marxist doctrine, inevitable and that in the interest of self-defence it must have control over the neighbouring countries. This easily passes into the new policy of 'building socialism in one group of countries' replacing the earlier policy of 'building socialism in one country'. It is easy to see how in this way communist faith and the policy of expansion fuse so that it becomes difficult to distinguish between them. How far the fear of a Western attack is inspired by Communist doctrine of inevitable conflict and how far it is fed by the behaviour, actual or imputed, of the Western peoples is a question as difficult to answer as the question whether the expansionist tendency once in full swing will be satisfied with anything less than world domination. It is clear, however, that 'ideological' differences do count and to understand their precise nature is therefore a task which is not to be neglected.

II.

Here we are concerned with ideologies in so far as they affect differences in moral outlook. It is commonly held that the essential point about totalitarian morality is the denial of a universal moral law binding on all mankind and its replacement by a relativist view of morals, racial relativism in the case of National Socialism and class relativism in the case of the Communists.

Let us consider the Nazi position first. The difficulty here is that we can easily do the Nazis too much honour by ascribing to them a definite theory maintained with some consistency. There is no doubt that in their propaganda appeal was made to justice, reason, fairness. There is no doubt also that in the same breath all the commonly accepted standards of justice and reasonableness were treated with contempt and derision. If their views can be described as relativistic they have little in common with the philosophic forms of relativism; they are so extreme as to amount to moral nihilism. The case is frankly stated by Mussolini in a passage which I quote at some length:

'In Germany relativism is an extraordinary daring and destructive theoretical construction (perhaps Germany's philosophical revenge which may announce the military revenge). In Italy relativism is simply a fact. Fascism is a super-relativistic movement because it has never attempted to clothe its complicated and powerful mental attitude with a definite programme but has succeeded by following its ever changing individual intuition. Everything I have said and done in these last years is relativism by intuition. If relativism signifies the end of faith in science, the decay of that myth "science" conceived as the discovery of absolute truth, I can boast of having applied relativism to the analysis of socialism. If relativism signifies contempt for fixed categories and men who claim to be the bearers of an external objective truth . . . then there is nothing more relativistic than Fascist attitudes and activity . . . We Fascists have always

expressed our complete indifference towards all theories . . . We Fascists have had the courage to discard all traditional political theories, and we are aristocrats and democrats, revolutionaries and reactionaries, proletarians and anti-proletarians, pacifists and anti-pacifists. It is sufficient to have a single fixed point: the nation. The rest is obvious. From the fact that all ideologies are mere fictions, the modern relativist deduces that everybody is free to create for himself his own ideology and to attempt to carry it out with all possible energy'.

(*Diuturna*, Milano, 1924, pp. 374-7: *Relativismo e Fascismo*, quoted by Franz Neumann, *Begemoth*, p. 462).

This can only be called a theory if the rejection of all theory is entitled to be called a theory.

The German National Socialist views are not very different apart from the intrusion of the racial element and the pretentious and turgid language in which they are expressed. They are based on what appears to be a form of vitalistic intuitionism. According to this, impulse and will are more vital than thought. The fundamental categories of thought and, in particular, the sense of values, spring from the race. Moral principles are tied to the race and are only binding within it. There is no such thing as humanity but only different racial communities. The community is the ultimate end and must never be treated as a means. Moral principles are binding, but validity means here, as elsewhere, the acceptance by the mass of the discoveries made by the creative minds of the race. Ultimately, therefore, there is no criterion other than the intuitions the leaders (or leader) have of what is good for the racial community. It is easy to see to what uses such a theory, if theory it can be called, can be put. Not only is the *Volk* put above all humanity but only the intuition of the leader decides where the 'true' interests of the *Volk* lie. There is little to choose between this sort of thing and the frankly nihilistic intuitionism of Mussolini.²

Marxist morality is certainly not relativist in the sense of relying on individual emotion or intuition. On the contrary, it claims to be scientific, that is to say, to rely on an objective determination of social needs. It is presumed that were it possible to eliminate class bias and distortion, in other words, were it possible to bring a classless society into being, a universal morality binding on all would for the first time become ascertainable. In existing societies, on the other hand, morality is always class-bound. This is seen in the title of one of Trotsky's books from which I have quoted—*Their Morals and Ours*. 'Morality', he says, 'is a function of the class struggle; democratic morality corresponds to the epoch of liberal and progressive capitalism; the sharpening of the class struggle destroyed this morality; in its place came the morality of Fascism on one side, on the other the morality of the proletarian

²C. E. Kriek, *Völkisch-Politische Anthropologie*, 3 Bde. Leipzig, 1937.

