

Univeristat Rovira i Virgili

In Defence of Democracy

Antoni Rovira i Virgili



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Publicacions de la Universitat Rovira i Virgili:
Av. Catalunya, 35 - 43002 Tarragona
Tel. 977 558 474
www.publicacionsurv.cat
publicacions@urv.cat

Arola Editors:
Polígon Francolí, parcel·la 3, nau 5 - 43006 Tarragona
Tel. 977 553 707 - Fax 902 877 365
arola@arolaeditors.com

Gràfiques Arrels:
Polígon Francolí, parcel·la 3, nau 5 - 43006 Tarragona
Tel. 977 547 611 - Fax 902 877 365
arrels@grafiquesarrels.com

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Antoni Rovira i Virgili



Tarragona, 2012

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Preface

The publication of an English version of Antoni Rovira i Virgili's *Defensa de la Demoocràcia* is one of the many ways our university is commemorating its twentieth anniversary. With this translation we wish to make the intellectual message and values which Rovira i Virgili left to future generations more widely known, in the conviction that his thought continues to offer worthwhile reflections on the continuing transformation of contemporary society. There are many other, equally important, texts by Rovira i Virgili we could have chosen. However, this particular book, based on a collection of Rovira i Virgili's writings published in 1930 and republished for the first time since then, in 2010, by the URV and *Memorial Democràtic*, has become firmly established among the experts both for its quality and its ability to capture the interest of a broad and varied readership. By offering an English edition of a book by the person from whom our university takes its name, we also hope to contribute to its growing international prestige, by identifying the URV with Rovira i Virgili's message of liberty and respect for the individual and the collective. We believe this message to be universal and especially relevant and necessary in today's world, and it is one which lies at the core of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili.

FRANCESC XAVIER GRAU
RECTOR

Presentation by Miquel Caminal¹

There is a dream found the world over: the dream of democracy. At the close of the twentieth century democracy was in the ascendant. But, looking back, Nazi totalitarianism, dictatorships of all colours and ideologies, wars between nations and empires that culminated tragically in the “Thirty Years’ War” of the twentieth century (1914-1945) prove once again that the only hope for peace is democracy.

The twenty-first century faces the challenge of making democracy the rule rather than the exception around the world. The lesson of the twentieth century is conclusive; whether civil, military, religious or monarchic, autocracies are always the greater evil. They are the worst form of government, as they hold society at large in a state of permanent immaturity. Achieving peace through fear is war by another name. But democracy is possible and it has now taken root in many countries throughout the world. Nowadays, even though over half of the almost two hundred states in existence are still authoritarian or false democracies, democracy is the international yardstick, and more and more governments are being legitimated by free, democratic elections.

Yet we must not be so naïve as to think that democracies are irreversible. Just as it is hard to achieve democracy, it is easy to adulterate or destroy it. The past and the present show how conflicts inherent in any society can weaken democratic bonds. Economic and social inequality, discrimination by gender, race or any other condition, all cause conflict and may give rise to intolerance and authoritarian imposition which can put an end to a whole political system. Democracy does not in itself solve conflicts, but it provides the essential framework and the conditions for resolving them in a fair and peaceful way.

¹ Translator's note: this is a translation of the presentation published originally in the 2010 edition by Pòrtic Edicions, Memorial Democràtic and the URV.

Democracy is government by debate, and is based on people's freedom and human rights. It is the instrument by which citizens are called upon to play their part in public affairs, and to participate in debate as a means of resolving social conflict. In this way, they are involved in choosing the most appropriate solutions, either directly or through representatives legitimated by free and plural elections.

Be that as it may, democracy is principally a *process*, a permanent objective, which can always be taken further. Societies change; nothing is certain or unchangeable. Therefore, democratic politics is the art of knowing how to find the best, fairest answers to social change and conflict, by means of a democratic dispute and deliberation that always sets violence and unilateral impositions to one side. In this process it should not be forgotten that there is no liberty without justice, and that a free democracy implies promoting ever greater equality. Republican values such as liberty, equality and fraternity are a reference, a guiding star for a process that is not linear and which has often been threatened, but one which has a clear aim: more freedom, more equality, more fraternity.

As Montserrat Roig said, democracy is an attitude to life. It must serve as a school for citizens that does not limit itself to politics but which begins on a personal level, at the same time as individuals use their freedom to enter into social relations. A democracy that is reduced to politics always runs the risk that it will become diminished or devalued, if it is not allowed to flourish in the fields of economics, culture, communication and all types of social relations.

The more civilized we become, the more chance there is of promoting a culture of democracy, although this is not always the case. Technologically advanced societies have the most extraordinary means at their disposal to achieve a fuller democracy. But democracy can also be destroyed if these means fall into the hands of totalitarians, or if a society suffers profound and lasting inequality and unjust economic domination by certain sectors. This is because barbaric behaviour and civilised society are not necessarily incompatible. Nonetheless, democratic culture and memory must always strive to outlaw oppression and violence as means for resolving conflict.

The present volume is the first in a new collection by Memorial Democràtic entitled *Debat Democràtic*. The series aims to stimulate reflection and dialogue on the subject of democracy. Our intention is to publish books which encourage democratic debate and strengthen our convictions on the questions of human rights and democratic values. We cannot imagine a better beginning to this series than Rovira i Virgili's book, *In Defence of Democracy*, which we are re-editing in conjunction with the Universitat Rovira i Virgili and Pòrtic Editions, with a prologue by Anna Sallés. We trust it will prove attractive to readers for both its quality and topicality.

As Rovira i Virgili says, only democracy can cure its own defects. He defends both the word and the concept of 'democracy' above all others. When other political principles are put before democracy, their proclaimed objectives soon turn out to be fallacies, whether they are based on economic liberalism or socialism.² For many centuries democracy has not enjoyed great prestige, and it will only be made possible if the utmost respect is given to human rights and citizenship: "Anyone of any class, condition or profession is a citizen".³ In other words, everyone, men and women, enjoy public rights and liberties, and must be able to intervene in public affairs, if such is their wish.

Rovira i Virgili's book was first published 80 years ago by the Valentí Mirall Foundation. Since then it has not been reprinted – until now – and it has lost none of its relevance. Its author shows a deep understanding not only of the period in which he lived, but also of the philosophical and political theory of the age. His intelligence and foresight is worthy of note, as he comes to the defence of democracy and democratic values in a historical context marked by the warring elements of revolution and counterrevolution, socialism and fascism. Looking back over the twentieth century, the liberal, democratic and republican convictions espoused by this Catalan historian, intellectual and politician have proven to be the driving force behind the freer, more equitable societies of today. When Rovira i Virgili was writing the articles that make up the present volume, Mussolini had already been in power for several years in Italy, the USSR was heading towards a totalitarian state and Hitler seemed to have a real chance of taking power in Germany.

A book which covers so many aspects of political life invites discussion and, naturally enough, one is not always in agreement with its author. It is, however, convincing in its final aim: that of expressing a commitment to liberty and democracy. Rovira i Virgili makes this very clear, in one of the final essays, "Our Democracy", in which he writes, "If the old forms of democracy are our tradition, its modern forms are the laws that govern our life and the way in which we express faith in our nation."⁴ The freedom of people and nations and their self-determination are a fundamental expression of democracy. This is the national and world vision of democracy, "the laws that govern our life", which Rovira i Virgili imagines for a globalized tomorrow, from a present time that was increasingly intransigent and oppressive for people and nations.

Rovira i Virgili's tomorrow is our present, and if we compare it to the dictatorships of the past we have reasons to feel optimistic. But he also warns us of the intransigence, intolerance and authoritarianism that so easily emerge in times of social

² As a complement to the theses defended in Rovira i Virgili's book, his correspondence with Amadeu Hurtado (1947-1949) is of particular interest. See the letters published in *Recerques*, n° 7, p.147-186. Curial, Barcelona, 1978.

³ See "Citizenship and Profession".

⁴ See "Our Democracy".

crisis, when people are disillusioned or disaffected with politics. This new collection aims to encourage debate and discussion on the issues of human rights and democracy. For this reason, *In Defence of Democracy* could not be a better opening title. There are only a few copies of this book remaining, and one of them, belonging to my friend, the professor and bibliophile, Lluís Argemí d'Abadal, served as the original for this new edition.

The second volume will be a collection of texts by Walter Benjamin, selected by Jordi Llovet. Other volumes will follow, all of which aim to spread democratic culture and memory as essential values, as the life force which ensures the future of democracy.

MIQUEL CAMINAL I BADIA
Director of *Memorial Democràtic*

Presentation by Francesc Xavier Grau¹

Congratulations are due all around for this new series, Debat Democràtic, under the auspices of Memorial Democràtic of the Catalan government (the Generalitat). And we should feel particularly satisfied that the Universitat Rovira i Virgili has helped to make it possible to begin the series with Antoni Rovira i Virgili's *In Defence of Democracy*, in a new edition by Anna Sallés.

When the parliament of Catalonia approved the creation of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili in December 1991, it stated specifically that “the name of the university wishes to honour the memory of the illustrious Catalan, Antoni Rovira i Virgili, writer, historian and politician, one of the most important theorists and promoters of the national cause of Catalonia, former president of the parliament of Catalonia, and an example of public spiritedness, hard work and esteem for the values of our people.”

From its title onwards, *In Defence of Democracy* gives ample testimony to the thoughts of the man who gave his name to the university of which I have the honour to be the rector. This new edition is a special cause for satisfaction because the book is a synthesis of the values brought together in the URV's own statutes, article 4 of which states that “The University will be governed by principles of autonomy, liberty, democracy, justice, equality, non-discrimination, independence and plurality.” As a public institution dedicated to higher education and research, through teaching, study and scientific investigation, our university aims to pursue the same democratic ideals that Rovira i Virgili defended with such conviction. In the language of the twenty-first century, our aim is to democratize access to higher education for men and women, independent of their social background.

¹ Translator's note: this is a translation of the presentation published originally in the 2010 edition by Pòrtic Editions, Memorial Democràtic and the URV.

Born in Tarragona, Antoni Rovira i Virgili soon made a name for himself as a journalist and theoretician. His articles and books quickly established his reputation in the world of Catalan culture, and he became one of the leading proponents of Catalanist liberal and democratic ideology and the main authority on the international politics of the First World War. After finishing his degree in Law, a profession which he never practised, he continued to publish on a range of subjects, always with the idea of bringing the different strands together into a coherent political theory of democratic Catalanism. As a member of the parliament of Catalonia, after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and the defeat of the Republic he went into exile in Montpellier and later Perpignan. After Lluís Companys was executed, Josep Irla took on the presidency of the Generalitat, and Rovira i Virgili the presidency of the parliament. As president of the Generalitat's Advisory Council, he formed part of the only Generalitat government in exile (1945-1948). Despite the difficulties Europe was suffering, at no time did he abandon his desire to teach people to be public spirited and to create a body of work that would serve as a guide to both democracy and Catalanist aspirations.

As a writer and politician he always defended Catalonia, democracy and federal ideas, concepts that come together in his idea of nationhood. He wrote that "every nationality has the right to constitute an independent, autonomous state," and "theoretically and historically there can be liberalism without democracy and democracy without liberalism," although they tend to go together. Rovira's reputation as a commentator and the literary quality of his prose, which is clear, direct and unmistakeable, were widely recognised, even by those of very different ideologies.

His theory of nation is to be found in *Nacionalisme i federalisme* (1917), and a student of his work, Isidre Molas, claimed that for Rovira Catalanism does not reach its peak in Prat de la Riba. Rather, Molas argues that there are both conservative and liberal-democratic elements that can be traced back to the federalism of Pi i Maragall, who was always a fundamental point of reference for Rovira i Virgili, when it came to doctrine, not only because of their common political origins but also because Rovira saw himself as Pi i Maragall's definitive heir. His entire work, like Pi's, is based on the concept of human freedom, and the principle of the will of men and peoples. He published numerous articles on such issues, of which the present volume is a fine example.

Liberal, democratic values underpin the URV's mission statement: "to facilitate the access to higher education of the maximum number of students from the area"; "to encourage critical thinking, the culture of freedom and pluralism, and the transmission of values appropriate to a society based on democracy, openness and solidarity; in particular, respect for human rights and for the environment, education for peace and international cooperation, especially with underdeveloped countries; to achieve the

highest levels of excellence in teaching and research with the aim of providing people with the best preparation for life, and contributing to their development as citizens and professionals.”

In Defence of Democracy is the best possible presentation and justification for the name of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, which as an institution is responsible for the public service of higher education, research and transfer of knowledge in the southern regions of Catalonia, the birthplace of Antoni Rovira i Virgili.

FRANCESC XAVIER GRAU
RECTOR

Introduction¹

On the 1st February, 1939, Antoni Rovira i Virgili crossed the French border accompanied by his family. He would never return to Catalunya. After a brief stay first in Perpignan and then in Toulouse, where he wrote one of the most moving accounts of the defeat of the Spanish Republic (*Els darrers dies de la Catalunya republicana*), he moved to Montpellier where he lived until 1946, and from there to Perpignan, where he died on 5th December, 1946. With his exile, Catalonia was orphaned of one of its most lucid and constant voices in the struggle for democracy and the national rights of Catalonia.

Antoni Rovira i Virgili was one of the most important personalities in Catalonia in the first half of the 20th century, with a long political and intellectual career, in which theory and practice were inseparable. Born in Tarragona in 1882, his political concerns led him to embrace the federalism of Pi i Maragall from an early age, and to focus on these federalist ideas from a Catalan perspective. In his view, this was the only way to wrest the leadership of the Catalanist movement from Prat de la Riba and the Regionalist League, and to forge a political project based on democracy, liberalism and federal nationalism. In other words, he sought a democratic Catalanism, which was heir to both Pi i Maragall and Valentí Almirall. With this broad aim in mind, Rovira i Virgili found political journalism to be the perfect instrument by which he could unite the two great vocations – politics and journalism – he had confessed to in the prologue to his work *Quinze articles*, written during the Spanish Civil War. But Rovira was much more than a journalist and a politician with a vocation to lead. He was also a man of immense intellectual curiosity and of great literary and philosophical culture. He was familiar with the work of such diverse authors as Rousseau, Schopenhauer,

¹ Translator's note: this is a translation of the introduction published originally in the 2010 edition by Pòrtic Edicions, Memorial Democràtic and the URV.

Renan, Jaurès, Stendhal, Ibsen, Leopardi, Hugo, Maurras and Drieu La Rochelle, among many others. He was also an avid reader of Catalan literature and had a special predilection for Joan Maragall. He was a multi-talented writer, who produced works on literature, history, Catalan grammar and language, as well as texts on political theory. He also published a play, *Nova Vida*, (1904), which was clearly influenced by Ibsen, and towards the end of his life a book of poems, *La collita tardana* (1947).

He left Tarragona, his birthplace, where he had been chief editor of the federal journal, *L'Avançada*, in order to settle in Barcelona in 1906, the year in which the Catalan Solidarity movement began, and write regularly for the newspaper, *El Poble Català*. During this period, as well as writing on Catalan and Spanish politics, he also produced numerous articles on international politics, a subject on which he became a great expert, and which interested him throughout his life, specially when the First World War highlighted questions of nationality and the rights of national minorities in Europe. From his arrival in Barcelona to General Primo de Rivera's *coup d'état*, in 1923, he clearly intended to become the leading ideologue of republican, liberal and lay Catalanism, and he threw himself into an extraordinary number of activities, ranging from political activism to journalism and writing books. As a journalist he collaborated with the main Catalan publications: *La Campana de Gràcia*, *L'Esquella de la Torratxa*, *Ibèria*, *D'Ací d'Allà*, and *La Revista de Catalunya*. He was very productive as an editor in this period as well.²

Politically speaking, Rovira i Virgili was a militant in various organizations, which, even though they never came to power, did make an important contribution to founding an alternative to conservative Catalanism. In fact, to trace Rovira i Virgili's political movements during the twenty-five years before the proclamation of the Republic is, largely, to trace the complex highways and by-ways which finally led to the birth of the party known as the Republican Left of Catalonia. In 1906 he joined the Republican Nationalist Centre party, led by Jaume Carner and Ildefons Sunyol, which then amalgamated with Catalan Solidarity and eventually disbanded in 1909 after the events of the Tragic Week. In 1910, he joined the Republican Nationalist Federal Union (UFNR), which, in Rovira's words, "aimed to achieve Catalan self-rule within the Spanish Republican Federation." But, in 1914, Rovira i Virgili abandoned the coalition as a result of the electoral pact that the UFNR had sealed with the radicals led by Alejandro Lerroux, and at the same time he stopped writing for *El Poble Català*, the official organ of the UNFR. Shortly afterwards, he became a civil servant working in the Press Service of the recently created Commonwealth of Catalonia, presided over

2 Among the titles from this period, we could mention *Història dels moviments nacionalistes* (1912-1914), published by the Societat Catalana d'Edicions, which he himself helped to set up, *La nacionalització de Catalunya* (1914, re-ed. 1979), *Debats sobre'l catalanisme* (1915, re-ed. 1979), *Nacionalisme i federalisme* (1917), *La Guerra de les nacions* (1914-1925), *Història nacional de Catalunya* (unfinished work, published between 1922 and 1934, re-edited and extended from 1972 onwards).

by Enric Prat de la Riba. That same year he embarked on a new political adventure, with the creation of the Catalan Left party, but it was short-lived. The failure of this experiment left him without a political tool for some years, but this did not lead him to abandon the ideological battle, which he continued to wage through his books and press articles. The year 1916 saw the start of his collaboration with *La Publicidad*, whose chief editor was Amadeu Hurtado; a few years later it began to publish in Catalan, becoming the official organ of the Action for Catalonia party (Acció Catalana). And in 1918, he began writing for *La Veu de Catalunya*, as a commentator on international political affairs.

In 1922, as a party-less Catalanist Republican, he took part in the Catalan National Conference, organized by the Nationalist Youth of the Regionalist League which was led by Jaume Bofill i Matas and Lluís Nicolau d'Olwer, among others, with a talk entitled, "How Catalanism should respond to the Spanish state." From this talk Acció Catalana emerged, with the aim of "Catalanizing Catalonia" and of taking political action from "within Catalonia", thereby assuming the role that the League had betrayed from the moment it had made a pact with the governments of the monarchy. But the concerns of left-wing, nationalist Republicans were not completely represented by Acció Catalana and, in the same year, 1922, Francesc Macià pushed for the creation of a Catalan State. Some months later, in July 1923, the Socialist Union of Catalonia (Unió Socialista de Catalunya) was founded with the aim of bringing together socialism and Catalanism.

Acció Catalana presented various candidates in the elections for the legislature in 1923, and Rovira, who was one of its vice-presidents, won a seat. However, the League conspired with the radicals to manipulate the electoral results, and he was prevented from entering parliament. At any rate, the legislature did not last long at all, thanks to the *coup d'état* by Primo de Rivera. All parties and unions were made illegal, the Commonwealth of Catalonia was abolished and any signs of Catalanism were prosecuted. Acció Catalana was left without the party machinery necessary to face the new situation and was disbanded in 1924. Between this date and 1930, Rovira was forced to put his energies into ideological agitation and he produced a large quantity of work of great quality.³

Between 1927 and 1928 his journalistic and political career took an important turn. In 1927 he left *La Publicitat* to set up his own newspaper, *La Nau*, and in 1928 he left Acció Catalana. These were two steps he had to take before taking a great leap: creating a party that would allow him to take the unchallenged lead in Federal

³ Among other activities, he was chief editor of the *Revista de Catalunya* (1924–1929) and the *Anuari dels Catalans*, (1923–1926), and wrote various volumes of the aforementioned *Història nacional de Catalunya* and works such as *Els polítics catalans* (1929, re-ed. 1977) and *In Defence of Democracy* (*Defensa de la Democràcia*), written during the time of the Berenguer government.

Republican Catalanism, something which, in his opinion, Acció Catalana had not known how to do. He aimed to appeal to a Catalanism whose social base and main clientele would have to be the middle classes, a sector of society which, according to Rovira, had never had a party to represent it in any sort of satisfactory way. 1930 saw the start of "his" political party, Republican Action (Acció Republicana), which was defined in its founding manifesto as "a political grouping made up of Catalans who identify in the one principle of human liberty the ideals of our land and the ideals of the democratic and social republic." The party was the mainstay around which the disperse forces of left-wing Catalanism could organize themselves. However, this ambition was also coveted by others, and when he saw that it could not prosper – as neither Companys nor Marcel·lí Domingo, among others, chose to follow him – he went in a new direction: he formed an alliance with Acció Catalana and set up the Republican Catalanist Party (Partit Catalanista Republicà) in March 1931. The parties joined forces at exactly the same time as other groups and forces of left-wing Republicans also came together to form the Republican Left of Catalonia (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya) of Francesc Macià and Lluís Companys.

Rovira i Virgili and Bofill i Matas were convinced their time had come: they were to be, at last, the alternative to the Regionalist League, now discredited in the eyes of a large part of public opinion for having given direct or indirect support to Primo de Rivera's *coup d'état* and for having supported the attempt to give democratic credibility once again to the Bourbon monarchy, after Primo de Rivera's resignation. But things did not go the way Rovira had intended. The municipal elections of 12th April and the elections of the Constitutional Convention in June 1931, gave power to the ERC and this led Rovira i Virgili to renounce his vocation as leader once and for all. He abandoned *La Nau*, left the Partit Catalanista Republicà and, in October 1932, he joined the ERC, together with a considerable number of leading lights of the world of culture and politics, in response to the call made by President Macià in Lleida. From that moment, Antoni Rovira i Virgili took on a secondary role in active politics, even though in the Catalan parliamentary elections of November 1932 he was elected as member for Tarragona. In 1928, he was elected vicepresident of the Catalan Chamber (Cambra catalana) and, in 1941, in exile in Montpellier, he took on the presidency. In 1945, the president, Josep Irla, made him a member of the Generalitat's Advisory Council, and, from 1945 to 1948, he was a member of the only government of the Generalitat in exile. Among its other members were such leading figures as Carles Pi i Sunyer, Pompeu Fabra and Manuel Serra i Moret.

Although his political activity was secondary during the Republic in peacetime and during the Civil War and his time in exile, the same could not be said of his

intellectual creativity. His work rate continued to be extraordinary, as his articles for various publications (*La Humanitat*, *Revista de Catalunya*, the Mexican periodical, *La nostra revista*, or *Germanor*, published in Chile, etc.) and his numerous books attest.⁴

In Defence of Democracy was written at a moment when, from the perspective of Catalanist republicanism, the Bourbon monarchy was showing important signs of weakness, even of imminent collapse. It is structured in four parts, under a common theme: the claim that democracy is a superior political system and fundamental to relations between groups and social classes. From that point of view, it is a work of extraordinary relevance still. And though it is true that some of the issues dealt with by Rovira i Virgili may be considered obsolete – obviously the world of the twenty-first century is very different from the one he knew –, the defence of human rights, the defence of citizens' rights in our days, in this country and around the world, are still and should continue to be an essential priority.

In Defence of Democracy was published when Europe was starting to get over the first effects of the Wall Street crash and of the subsequent economic crisis which would end in the Great Depression and which would have terrible political consequences. But the author is not yet in a position to appreciate the dimensions of this crisis, almost certainly because it affected Spain later than the rest of Western Europe and because it was still only the beginning. In contrast, he shows himself to be concerned and worried by the crisis in democratic values, which he believes was caused by the immense humanitarian catastrophe that was the First World War. Some of his contemporaries, among them the great economist John Maynard Keynes, warned of the consequences that a poorly brokered peace could bring the Europeans. Rovira i Virgili is also deeply concerned about Europe's difficult post-war convalescence, as convalescences can lead either to a return to health or a relapse. He warns that peace and stability are precarious and that "the storm cycle is still floating over Europe (...) because in people's souls the storm of the Great War has still not played itself out." Despite all this, Rovira, who had never wavered in his battle on behalf of democratic values, is clearly convinced that democracy had to win in the end. This conviction led him to be more hopeful than optimistic that democracy would necessarily have to be accepted as a supreme value by the vast majority. But, in order for this supreme value to finally triumph, it needs to be actively, realistically and unwaveringly defended. Men, says Rovira, "must know how to act, work and hope, with no need for false, all-

4 Among these, *Catalunya i la república* (1933, reprinted in 1977), *Els sistemes electorals* (1932, reprinted in 1977), *La Constitució interior de Catalunya* (1932), *El principi de les nacionalitats* (1932), *Corpus de Sang*, (1932), *Resum d'història del catalanisme* (1936, reprinted in 1983), *Valentí Almirall* (1936), *Quinze articles* (1938), which won the Valentí Almirall Prize. Once in exile, as aforementioned, *Els darrers dies de la Catalunya republicana*, *Memòries sobre l'èxode català* (1940, reprinted in 1976) and *La collita tardana* (1947). Among works published posthumously, *Els corrents ideològics de la Renaixença* (1976), *Viatge a la URSS* (1968), *Prat de la Riba* (prologue and selection by Isidre Molas, 1968) and *Cartes de l'exili* (compilation, transcription and analysis by Maria Capdevila, 2002).

absorbing illusions, which are dangerous drugs. They must not condition their actions to the promises of success. They must believe without demanding miracles”, because “the naivety of today is the disappointment of tomorrow.”

It is evident that the dramatic history of Europe between the wars, and especially in the Thirties, with the rise of Nazism, Stalinism, the Spanish Civil War, and the Second World War, required democrats to exercise great courage and great civic self-discipline in order to cope with such terrible circumstances and not waver. Rovira i Virgili, who considered himself neither naïve, optimistic nor pessimistic, but rather a realist, was aware of the difficulties of achieving a fully democratic state. In his opinion, such a fully democratic system would bring with it the free representation of all the social forces, through different political parties, and would rest upon one basic principle: the judicial equality of all citizens and, above all, the principle of one man one vote. However, when Rovira speaks of judicial equality, not only does he not mention the right of women to this equality – he does not even consider it – he makes his feelings quite clear by speaking of the legal rights all men have over “their children and wives.”

Rovira defines democracy as a social pact for peaceful coexistence and for national and social solidarity, in which majorities must respect the right of the minorities via the functioning of parliament, which in turn must depend on the free exercise of political parties, the *sine qua non* of democracy. But, at the same time, he attacks what he considers a grave danger: the hypertrophy of the political party spirit; in other words, the militant sectarianism that could put an end to the social pact, and with it, social cohesion.

The essence of democracy lies in accepting diversity and contrasting different trends, ideas and beliefs, which implies defending complete civil and religious freedom. Only in this way can social progress be made. This progress, however, is not linear, as eighteenth century thinkers believed, but must overcome many obstacles. There are times, according to Rovira, when one must take a step backwards to take three forwards. Without doubt, in using these words, he seeks to emulate Lenin's famous phrase, spoken in 1921, in what were evidently very different circumstances and with very different intentions. The Bolshevik leader was arguing in favour of the New Economic Policy, in an attempt to restore social peace, and against those who were seeking a rapid advance towards socialism. One need hardly point out that, unlike Lenin, Rovira i Virgili was a liberal through and through. According to him, political liberalism was the maximum expression of the victory of reason and moral conscience against biological and economic determinism, with which fascism and Bolshevism, respectively, were “impregnated”. The so-called “advanced man” must be liberal in essence, as “liberalism is the political formula of civilization”, insofar as it defends the

interests of individuals, groups and social classes. The only way to be truly of the left – Rovira never used the adjective *esquerranista* when referring to left-wing liberalism, as he reserved this term for workers' groups and parties – is to be liberal. The liberalism which Rovira defended is one which accepts the open struggle of all the ideas in the field of political theory and practice, considering that liberalism and democracy constitute one indivisible whole. If there is no freedom, he affirms, there is no justice or equality, because "freedom is a goal, not a means. Beside the word liberal, we must insist on the word democrat, which has been so vilified by everyone, as a result of the social and political catastrophe caused by the Great War." The concepts of freedom and democracy imply "admitting the principles of individuals' rights tied up with universal suffrage". And this close connection he defines as demoliberalism.

From our viewpoint as citizens of the twenty-first century, some of Rovira's subjects, in *In Defence of Democracy*, seem antiquated, as they are no longer part of our political and ideological debate, even though they were concerns of the period in question. This explains why Rovira dedicates part of his work to rejecting the concept of political rights connected to guilds or corporations, which he considers a medieval anachronism and in opposition with the concept of citizenship; in other words, with the natural and political rights inherited by all men. Such political rights had been established by the French Revolution, even though they had previously been formulated by Great Britain and the future United States of America. These reflections must be understood from the perspective of the political context in which Rovira was writing: corporatism was used by conservative sectors and Italian fascism as an instrument to control the lower classes and to confront and even destroy anarchist or Marxist trades-unionism, at a moment in which mass society was taking shape in Europe, and also in Spain. In other words, corporatism was a way of preventing or limiting access to democracy by the lower classes. And Rovira i Virgili, who did not belong to a workers' party but was a democrat and a liberal, understood that the rights of citizens had to be the same for everyone.

In the last chapter of the book – *Els problemes espirituals*– Antoni Rovira discusses various problems and issues, some of which reflect his character and pet hates. They are, therefore, only of relative interest for today's readers. Nonetheless, what these pages do suggest is the moral integrity that characterized his life's work. The author shows his concern for the loss of a certain romantic, idealistic spirit which had been felt in the first years of the twentieth century, and which was in sharp contrast to the materialism and positivism that had come to dominate society in later decades. And, in his opinion, this loss had given way to a moral decline, in the name of modernity. In the name of modernity, he claims, "human values have been forgotten" and "many transgressions have been committed against ethical and civic duties". Moral

decline, materialism and positivism are all the result of the destruction caused by the First World War. Once again, Rovira knows full well the importance of the Great War in all its tragic consequences.

But, always hopeful, he trusted that those in government would know how to find ways to understand and overcome post-war neurosis, which would necessarily lead to respect between peoples and social groups beyond the chauvinistic interests of class and homeland. Here he insists once again on the need for respectful interplay between minorities and majorities which is intrinsic to any authentic liberal democracy because, without it, political life ends up as a dictatorship or, in other words, as an absolutist regime of the majority which violates the principle essence of human liberty. In every country the forms of liberal democracy are in autochthonous traditions. In many respects, the democratic system connects to the ancient traditions of some peoples, a tradition interrupted during the centuries of absolute monarchy. In Catalonia, “democracy is confused with racial spirit”, expressed in the “old laws of the principality (...) Our democracy comes from our traditions and our land. Catalan democrats are the veritable heirs of an autochthonous tradition. The antidemocrats, on the other hand, by reacting against the ideas that are said to come from the French Revolution, have taken up an exotic position. And if democracy in its ancient forms is our tradition, democracy in its modern forms is our way of life and our way of expressing our loyalty to our nation.” Here it is important to clarify how he uses the notion of race, a notion that he clarifies in his book *El principi de les nacionalitats*, published a few years later. When he talks of race he does not do so in the anthropological sense “but rather in the historical and collective” sense insofar as “there are no pure races, but that all peoples are made up of mixtures and combinations of races” and “race as a component of the nation is the historical component coming from ethnic mixtures and the influence of the territory, and moreover has a spirit all of its own. For this reason it is ridiculous and incongruent to refute the theory of nationalities by denying the current existence of peoples of pure race in the anthropological sense of the word.”

But, a little later, Rovira i Virgili seems to forget these considerations and contradicts himself when he offers a series of speculations on the “feminine condition”, which one supposes, at the time, must have made even the most lukewarm feminists angry, and which reveal his nineteenth-century paternalistic attitudes. He practically makes women responsible for the rise and triumph of Nazism because, according to his surprising interpretation, in 1925 they had mostly voted for Hindenburg and, in 1930, for Hitler. The reason women supported these two leaders, says Rovira, is that women have less capacity for logical reflection, as they are more orientated to their instincts and feelings, and consequently “the formidable increase in German racism” finds its roots more in them than in men. He continues in the same vein: “Subconscious,

affective power turns women into the purest expressions of race. (...) Women oscillate between unbreakable conviction and indifference. More often than not, men tend to occupy a mid-point between these states because, in the masculine soul, critical sense and logical analysis counterbalance the rallying cry of the instincts and the blazing outbursts of the sentiments.”

The lack of confidence in the ability of women to behave in a rational and autonomous way, and the conviction that they would always need the tutelage of men was not exclusive to Rovira i Virgili, but was fairly widespread among the various sectors of the left, and not only in our country. Be that as it may, in Rovira’s favour one must point out that at no time does he question the right of women to vote, even if he considers that their “racial sentiment” needs to be directed and subordinated “to the voice of reason and the lessons of historical experience.” Despite all these suspicions, on the part of both the left and right, in December 1931 the constitution approved by the Constitutional Convention of the Second Republic put an end to discrimination against women, at least in terms of giving them the vote. And it is worth remembering that, in the various elections which took place between 1932 and 1936, the women’s vote did not differ substantially from the men’s. It was not for reasons of gender that the vote inclined one way or the other.

However, despite these words dedicated to the “feminine condition”, *In Defence of Democracy* is a work worth reading, a work which is still highly relevant today. It is the work of someone who, in the words of the historian Pere Anguera, written on the occasion of the tribute paid to him by the Universitat Rovira i Virgili in 1999 in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of his death, “as well as a political thinker, he was an inquiring, thorough intellectual.” He was an intellectual committed to democracy, to a democracy that he considered to be a supreme value.

ANNA SALLÉS

Translator's Note

I am very grateful to Dr Francesc Xavier Grau i Vidal, the Rector of my university, the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, for asking me to translate Antoni Rovira i Virgili's *Defensa de la democràcia* from the original Catalan into English, to help mark the URV's twentieth anniversary celebrations as an independent university, as *the* public university of Southern Catalonia.

I willingly accepted the task before I really appreciated what it involved, partly in gratitude for the rector's consideration, but also because it would offer me the opportunity of becoming more acquainted with the writings of the man whose name was given to the institution for which I work, and about which I confess to having been embarrassingly ignorant. You can therefore imagine, first, my relief and, second, my excitement, to discover that not only could my author write with a clarity and succinctness which my English education had taught me to value very highly, but that his articles were still genuinely interesting and thought-provoking, and written with considerable passion. For a translator, such authors are rare, and to work on them is a pleasure and a privilege.

As the presentations and the introduction of this edition make clear, while the book is undoubtedly still highly relevant, it is also a product of its time. One dilemma as a translator was to decide whether to update the text, in order to soften the effect of the repeated use of *home*, man, as in 'one man, one vote', by replacing it with 'person', in consonance with our modern sensibility. Working in a university environment I was of course surrounded by excellent advice leading in all directions, from Catalan philologists to translation theorists to translation practitioners, but finally took the historians' advice to preserve the historical character of the discourse, warts and all.

Although in one of the essays in the current volume Rovira i Virgili specifically says he is not a Nietzschean, his writing is clearly influenced by nineteenth-century

idealist philosophies, and he frequently uses the Catalan word for the people, *el poble*, as German philosophers in particular would exalt the concept of ‘das Volk’. Rovira often uses the plural, *pobles*, too, sometimes in close proximity to the singular, but without referring specifically to the Catalan people. Unfortunately, in English, while ‘peoples’ is not unheard of, it certainly cannot be used as a regular equivalent to *pobles*, without sounding awkward. So, after much affliction, I have occasionally rung the changes by using ‘nations’, in full awareness that that word has a particular resonance for Catalans, given that for many Catalonia’s stateless nation status continues to be a moot political point.

I would like to thank the Rector and Dr Antoni González Senmartí for their patience and understanding in waiting for the finished manuscript, and Drs. Maria Bargalló and Encarnació Ricart for overseeing the publication process. I would also like to thank my good friend, John Bates, of the URV’s Language Service, for reading my first draft and wielding his remorseless Plain English silver scalpel with such élan. The final text is definitely the better for it. Where I have retained slightly wordier alternatives, it has been in an attempt to give something of the flavour of my author’s amiable, colloquial style.

JOHN STYLE

I Democracy

The crisis of democracy

Who can deny that in Europe and America today democracy is in crisis? Crisis, however, does not necessarily imply collapse or decline. The current partial erosion of those human values which form the basis of democracy cannot be definitive, if civilization is to survive on Earth. History has its ups and downs. Some places in the world are probably at a low point at this very moment, but despite a wave of antidemocratic feeling, the deeper elements of democracy and liberty continue to survive. And if in some places they have been momentarily crushed under the weight of opposing forces, in others they do not merely hold their ground, but grow in strength and depth.

As has been noted over and over again, the current crisis in democracy is one of the effects of the Great War. The economic, political and moral upheaval caused by the greatest, most deadly of all conflicts inevitably brought about a marked instability. This instability may have lasted longer and been more intense than many people, through lack of experience, could ever have imagined. But when one thinks of the catastrophic scale of the 1914-1918 war, it must be admitted that its many consequences are not out of proportion.

The tension created by the war has brought to the fore a widespread collective neurosis. The fever of the war years deceived both warring and neutral parties as to their own capacity for resistance. Once the fighting ended, it seemed that it would take only a short respite before they would recuperate their diminished powers. Such hope was far too optimistic. The debilitating efforts of the war have taken their toll. After the illness, we now have to undergo an extremely long period of convalescence, with all its distress and pain. And worse still is the inner anxiety, the neurosis of men and nations. It is a case of collective neurasthenia.

How can we possibly regard as normal the tendencies born of or accentuated by this neurosis? When Europe recovers its health, democracy will undoubtedly have

overcome its crisis. The threat that many believe can overcome democracy is merely a chimerical illusion brought on by the neurosis, an illusion that will pass when the neurosis passes.

Those who have wanted to build a new state quite different from a liberal one will see that their creation is ephemeral. The fact is that some men have managed to pass their delusions on to the multitudes sickened by war.

One should distrust things born in periods of neurotic crisis. Those who have a clear architectural, even classical, concept of political structure should not expect men and parties affected by the neurosis of the postwar period to make effective draughtsmen and builders of the edifices of state. One of the great advantages of democracy is that it responds to a conception of humanity and society that is at once serene, balanced and harmonious.

Democratic principles will resist the crisis, will see the wave pass. And if in this contradictory period the opportunity is taken to review the ways these principles have been put into practice, by means of correcting some of the notorious defects which they have shown in their current specific applications, then democracy will not only impose itself again in the near future, but will offer among its virtues, strengthened by the weeding out of its own vices, a guarantee of continuity and an increased certainty of its own effectiveness.

The defects of democracy

The perfect political system has yet to be found. And it never will be. For this reason it is easy to criticize any of the known systems and democracy is no exception. And those idealistic democrats who present democracy as a formula that can ensure the happiness of men and nations have done it as much harm as have its irreconcilable enemies.

The theoretical defects of democracy are exacerbated when it is put into practice, but the practical defects are essentially the consequence of applying its principles in an incomplete or fraudulent manner. We could say that one of democracy's weaknesses is that it is often not democracy at all. It is unfair, however, to hold a principle responsible for the falsifications that are offered in its name. We should not condemn or proscribe false democracies, merely insist on true democracy. Most of the basic defects of which the democratic system is accused can be cured by greater democracy. There is much truth in the famous maxim which says that the ills of liberty are cured with liberty. The same can be said of democracy. The desire to make democracy pay for the ills arising from its adulteration is an inadmissible paradox. Even so, it is a paradox that is omnipresent.