revolution' (p. 16). There may be some highly general principles, but the working code of morals, whatever the philosophers may say, is not in fact based on a consideration of general human needs. People are in fact guided by the needs of their class. This applies also to the workers in the transitional period. Especially during a civil war general moral ties are broken and the demands of the class over-ride all other claims. '*Our* morality', says Lenin, 'is wholly subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. We deduce our morality from the facts and needs of the class struggle of the proletariat'. The ethics of the revolution is the ethics of war: 'it explodes into mid-air all moral ties between the hostile classes' (Trotsky, p. 14). 'Whoever accepts the end must accept the means; civil war with its wake of horror and crimes'. Of course violence and lies are bad, but this merely means that we must condemn the class society which generates them. 'A society without social contradictions will naturally be a society without lies and violence. However, there is no way of building a bridge to that society save by revolutionary, that is violent, means. The revolution itself is a product of class society and of necessity bears its traits. From the point of view of "eternal truth" revolution is of course anti-moral. But this merely means that idealist morality is counter-revolutionary, that is, in the service of the exploiters' (p. 25). Revolutionary morality thus inculcates, in Spencer's phrase, amity within and enmity without. Nothing is to be done which sets one part of the working classes against another, or which is likely to lower their morale. Against the rest of the world everything is justified which is required by revolutionary tactics and strategy. When the class struggle is over a universal morality will become possible. Thus Engels: 'A really human morality which transcends class antagonism and their legacies in thought becomes possible only at a stage of society which has not only overcome class antagonisms, but has even forgotten them in practical life'.³

The theory can be summed up in the following way:

1. The interests of the social classes are irreconcilably opposed. This is not an ethical proposition but is intended as a statement of fact.

2. The conflict thus generated produces a moral code appropriate to each stage. Thus, *e.g.*, in the period of expanding capitalism with the resulting prosperity there was a certain softening of the relations between the classes, and this was expressed in the norms of democracy with its emphasis on freedom, justice and humanity. In the period of what is called 'decaying' capitalism these break down and reveal their helplessness. They are replaced, as Trotsky says, by the ethics of Fascism and Revolutionary Socialism. The ethics of the latter is naturally one necessitated by revolutionary tactics. This again is a statement of what purports to be historical fact.

³*Anti-Duhring*, p. 109.

3. The relative ethics of the different periods can be examined not only from the point of view of their appropriateness to the conditions prevailing in each period, but also in the light of an ultimate ideal or end; for this ideal absolute validity is claimed. When we ask what this end is the answer is vague and in fact not very different from the answer given by bourgeois ethics. Marx tells us it is a mode of life in which the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all. Trotsky says: 'A means can be justified only by its end. But the end in its turn needs to be justified. From the Marxist point of view, which expresses the historical interests of the proletariat, the end is justified if it leads to increasing the power of man over nature and to the abolition of the power of man over man'. It is an open question whether this is an improvement on the Kantian formula: Always treat humanity in your own person and in others as an end and never as a means merely.

4. This ideal can only be reached by revolutionary methods, that is, by violence. The ethics appropriate in this phase is that which is dictated by revolutionary strategy and tactics. These cannot be judged by bourgeois moral codes. Since the means have to be justified by the end, it has to be assumed that violent revolution both *can* attain the end and that it is the *only method* by which it can be attained.

It will be seen that all these propositions, with the exception of the third, are statements of fact and not of ethics proper. It is open to question whether the interests of the social classes are irreconcilably in conflict in democratic societies; it is open to question whether historically the working code of morals is completely or even mainly class bound; it is open to question whether the ultimate end, that is, the full and free development of personality, the abolition of the power of man over man, *can* be attained by violence and by violence alone. It is in reference to this last question that the most serious divergence exists between liberal and communist thought. Trotsky himself stresses what he calls the dialectical interdependence of means and ends. It has to be shown that the means chosen are '*really* likely to lead to the liberation of mankind'. 'Precisely from this', he says, 'it follows that not all means are permissible. When we say that the end justifies the means then for us the conclusion follows that the great revolutionary end spurns those base means and ways which set one part of the working class against other parts, or attempt to make the masses happy without their participation; or lower the faith of the masses in themselves and their organization, replacing it by worship of the leaders' (p. 35). Are not these results, we must ask, certain to follow any revolution in which a minority seeks to impose its will on the rest of society by violent means?