The wounds of the world today are by no means due to any harmful action by democracy, but rather to the survival of the more primitive instincts of men and of multitudes over the intellectual, moral and material progress which man has made. Neither liberty nor democracy has the virtue of turning a man into an angel. The mistake of idealistic democrats and philosophical anarchists – acrary or anarchy is democracy taken to the limit – is to believe in the natural goodness of man and in its perversion as an effect of authoritarian oppression. Such oppression may make men and nations worse, as distant and recent history has shown. But suppressing these oppressive forces is not sufficient to establish paradise on Earth. If mankind were good by nature, oppressive regimes would never have been established in the first place.

Democracy is an instrument, not of perfection but for perfecting. It does not reveal the general good or set it in action, because it does not exist. But it helps the noble forces in the human spirit in their fight against the baser forces which goad and provoke them. These noble forces do not attain a complete and utter victory. But when their continuous efforts weaken, or when they are submerged under the assault of blind passions, the result is the downfall of individuals, into crime and denigration, and the downfall of the collective, into barbarity and tyranny.

The objectivity of democracy

In a comment in his magazine, *La Critica*, Benedetto Croce recognizes that beside its many defects democracy has one advantage: through the system of majorities, it builds an agreement out of diverse opinions and interests. The great Italian thinker does not attach too much importance to this advantage, although to us it seems to be fundamental, if not in theory then at least in practice. Democracy effectively allows parties to come together to determine which one should govern, and to choose one solution when there is more than one solution to choose from.

Who should govern? Which solution should be adopted for each problem that arises? Democracy says that the party with the majority of opinion behind it should govern, and that it should adopt the solutions that the majority would prefer. The objections raised against the system of majorities are well known, as a choice made in the name of the majority cannot be guaranteed to be the right one. But antidemocratic regimes not only do not guarantee right choices, they also do not have the advantage – an arithmetic advantage, but an advantage nonetheless – of representing the majority opinion.

It is not difficult to understand that antidemocratic regimes are essentially subjective in character. Antidemocrats will say that government should be given not to the party that represents the majority, but to the best party, and that the solution to be adopted should not be the one preferred by most, but the best. But how are we to determine which is the best party and which the best solution? Every party thinks it is the best of all, and every solution, for those who defend it, is unparalleled. Thus the fanatical and tyrannical views of the most powerful come above the views and will of others. In the same way that the Communist extreme left believe their principles are best, and impose them by force, so the bourgeois extreme right, believing in the superiority of their own principles, impose them by the same procedure. There is no difference between the logic of absolute monarchy and the logic of proletarian dictatorship.

In order for antidemocratic theory to be valid, there would have to be a universal, objective criterion for judging where good is to be found, and what is best.

This criterion does not exist, since on these questions an unlimited number of opinions come into conflict. In a majority system, majority numbers are determined arithmetically, and that is an objective fact, which all parties no matter how opposed must recognize. In a democracy parties, classes and interests are united in a sort of convention. If those who govern are those who have the majority, all the other parties know how to come into government: by means of publicity, organization and conquering public opinion. In this way, democratic struggles are compatible with internal peace. In contrast, for antidemocratic systems, the only way for opposition parties to gain power against the will of those who have it is by force. In reality, in an antidemocracy, the best people do not necessarily govern and the solutions adopted are not necessarily the best; rather, government is in the hands of those with most force, and the solutions adopted, whether good or bad, are those preferred by the strongest. And if number is not a guarantee of justice, can it be said that the possession of material force is?

The stability of democracy

In his book *The Political Party in Modern Democracy*¹, Robert Michels establishes a fact of the greatest importance: namely, the stability of the leading groups – call them the oligarchies if you will – within democracy-based parties. In effect, you only have to recall the names of the main protagonists and leaders of both workers' and bourgeois parties to notice how stable they were. And let it be noted also that this topples one of the main arguments against democracy: that is, it causes instability in the leadership of the collective.

This phenomenon is probably manifested most notably in socialist parties. Bebel in Germany, Hjalmar Branting in Sweden, Stauning in Denmark, Jaurès in France, Vandervelde in Belgium, Pau Iglesias in Spain, were – or still are – involved in leadership throughout their lives. If you read through the names of the outstanding members of the various national and international socialist congresses, you will find almost the same men, and you will see that most of the changes are due to one generation succeeding another.

Stability does not mean immobility in either physics or politics. The permanence of the leading nucleus does not impede ideological or tactical renewal. Furthermore, in many cases, changes in orientation and restructuring of ideas and the means of struggle do not emerge from the mass of party followers, but rather from the party leaders. The fluctuating fortunes of the workers' movements that we have witnessed in

¹ Translator's Note: Rovira i Virgili gives the title of Michel's book in Catalan, although there was no Catalan edition. The original title of Michel's book was *Zur Soziologie des Parteiwesens in der modernen Demokratie. Untersuchungen über die oligarchischen Tendenzen des Gruppenlebens*, published in 1911. Translated as *Sociologia del partito politico nella democrazia moderna : studi sulle tendenze oligarchiche degli aggregati politici*, from the German original by Dr. Alfredo Polledro, 1912, it was translated from Italian into English as *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, by Eden and Cedar Paul, Hearst's International Library Co., 1915; there was no Spanish version until 1969 saw the publication of Enrique Molina de Vedia's translation, *Los partidos políticos. Un estudio sociológico de las tendencias oligárquicas de la democracia moderna*, Amorrotu editores.

recent years in Great Britain, Italy, Germany, France and Belgium have been the work not so much of the workers *en masse* but of the leading figures and their dissensions and disagreements.

Certainly, within democratic parties we sometimes see internal crises, undisciplined behaviour, the appearance of splinter groups and disputes. But do we not see the same thing at least as often in undemocratic parties? The Spanish legitimist party, whose base is not even oligarchical, but rather monarchical, and which is led by the actual pretender to the throne, has had as many crises, divisions, squabbles, acts of dissidence and desertions as the most unfortunate republican party. The Carlist party of yesteryear, and the Jaumists of today, directly under the orders of their august leader, and with a hierarchical structure from top to bottom, have enjoyed less stability among their effective leaders than the socialist workers party.

Who, then, can claim that the intervention of the people in elections, and the – perhaps sometimes excessive – celebration of congresses and assemblies necessarily make for unstable government in collective organizations? The example of democratic parties is solid proof that democracy and stable leadership are compatible.

It is true that if we move on from the internal life of parties to consider the government of public corporations and of the state, democracy does not appear to be quite so stable. But then neither does autocracy. In some specific cases, stability is not always a good thing; the duration of a regime or of a government is not always, necessarily, something to be desired or a cause of satisfaction. Undoubtedly, the Bolshevik government in Russia and the Fascist government in Italy could be considered stable and lasting. Should we congratulate ourselves on that, unconditionally?

The relativity of democracy

“The great defect of democracy”, said Chesterton in one of his typical paradoxes, “is that it is never democratic enough.” As often happens with paradoxes, behind Chesterton’s words lies a profound truth.

Democracy is never completely democratic. Very true. But is that a bad thing, a deadly defect, in absolute terms? In reality, the current practical impossibility of implanting a totally, absolutely democratic system of government appears to some as a lamentable defect; but to others this is undeniably advantageous. Given even the slightest thought, it will be obvious that absolute democracy, in today’s world, would not be a perfect system of government, from a pragmatic point of view. Democracy, necessarily, has to be relative. Insisting on a principle and the wholesale adoption of an idea does not always lead to improvement or perfection. Those who wish to be “pure” and “unbending,” sometimes become useless and obstructive.

Democratic principle is to be found in this case. God save us from democracy being too democratic to be of any practical value: in other words, absolutely democratic! God save us from the government of the people by the people and the equality of individuals being taken literally! If they were, the adversaries and detractors of democracy, from Carles Maurras to Benito Mussolini, would be partly right. If every citizen had equal weight in the management of public affairs, we would have to admit that the ironies and sarcasms of the enemies of universal suffrage were justified.

Fortunately, in its spontaneous workings democracy has its own defences against the evils which could arise from the literal and material application of its principles. On the side of liberty as well as on the side of equality, democracy has its self-regulating counterweights. There is a sort of social mechanism which stops the vehicle of democracy crashing into absurdity and madness. Democracy is like a machine with a self-braking device.

One of the resources which democracy spontaneously brings into play to avoid the pernicious or absurd consequences of its basic principles is the development within of teams of leaders. The Swiss intellectual, Robert Michels, coming from socialism, has written an excellent study of this aspect of the problem in his book *The Political Party in Modern Democracy*. The author shows the elements of the internal machinery of democratic parties, particularly the Socialist Workers' party, and reveals the extreme importance within the workings of democratic forces of leading groups, which inevitably form part of them. These groups could be called oligarchies. But we should not be superstitious of names. The fact is that the oligarchical element in democratic parties saves them from falling into absurdity or a vacuum. And we do not wish to imply that the oligarchic part is free of correctible vices, which result more from nature than from the essence of fundamental principles.

Some may say, then, that there is no great difference between parties that are democratic and those that are not, between democratic and autocratic styles of government. This is a big mistake! There is a difference. A big difference. Within democracy an oligarchy develops; but it is subject to popular feelings, and is controlled, and can be dismissed by the will of the majority. In the democratic oligarchy power is simply delegated, while in the autocratic oligarchy it is held. The citizens led by an oligarchical group based on democracy do not have the humiliating feeling of being like human sheep or mere statistics.

On equality among men

These days it is customary to speak disparagingly about democracy. Autocratic politicians, pessimistic philosophers and hieratic intellectuals say disagreeable things about equality among men. Many of those who embrace democratic principles and who see liberty as fundamental do not feel the same about equality. The principle argument against the equality of rights is that there are natural differences in human lineage. When universal suffrage says "one man, one vote" anti-egalitarians are horrified. Forty years ago, a Spanish person famously compared an intellectual and a roadsweeper, in order to show the absurdity of giving the same electoral power, the same single vote, to each of them. But, carefully considered, there is no reason for these excessive, hypocritical overreactions.

The principle of equality among men, which has its rigorous numerical application in universal suffrage, is not unfair, unnatural or absurd. It is founded upon a basic postulate: unless shown to the contrary, everyone has sufficient capacity to participate in the collective political form of government to which they belong. Those who are demented, for example, will be deprived of their political rights. But if there is no cause for such deprivation, a man must be supposed to have the necessary degree of discernment to participate in the political system as an individual, which is his right for the mere fact of his existence.

This postulate is the target of furious stone-throwing from the right and from the left. If we stop to consider just for a moment, we must ask ourselves the following question: Is there perchance no analogous postulate in other areas of social life? If we leave politics and move on to law, for example, we see that there is also an egalitarian postulate in civil law. While individuals are not incapacitated for reasons established by law, all their rights related to property, family, commerce, etc., etc. will be recognised. Universal suffrage makes men equal within electoral colleges, as Civil Law makes them

equal to dispose of or purchase property, to buy and sell, to borrow or exchange. These rights are of primordial importance in human society and if their exercise is subject to no gradations in intensity or quality, then why should the exercise of voting rights be so graded?

Let us consider the specific case of custody. All fathers who are not legally incapacitated have the same rights over their children and their wives. Undeniably, not all fathers have the same intellectual and moral capacities. If we were obliged to take into account the capacity of individuals, we could not give them equal rights over the family. Theories against equality offer us the enormous contradiction of differentiating between the voting rights of men, while maintaining the concept of equality in their civil rights. Evidently, a man needs considerably more mental capacity to govern his own home than to make an infinitesimal contribution to the election of a councillor or a member of parliament.

If it is subjected to critical examination, the postulate of equality has its weak points. But, the same is true – sometimes to a much greater extent – of all the other numerous postulates that are fundamental to social life. When the “one man, one vote” formula is dispensed with, other formulae must necessarily take its place, and these are even more doctrinally defective and have even greater practical shortcomings. By saying “one man, one vote”, we establish a double human and numeric principle. If we turn our backs on it, then we will lose hold of both the vote and the man.

Universal suffrage

In considering this problem, it is convenient to point to the words of Carles Maurras in his daily chronicle “La Politique”, published in *L’Action Française*. Our own rather out of date, more or less traditionalist conservatives will probably be disconcerted when they read the following affirmation by the great theorist of French nationalism: “I am for the indefinite extension of the vote.”

On this point, Maurras’ ideas are not absolutely original, though they are quite different from those normally held by the right wing in certain parts of Spain. Commenting on Gustave Hervé’s thesis, according to which any renewal of French politics must be based on the principles of universal suffrage and the republic, Maurras claims that it would have to begin by eliminating the republic, but ensuring the continued existence of universal suffrage: “Universal suffrage must not be touched”. In the interest of literal faithfulness, we will repeat the original French: “Il ne faut pas toucher au suffrage universel.”

Obviously, this does not mean that Maurras has turned into a supporter of democratic government or the parliamentary system. He believes that universal suffrage must be kept, but he also believes that its sphere of competence must change. According to his theory, suffrage must tend to represent the nation, but not to direct it. As can be seen, he aims to take those elected by the suffrage and form not a sovereign parliament, but a representative organ that is linked to the leading political institution, at the head of which Maurras places the king. In this Maurras shows himself to be much more realistic than some out of date politicians who still consider it possible today to suppress universal suffrage or to substitute it by any of the discredited formulas which attempt to make the manifestation of popular will vanish.

Quite apart from its legitimacy or intrinsic value, the formula “one man, one vote” can undoubtedly count on a collective consciousness, which these days is clearly

in its favour. This principle must be both natural and just for it to have become so predominant in the opinion of the people as quickly and as thoroughly as it has. Were there no other reasons to defend universal suffrage, one would have to bear in mind the decisive and very powerful argument that nowadays people would not willingly accept being dispossessed of this instrument of democratic power.

Now that we have started commenting some of Carles Maurras' interesting words, let us continue in the same vein with some others from the same article, which are just as interesting. Having made the essential point that the republic needs to be dispensed with, Maurras goes on to say that it must be removed from the position it occupies at present – that is to say, at the pinnacle of the state – and be instated where it does not currently reach: professional bodies and municipal and regional corporations. Thus, Maurras turns out to be in favour of organizing society and the state along republican lines, but under the supreme leadership of a monarchy. The state would therefore be a group of republics presided over by the king.

Let us be under no illusions about the practical implications of the reform that Maurras proposes. According to his wishes, democracy would no longer control the key questions of state. But in all other questions, not only is he in favour of republican organization, he believes that universal suffrage is untouchable as the basis for achieving the true representation of the people.

Evidently, the right and the left, in the form of conservatives, radicals and revolutionaries, are to be found everywhere. But it is sad to see that in some parts of the Iberian Peninsula these ways of thinking are often disconnected from Europe and the current times. This is symptomatic of a certain isolation and spiritual backwardness, and it justifies, within the world of politics and ideas, the harsh judgments handed out by certain foreign and even some Iberian critics. At a time when all the conservatives and people on the right in Europe and America basically accept universal suffrage, in the Iberian Peninsula there are still hoarse voices calling for the suppression or mutilation of one of the definitive conquests of modern liberty.

The criterion of quality in voting

It is easy to denigrate the criterion of quantity applied to universal suffrage. But when this criterion is put to one side, and the criterion of quality is adopted, in principle, those in favour of the latter begin to feel uncomfortable. What practical formula must be used to establish differences of quality when citizens vote in an election? Men's capacity, value or honesty clearly cannot be graded or measured objectively. A rigorous criterion for gauging quality would oblige us to provide every man with a different electoral power. Seeing that this is not possible, those in favour of the criterion of quality reject checking capacities and human values directly and individually, and prefer instead to focus on what could be called outward signs.

One qualitative method is so-called plural voting. In this system, instead of the usual single vote, certain categories of citizens are given two, three or even more votes. Grounds for granting plural voting are being in possession of professional titles or academic qualifications, or being wealthy or of a certain class or social status. According to the criterion of cultural level, a simple citizen would have one vote; but a person with a secondary education, for example, would have two, and a university graduate three. The criterion of wealth relates voting rights to a person's fortune or the taxes they pay. And particularly popular in France is the family criterion, by which fathers of families will have more votes than bachelors.

If we examine these criteria, we will see that they are no guarantee of success, nor are they particularly fair. The case of illiterate people clearly shows that criteria of quality lack a solid base. Many who can read are – to use a popular expression – second-level illiterates. These people tend to be less intelligent and practical than the vast majority of true illiterates. Anyone can put this to the test by comparing a few peasant farmers who do not know how to read or write with low-skilled workers who are just about able to write a letter or read a newspaper. The comparison favours the

first group. Moreover, there is a cruel injustice in the state excluding illiterate people from having the vote, or giving them fewer votes than others, when, after all, the state itself is more often than not to blame for the existence of illiteracy. By the same measure, holding an academic or professional qualification is no guarantee of a higher level of intelligence, as it is frequently the result of the privilege of the wealthy, who can afford to spend their adolescence and youth studying, while people of more humble origins are obliged to spend theirs working.

If the criterion of quality based on education and studies is lacking in fairness and justice, the criterion based on wealth and tax payments is even more lacking. Today it seems an affront to human dignity to provide the wealthy with a voting privilege, on top of all the other social privileges they still enjoy. Amongst other things it goes against the tendency of social levelling, so characteristic of our times.

The quality criterion that favours the family vote hardly seems defensible either, even if it is based on a premise that is less antidemocratic and nobler than the criteria discussed above. Rather than give the male head of the family two, three, or four votes, and thus confer upon him the right to represent his wife and children politically, would it not be fairer to give the vote to women and reduce the voting age? In this way all members of the family would have a direct, personal vote, and not merely be grouped under the vote of the head of the household.

All the quality criteria alluded to here have been, and in some cases still are, put into effect within state voting systems. And anyone who has studied the issue in contemporary history and in the current political climate must recognize that applying these criteria has been the cause of much disagreement and has given rise to constitutional disputes that have almost always been resolved in favour of equal, individual and direct, universal suffrage. In truth, this suffrage is not exclusively quantitative. In material terms, one man is one vote in a ballot box. But in the many operations that precede the physical act of putting a voting slip into a ballot box, all the qualitative differences that really exist between men come into play.

Social classification

It is easy to say that people should be classified into social categories. However, it is far more easily said than done. In civilized countries, social classification always proves difficult, even impracticable in certain aspects, if one is not to resort to the expeditious classification procedures of the Bolsheviks. In all classifications there is necessarily a considerable element of arbitrariness, even in the so-called natural classifications, which are of course not the work of nature, but of man, who has fairly been described as a classifying animal.

One of the most suggestive passages in the declarations made some time ago by the leading Italian socialist D'Aragona is one in which we are made to see the practical difficulties of an electoral system based on social categories. In Spain, Vázquez Mella and Pradera went straight to the point, "There are so many social classes: for example,..." And they went on to list them forthwith: farmers, industrialists, traders, labourers, clergy, etc. These two traditionalists did not agree on either the number of different classes or their denomination. But a difficulty of this sort can easily be resolved by issuing a decree or tossing a coin.

In Italy, social classification is altogether more difficult. At least according to D'Aragona. "I declare", he said, "it is not clear to me how the corporate associations should be made up, that is the electoral body for representatives of a profession. While it is easy to subdivide workers according to their trades, for example, putting metallurgists with metallurgists, and builders with builders, it is hard to fit industrialists into organized groups or orders. Take a public limited company: would only the chief executive officer be considered an industrialist? Or, perhaps, the whole board of directors? Or, indeed, all the shareholders? On the other hand, if a given number of electors have the right to elect their work representatives, even if only indirectly, logic tells us that the workers, who are always more numerous than the employers, will always be in the majority.

Capitalists, then, will never agree to this sort of arrangement. In 1919, we began working on a similar project, and I can tell you the technical problems we came up against proved to be truly insoluble.”

What all this means is that the supposed “organic” constitution of social life is an illusion or mystification created by corporate thinkers. The application of physiological terms to society has created numerous false notions. Human society, and particularly modern society, has no organs in the sense that the word is used in physiology. It makes even less sense to say that its parts, or pieces, or layers, are sufficiently different to justify some form of natural classification.

Classification is a human, intellectual process that uses the elements provided by nature, and which mentally interprets, completes and adapts them. The assumption that suffrage can in reality be corporate or organic is a great mistake. If we want to classify the voters of a country into professional colleges, we will be obliged for the most part to rely on arbitrary processes.

Dividing readers by trade, profession or occupation these days is just as arbitrary as dividing them by districts, or by the names of the neighbourhoods in which they live. As a criterion for dividing up the electorate, topography is just as legitimate as profession, and much more practical. Barcelona’s seventh or eighth districts, for example, are just as organic and alive, from the municipal point of view, as the Guild of Cattle Farmers, or the Chamber of Urban Property.

Truth in this world

Being in possession of the truth is of great importance. But the human and social confirmation of such a glorious possession is sometimes enormously challenging. If the people in possession of the truth about this or that issue wish to impose their own convictions on others, then its purity and resplendence become a pretext for despotism and intolerance, and the source of misery and misfortune. And this is by no means the mission of truth on earth.

In society, people who are fortunate enough to possess the truth are terribly dangerous if they do not understand the virtue of tolerance in both mind and heart. Those who possess the truth run the danger of believing that they have been given the authority to impose it, and to impose themselves, even by coercion. Human coexistence is impossible, or at least uncomfortable, when the possessors of the truth insist on imposing it, because they feel obliged to use force to achieve the dominance and universal recognition of the truth that they have discovered or which has been offered them.

Social coexistence is only possible on one condition: that when the possessors of the truth emerge from the world of their speculations and individual conscience, they are prepared to admit that they might be wrong. In order to be able to live alongside those who do not possess the truth, or at least not the whole truth, those who believe they have it must behave as if they are not absolutely sure of their awe-inspiring possession. This is the cornerstone of the democratic system and the liberal state.

For every question asked about human life one man or many are in possession of the single truth, and they will defend this truth because it is fair and just. If these men are so convinced of the fairness, goodness and truth of their ideas that they attempt to impose them, by any means, because they are true, good or fair, and others resist having their ideas imposed on them, then the controlling principle of society will

primarily be a question of force. The men with the most force will win the day. And it just so happens that those who hold power in society are not always right. As we well know from real life, anti-democratic and anti-liberal doctrines do not bring about the triumph of the fairest or the best, but rather the triumph of the strongest. And the use of force can often be accompanied by poor values, defective intellectual arguments and a general lack of ethics.

Men in possession of the truth need to know how to conceal it from others, in order to play a role in society. They must be charitable enough to give others the impression that maybe they are in possession of the truth. Who in the world could act as an impartial judge in the struggle between two people or more, all of whom believe they alone know the truth? In such cases, depending on the judge, the judgement could go one way or the other. And when the judge's finding is pronounced, there is no guarantee that it will be accepted by everyone. That is why theories which have their origins in subjective truth generally degenerate until the option of the last resort, the *ultima ratio*, is taken. And we all know what that means. Such is the case of the Bolsheviks, who are in possession of the truth in Russia, and of the Fascists, who are in possession of the truth in Italy.

If a decision is to be taken at the right time, there must be someone to take it, and democracy has come up with the practical solution of the numeric principle of majorities as a basis for essential human rights. A weak principle, perhaps, an uncertain one? But as weak and uncertain as it may be, antidemocratic principles are not only similarly weak and uncertain but also arbitrary. As a general rule for human coexistence, if democratic and liberal principles are closely adhered to, they have the immense advantage of making possible general agreement and objective acceptance. It is a convention, a social pact, whether declared openly or agreed tacitly. When men with a range of opinions come together, it is possible to get them to agree on the principle of doing what most of them decide, always along the lines of certain pre-established rules. But it is impossible to get them all to agree to the principle of letting those who say they are in possession of the truth decide. People can accept the role of the majority without any civic or moral loss of face, even when the result is contrary to their opinion. But how can they accept, without any violence turned outward or inward, the indisputable will of those who claim to be in possession of the truth as the result of some privilege which is beyond the control of their fellow men.

Parliament and democracy

While it may be true that parliaments often make life difficult for governments, it is also true that, in a normal parliamentary system, there is a continuity of people and collaboration between parties that would not be possible under any other political regime. It is not only the appointed ministers who govern, but also the eminent politicians and technical experts who have acquired prestige and strong influence over the parliament and the nation. Many laws and legal provisions are thus the fruit of a collaboration that has taken place in parliamentary commissions and in the public debates during the parliamentary sessions.

The parliamentary system allows for coexistence, even between opposing parties. The opposition parties may cooperate in varying degrees in the functions of government. And a government's initial bills are often modified and notably improved thanks to the interventions of opposition groups. To a greater or lesser extent, the governance and the laws of a state in a parliamentary system are the work of all the parties and the whole range of political opinions. In these conditions, ministerial actions and legislation have greater strength and are better received by the country at large.

Examine the history of contemporary Europe, and you will see that in states with parliamentary systems a handful of men have assumed the role of managing public affairs. Changes in government, the electoral triumphs of some parties and the defeats of others have hardly ever marginalized these political leaders. They have, in varying proportions, shared out the various duties of leadership. And in grave moments of the state's existence there have developed, either inside or outside governments, concentrations of forces and abilities which together have constituted the best guarantee of success and the highest mark of the people's trust.

It is true that these advantages of the parliamentary system can be weakened or even destroyed when political life degenerates as a result of corruption. But all systems can degenerate and become corrupt, and history shows that the parliamentary system does not provide the saddest examples of degeneration and the worst examples of corruption. Be that as it may, these ills would stem from the falsification of the parliamentary regime, not from the regime itself; in which case it is not the system that must be fought, but its mystification.

Outside a parliamentary system it is very hard to guarantee the continuity of the men who direct public affairs. The stability of governments in undemocratic regimes excludes men who are against the controlling group from the functions of leadership. And, in these regimes, the collaboration between the many political and social tendencies in matters of government and legislation is not just difficult; it is impossible.

As a child born of the basic principles of democracy, parliamentarianism responds to the demands of national and social solidarity, which is the expression of the soul of the people. Other regimes are fragmentary, unilateral, and by their very nature cannot attain the highest sense of democracy in its totality.

Party spirit

In modern society, with its multiple internal divisions of a political, social, economic and religious nature, parties are an indispensable instrument for the regular practice of democracy. These parties turn – or at least should try to turn – the great amorphous and indistinguishable mass, which is variable and barely comprehensible, into a clearly diversified whole, apt for the expression of political leanings and the manifestation of the collective will. If this mass is not previously separated into parties, the concepts of the people and public opinion are words that make no sense.

But the multi-party system, which has no substitute in a democracy, is exposed to a grave danger: the excessive growth in party spirit. On those occasions when democratic states have teetered and foundered, this excess has been the cause.

Within democracy – a unique formula for political totality – the parties are separated by their ideas and interests but they must still share some common ground: a sense of solidarity. No matter how big the differences are of class, race, ideas and beliefs between the parties and the social groups, they must still be tied together; a force for cohesion must be at work. This uniting but not unitary bond is, basically, the sharing of a feeling that can embrace all the groups and all the people of the state. A feeling for the homeland has fulfilled this mission for centuries. But, in the last instance, the supreme bond would be a feeling for justice and respect for all people.

The excessive growth of party spirit in many places has often led to the party becoming the dominant factor, either through passion or interest. The state, the homeland, society as a whole, even justice, have sometimes found political parties to be not their servants nor instruments, but rather their rivals. Far too frequently the selfish interests of a party have been placed above social and patriotic solidarity. The part has not wanted to subordinate itself to the whole. Party versus totality: this is the formula that produces the crisis which we are talking about.

In this way the democratic system cannot become fully consolidated. And in those countries in which the establishment of democracy in modern times has been more due to copying the international example rather than to a process of internal development of its own, consolidation will be an even greater problem. Democracy wanted to turn the social, local and personal groups of the old regimes into channelled forces of opinion – that is the function of the parties. And it turns out that in some states, modern parties have degenerated into old-style bands. In fact, these pseudo-parties, with their uncontrolled desires, their animosity and selfishness, have repeatedly damaged and compromised the highest interests, the health and even the very life of the social body.

Worst of all, this party game has not ceased or diminished even when democratic institutions and human liberties are in peril. The Great War re-created the bond of solidarity among classes and parties in the countries which took part. But afterwards that bond has weakened again, and the vices of party politics have returned. Often, neither the threat nor the reality of danger to all has been enough to stop the struggle on the edge of the precipice. Only the blind or madmen fight in such places. As children of democracy, many parties have fulfilled their filial duties very poorly.

Mysticism and democracy

Not long ago Louis Rougier published an article on the mystical nature of democracy. It is an interesting study, thoroughly documented, well written, brilliant in parts, but also unfocussed, often confusing and of limited doctrinal value. Rougier's basic thesis is that faith in democracy is a mystical belief, and its fundamentals are therefore neither demonstrable, rational nor historical. This is only partly true. There is a mystical element in democracy. But not everything in democracy is mystical.

Let us see how Louis Rougier defines mysticism. He says, 'Mysticism is a set of beliefs which cannot be justified either by reason or experience, but which is imposed by the voice of authority, by example, by habit, by prejudice, by interest, and in particular because it expresses and sanctions the sentimental aspirations and passionate tendencies of the individual or a collective, in such a way that they must be exteriorized in feeling.' The definition is a little long, but it is interesting and quite well orientated.

It is true that among the people, democracy is mystical. All great ideas take on a mystical quality when they nourish the soul of great collectivities. But mysticism not only refers to those things that cannot be demonstrated by reason and experience; it also refers to those things that can be demonstrated but which become so firmly rooted in the heart of the people that no demonstration is required. This is the case of democratic principles. When doctrines reach the masses, they have been transformed into passion and mystical power. The mystical nature of democracy is proof, not of its falsity, but rather of its sentimental power. Similarly, reason and experience confirm, if not the mystical faith of democracy, at least its predominant advantages.

As a whole, Rougier's work does not stand up. It amounts to a repetition of facile criticisms against the principles of democracy. And we call these criticisms facile because democracy does indeed have disputable points in theory and some weak points

in practice. The difficulty comes in providing a theoretical and practical demonstration that there is a better system.

So it is not surprising, then, that when Louis Rougier moves on from his criticisms of democracy to expound the future regime of his preference, he does little more than describe the privileged situation of a group of intellectuals in a hierarchical, corporate society. The poor quality and emptiness of this part of the study is the best proof of the goodness – relative though it is – of the democratic system. People feel this goodness, history shows it, and reason demonstrates it.

One before many

Once Lenin was dead, so was his authority over the Bolshevik state and his prestige among the Russian proletariat, both of which he had used to quell all squabbles and attempts at dissidence, and the disagreement between Trotsky and the now dominant group finally broke out publicly. This divergence was both doctrinal and personal. Trotsky's strong personality did not allow him to consider playing a secondary role among his companions, who had become distanced from him on some points of considerable importance. And most of the leading bloc, none of whose members came close to being able to take over from Trotsky, found it unacceptable that he should impose himself.

Apart from the interest this problem may have in the specific case of Russia, it is worth pointing out its general interest. If we examine this particular conflict carefully from a broader perspective, we will find it repeats a historical situation which has recurred ever since there have been states in the world, and even since before states existed. In effect, it concerns the struggle between the personal power of an individual and the strength of a group of people who together constitute the organs of official leadership at the highest level. To formulate this conflict in modern terms, we could call it the conflict between the individual and the committee.

Anyone interested in the so-called laws of history and in the phenomena of individual and collective psychologies well knows the tendency for this type of rivalry among men, classes and parties. When a man feels a driving energy within, he tends to impose his own will upon the organizations of states and groups. This is the case of the superman. For the superman – and here we use the word not in the Nietzschean sense, but in the sense of one possessed of exceptional qualities for taking action – the play between organs of government and other representative bodies, in a democracy or an oligarchy, is a mere stumbling block. Every time a nation or a group has to cope with

the appearance of a man of this sort, the collective system begins to tremble, and often collapses. Or perhaps all that remains is the outer shell, while what really collapses is the internal structure.

For example, Napoleon received some advice and guidance during his time in power but it was he who governed and led France. All the advisory bodies and boards, all the consultative and executive organs, were nothing more than mere shadows which gave the false impression of outer legality to the uncontested power of the true dictator.

To some extent, Lenin was the Napoleon of Soviet Russia. It was he who directed the state, and imposed direction and action. The complex set of councils, boards and committees only served to channel Lenin's will and to put into effect his supreme decisions. In the times of Lenin, Soviet Russia was in fact directed by the power of a single person, by an individual gifted with an all-absorbing potential for action.

However, not all individuals with ambitions to become supermen have the necessary qualities to dominate their fellows so successfully. However valuable Trotsky is, he is not as valuable as Lenin. Trotsky is, above all, an organizer, and organization is a technique. Lenin was a political creator, and creation arises from the pure power of the soul. The imposing figure of Lenin towered over the committees and converted them into humble organs of service. But once they found themselves faced not with a Lenin, but with a Trotsky, the Soviet committeemen stood up to him victoriously.

If willpower always went hand in hand with moral rectitude and the intense clarity of thought born of intelligence, then the actions of a superman could be beneficial in practice. But there is no guarantee that these qualities coincide. In contrast, what happens sometimes is that lack of adequate intellectual and moral standing increases the power to act and impose. And then the superman is a force of evil and the cause of historic catastrophes.

At the same time, such cases produce drama of impressive dimensions. The dramatic magnitude of men or events can by no means be regarded as a justification or an excuse for their errors or shortcomings. But we do recognise that the difference between great men and those who merely aspire to be supermen is that all trace of greatness disappears in the latter, and their history is nothing more than a laughable caricature or a poor attempt by a second-rater.

II

Liberalism

The diversity of ideas and beliefs

Beyond the racial characteristics and specific issues of individual nations, civilized people today share the same ideas, trends and forces which are a response to the profound reality of universal questions. As well as national evolution, there is in the world a human evolution. In addition to its specific characteristics, a nation has universal elements which form the community of human lineage and these are the essential foundations of civilization. It would be just as fatal for a people if their specific characteristics were to erode or disappear as it would if the universal elements were to do the same.

The nations that are part of contemporary European civilization (including the American branch, which is only separated from it geographically) share what we might call a political, social, religious and moral overview which in its main features is basically the same. All these nations are characterized by the political left and right, the struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, and a range of diverse individual and collective positions on the questions of religion and morals. In different proportions, and depending on their historical evolution and the influences they have received, all around there are reactionaries and revolutionaries, progressives and conservatives, reformers and traditionalists, orthodoxies and heterodoxies.

Whatever our personal preferences are, it must be admitted that these struggles and this multiplicity of trends are a particular and distinctive feature of our time. The greatest spiritual revolution to take place since the spread of Christianity is that of the freedom of the spirit. And although in the practical life of society or the state it is not absolute, this freedom is the basic postulate of social coexistence in our times.

It is impossible, then, for a modern society to experience a unity of ideas and feelings about the issues alluded to above. There might be a predominant trend or belief, but not unanimity. If in theory unanimity of opinion on a particular idea may

appear to be a very positive thing, in practice it seems obvious that the absence of diversity of opinion on some of these issues would be more a symptom of sickness. In contemporary society, it is inconceivable that everyone would be on the same side on these issues, and that there would be a difference of opinion.

Given that the diversity of ideas and trends is a universal characteristic of contemporary societies, everyone who attempts to convert others to their cause must also objectively accept the variety of ideas. There can be nothing more harmful to the solidarity of a contemporary people than when someone tries to cast all its individual members in the same mould. As history is our witness, any attempts to do so can only be explained by the inhuman aberration of those who preach the violent and coercive imposition of their ideas and beliefs.

A contemporary society must normally have all the elements, all the political, social, moral and religious trends that lie at the heart of contemporary civilization as a whole. From the double perspective of the ethnic and the universal, no-one can use their own beliefs to demand that another be excluded for having different ones. They must, however, believe in solidarity among peoples, and value those differentiating characteristics which make these peoples vital and distinctive elements of humanity as a whole.

Those on the right should not want leftist tendencies to disappear. Those on the left should not want rightist tendencies to disappear. Both should want all the tendencies of the contemporary world to manifest in their people, contained only by the limits of mutual respect and a sense of ethnic brotherhood.

Two equivalent formulas

Whether they hold right- or left-wing views, men who are anti-liberal use their respective anti-ethical formulas to achieve the same result: namely, the negation of the liberty of others. We all know the right-wing anti-liberal's formula by heart: 'Liberty for good and for truth, yes; liberty for evil and for falsehood, no.' These men make their own definition of what is good and bad, falsehood or truth, so their formula means that they and those that share their opinions must enjoy liberty, while there is to be no such liberty for those who think differently.

No-one, except perhaps certain mad theorists, assumes that liberty should know no limits. Liberal doctrine on the limits of liberty is well-known. We do not need to go over these concepts, which are the cradle song of modern liberal thinking. But the sense of the aforementioned anti-liberal formula is clear enough, especially in the mouths of that vast majority who use it for their controversial and doctrinal needs.

Unlike this rightwing formula, the anti-liberal leftist formula is not so well-known. It should be pointed out that the latter could adopt exactly the same formula as the right-wing, only to interpret the concepts of good and evil, truth and falsehood, in the opposite way. But the typical anti-liberal left-wing formula is another thing, different on the outside, the same inside. It is this: 'There is no liberty against liberty'. This blunt statement, engraved in stone, deserves to be put in a beautiful gold frame. It was invented by certain French radicals or radical-socialists a few decades ago. According to this principle, those who do not accept liberty as it has been defined in modern times cannot be free. Similarly, one could say: 'There is no justice against those who do not respect justice,' in other words, against delinquents. Thus, both Christian feeling and the liberal spirit are simultaneously negated. The two formulas are equivalent.

In themselves, neither of these formulas would be very dangerous were it not for the fact that they are underpinned by intolerance, fanaticism, hate for Reds and Whites. The evolution of modern society tends more and more to the variety of ideas, beliefs and opinions. Without a broad and true spirit of liberty, social coexistence would not be possible. Those who might wish to re-create certain uniformities of thought or conscience among the peoples of today would have to exterminate all those who oppose them. And the history of persecutions, which amounts to almost half of the history of the world, shows that it is not so easy to achieve this insane purpose even with this method.

Whoever said that liberty is a condition of the spirit was stating a profound truth. It is a state of the spirit that is tied to one's normal emotional state. It seems unnecessary, from this point of view, to discuss whether liberty is a means or an end for mankind. Gabriel Alomar has argued eloquently that it is an end. Our worthy friend who speaks from the portico of *La Paraula Cristiana* argues that it is only a means to an end. Whether a means or a goal – or a means and a goal at the same time – liberty of the spirit is necessary for all people, because it is one of the most obvious indications of our superiority to other animals. Not to enjoy this liberty is sad. Not to feel its absence is much sadder still.

What is deplorable and abominable is not the diversity of beliefs and feelings, which is after all consecrated in the Bible, in the sense that God gave the world over to human dispute. What is deplorable and abominable is the attempt to show that those who think or feel differently are inferior, even if only intellectually or morally. This is a characteristic sign of fanaticism and intolerance. The Inquisition, the expulsion of the infidels, and persecutory or prohibitive legislation are not the only manifestations of this type of spiritual sickness. The vexation of the spirit is just as abusive as those forms of coercion: and it involves not only contempt for the different beliefs or opinions in themselves, but for the people who hold them. Those who feel this contempt, no matter how subtle, are not fit to live with others within a society or nation, no matter how much effort they make to appear to be tolerant. These restrained fanatics are the genuinely inquisitorial spirits; and if they do not call for the bonfires of purification or defend their use, it is for reasons of historical opportunism or lack of courage.