If this analysis is on the right lines the ideological difference between the communists and their opponents does not concern ultimate moral ends. The communists cannot be described as believers in a moral relativity without qualification. On the

contrary, they pride themselves on their objective, *i.e.*, scientifically determinable, view of ethics. Anticipating the classless society they apply the ethics which would then prevail as a standard by which the relative ethics of the class-ridden societies can be judged and which, as they say, embodies the real interests of the proletariat. Nor do they in theory reject the value of individual personality; they claim, as socialists always have done, to aim at the liberation of mankind. Nor is their view of the relation between means and ends theoretically different from that which might well be held by moral philosophers who are not communists. For they realize that means and ends are interdependent, in other words, that the means adopted must be such as not to distort and corrupt the end aimed at. There is a moral difference, but this does not mean that the communists reject the fundamental principles of Western civilization. On the contrary what they suffer from is a moral fanaticism arising out of a loss of faith in the dilatory habits which they associate with the liberal spirit and out of despair at the terrible inertia of the masses. Thereafter the formidable apparatus of communist sociology comes into play. The bourgeoisie is represented as waging war with the working classes. The slogans of democracy are the weapons of the bourgeoisie. It has to be met by all the weapons of war available. For a time it may be necessary to play the democratic game, but in the end the masses cannot be brought to socialism through democratic methods. 'The path of socialist ideas', says Trotsky, 'which is visible through all deviations and even betrayals, foreshadows no other outcome but this: to throw democracy aside and replace it by the mechanism of the proletariat, at the moment when the latter is strong enough to carry out such a task'.⁴ The regime which is set up aims at the 'real interests of the labouring masses'. But these cannot be ascertained by the crude method of discovering their opinion. The business of the regime does not consist 'in statically reflecting a majority, but in dynamically creating it'.⁵ How this has worked out in the case of the Russian Revolution we know. It has resulted in the seizure of power by a party which is only a small fraction of the proletariat. Operating à la Blanqui, it has established a pitiless dictatorship and rules fanatically in accordance with its own ideology and will to power. Others can play a similar game. The Nazis learnt its techniques: disruption of ordinary democratic processes, seizure of power by terrorist methods, obsessional propaganda directed at telling 'the masses' what they ought to want, reliance on a series of crises designed to keep alive the mentality of war, the maintenance of a form of government appropriate to war. The Nazi regime has been destroyed, but the methods now pursued by the Soviet, whether inspired by a missionary spirit or by the needs of self-defence, everywhere put the democracies to the severest possible tests. In these circumstances the moral issues are obscured. The

⁴*Defence of Terrorism*, p. 40.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 44.

ultimate ends about which there may be little or no disagreement are forgotten. The means become all important and are pursued fanatically without any consideration of their relevance to the ends. What inspires this fanaticism is not a moral theory about ultimate ends but a sociological theory of the class struggle and the belief that a war between the communist states and the rest of the world is inevitable. This soon passes into the belief that the world is already at war. Ordinary moral standards then become inapplicable. 'The welfare of the Revolution; that is the supreme law'. The supra-class morality which is to provide the ultimate moral standard has no application. The operative moral code is that of war. Does this involve a conflict of ideologies between the communists and their opponents? Clearly the answer is 'yes'. Does the conflict involve a difference of moral outlook? The answer again must be 'yes' though the difference turns ultimately on a difference in the interpretation of the facts.

III.

Curiously enough justification for democracy has been sought by some writers in theories of moral relativity. Thus Kelsen has argued that the opposition between autocracy and democracy turns ultimately on our view of the nature of knowledge and especially of our theory of morality. Those who believe in the possibility of absolute knowledge will tend to autocratic forms of social organization; those who favour the positivistic view, or perhaps more correctly, those who accept a form of critical relativism, will tend towards democracy. In other words, since our views regarding the ends of social endeavour are only relative, we can only justify the use of coercion by the State when that coercion is agreed upon by the majority.⁶ A similar view was held by Radbruch⁷ who also argues that since all our value judgments are relative only the will of the majority should be decisive.

Whether this is logically consistent may be doubted, since it appears to raise at least one principle above the sphere of relative validity, namely, that where there is doubt, coercion ought not to be used. Be this as it may, the fact that such theories have been held throws serious doubt upon the opposite view which has recently attracted some attention that there is a special association between logical positivism or other forms of ethical relativity and fascism. The fact is that historically no regular association in either direction can be established. Auguste Comte certainly held a relativist theory of knowledge, but can hardly be called a liberal democrat. The Utilitarians, empiricists in their theory of knowledge, were not ethical relativists, but they were ardent defenders of the main principles of democracy. The originators of logical positivism in Vienna were certainly far from supporting fascism. It would appear

⁶Cf. *Allgemeine Staatslehre*, p. 370.