In the Iberian Peninsula, this spirit still manifests itself with certain frequency. Particularly in some geographical areas, the medieval concept of religion still persists. In this sense, there is a sharp contrast with religious elements in other countries in Europe and America. It must be said that the nuances of Iberian Catholicism are no purer than the nuances from abroad, with which we are familiar. And the distinctive characteristics of the nuances of Iberian Catholicism add little of any worth to its intellectual and moral credit.

For this reason, we feel a strong sense of rejection every time these nuances show their colours close at hand. And if those who fall into this erroneous way of thinking have pretensions to an autochthonous ethnicity, then the situation is even sadder.

And after some local Catholic elements we know have revealed their spiritual identity in the pages of *El Siglo Futuro*, *El Debate* and *Razón i Fe*, the only conclusions that can be drawn are painful ones.

By the same token, we celebrate the emergence of manifestations of a spirit of coexistence and breadth of thinking among some elements of Iberian Catholicism, which are of considerable number and quality. Such an attitude does not imply abdication, or turning one's inner fervour into a lukewarm conviction. All it implies is a rejection of the inhuman aberrations of human faith.

The future of liberalism

Has liberalism failed in the field of politics? Will we see the liberal concept of the state disappear in the midst of the struggles between the concepts of the extreme right and the extreme left? This problem has been addressed in a substantial and very moderate article in the *Journal de Genève*, and in a note by Benedetto Croce in his magazine, *La Critica*. Both pieces not only defend liberalism from a theoretical point of view, but also provide an invincible sense of hope for the future of liberal principles. It would not be appropriate here to go into a long discourse on the different meanings of the terms 'liberalism'. We are sure that our readers will understand well enough which definition both we and the illustrious writers mentioned above are referring to. However it is defined and distinguished, the citizens of the modern world clearly understand and feel what liberty is. The theories that attempt to do away with liberty and, in order to do so, begin by denying it and claiming it to be an empty concept, a thing with no existence, will never be able to remove from people's souls the aspiration to individual and collective liberty.

The author of the *Journal de Genève* article notes that the great catastrophes in history, and above all the bloody, devastating wars, are followed by periods of crisis in which more instinctive impulses – which we would classify as authoritarian or anarchic – erupt violently and for some considerable time come to dominate liberalism, the product of a lengthy historical development and the flower of the human spirit. Thus, anti-liberal systems could be said to be neurotic in their origin. They are the result of the impact of pain, deprivation, hatred and desire on humankind's weak soul. When normality returns, and the turbulent waters return to their usual peaceful levels, extremism retreats and liberalism in all its nuances once again becomes a dominant force. The outcries and sophistries of liberalism's enemies cannot destroy the fact that liberalism characterizes those periods in which people's judgement has been clearest,

their will strongest and their feelings least primitive. For this reason, as Croce says, liberalism is the party of culture. An intelligent, cultivated person must be liberal, in the best sense of the word.

The eminent Italian philosopher goes on to say that the prophecy that liberalism will have no role in future history and the struggle will be between communism or exclusively economic socialism on the one hand and reactionary forces or fascism on the other has no doctrinal value. And if it has no doctrinal value, could it become a historical reality? As Croce observes, prophecies such as this one are often cruelly and sarcastically exposed as false by reality itself.

Benedetto Croce comments on Italian fascism's well-known inability to discover and implant new state institutions that are essentially different from those created under liberalism. Using nationalist ideas of the sort put forward by Federzoni, Italian fascists declared that they were going to substitute the liberal state with a national state. In this attempt they have clearly failed, despite the doctrinal and practical efforts of the Commissions of Fifteen and of Eighteen, as the director of *La Critica* describes so ironically. Croce claims that the fascists' national state is nothing other than the liberal state governed, even violated, by a political party.

The fact that the rise of anti-liberal principles has coincided with catastrophes and collective neuroses is sufficient reason for us to distrust their essential value. Those tendencies that come to the fore in times of social sickness can be reasonably considered unhealthy. A serene, intelligent person, with a sense of justice, is liberal, and liberalism springs from the best part of the soul. That is why, to quote Benedetto Croce, liberalism is the party of culture.

Liberals and socialists

Some years ago, Benedetto Croce joined the Italian Liberal Party. After his brilliant defence of liberalism, the illustrious philosopher wished to apply his ideology in practice. He who had never belonged to any political group reacted to Italy's predicament by deciding to enter the turbulent waters of party politics.

Benedetto Croce's decision more or less coincided with the elections in Belgium, which confirmed the tendency already seen in the British elections for the polarization of political forces into a conservative right wing and a workers' left wing, to the detriment of liberalism. The liberal parties of Belgium, England and other countries gradually shrank in size, while the bourgeois right and the workers' left grew. Had the Italian philosopher, then, made a mistake by so clearly proclaiming his liberalism, which was so different from both reactionism and socialism? Would his eulogy of liberalism be the swan-song of the school of thought that had presided over the political developments of the nineteenth century? Would the writers of liberalism's obituary, rather than its apologists, turn out to be right?

The current phenomena that have a direct effect on liberalism are complex, and some distinctions need to be made if the problem is to be seen clearly. In Croce's repeated defence of liberalism from the pages of *La Critica*, the very broad sense he gives to the word covers ideological liberalism, political liberalism and economic liberalism, as if they were the same thing. And in the light of recent events, it can be seen that the present and future of each of these aspects of liberalism have their own distinctive features, which in turn makes any argument that closely identifies the three seem sophistical and confusing.

When the election figures showed that English and Belgian liberalism were in decline, a whole host of commentators appeared to proclaim liberalism was dead! As we see it, these funereal claims are quite exaggerated. The truth is that in recent years

liberalism has lost the support of the working-class masses and part of the bourgeoisie, who live in fear of socialism and soviet socialism in particular; thus, support is now limited to that part of bourgeoisie that is more open and cultivated. Those who are in politics to get elected, and who with this excuse adopt an antidemocratic position, do not realize that its political defeats are increasingly converting liberalism into the select party. Benedetto Croce's claim that liberalism is the party of culture is truer now than ever before.

Moreover, the weakening of liberal parties does not imply the end of the principles which sustain them. Ideological and political liberalism is not dead, nor is it threatened by the advance of socialism. Socialists are as much liberals and democrats as those who bear these titles, and in many cases more so. Within the workers' movement, the mortal enemies of liberalism and democracy are the Soviets, the Bolsheviks, who call themselves Communists. These people have enjoyed no important success in either England or Belgium. They have, however, in France and Germany.

What is well and truly dead is economic liberalism, as it was understood by eighteenth-century doctrinaires. It is true that the trend towards statism, which is generally speaking socialist, has suffered some defeats and in various countries strong currents of reaction have emerged against such socializing programmes, especially in social and economic questions. But today this is not so much a question of principles as a question of degree. To a greater or lesser extent, liberal parties, conservative parties and right-wing parties have all adopted statist programmes. Pure economic liberalism is a principle that is no longer defended by anyone in state politics.

Claims that political liberalism is dead are even less appropriate if one bears in mind that much of socialism has developed strong reformist tendencies, such that in today's terms there is very little difference between a radical liberal party and such socialist parties as the English Labour Party, the Belgian Workers' Party, the French Socialist Party, or the Italian United Socialist Party. All the essentials of liberalism are today upheld by reformist socialism. If this movement is not drawn in by extremist workers' parties, it will come to occupy a place very close to that of liberal radicalism. There is, therefore, no justification for arguing that the weakening of liberal parties and the growth of socialist parties are symptoms of the eclipse of the principles of liberty.

Swings of the pendulum

There is a story about a Cuban negro who was officially set free when slavery was abolished. "You're no longer a slave! You're free now!" he was told. "In that case", he answered, "now the slaves must be the white folks!" And when they told him that this was not so, that there would be no more slaves from now on – neither blacks, nor whites, nor Cuban mulattos – the negro was profoundly disappointed. "That's not fair!" he cried. "We black folks have been slaves of the whites for centuries. Now, for the same amount of time, the white folks should be the slaves of the blacks!"

That is the logic of a slave; but it is a logic. And it must be admitted that it is essentially the logic that is used by many people, and not just by those who are black, but by those who are yellow, white and copper-coloured, too. Do we not constantly hear how, for example, the excesses of Bolshevism are justified by the previous excesses of the Tsars? Do we not hear how Italian fascism is defended in the same way by the argument about the previous excesses of the extremist Italian workers?

Invoking this logic is extremely dangerous, for it is, as we have seen, the logic of slavery. If this theory were to prevail, people and states would be forever subject to the swings of a pendulum – now the excesses of the right, now the excesses of the left, but never the equilibrium of stability and justice.

We would not deny that this swinging to and fro is, to some extent, one of the true laws of history. When a rope is pulled too much to one side, there is a risk that, if released, it will swing violently in the opposite direction, with an energy proportionate to the tension under which it was held previously. But people of justice and reason – who in our civilisation are respectively Christians and liberals – must make an effort to combat or at least reduce as much as possible these historical actions and reactions, the result of such base aspects of the human spirit as the law of talion. And the best way to avoid such anti-liberal and anti-Christian swings of the pendulum, to the right or to

the left, is for everyone to set an example themselves, and not to demand it, usually at the top of their voices, only of others. A period of broad civil and religious freedom is more efficient at laying to rest the spirit of imposition and intolerance than all the laws of extortion and exception, which merely prepare for a future swing to the other side.

All in all, a choice must be made between the logic of the Cuban negro, on the one hand, and Christian feelings and liberal spirit, on the other. People can live together under a system of mutual respect and consolidated freedom, with all the natural limitations and human imperfections that this implies, or set up a system of fixed turn-taking, of power of whites over blacks and then blacks over whites.

The procession of progress

The simplistic idea of human progress symbolized as a moving train has been completely discredited these days. The only spirits continuing to believe this myth of uninterrupted, constant progress are those still living off the dregs of an eighteenth-century belief in progress, born of the vulgarisation of science, and which, when stale, is one of the least sensible things in the world. To find progressionists of this sort today, you must search among the repositories of living mummies.

However, although this old-fashioned belief in progress must be recognized as false and extremely puerile, does the idea of progress itself necessarily have to be denied? After careful consideration, human progress is far from straightforward. After many millennia of human existence and many centuries of history, doubt should be cast on whether humanity has even progressed at all. Have we or have we not progressed since the Stone Age? One might think the answer would be very easy, and that the reality of progress would be in evidence all around us. However, the issue is not clear, at least not in a simplistic way. And it does not take a mind especially given to paradoxical thinking to find philosophical, social, moral and scientific arguments against the theory of progress.

In truth, human evolution is a highly complex phenomenon. The idea that we advance, towards the light, towards the heights, towards perfection, in a straight line – or even in a spiral, as some claim – is completely mistaken. Material progress in the sciences can be more or less reduced to one of these geometrical images. By contrast, spiritual progress is a tissue of contradictions, of steps forwards and backwards. If we were to represent this spiritual movement – or rather the many successive and simultaneous movements of humankind – in the form of a geometrical shape, we would end up not with a drawing but with a tangled mess.

Be that as it may, it is always useful to try to schematise human evolution, even if the scheme is heavily simplified. The difficulty resides in finding an image which, despite the simplification of its lines, is intelligible without being false. Neither a straight line, nor a curve, nor a dotted line, nor a combination of these, nor even a spiral is good for the job. In fact, a linear diagram is of no use at all. Much better for our purposes is the image offered by a French politician, a man of the centre and a mediocre theorist: Charles Benoist, the “Father of Proportional Representation”, a parliamentarian who, as soon as he had lost the elections, discovered a terrible illness called “electoritis”.

The image of human progress suggested by Charles Benoist is more ingenious and telling than his discovery of the illness alluded to. In a speech, Benoist reaffirmed his faith in the reality of human progress, and to explain the contradictions he found in it, he made a comparison with a procession that takes place annually in Luxembourg. It is a very slow procession; all those participating in it, from the people holding sacred images, and the flag-bearers, to those carrying candles, move to a monotonous rhythm which consists of taking two steps forwards and then one step back. In order to advance one step, three steps are taken. At certain moments, the whole procession goes backwards. Despite everything, the procession runs its slow course. And so it is with human progress.

The flood wall

Two steps forwards, and one step back... the procession is an allegory which gives us a simplified though true idea of how human progress works. The essential truth of this rhythm can be demonstrated in a fairly simple way: by studying earlier phases of history, if possible their origins. If we compare a past period of regress with a similar contemporary period, we will see clearly that the latter period does not regress as much as the former. Maximum levels of barbarity are getting lower and lower, even if, unfortunately, they are still too high.

The net gain of these historical swings can be seen in the freedom of the spirit. In truly European society, freedom of thought and conscience does not suffer from the terrible eclipses which were characteristic of the Middle Ages. Neither Fascism nor Bolshevism – the latter being more anti-liberal than the former – has reached the extremes of, for example, the persecution of the Cathars or Albigensians in the Italy and southern France of the 12th and 13th centuries. Nowadays we would fail to find anyone – except for some bloodthirsty madman – calling for a repression of heterodox thinkers of the kind put into practice by the reputable Simon de Montfort, whom a modern French clergyman, Dom H. Leclercq, a Benedictine friar of Farnborough Abbey, has described as one of the most disgraceful pirates of medieval times.

When the horrors of other ages are criticized, those who wish to excuse them or play them down use the argument of the difference between epochs, and the different moral and social environments of the times. In this allegation lies the recognition of the progress made. Some things of medieval or even ancient times could make their reappearance. But the highest flood levels of those times will not return in ours, nor in the foreseeable future.

In certain towns and cities, on a wall near a river, there is often a line to indicate the highest level reached by the flood waters at that place, an event still remembered

with sadness today. Every time the River Seine bursts its banks in winter, the Paris newspapers publish photographs of bridges, with lines indicating the height of previous floods. So it is that in the history of mankind, which is a great and unsettled river that overflows time and again; floods continue to occur and with each one the waters cover part of the land reclaimed for agriculture or building houses. But on that ideal wall the highest flood levels recorded tend to be on the decline.

Two steps forward, and one step back... This is the rhythm, with some minor variations which make it less monotonous and more dramatic, that human society has followed, from the Stone Age to the Age of Reinforced Concrete. Not only is each period of regress shorter than the previous period of progress, but each nasty backslide is the prelude to a future advance, which, even if it does not lead to the earthly paradise of the Utopians, at least it distances us a little more from the highest levels of barbarity that history reveals to us and which prehistory only allows us to guess at.

The lordship of man

We must take care, my friends, when talking about the influence of biological and economic forces on the lives of people and nations. We must take care before establishing the fatal or unavoidable nature of these forces. If we do not, we may jump to the wrong conclusion. For some time now, it has been fashionable to justify certain, social facts – in the broad sense of the term – by arguments from biology or economics. “That is a biological fact!” say some. “That is an economic fact!” say others. What such expressions mean to imply is that there is no other solution but to hang one’s head in resignation.

The theory of incontrovertible biological and economic facts has gone a little too far, and is likely to go even further. It is worthy of close consideration. If we give this, we will soon realise the theory is fairly empty. Nobody needs to deny the force of biological and economic facts. But these facts are missing two elements: rationality and morality. Neither biology nor economics are based on rational or ethical principles. They are mere brute forces. In a speech to the Society of Nations, M. Painlevé warned the national representatives of so-called “economic necessities”. He said in Geneva that if the brutality of economic forces – his expression – were not controlled, they would soon break through the barriers of international conventions and lead the world to a new catastrophe, worse than all previous ones.

Fascism and Bolshevism are full of this submission to universal, amoral forces, which act upon our lives, individually and collectively. Often such fatalism filters into other areas of politics and society. Even here in Catalonia, some time ago, there were groups of intellectuals who paid homage to biology and economics. Philosophers, literary figures, and politicians have bowed down to these gods – ancient idols which have been repainted again and again through the centuries. There was a desire to impose biological and economic factors on rational and ethical considerations. And

for this reason, liberal and democratic tendencies, which are flowers of reason and will, had fallen into disrepute and were considered by many as ideas from the impoverished nineteenth century.

This biological and economic superstition, whose most faithful modern exponents have been the Germans and the fans of all things German, managed to subject the finest part of every person and mankind in general to the most primitive and instinctual part of the human make-up. The history of civilisation is the struggle of reason and moral conscience against the brutality of biological impulse and the rigidity of natural and economic phenomena. A civilised human being is one who ensures the authority of reason and ethics over the instinctive brutality of one's own temperament and over the injustices and miseries that are brought to the life of society when selfishness is given free rein. To the extent that they contradict reason and will, biology and economics have no right to be considered intangible. Without a doubt, those who avoid the issue by closing their eyes are mere dreamers, powerless to change the state of things and the course of future events. By paying attention to the adverse and unfair, by bearing them very much in mind, we must be prepared to fight against ugliness and sadness in what is effectively an unending struggle: namely, the most beautiful and noble battle of life itself. Reason and moral sense are what make human beings truly superior, and what gives them the right to their high lordship over the earth.

Advanced man

It so happens that some of the more radical left-wing workers' parties are politically anti-liberal and anti-democratic. There is still the prejudicial belief that those whose opinions are most radical are more to the political left. Those who defend the more extreme solutions to society's problems are generally considered to be more "advanced" than others. This is a question that deserves calm and careful consideration.

From our point of view, the truly advanced person must be essentially liberal. Forms of radicalism and extremism do not necessarily represent an advance in any psychological or ideological sense. Frequently, the violent aspect of a political trend owes more to the drive of primitive instincts. How can we claim that a man moved by such instincts is in any way advanced? It must also be borne in mind that holding a series of ideas or inclinations which are in agreement with one's personal interests, or are shared with a group of like thinkers or with one's own class, does not necessarily imply any advance. The fact that a worker agrees with drastic solutions because he believes they will improve his lot is no sign of sentimental or mental progress, and we would go so far as to say that it has not merit at all. The reasons which turn these workers into Red extremists are the same as the ones that turn many bosses into White extremists. Many such extremist tendencies are impregnated with a deep selfishness.

Liberalism is completely different. We might say that liberalism is civilisation's political formula. Liberal ideas, and we use liberal in its political sense here, are the result of a spiritual process, and they constitute individual and social progress. Throughout history, liberalism has represented real progress. A liberal person is an advanced person. While we can find forms of extremism in the furthest epochs of history, liberal forms are the product of human civilisation.

Instincts and interests all affect whether one is an individualist or a socialist, a conservative or a revolutionary. Deep down, these positions frequently obey selfish

motives. The only truly altruistic position is that of the liberal, a person who defends certain rights and advantages not only for himself but also for other groups and social classes.

An evaluation of the various tendencies which struggle in the contemporary world reveals that the loftiest, the most advanced, is liberalism. That is why we claim that the liberal person is advanced, and that is why we would argue that right- and left-wing tendencies should be classified on the basis of the degree of liberalism that each individual and group displays. Extremists can be found in all political directions. The direction of the left, the authentic left, is that of liberalism. Non-liberals should not describe themselves or be described as being left wing, no matter how radical, and extremist they be.

Would it not be more exact and clearer to use the terms "right" and "left" in the sense they enjoyed in the last century, which is the same sense that they have, or have had until now, for the average person?

Without respect for the principles of liberty, there would be no authentic left-wing politics. People who believe that the emphasis on worker radicalism brings about stronger left-wing thinking show that they have no notion of the word itself. In order to demonstrate the truth of this, it is useful to recall that the trajectory of right- and left-wing forms of radicalism often used to be represented by a geometric shape: the circle. Those which go too far to the left actually turn back to the right, and reach a point of contact with those which go too far in the opposite direction. This is exactly what is expressed by the well-known saying: extremes eventually meet.

Do not think that this is mere word play. It is much more important and profound than this, and affects all our ideas and mental structures. As we see it, the main cause of the crisis in liberal and democratic doctrines, which before the war advanced triumphantly across Europe and America, is the fact that the mass of workers have separated their class demands from their political principles. Such emphasis has been put on worker radicalism that the limits of human liberty have almost been infringed. This has destroyed the confluence of the more advanced elements of the bourgeoisie and socialist parties, and has reinforced the conservatism of many, not to say all, of the employers and the well-to-do. In our opinion, the association of the terms "leftist" and "anti-liberal" is an unacceptable paradox.

In his attack on the workers and particularly on Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Lloyd George vindicated the term "liberalism". The head of the Liberals warned the head of the Labour party that the word "liberalism" could not die or be eclipsed, because it more accurately represented the direction of progress than the term "socialist". When socialism has passed on, liberalism will continue its perennial work in human society. Such is the thesis sustained by Mr. David Lloyd George.

Today, the word “liberalism” has lost both its individualistic sense in terms of economics and social life, and its implications of rationalism in moral and religious questions. It has become impregnated with reformist socialism and has gained wide acceptance among believers of all the professed religions of the civilised world. The essence of liberalism can be explained in a few words. A liberal person, nowadays, is someone who openly accepts the struggle between all the ideas in the field of theory and political life as a condition for human coexistence; who looks on political and social institutions as forms to be modified; and who uses the postulates of democracy as a starting point when it comes to constitutional order.

Conceived in this light, liberalism is a loftier, more lasting idea than socialism. In a world in which social questions had all been resolved, liberal thinking would have to go on, with its torch aflame, as it is an integral part of the superior activities of mankind.

The central problem

The fact that some simple-minded people of our times are concerned – and legitimately so – with the problem of the workers has led them to fall into the grave error of considering that it is central to all the problems in the world, and even that it is the only important problem nowadays. This seems to us to be a lamentable and pernicious mistake, because it often leads to a dogmatic fanaticism and a class-based chauvinism, which is essentially no different from national and local chauvinisms.

No-one can deny the formidable and ever-increasing problems of the workers in today's world. No-one can deny either that this problem is intimately connected to the structure of human society. Of all the social problems of the day, the problem of the workers turns out to be the most transcendental and dramatic, and this has prompted many to refer to it as the "social problem", though strictly speaking this usage lacks rigour and is unfair. We would further add that the problem of the workers has been to the fore in all our studies and throughout our life-long thinking.

However, we believe that there should be a reaction against the tendency to be ignorant of the social and psychological realities of the whole of mankind. While the problem of how work is organised is of extreme importance, it is merely one of a whole series of problems which people turn to society and their own consciences to solve.

In our opinion, the central issue in all human problems is liberty. For civilised people, this is the key. It is also the issue that affects the noblest and highest levels of the spirit. And we believe that what most profoundly distinguishes people in their relationships is the feeling they have for liberty and the concept they have of it. For this reason, between a liberal and a fascist, for example, there is a much greater psychological difference than there is between a fascist and a Russian-style communist.

A pure humanist principle makes the problem of freedom – which is the sum of all individual freedoms – the centre of all questions about the individual and civilised

societies. Problems of equality, justice, virtue and perfection are addressed viciously and dangerously when they are not rooted in the existence of human liberty.

Those who turn the question of work into the centre of individual and social life are adopting a materialist conception of life. To be liberal or not is more important than whether you are a socialist or collectivist. Collectivism is a response to a desire for social justice; but anyone who is not a fanatic must admit that others may think that, for reasons of justice, collectivism is not the best system, or at least not in the current phase of human civilisation. By contrast, we cannot even theoretically accept any solution to the problem of liberty that is not liberty itself. From this point of view, liberty is an end in itself, and not a means to an end, as some social systems plainly are.

Being liberal means a lot these days. But being only liberal is not enough for the times we live in. To the proclamation of liberty must be added the aspiration to justice and economic emancipation. Those who are not essentially liberal can make no claims to that advanced and broad-ranging concept which the conventional language of modern politics chooses to call the Left.

The turn of the water wheel

Is Europe seeing a return to the times of all-out political struggle? We believe it is very possible. Recent events in France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Spain and other countries are leading to a new period that is essentially political. Those who thought that in today's world political questions had lost their primacy and that we had once and for all entered an essentially economic and ethnic period are perhaps wrong. Many of the problems which were of concern for much of the 19th century are still current. Will the concerns of thirty, fifty or even eighty years ago return to haunt us? Are we experiencing the water wheel of history?

Pi i Maragall announced that, just as the 19th century had been the century of politics, the 20th was to be the century of social change. The 19th century was presented as the time when political liberty was achieved; the 20th century was to be the century of social equality. But two very important subsequent occurrences have changed this course. The development of an extremist workers' movement, on the one hand, and the Great War, on the other, have together created a powerful diversion. If the alliance which had been established in many countries between the bourgeois left and the proletariat had prevailed, the powers-that-be could have gradually and relatively quickly transformed the system. For some time, the division and often violent opposition between the workers and other social elements, who were attacked indiscriminately by the extremists, made it impossible to form governments and parliamentary majorities which would have been able to undertake the vast work of social reform.

The lack of direction caused by the disintegration of leftist forces has been exacerbated by the effect of the Great War and above all by the collective neurosis this has occasioned. At the beginning of this century, right-wing forces had seemed about to be crushed once and for all but have now regrouped on both social and political issues. And problems that seemed to have been solved forever – that's to say, all the debts that

had been settled in the previous century – have reappeared in Europe. They had really never been completely solved at all. When they emerged again, they may at first have seemed to be mere shadows. But it was soon to become clear that they were real.

For this reason, there is a lot to be said for those who claim that the clear and sonorous terms used in the 19th century to classify political opinions and forces are once again perfectly up to date. Eduard Gómez de Baquero said we should not feel ashamed to revive such eighteenth-century terms as “right” and “left”, “liberals” and “reactionaries”. At least such words have the advantage of simplicity, clarity and truth. We would add, of our own account, the word “democrat” as even more deserving of revival, a term held in such contempt by right- and left-wingers, intellectuals, and both skilled and unskilled workers.

If the political struggles of the 19th century return, it is natural that the words which served to distinguish the tendencies and opinions should return as well. But it would be very sad if the approach to these questions this second time around were to be a mere second edition of the same ideas and attitudes that characterised the previous century. It would be sad if the historical movement of the present were to be like the buckets on a water wheel. Must we see the same old reactionary and liberal attitudes of fifty years ago? Must we once again witness the same old pro- and anti-clerical scenes being performed in public? If we must, we will have lost the spiritual gains of half a century.

We are not especially alarmed by the new political struggles, nor do we think that the civil debates they involve can be eliminated. But the people taking part in the struggle would do well not to forget the earlier lessons. We do not have any great objections to the revival of the words we mentioned above. What we do want, however, is to give them a more lively, agile and noble meaning than they had half a century ago. The turn of the water wheel is not a source of satisfaction. Some campaigns of both the right and the left, both pro- and anti-clergy, have been of such a low intellectual level and so miserably wanting in morals, that we feel in our spirits a deep repulsion at this twofold lack of ethical and aesthetic principles.

Demoliberalism

Liberalism and democracy are evidently two different things, especially if we examine them from the point of view of the etymology of the words. We cannot imagine anyone arguing otherwise. Theoretically, and historically, liberalism exists without democracy and democracy without liberalism. Liberalism can be anti-democratic and democracy can be anti-liberal.

However, in contemporary history, the liberal and democratic doctrines are presented as one. In the political language of our times, a democrat is a liberal and a liberal is a democrat. The ideas of liberty and democracy are conceived as the daughters of the same basic principle.

In the eyes of the world, these ideas are inseparable today, and for this reason the words “liberal” and “democrat” are often taken as synonymous. When one speaks of liberty, it is generally understood that one speaks of democratic liberty; when one speaks of democracy, it is generally understood that one speaks of a liberal democracy. And, in almost all cases, anti-democratic regimes are anti-liberal regimes.

This essentially liberal meaning to the word “democracy” is by no means new. When, 75 years ago, Spanish democrats discussed the compatibility of democracy and socialism, the “Declaration of the Thirty” that they drew up made it clear that democrats were all those who accepted the principle of individual, unlegislable, indispensable and inalienable rights, with universal suffrage as a political formula whatever they thought about social and economic questions. As can be seen, the ideas of democracy and liberalism come together in this definition.

Since then, the conjunction of these two ideas has only become more emphatic and consolidated. Their solidarity is both active and passive. In Russia and in Italy, there is no democracy and neither is there liberalism.

This solidarity has been noted by those in favour of liberal and democratic ideas and those against. In the political nomenclature of the journalists and writers of Italian Fascism we find the words “demoliberal” and “demoliberalism”. They hold that liberal and democratic doctrines are one and the same thing.

They are right. Anti-democratic liberalism is as passé today as is anti-liberal democracy. Even if it is an invention of the Fascists, the word “demoliberalism” is a good word, a fair one, one which is completely acceptable for those of us who are both democrats and liberals.

III

Democracy and corporatism

Citizenship and profession

The so-called theories of the French Revolution – which were in fact developed prior to the Revolution and were not exclusive to France – describe a type of person who is neither noble nor plebeian, rich nor poor, lawyer nor doctor, carpenter nor locksmith, tradesman nor farmer. This person is a citizen. Anyone of any class, condition or profession is a citizen. Thus to the natural rights of people are added the political rights of citizenship. And if everyone is a citizen, and all citizens have both political and human rights, then every citizen is a political being; that is to say, they must intervene personally in political affairs. This intervention consists of active and passive suffrage, and of various other rights assigned to them by modern constitutions.

Thus, in daily life the status of citizen displaced the status of profession or trade. Lineage and profession no longer affected the public rights of individuals, and only the status as a person and a citizen remained. The consequence of this conception was the dissolution of the guilds and professional corporations and the creation of political parties. In the guilds and fraternities of a certain class or trade, people were grouped according to their birth and occupation. In political parties, people are grouped according to the affinity of their feelings and ideas, which are common not to a class or trade, but to all people and all citizens. It was thus concluded that everyone must participate in politics and that everyone is a political being. Public affairs must be subject to the intervention and consideration of all sorts of people: engineers and priests, doctors and surgeons, lawyers and legal advisors, boat builders and porters.

By contrast, corporatism or professionalism does not in fact recognize citizens. In this system, in their social life people belong to their trade. It is as simple as that. There is no common quality of citizenship, which is independent of profession. Corporate representation in the form of deliberating or consultative assemblies holds the professions of its members in the highest esteem, but pays no heed to the rights of citizens.

Within a system organised by professions, politics or the art of government is logically a profession reserved for a relatively small number of people, who in effect dedicate themselves to carrying on the affairs of government. This is the foundation of monarchies. Monarchs are political officers and governors par excellence. And, because monarchs, on their own, cannot deal with everything, they surround themselves with people in whom they trust, who make up the profession responsible for this area of human activity, a profession which needs specialised skills, as does the work of a clockmaker, farmer, judge or soldier.

This implies the death of politics, in the usual sense of the word. Politics as a profession becomes closed off, the job of sovereigns and ministers. Meanwhile, the clockmaker goes on making clocks, and the farmer cultivates the soil, and the soldier wages war, when there is war to be waged. The government of the state is the responsibility of the monarch and those he chooses. Others may give their opinions, when asked. If they have other faculties or rights, this undermines the principle of corporatism, which is essentially apolitical. Logically, the corporate system is appropriate to an absolute monarchy, which surrounds itself with assemblies for mere consultation.

Spirit and work

Those of us who believe in the republican system of government are decidedly anti-corporatist. And there are more of us every day. Our conviction comes from analyzing historical developments and studying modern society. The various forms of corporatism seem so dangerous to us that we find most lamentable the partial concessions made to it in the name of eclecticism by certain democrats and liberals.

In politics, people's professions are of secondary importance and cannot be taken as a basis for their rights. Only the person should count. Only the person has political rights and duties. A person's social class or profession should not be taken into consideration in the granting of rights, in the organisation of suffrage or in the grouping of electoral colleges. The dependence of people's rights on their trades can be traced back to the *ancien régime*, which assumed the principle that there were different sorts of people. To feel conditioned by or tied to one's trade is the most profound humiliation for a modern person; it is an intolerable humiliation for anyone who has that true sense of dignity, which is, morally speaking, the clearest sign of human nobility.

Representation by profession? Corporate organisation? These are instances of human accident being raised above the human essence, trades being set above the person, and crafts above life itself.

Corporatism was a way to subordinate human spirit to the objective reality of work. A person's work takes the place of the person. The object gains primacy over the subject. The French writer, Drieu La Rochelle is right when he says, "Trades kill!" They kill the man if the man lowers himself and spiritually becomes a mere tradesman. This is the great danger of our times: the mechanisation and the objectification of the human subject. When priority is given to profession, to work, the person within the person dies.

The response that needs to be given to this conception of life, which brings about the death of the best part of a person's life, is the exaltation of freedom in people's hearts and minds. If we allow our profession to rule within us, our spiritual freedom will gradually wither and perish. Then, the guild will consume the person, and individual freedom will dissolve in the group. Political organisation by professions, by guilds or by corporations is the prison of the human individual. This was clearly seen by the people of the 18th and 19th centuries, but it seems to be something that the people of the 20th century have lost sight of. It is one more reason for holding on to what is of prime importance in today's world: namely, a great renewal of liberal idealism.

If the corporation consumes the person, ultimately the corporation will become weaker. If work prevails over the person, the quality of that work will eventually be lost.

The crisis in the world today is not a crisis of professions, or trades or crafts. It is a crisis of people, a crisis of human qualities. Citizens are less in evidence today. And no state can afford not to have citizens. Some time ago, Massimo d'Azeglio said, "Italy is made; now it is time to make Italians." How d'Azeglio meant to apply this idea is disputable, but the sentence nonetheless shows that a state is nothing without its citizens, by which I mean without people in the plenitude of their civil and political functions. In public life, the predominance of corporatism brings about a decline in those essential human qualities, without which states have no strength and people no spirit.

The corporate vote

It is a well-known fact that all sorts of strange things sometimes happen among the ranks of the enamoured. People fall in love with people, things or ideas which are quite obviously far from excellent. Some years ago Spanish conservatives, especially the Maurist branch, fell in love with the corporate vote. At that time they were on the point of introducing this type of voting as part of their project on local administration.

It is possible to conceive of suffrage being organised in some way other than the individual vote; voting on class or estate lines does not contradict the basic principle of universal suffrage. But voting by class is not the same as corporate voting. Corporations are not the same as estates. A handful of economic, cultural or workers' societies does not truly represent the commercial class, the intellectual class or the working class. In the case of the Iberian Peninsula, one has to say that corporate life is so meagre that the corporations that do exist are generally ghostly collectives with a board of directors. Catalonia is the place where corporations still show signs of life, and a poor life it is, too.

Most corporations are dead entities, directed informally or by small-time social figureheads who are even more abject and harmful than the political leaders. The representative positions which these corporations enjoy are quite useless. And do not go saying that they would be revitalised by the corporate vote. The result of introducing the corporate vote would be fatal; much of the corporate life of each locality would depend on electoral interests and goals.

Mixing the corporate and the individual vote has always seemed an absurd proposition in our view, especially when the latter is organised according to a proportional system. Essentially, proportional representation is aimed at creating entities which are, on a much smaller scale, a copy of the numerical proportions of the electoral body as a whole. In order to achieve this, people add and subtract, multiply

and divide, and even apply algebraic equations and logarithms, if necessary. And if after such careful weighting and calculating the resulting entity were to be complemented with those elected by corporations, the proportion so painstakingly achieved would be destroyed and there would be no point in having bothered in the first place.

Apart from the theoretical side to the problem, the practical implications are also worth examining. On this point we will only say that a few years ago we heard the following words from the lips of an illustrious Catalan personage, who had defended the corporate vote at the time of Maura's project: "What an enormous mess there would have been if it had been implemented!" And this is a person who, since then, has known a number of corporations from the inside.

Theoretically, the organisation of the vote is a matter of argument for both the right and the left. A system of corporate voting which does not contradict the essence of universal suffrage is conceivable. If, for example, the universal vote is organized not on the basis of municipal, neighbourhood or district colleges, but by corporations, guilds or professional associations, the result is a combination of democratic universalism and egalitarianism with corporatism, or even better, with voting by estates. We are against this way of proceeding, even if we recognise that it does retain the universal and equal aspect of the vote.

If we move from theory to practice, we will see that some years ago the Spanish right wing did not defend corporate representation simply as a consequence of some ideal criteria for organising universal suffrage, but rather to make it less egalitarian. It was not a question of organisation, so much as of substance. They wanted to destroy the relationship between the number of individuals and the number of votes. And while we all know that the numerical criterion is no guarantee of justice or good judgement, we also know that those systems which are not strictly based on numbers and partially or wholly adopt collective or quality-based systems do nothing more than favour right-wing forces and tendencies, especially on social issues.

It is evident that the majority is not always right. It is evident also that not everyone has the same mental capacity, or the same degree of ethical honesty. But that is no reason for saying that the minority is right more often than the majority. Generally, a minority can be mistaken, just as a majority can be mistaken. And, since the possibility of being right or wrong is the same in both instances, it is natural that the opinion of the majority prevails. In this case, the fact that there is a majority is an important argument.

Organising universal suffrage is one thing; distorting it is another. A system that mixes universal suffrage with corporate voting is in danger of being a mystification. The practical consequence of introducing the corporate vote alongside the individual vote is to strengthen the representation of the conservative, unitarist right.

If the mass opinions of the electorate could be separated out in such a way that the select few were on one side and the vulgar majority on the other, it might be worth considering whether intelligence was more strongly on the side of justice and truth than mere numbers. But one only has to look at the reality of the situation to see that the intelligentsia, the select and cultivated few, are never always on the same side. Some go with the majority, some with the minority. And there is no way of seeing if there is a higher proportion of intelligent and honest people inside corporations and certain estates than outside among the people who happen to be walking along the street at any one moment.

Respecting the majority, in the sense of the numerical majority of all individual voters, is even more necessary in places where there is a collective movement of an ethnic or idealistic nature. In these places, the majority is not the mere sum of disconnected individuals, not an amorphous mass, but rather an entity with a specific character, which is permanent, vigorous, coherent and organic: in other words, a people.

Number and corporatism

Theoretically, organising the state along corporatist lines is compatible with modern, liberal and democratic principles. One can even conceive of a corporate system that is highly advanced in terms of political and social order. Revolutionary trade-unionism, for example, is a sort of radical corporatism, which constructs the edifice of a new society on the foundations of trade-union groupings. Pi i Maragall once wrote that he accepted corporatism, as an organising principle. It is all a question, a theoretical question, of how the system is organised. The way it is organised affects its ideological grounding.

As we have indicated, the arithmetical formula for universal suffrage, “one man, one vote”, can be connected to corporatism very simply, by proportional representation. If we establish that the number of representatives of each corporate group has to be proportional to the number of individuals in that group, we will have respected the principle of electoral equality. Thus the place-related college will be substituted by the professional college, all the while respecting the democratic basis of the vote. Let us be clear here that we are talking about a corporatism which organises all the citizens into estates and classes.

Personally we would not be in favour of corporatism even if it were to be established in this egalitarian way. But we recognise that, in such a case, democratic principles as applied to the voting system would not be harmed. Precisely for this reason, corporatists want to have nothing to do with corporate proportional representation. Ironically, the best part of this is that they often declare themselves to be in favour of proportional representation for individual voting within the universal suffrage system.

To be honest, it is undeniable that all of this can be explained by the fact that militant corporatism tends to be anti-democratic, anti-liberal, and medievalist.