⁷*Rechtsphilosophie* (3rd ed. 1932), Vorwort, p. viii.

that with such very general designations as positivism, relativism, democracy, no fruitful analysis can be conducted. In applying ethical theories to the problems of political organization the important thing is not so much the formulation of ultimate ends as the discovery of mediating principles by the aid of which a link can be established between ultimate ends and the detail of life. The serious difficulties of morals are due in the main to ignorance of human nature and of the consequences of human inter-actions. It is easy for lofty principles to remain on a safe level of abstraction, or to be used, as they often have been, in justification of the *status quo*, or, as in the case of the revolutionaries, to justify whatever is thought to be tactically necessary. The growth of positive knowledge of human needs and potentiality is therefore an essential pre-requisite of advance in ethical thought. The believer in a rational ethic need have no fear of the positive spirit. The task of a rational ethic is to clarify our ideals and this involves the careful disentangling of the elements of fact from the elements of valuation proper which are generally intermixed in our moral judgments. The deeper our knowledge of the facts, the greater the chance of increased insight into the nature of values. Whatever positivism has to contribute in this direction is all to the good. What to my mind is unacceptable in the positivist view of morals is the assumption that we know what we want, that ends are just given and that the only question for investigation relates to the means needed in order to satisfy them. For this assumption there is no warrant in observation or in analytic introspection and it is not in harmony with what I take to be the main principle of positivism itself, namely, that knowledge must be based on observation.

Democracy cannot be based on moral indifference or moral scepticism. The ideas which gave it impetus are, first, the idea of freedom with its correlative notion of individual responsibility, and, secondly, the idea of equality which is the core of justice. It is sometimes said that liberalism is not committed to any particular conception of the content of the good,⁸ that, on the contrary, it is based on the contention that everyone knows best what his own good is and that the important thing is that the individual should be free to pursue whatever ends he chooses, provided he does not interfere with the like freedom of other persons to pursue their own ends in their own way. This Spencerian formula still has some vitality despite the devastating criticism to which it has been subjected. It owes this vitality to the fact that it emphasizes the point that coercion is *pro tanto* evil. But it is surely illusory to think that the problem of the relation between coercion and freedom can be resolved without considering the nature of the ends aimed at, their bearing on the means which have to be adopted and their effect upon the agents and others concerned. As years of controversy have shown, the problem is mainly one of the limits of

⁸F. Knight: *Freedom and Reform*, p. 52.

coercion, that is, of distinguishing between the kind of control that is necessary in order to secure the conditions under which ends having intrinsic value can be attained and the kind of control that is destructive of these values. It is a question of getting rid of coercion, direct and indirect, fatal to the realization of values, and of employing that kind of coercion which is indispensable for the attainment of those values. The problems involved concern both social philosophy and social science. It seems to me that on the purely ethical side the antinomies that worried the liberal thinkers of the nineteenth century have lost their sting. That liberty rests on constraint, that there is no real opposition between individual and social good may now be taken as sufficiently well established. Liberal thought has, I think, enriched the content of the idea of freedom by showing its relation to the intrinsic values of individual personality and by a deepened analysis of the relations between the individual and society. In all this there was nothing which would bring it into opposition with the main tenets of socialism, the inspiration of which was undoubtedly also the idea of freedom. But, as Hobhouse saw clearly,⁹ there are forms of socialism with which liberalism can have nothing to do, and, as he also saw, if there is such a thing as liberal socialism, it must fulfil two conditions. It must reflect the desires not of a handful of superior beings but of the masses of men, and it must make not for the suppression but for the free development of personality. Between this kind of socialism and present-day communism there is a deep cleavage. And it is a moral cleavage. For what counts in the communist ethics is not the ideal morality of the classless society in which 'the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all' but the relative morality of the class struggle which is the morality of enmity and war and in which the ordinary standards of morals are not only violated in practice but are openly derided in theory. This cleavage, in so far as it has a theoretical basis, is no doubt mainly due not to a divergence of view regarding ultimate values, but to a difference in the way in which the facts are interpreted. But in this, as in many other contexts, judgments of value and judgments of fact are confused, with the result that the ideals are corrupted and the facts distorted. Whether the struggle now raging is ultimately to be traced to moral causes is a problem which may well baffle enquiry but that the contest is embittered by a profound opposition of moral outlook is beyond doubt.

The control of group violence is the most urgent problem of our day. In particular, the association of war with revolution has now a significance far more terrifying than at any other time in history. The brutality of modern warfare with its mass deportations and the massacre of millions of the civilian population has deadened the power of moral appeal and has obliterated standards which formerly seemed self-evident. To the sufferers moral appeal comes as bitter mockery, to the ardent revolutionary as blatant hypocrisy.

⁹*Liberalism*, Chap. VIII.