Today's corporatists have no interest in making their system compatible with modern liberalism; on the contrary, they see corporate organisation as the antithesis of the liberal state. In theory, universal suffrage and a certain degree of corporatism are conceivable; in practice, corporatism is a way of destroying or at least watering down universal suffrage, which in our day has become the foundation of democracy. In order to counteract the influence of universal suffrage, in his day Maura defended the corporate vote. And in order to avoid being controlled by the people, Mussolini imposed corporate representation in Italy.

In practical terms, corporatism today is an anti-democratic trend. Clear proof of this is to be found in all the instances in which it has been put into practice. The current case of Italy is transparent. It is an attempt to remove people with ideas or distinctive sentiments from politics by substituting them with people with professions or trades. In the place of the individual citizen we have the corporate professional. There is no sense of affinity of ideas, brotherhood of feelings, or ethnic solidarity. All that remains are the interests of each group, considered as a collective. By manipulating these groups, it is easy to reach the point where the arithmetical relationship between the number of representatives and number of people represented is quietly forgotten. And since number – crude and disreputable though it may be – is in suffrage terms the effective expression of the living people, this is how the people are sacrificed and made to disappear from the scene.

The professional parliament

All those interested in social and political questions would do well to familiarise themselves with the debate in the 1927 Congress of the French General Confederation of Labour, the CGT, the cradle of the century's trade unionism. We particularly recommend the speeches given by Léon Jouhaux, a man of great moral stature. It is too easy for revolutionaries to say that Jouhaux has become a conservative, or has sold out to the bourgeoisie, and for the conservatives to say that trade unionists, socialists and communists are all the same and that there is no difference between Jouhaux, Blum and Cachin. Such comments are typical of those incapable of understanding events or discussing ideas.

Léon Jouhaux, a key figure for many years in the French CGT, is an excellent example of loyalty and honesty. He prefers to be vilified by the intemperate and uncomprehending than to deceive the workers by cowardly flattery. If he has ceased to uphold certain myths of the contemporary workers' movement, that is because he has ceased to believe in them. The development of his understanding has been dictated not by theoretical speculation but by long and direct experience of the problems of society.

For this reason Jouhaux's attitude towards those who defend the parliament of professions – in other words, corporatism applied to the political system – is of utmost importance. Many people think that professional or corporate representation accords with the thinking of the workers' movement, and that it offers big advantages to the working classes. In the aforementioned congress, Jouhaux clear-sightedly described the parliament of professions as a "dangerous institution for all democracies". French trade unionists, like sincere people everywhere, are evidently disillusioned with the principle of the class struggle, and have understood that, at least for the present, the best way to achieve the demands of the workers is not by dividing the professions but by emphasising democratic solidarity.

In *L'Ère Nouvelle*, Georges Ponsot used Jouhaux's words against the idea of a parliament of professions in order to show the evils of corporatism. The field of corporatism is naturally full of rivalries and opposing interests. A state organised along corporate lines is like a field divided into small pieces, each separated off by a private wall, where the accident of one's profession is asserted as the essential distinguishing feature of the human condition. "A parliament of professions", writes Ponsot, "would be like the most heterogeneous mosaic, whose many tiny coloured tiles make up the most capricious of designs... truth is to be found in political representation on a national level, which allows the interests of professional groups to align themselves and be assimilated into the general interest. It is the Republic."

The defence of democracy and the condemnation of corporate representation by someone like Jouhaux indicate that he has known how to avoid those myths that may seem necessary as a distant ideal, but which are deadly if applied to the present. Furthermore, a distinction must be made between those principles that constitute a theoretical advance – social progress of some sort which would be desirable if it were possible – and those other theories that are little more than a return to the middle ages. The principle of corporatism belongs to this latter group, as does its corollary, the parliament of professions. As Jouhaux has said, the parliament of professions is a danger to democracies. The only people who could possibly want it are logically people who are against democracy itself.

Corporations in the past

We are not saying anything that has not already been said when we say that systems which have disappeared, unlike current systems which have been in existence for some time, have the advantage of being forgotten. People today have forgotten the many miseries of yesterday and the day before, while they know, feel and suffer the difficulties and sorrows of today. From this stems the ingenuous individual and collective belief that any time in the past was better.

The current defenders of organisation by corporations – that is to say, of one of the many ways of organisation by corporations – forget or want to forget the grave deficiencies that their chosen system revealed over the many centuries in which it was uppermost in human society. Corporatist theories benefit from the oblivion of far-off times, even of those which are only relatively far-off. If our great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents were to come back to life they would perhaps not be so enthusiastic about the latest thinking on corporations and guilds.

Not long ago the *Journal de Genève* dedicated an article to this subject entitled “Le retour à l'état corporatif”. The journal noted the care with which the preachers of corporatism only show the advantages of their system. Corporatists take advantage of the fact that the history of old conflicts between corporations is hardly known at all today. “The works of Forbonnais and of Martin Saint Léon,” claims the *Journal de Genève*, “are no longer on people's tables; but they are not so consigned to oblivion that they cannot be called upon as witnesses”. In effect, it would be convenient if these and similar works – as well as those which could be written on the subject now by using archive documents – took their place in the battle line in preparation for the present struggle between democracy and corporatism.

One feature of the corporatist system of the past was the frequent in-fighting between corporations and within each corporation itself. Guilds and their regulations

were a source of interminable arguments. The author of the aforementioned article recalls how, in the 18th century, the sums of money invested by the corporations of Paris in legal costs for lawsuits and disagreements amounted to a million pounds, in today's money. Some of these lawsuits were famous. One such case, of the leather traders against the shoe-makers, lasted thirty-five years. Another, brought by the wine-sellers of Paris against the *Six Corps*, lasted one hundred and fifty years. The conflict between the Greater Arts and the Lesser Arts in Florence was terrible. In all the main cities of France, Italy and Switzerland, there were incessant struggles, which were sometimes tragic in their outcome. The city of Barcelona could also add a chapter to this history.

A recent work by Antony Babel on the history of Swiss clock-making offers numerous examples of the vices and defects of the corporate system, which were a great obstacle to the economic and moral progress of society. "Modern democracy", says the *Journal de Genève*, "based on the declaration of the rights of man, cannot agree with a corporatist state; and those in favour of corporations know full well that they are working for the introduction of an authoritarian regime."

In the Middle Ages a sort of democracy may have existed alongside the corporate system. But in our times, for practical purposes one is forced to choose between corporatism and democracy.

IV

Spiritual problems

Human faith

Talking with a dear friend, who is a rationalist, we said that we thought that people needed to have a grain of mysticism in them. Let us not give that word any unhealthy connotations. We use it in a way that is synonymous with spiritual warmth. We are not asking for the burning passion of mysticism which makes people forget the meaning of life on Earth, but for a spark of idealism to warm the human soul. Faith, in the broadest, most pristine sense of the word, is the essential backbone of a life of dignity.

Objective analysis, the use of reason, a critical sense, a concern for material interests and an inclination for the pleasures and comforts of the body would bring individuals and whole peoples to a point of internal collapse. If you take away from people the incandescence of their faith, you will see how implacable logic and insistent appetites lead to their living a purely material life of animal abjection. When a critical sense lacks the counterweight of a solid faith, its effects are fatally corrosive. The only completely logical nihilist is a suicide case. The end of all negations is the negation of one's own existence and the renunciation of one's own human dignity. This is as true for a collective as it is for an individual.

We are as afraid of nihilism as of feverish mysticism. There are moments in the lives of men and nations, when the need for a sustaining, guiding faith is more evident than ever. Even if only for the sake of our moral health, we need to desire that everyone bear within them that saving grain of mysticism, which is like a miraculous salt that preserves from degeneration and corruption.

The fiery mystic Giuseppe Mazzini had all the virtues and vices of mysticism. When he took to the stage of Italian politics, his mysticism turned him into an apostle, a visionary, a prophet. Being profoundly religious in spirit, he considered patriotism as an adoring consecration of his country. And he expressed this idea in a few, concentrated words, glowing like embers: "Italy is religion."

But, within Mazzini's soul, this mystical fire burnt so strongly that it left no place for the more rational workings of the human soul, especially the critical function. At certain moments in the inner life of Mazzini, his faith misled him. Many of his political and social prophecies, as Giuseppe A. Borgese has noted, were wrong. If we re-read Mazzini's writings today, we still see the full force of his invincible faith and we can admire the life which, as Nietzsche put it, was like a flame which always burnt for a pure ideal. But at the same time we are regrettably aware of how noticeably out of date many of this great Italian's ideas are; and we are also even more aware of the grave errors in his political and social vision, which led him to announce events which have not come to pass and to believe that European politics would follow directions which the history of the 19th and the first quarter of the 20th centuries contradicts in many ways.

On the other hand, the logical power of reason, as it goes slipping down the slopes of scepticism, often leads us to conclusions against which our inner voice protests, as it calls us once again back to reality. If there were no way to stop our slide down these slippery slopes, we would lose all motivation to work, to fight, to live. Within inhuman cruelty, logic would tell us there is no point in working, fighting or living, as all human things come to an end. As a justification for doing no work, as an invitation to breaking his pen in two, a writer, for example, could bear in mind Ernest Renan's comment that in a thousand years' time, of all the books and authors, the only ones that will still be read will be the Bible and Homer. And those future prospects would look even more desolate if we thought, as the Spanish writer Alfredo Calderón once reminded us, that the day will come when the Earth we now inhabit will become a dead planet, spinning on uselessly through infinite space...

A powerful vital instinct prompts us to react against these deathly thoughts. Reason and faith must come together in the soul. The best, most noble people are those who are also people of reason and faith. Anti-rational mysticism is just as harmful as anti-idealist rationalism. Rational and faithful people live life most fully and best serve their people and the lineage of mankind.

Good scepticism

Just as nihilistic and pessimistic scepticism is to be reviled, praise should be given to the intelligent and honest scepticism of those things that claim to be definitive in our world.

Precisely one of the most frequent reproaches against science, in the broad sense of the word, is that its principles and results are always uncertain. Many people – even intellectual and educated people – are contemptuous of science, as they consider it inadequate and deceptive. The people who have really been deceived, however, are those who think that doubt is a cause of weakness and a sign of inferiority.

Those who make defamatory remarks about science and doubt commit such an enormous injustice! Doubt is so closely connected to science that the latter would not exist without the former. Science has no need to be ashamed of its temporary and hypothetical nature. On the contrary, this is exactly where its spiritual nobility has its root. A dignified life involves considerable dedication not only to faith but also to scepticism.

In his *Sceptical Essays*, the mathematician and philosopher, Bertrand Russell, offers high, and yet serene, praise for scepticism. Commenting on this work, Henri de Varigny says, “Russell’s scepticism has a particular quality: it is that of a believer, a special type of believer, who knows that he does not know everything; the scepticism of a man who measures the extent of the work already accomplished by humanity in its first stages, who sees all the imperfections, and who thinks that mankind will know how to correct its errors, on condition that it is not persuaded that it has made a masterpiece and that all that remains is to lie back and relax.” This healthy, dynamic scepticism, he adds, goes back to the origins of mankind. No-one was more sceptical than prehistoric man, who was only concerned with one thing; to improve his lot. Thus

began an excellent tradition. “It is clear that to improve one’s lot is not everything; but it is important, and it helps to live more fully and more usefully.”

Scepticism understood in this way is fecund and beneficial. “No-one will debate the usefulness of scepticism”, continues Varigny, “as regards the excellence of social structures, laws and institutions: thanks to scepticism, improvements are continually made, even if they are still not enough.” In the field of science, scepticism is essential. It is the condition for the advances made every day.

It is worth quoting a noble and profound phrase of Duclaux’s on the subject of scepticism. It goes thus: “Because nothing is ever certain, science always advances.” And again, this sentence from Claude Bernard: “In science, scepticism is a form of progress.” William James proclaimed “the will to believe”; Bertrand Russell proclaims “the will to doubt”, and affirms that this will is a great virtue.

Ending his commentary on Russell’s work, Varigny observes, “Science is in a perpetual state of becoming, and with it all other things, including political and moral ideas; mankind has undertaken a never-ending task, and that is what makes its activities and ideas so interesting.” We must doubt not only science, but also politics. This is what Bertrand Russell believed. And this doubt – which is not incompatible with human convictions – is the philosophical foundation of liberalism.

Moral hygiene

“The devil makes work for idle hands,” so the saying goes. Someone who has nothing, or very little, to do acquires habits which soon become vices. Time not dedicated to work is dedicated to meaningless, harmful things. Someone with no work, no matter how naturally good they may be, is always under the threat of temptation. That is why one of the first principles of moral hygiene is to have some work or other which serves as an outlet for the normal activities of the body and the spirit.

But material or professional concerns are not enough to fill the soul. There are many who work in the material sense, but who are spiritually idle. They are occupied with mechanical, routine concerns, which become automatic habits. Meanwhile, the spirit remains hungry, or has little substance. Practically speaking, such a case is the same as someone with no work to do. While their hands are working mechanically, with nothing high or beautiful to aspire to, their thoughts are lost on petty things. A second principle of spiritual hygiene therefore needs to be formulated, and it is that the soul must concern itself with a noble activity which stops it from falling into misery.

There are forces in people’s souls which must be applied in one direction or another. If they are not, people will suddenly be seized by a fit of frantic behaviour. If these forces are not given an appropriately worthy outlet, they will slide headlong to the bottom of the muddiest ditches. The lack of any higher activity for the spirit makes people become sour and discontent. And this inner torture makes them more aggressive towards other people. You will often have difficulties explaining certain facts, only to discover their explanation resides in phenomena of a psychological nature.

Without some sort of desire, yearning, or ideal, souls have no salvation. Passion which is not put into noble things will be invested in mediocre or worthless things. When the human soul does not follow the path of the best spiritual practices, unconsciously its unconstrained energy drifts towards disturbing and anti-social activities.

In order to have a clear idea of people, you not only have to know how they occupy themselves professionally and materially; more importantly you must understand their spiritual concerns. You must find out what they love, what interests them, what they are passionate about, what things draw them from a state of indifference or selfishness. When, after careful examination, you find no clear indications of such high ideals, the only conclusion you can draw is that their spirit is so dark that it detracts from their value as human beings.

Even when people's passions are unfocussed or mistaken, they often have salutary results. This inner flame purifies, as it gives sense to one's life. With no material or professional occupation comes persistent idleness, which will lead a person into common vices. Without noble spiritual activity, emptiness in the soul will lead to another type of idleness. This idleness, in turn, will give rise to fatal, inner worries, which then take on all forms of individual and social wickedness.

The return to idealism

Josep Pous i Pagès, the famous writer of comics and novels, made a powerful call some time ago for the “return to idealism”. Pous i Pagès pointed out that one of the shortcomings of the current generation was its moral bankruptcy. The issue seems to be of the utmost importance. And as the observations made by the author of *La vida i la mort d'en Jordi Fraginals* coincide with ones we have made on repeated occasions, we will take advantage of this coincidence to insist on them once again.

In some aspects of social and individual life in Catalonia in recent decades, there has been a materialist reaction – call it positivist, if you will – which has extinguished the romanticism, in its broadest sense, of the generation at the turn of the century. When the idea of romanticism is applied today, not so much to literature as to life, the defects and exaggerations of fiery romanticism are quite inappropriately mixed up with some of the noblest qualities of the human spirit. An anti-romantic current of thinking turns into an anti-idealist current. The constant censure of the Romantics, with no appropriate distinctions, clips the wings of the people of today, makes them selfish, and quashes any pride they may feel in unselfish conduct.

We truly believe that a return to idealism is necessary. This does not mean moulding everyone to the same spiritual pattern. No-one can be unaware that the human soul admits a wide variety of conditions. There are now, as there have always been and always will be, cold, concentrated temperaments, and hot, expansive temperaments. There will always be the prudent, calculating person, the generous, capricious type, the ironic and passionate person. Such differences can be seen in individual and social lives as well as in the diverse work of the fields of science, literature and art. But the preponderance of dry materialism disguised as indifference, irony and even intelligence would be terribly harmful to a people's health.

Moral bankruptcy? If this expression is applied to the current generation as a whole, it is perhaps a bit harsh. We have certainly seen many such bankruptcies. In order to characterise the present moment, we would choose a different expression: a decline in moral sense. The practical result of the materialist reaction has been a relaxation of the spiritual resources which help people keep a tight hold on their sense of dignity. The sin has been to forgive or make light-hearted excuses for ethical shortcomings; and we are not referring to private ethics. Amorality and immorality have been given priority. And we have seen the repetition of a phenomenon which is not new to history: moral transactions and leniency towards failures to fulfil ethical and civic duties are presented as if they were the latest word in modernity.

The havoc caused by such shortcomings is evident in many areas of our collective and individual life. In literature, in journalism, in universities, there has been a decline in idealism. And we have seen that all attempts to ridicule the impulse and enthusiasm of so-called romanticism have been little more than a low form of positivism and inexcusable cynicism, which poisons human life at its very source.

In order to arrest the downward slide of our moral sense, we must return to idealism, to an idealism that has been pruned of the parasitic growths that have taken away its solidity and efficiency of previous epochs. A return to idealism is not a return to the situation of twenty years ago; it is a renewal of that pure enthusiasm, strengthened with the lessons of humanism which have been our main focus these last fifteen years.

Spiritual forces

“It is the Spirit that moves the world,” said Maurice Barrès. These words, spoken by a man of high standing in the literary world, formulate a general principle and were subsequently confirmed by two leading politicians, who applied the principle to specific, current issues and real instances. Ramsay MacDonald declared to the House of Commons, “The nation which trusts in armaments for its security will eventually be disappointed.” And Brind declared in a speech that France would have to bring all its idealism to bear on its foreign policy if the country was to play its rightful role, and that it was Republican France which triumphed in the Great War.

These voices insist on idealism, they proclaim the empire of spiritual forces. In recent years, there has been a materialist reaction to the neurosis brought on by the war. On the right, in the centre and on the left, greater prestige has been accorded to material forces and the belief that they are decisive in the struggles between men and in the history of nations. The use of violence was not only considered licit in exceptional cases, even critical, it also tended to be called upon systematically, even as a form of government. Physical force appeared, not as a final resource, but as a habitual instrument.

Even more than the war itself, the post-war period has been a time for arms. Returning to the practice of earlier centuries, weapons have ceased to be the distinguishing feature of the military, the instruments of armies. Their use has extended to all social classes, to all groups involved in a struggle.

The weapon that is most suited to passion, hate and crime – the pistol – has prevailed. As a weapon, it is often hidden, and found in the hands of mystery men and sly assassins. The nobility of the sword has been substituted by the treachery of the automatic pistol. A weapon hanging visibly from the shoulder or the hip has given

way to a weapon that is concealed in secret pockets. We have witnessed not only the dominance of material force, but also its degradation.

Are we now coming to the end of this period of neurosis? Maybe we are. There are good signs in the sky and on the ground. Once again we hear the spiritual forces beginning to spread their wings. And the first signs of this change are coming from precisely those countries which have acted as guides and explorers in modern history: England and France.

As long as material forces dominate, we will be deafened by their noise and crushed by their weight. Cumbersome and strident, they seem to have won a definitive victory over spiritual forces. These latter forces, however, are silently preparing their revenge. They make no fuss, just get to work. When the enemies' enormous roller runs on and squashes everything in its path, they take to the wing. They are light and airy, which is why they cannot be crushed by material forces, whose own weight condemns them to the lower regions of the world.

Violence can overcome another act of violence. They are two forces on the same level. Violence cannot overcome an ideal, which belongs to a higher plane. Even better than a breastplate to protect your heart is the idea in your heart.

Do you have a weapon in your pocket? You might lose if you fight. Do you have love for something in your heart, a thought in your head? Do not be afraid of losing. Tomorrow is yours. Hostility cannot win the day.

Armies and navies, battalions and squadrons, steel knives and red-hot firearms, all still have work to do – sad work – in the world. But they neither lead nor make it move. It is the Spirit that moves the world.