It is no consolation to be reminded that the brutalities of the war were in a measure the product of the revolutionary tactics of the totalitarian regimes, whether communist or Nazi. The ruthlessness of the revolutionaries prepared the way for the ruthlessness of the wars and the amorality of war is reflected in the amorality of revolution. The blurring of the distinction between war and revolution has been further intensified by the experience of the resistance movements, whose tactics can be as readily used against the enemy within as against the aggressor without. The communist view that the ethics of the revolution is the ethics of enmity, therefore, presents a challenge which if not countered must end in the destruction of all forms of free government and liberal civilization.

Contrary to what one might be led to expect from communist writings, 'bourgeois' moral philosophers of varying political affiliation, have not denied that in certain circumstances there is moral justification for rebellion.¹⁰ They have not indeed found it possible to lay down any general principles for it, or to put it more frankly, they have not discovered any infallible method for avoiding civil war. They have, however, pointed to certain general considerations which those who resort to force must bear in mind. Firstly they must be satisfied that they have a reasonable chance of success; secondly, they must have exhausted all peaceful means of attaining their ends and, thirdly, they must be convinced that the evils they want to remove are worse than the risk of disorder and anarchy. These considerations emphasized by philosophers writing in an age of security and stability are not likely to restrain struggling minorities driven to desperate measures by prolonged frustration and disillusion. Nor will nice calculations of the probability of success deter those who, moved by the feeling that injustice is worse than death, set out 'to defy Power which seems omnipotent'. In reference to past revolutions who can say in retrospect whether any of them were worth the price and whether the price was necessary? In prospect the difficulty of weighing up the evils of resistance against the evils of the existing order are even greater, especially if the scale on which the comparison has now to be made is borne in mind. When Stalin was asked by a newspaper correspondent about the millions of peasants who died during the drive for collectivism he answered by drawing a comparison with the losses of the world war. 'Over seven-and-a-half million deaths for no purpose at all. Then you must acknowledge that our losses are small, because your war ended in chaos, while we are engaged in a work which will benefit the whole of humanity'.¹¹

These difficulties of comparison are not to be dismissed lightly. Yet they do not differ in kind, though they differ greatly in degree of complexity from the difficulties we have to meet in other

¹⁰Cf. Ritchie, *Natural Rights*, Chap. XI; T. H. Green, *Philosophical Works*, II, pp. 455 seq.; Sidgwick, *Elements of Politics*, p. 619 seq.

¹¹Quoted in *Scientific Man versus Power Politics*, by H. J. Morgenthau, p. 182.

important moral decisions. The principles may be sound enough, but in applying them to complex issues we are hindered by our ignorance of the facts and the probable consequences of the policies open to us. This applies to revolution as it applies to war. Theoretically we must admit, I take it, that from a moral point of view, there may be just rebellions as there may be just wars. In most democratic states, of course, there is a much greater chance of settling internal conflicts by peaceful methods than there is in the case of conflicts between states. Yet under modern conditions war and revolution have become so entangled that a failure to restrain the one must result in a failure to restrain the other. If the ethics of enmity are allowed to guide the relations between states they will also dominate the relations between groups within states. In both cases morality to be effective must cease to be group morality and reach out towards a morality binding on all persons in a world community.

MORRIS GINSBERG.

CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITORS OF *Scrutiny*.

Clearly education ought not to become a Bantock-Ford monopoly in *Scrutiny*; it is time the caste were changed. For this reason I decided in advance not to reply to Mr. Bantock's rejoinder. But for three reasons I now feel compelled to write after all, though as briefly as possible.

First, concerning the anecdote about a Dartington pupil, I want to offer my sincere apologies to Mr. O'Malley for introducing him quite gratuitously into the discussion, and for telling the story inaccurately into the bargain. Moreover, I am particularly sorry that my manner of telling the story gave Mr. Bantock the opening which he took—though I think it was very wrong of him, for all his apology, to take it at Mr. O'Malley's expense. For if my 'expression [was] so slipshod' that Mr. Bantock encountered 'some difficulty in discovering what precisely happened', then surely he had no right to deduce, out of my tangled verbiage, that Mr. O'Malley's educational practice is 'inadequate'. At any rate, Mr. O'Malley has since written:

'Two anecdotes seem to have been telescoped. One had the moral that distinguished parents have great difficulty in accepting the fact that genius is not automatically transmitted. The other was more relevant. It concerned a child on whom the right literary views had been most successfully "imposed". His self-righteous condemnation of the trivial reading-matter of some of his friends betrayed a secret curiosity, even fascination. I persuaded him to sample what he condemned with such pleasure. For a while