Knowledge and respect

It has been said that most of the prejudice and hate between peoples is due to their not knowing each other. If different peoples knew each other better, if we understood each other, it would be much easier to establish a mutual respect. We say respect, and not affection, because we agree with President Masaryk that there does not have to be a mutual outpouring of love between peoples; sincere respect would be more than enough. And the same could be said for social classes. Just as people's ignorance of each other contributes to maintaining the antagonism and suspicion that can lead to war, so the ignorance between social classes adds to the hostility with which they look upon each other, and this makes conflicts and clashes much worse.

No-one can be a true pacifist if, while they preach peace between peoples, they preach class war in their own society. The horizontal frontiers which theorists and propaganda writers of the more inflexible workers' movements set up in opposition to vertical frontiers are just as harmful to human progress and the attainment of justice. An exchange of friendship between the social classes is just as necessary and would be just as beneficial as a mutual exchange between peoples. What happens now is that when two races or two nations are ignorant of each other, they attribute defects and grievances which are not real or are only of secondary importance to the other. A similar thing happens between social classes. Class chauvinism, which is as unjustified and harmful as jingoism, is the reason why employers and workers have such an exaggeratedly poor opinion of each other. The same phenomenon occurs between politicians and bureaucrats, between intellectuals and people in commerce. The propaganda that is spread in each social class complicates and poisons issues which are hard enough already. This lends the forces in conflict an aggressiveness and cruelty, which leads them to portray their adversaries in almost diabolic terms. No matter how much evil there is in the world, no matter how many crazy and rotten things are

to be found in each nation or in a class society, there can be no doubt that the images everyone has of their adversaries are often much blacker and more sinister than they really deserve.

Many workers, for example, are strongly prejudiced against scholars, skilled workers and intellectuals. They consider them "Sirs", they associate them with the "bourgeoisie" or with the "rich". Surely these workers would change their opinions if they were more closely acquainted with intellectuals who had had to struggle, especially when they were students or at the beginning of their careers, against difficulties which at times were as great or painful as those which often occur within the homes of the working classes. Let us recall that in his diary, *La Victoire*, Gustave Hervé wrote some lines on this subject that were full of truth and emotion. While we do not approve of the way Hervé has developed in recent years, this does not stop us from praising where praise is due. Commenting on a Communist attack in Paris, Hervé remarked that one of the young men killed was an engineer. For many simple-minded workers, an engineer, like a lawyer or a writer, belongs to the class of "Sirs" or the "rich". Hervé wrote fervently against this idea. The engineer who had been brought down by Communist bullets, he said, was probably poorer than many workers. "How many are there among the young people attending school, who, whether they are hard up or well-off, are prepared to give it all up, their fortunes and their lives, in defence of that ideal of great moral beauty of a common mother, which for them is France!"

Another mistake made by some of the working class is to believe that the bourgeoisie are dedicated wholly to the pursuit of material gains and lustful desires. If only for the spirit of sacrifice and the idealism which it reveals, their sense of homeland deserves to be respected by workers with even the reddest ideas. Hervé gives the example of young men from the French nobility or the richest echelons of the bourgeoisie who, during the war, went to fight before they were called up, volunteering for the trenches, with no thought for the fortunes they may have been leaving behind. "It was not class spirit which was to be read in those radiant, intelligent young faces: it was a truly fearsome force, against which revolutionary mysticism will always clash: namely, patriotic mysticism."

These workers know nothing of the authentic spirit of these so-called young bourgeoisies, who they imagine to be totally devoid of selflessness and ideals. Even when their ideals are mutually contradictory, good soldiers of every cause must respectfully salute the moral values which the opposing camps support. If knowing each other does not always bring about agreement, at least it will bring respect.

Fights and brawls

We often hear the plaintive voice of those who are alarmed at the political dissension and controversies in the press so typical of a liberal and democratic system. When, in Catalonia, some fifty years ago, the *Diari Català* and *La Renaixença* became involved in some violent disputes, the more ingenuous patriots were deeply concerned and gave voice to their complaint. Then came the disputes between *La Renaixença* and *La Veu de Catalunya*, and between *La Veu de Catalunya* and *El Poble Català*, which were also censured by good patriots who contemplated these battles and skirmishes with aching hearts. And, more recently, the arguments between *La Veu de Catalunya* and *La Publicitat* or *La Nau* gave rise to the same scenes among the patriotically sentimental.

We have said it many times, and we will say it again: controversies in the press and party differences are so natural and universal that the people who are scandalised by them and protest against them show that they are not made for public life. They are the sort of people who wish you could make an omelette without having to break any eggs.

In order to cure these fainted-hearted souls of their superstitious fear of political and press polemic, we would recommend that they read the foreign press regularly for a few weeks. In this way they will become convinced that more or less violent struggle is the condition of politics. They will also become convinced that what Mr. Cambó has called “cannibalism”, which manifests explosively on a daily basis in *L’Humanité* and *L’Action Française*, has yet to reach Catalonia, and that the supposed Catalan “cannibalism” is only a very pale imitation of such foreign models. One edition of *L’Action Française* offends its adversaries more than an entire week’s worth of editions of all the newspapers in Catalonia. And not only is there a difference in quantity; there is an even more pronounced difference in the quality of these accusations and offences. In this regard, an article by the monarchist Léon Daudet, or by Florimond Bonte, the

Communist, makes even the strongest articles by Àngel Samblancat or Jordi Arquer pale into the utmost insignificance.

The problem with certain polemicists – or apprentice polemicists – does not reside in the virulence of their work, so much as in the low, plebeian tone they sometimes adopt. These gentlemen, who insult each other systematically, are not cannibals. They lack manners. For this reason, in certain political ambits and journals, the noble struggle – and it can be noble so long as it is lively in tone and gives off sparks of verbal energy – becomes a street, or even a back-alley, brawl. These sorts of writers, small-minded as they are, do not eat anyone alive; they limit themselves to throwing mud or pulling funny faces shamelessly. All this can be done by those with the meanest of intelligence; in fact, they do not even have to know how to write. To cause offence like Léon Daudet requires a great literary talent. To give offence as ill-mannered people do, one need be neither genius nor cannibal. In such cases, he who does not know how to fight, brawls. And the only dignified response to such people is to leave them brawling on their own.

The harmlessness of insults

A highly-indignant friend once showed us the postscript to a leading article by Léon Daudet in an edition of *L'Action Française*, and then asked us: "No matter how much we consider ourselves friends of liberty, can we tolerate such remarks?" And he pointed to the following words: "... a regime of assassins and cretins, which is the Third Republic". He then went on to point to those places where Daudet had described Poincaré as a "coward", Barthou as a "pig", and Saurraut as "grotesque". And he also showed us where he had referred to Caillaux and Malvy as "traitors" for the ten thousandth time.

In truth, the postscript was very rude. It was a fair example of Daudet's style. In order to write in this way, the co-editor of *L'Action Française* did not need to be in a moment of ire or exacerbation. It is his natural, usual style. This explains how after a very interesting and lucid article on the scientific theme of aggression on a cellular level, he writes things such as we have quoted. It is true, however, that under the main title of the article, "The Fighting Nature of Cells", there was the subtitle: "From Virulence and Malignancy". Maybe the physiological theories upon which Léon Daudet was commenting in the article in question were fully applicable to his psychological state. One suspects this, among other reasons, because he moves easily and without any clear transition from examining a scientific problem to making his insulting attacks.

However, faced with these unbalanced aggressions, we do not feel the same indignation as did our friend who handed us the copy of *L'Action Française*. While we do not like Léon Daudet's way of putting things, on very few occasions does it make us feel indignant. The more emphatic and strident his words become, the less they move and revolt us. To habitual readers of this leading royalist, whether they agree with him or not, Daudet's attacks can hardly cause them great commotion. They get used to it, and they are not affected by the more gross expressions. To claim day in day out that the French Republic is a regime of assassins and cretins is completely harmless.

These words lose their initial virulence once they have been repeated over and over. A simple insinuation from the pen of a writer who is usually sober and correct in style has much more power than the daily issue of prose insults from a writer who has made a profession of verbal assault and bad language.

Therefore, we do not find such phrases or others like them, intolerable. From both the moral and aesthetic points of view, we condemn them. But considered politically, they seem insignificant and inoffensive. The freedom Léon Daudet has to write such things every day has made his attacks harmless. Sometimes, the best way to avoid the harmful effects of such insulting prose is to let it flow freely. Someone who is freely allowed to insult others becomes inoffensive, and is the only one damaged by his own words.

Even though Daudet claims in the same postscript that the French Republic is about to collapse, it is strong and it can allow itself the luxury of not paying attention to its detractors, however violent they may be. What has hurt Daudet most of all is the freedom which he has been given to insult everyone; and what he has reaped most benefit from are the lawsuits brought against him for going over the limit. As we understand it, his case proves freedom of expression renders even the most furious attacks harmless. A man like Daudet would be much more fearsome if he was subjected to some sort of restriction, because then his insults, which would reach the general public somehow or other, would have a power which today they have not. The best thing to shout against Daudet is not "Seize him!", but "Let him talk!"

Pessimism and optimism

The spectacle of life and the world has always given rise to optimists and pessimists, people who have seen things through a glass darkly and people who have seen things through rose-tinted spectacles. In terms of temperament, there is a duality. Between the two, there stretches a long sliding scale, almost as long as all the people born on Earth standing in line.

Which temperament is better: the pessimist's or the optimist's? Considered in absolute terms, both temperaments are prejudicial, even pathological. The absolute optimist and the absolute pessimist are, at their two extremes, the craziest people in the universe. Those who gaze on the spectacle of life on Earth and see it all as clear, good and beautiful, just as like those who see it all as dark, ugly and vile, are optically impaired in spiritual terms.

When he enters a garden, Leopardi sees only wilting flowers, broken branches, severed buds, pulled up shoots, trampled grass and plants martyred by insects. This is proof of the desolation within his soul, and that his vision of devastation all around is mainly a projection of his pain. For this reason, when he finds no objective pretexts for a pessimistic interpretation of the spectacle of the world, he seeks, with an instinct of profound distrust, the sad things he would wish to see behind the most innocent and idyllic of realities:

Che fai tu, luna, in ciel? Dimmi, che fai, silenziosa luna ?

[What are you doing, Moon, in the sky? Tell me, what are you doing, silent Moon?]

The pessimist finds in pain the justification for his state of mind. In joy, or the absence of objective pain, he finds the apparent lack of pain deceptive. The beautiful

impassivity of a starry night cannot be taken on trust by a pessimist. Something terrible must be lurking there. And Leopardi continues his tortured questioning:

E quan miro in cielo arder le stele,
Dico fra me pensando:
A che tante facelle?
Che fa l'aria infinita, e quel profondo
Infinito seren? Che vuol dir questa
Solitudine immensa? ed io che sono?

[And when I see the stars burning in the sky,
I say to myself in thought:
To what end so many torches?
What is the infinite aria doing, and that deep
Serene infinity? What does it mean, this
Immense solitude? And I, what am I?]

It would be perfectly useless to try to bring the pessimist out from his dark hole. For him, pain and evil are the only reality; joy and goodness are simply treacherous outward appearances. Deep within the pessimist's psychology there is a paradoxical enjoyment of suffering. The pessimist feels a strange and powerful voluptuousness upon diving into the icy black waters of his torment. Pessimism is a form of moral masochism.

Does that mean, then, that the example of perfect spiritual health and human efficacy is to be found in the optimist? We have already said that the systematic or absolute optimist is also a pathological case. After careful consideration, an optimist will be found to be foolish or naïve: in other words, a pessimist in disguise. Any excessive projection of temperament onto vision or judgement of external things will give false images and ideas, whether good or bad.

Let us leave aside the foolish optimist who says "everything is fine", or "things are going better than ever" and talk a little about the naïve optimist. One who needs to dream in order to be able to believe, to work and to hope is not a healthy optimist, nor an example to follow. Dreams often conceal a lack of faith. Living on dreams, on dreams alone, is in all truth a poor way to live. The naïve optimist is not to be trusted. The threat of disillusionment is always lurking. And when disillusionment strikes, such temperaments suffer terribly. The naïve optimist of today is the disillusioned person of tomorrow. A nation of dreamers, or a nation that is led by dreamers, will have a tragic future.

People have to be above optimism and pessimism. They must know how to behave, to work, and to hope without relying on the dangerous drugs that are false, all-absorbing dreams. Their actions must not be tied to promises of success. They must believe without demanding miracles. They must follow their path, taking more notice of the guiding stars above than the spectacular, ephemeral fires where dreams burn.

Living up to a name

It is a beautiful thing to have a name that resounds with admiration and affection among the masses. It is a beautiful thing to be known, to have accumulated prestige, to become part of posterity. Being named is the purest and most lasting prize to be conferred upon virtue and science. Generations of men are like successive waves passing over the earth, and as each wave breaks upon the beach there remain only a few names, saved by fame from their foamy end. The ambition to make a name for oneself, and, even better, for it to be lasting, is a sign of nobility of spirit. However, this ambition must have an ethical base in order to produce a truly superior sort of person.

Having a name is not only a shining privilege. It also imposes social and individual duties. Whoever has a name – in literature, art, politics or science – becomes an example to others, a model, a mirror. The actions, attitudes and words of people of renown are much more important and representative than the actions, attitudes and words of individuals who do not stand out from the great mass of people. And when people of prestige or renown are faced with a choice between their own interests and the interests or concerns of others, they must think about the moral repercussions that their conduct may have.

For common men, some things are of minimal importance, but for men of renown who represent a social class, an intellectual activity or an ideological aristocracy, these very same things acquire great importance. It is inadmissible, then, for men of repute to flee from the social obligations which come with their status, and to expect to act as if they were simply unknown.

If men wish to satisfy their vanity by taking advantage of the prestige that comes from having made a name for themselves in literature or science, in compensation they must be prepared to fulfil the social duties that such prestige involves. In both their private and public life, the privilege of fame naturally obliges them to exercise the

greatest care in their own conduct, the utmost respect in their actions and words, and uncompromising austerity in their daily lives. It would be too much to hope that all men of repute were also holy enough to deserve sainthood. But it is normal, and thus to be recommended, that we demand of these men a minimum of civic behaviour.

If there are moral and civic duties to fulfil, a man of repute must be the first to fulfil them. It would not be good if such a man were to say, on the one hand, "Respect me! Admire me! Say my name with veneration!" while, on the other, he were to disregard his corresponding duties, and indulge in excessive levity. Exploiting one's good name in such a fashion would be immoral. To use one's name for the sake of personal glory, and as a public example of rectitude, would be quite disreputable.

The moral level of a people depends a lot on the valuable example given by its most reputed citizens, from politicians to poets, from philosophers to playwrights. If in fulfilling their social and individual duties, such men of repute do not display at every moment, and especially in moments when they are put to the test, the required civic convictions, there would be no reason to censure the poor sense of duty among the lesser-known individuals or the people at large.

When it comes to social life and civic behaviour, more demands must be made on those at the top than on those below, on men of repute than on members of the anonymous public. Whoever enjoys repute must accept both honours and duties. And when a man of intelligence or technical skill with a name of distinction behaves in a manner inappropriate to his status, then he also loses the right to receive the praise of his fellow citizens and the privileges conferred upon the chosen few.

The sound of watermills

Imagine the most desolate of winter landscapes. Do not hesitate to use your imagination, influenced perhaps by feelings or sensations of depression, to exaggerate the desolation of its bareness. If in this wintry countryside you hear the mills at work beside the old, ever-flowing, never-tiring ancestral rivers, the sadness of the whole sight will disappear, and you will have an unmistakable impression of movement and continuity, which is where man's awareness of life comes from.

The mill wheels turn, thus ensuring food for the world. They are the mill wheels of study, of literature, of art. Culture means working with others, collaborating, consolidating. It is structure, organisation, and joint initiatives. It involves creating and using documentary material and mechanical instruments. With all these elements – under an overarching ideal – individual peoples become cultural hearths where the best human and racial essences are distilled.

The mill wheels turn, and still more mills are being built. Foundations, places of learning and publishing houses are increasingly active. But as noble ambition is the most fecund source of noble realities, the work that is now to be done in the field of science, art and literature has been intensified and extended along a united front, which links related intellectual disciplines more strongly and lastingly than political labels have ever done.

Where did our people come from? In his search for our historical origins, Josep Balari searched the archives and examined the ancient documents of the time when Catalonia was ruled by counts and he found, in the beginning, a culture. His book, entitled *Orígens històrics de Catalunya*, might just as well be called *La civilització catalana de l'època comtal*.

Where did our people come from? Those who interpret everything in material terms would answer from Wilfred I's sword. But beside the geographic reconquest

carried out by heroic men of blood, there was the spiritual reconquest carried out by heroic men of learning in the schools of the Benedictine monasteries and episcopal sees. A lamp of vigil had been lit in the scriptorium of the monastery of Santa Maria in Ripoll, the cradle of Catalan culture. Catalonia enjoys a double paternity: that of Wilfred I, Count of Barcelona, and his great-grandson Oliva of Ripoll. The warring count and the founding abbot together form the iconographic diptych that is the gateway to our history.

The lamp of Ripoll illuminated the first Catalan culture. If it had not been lit as early as it was, and had not persisted through the periods of desolation that followed, the whole work of the geographical reconquest would never have given us our vitality, our wit, our appearance, our name or our lasting fame. In the darkest hours, the spark from the monastery kept alight that miraculous fire which does not destroy, but creates and procreates.

Every day new initiatives and new cultural manifestations increase the activity of those mills that provide us with their best flour. The insistent, ever-swelling sound of their nourishing work is also a clear sign that here is a culture in full swing.

The daily routine

Some people yearn to be rich, and are sure that it will not be long before they are. Such a conviction, even if it does not need to be confirmed at any particular time in the future, often works as a stimulus. But it is important that the conviction of imminent wealth does not disturb one's work. Throughout the world there are certain sorts of people who, once they are convinced that they will at some point suddenly become as rich as in their dreams, give up making a day-to-day effort in certain areas of their lives, and concentrate all their thoughts and actions on achieving the miraculous wealth which they are convinced is on its way. Then, this obsession with the precise moment at which riches will be acquired becomes an obstacle to the achievement of wealth.

When a man gives up or reduces his systematic, daily efforts because he trusts that he is on the verge of power and opulence, then he is in danger of distancing himself from or even ruining for all time his chance of achieving this grand objective. Gaining something slowly and gradually seems contemptible; this normal way seems far too long. He thinks that he will be rich tomorrow, and that he will then possess all the power, comforts, faculties and glory he could wish for. Why, then, should he waste his time making the smaller gains appropriate to times of poverty? It seems to him that all that needs to be done is to prepare everything for the arrival of the great day. He is like the army laying siege: so convinced is it of victory on the approaching day of the final assault that it neglects the small, hard-fought, daily advances, the disputes over a handful of terrain or some temporary position, and imagines the glory of the final battle, before ever getting there.

We would not advise anyone to adopt this approach. Even if the whole world were ensured of imminent wealth, the man who wants to be rich would still do well, even on the eve of such a bright day of transformation, to keep up his every day efforts. Riches are more often the result of the accumulation of the persistent efforts of an

invincible will, working away on good days as well as bad, than of a sudden stroke of fortune. And even if fortune does strike in, shall we say, a dramatic fashion, then the work done silently and ceaselessly for days on end has often played an essential role.

Continuous, untiring effort in one's everyday work not only ensures the prosperity of the future; it also forges the character necessary to be able to enjoy wealth when it eventually comes. We have all heard about the tragic lives of men who become rich unexpectedly, who are unable to take advantage of fortune's favour because they lack the appropriate skills.

Must we get rich quickly? It's better, if we do. But let us not forget the calming influence of day-to-day work. We should not scorn the modest benefits it brings, nor leave unattended those tasks which are outwardly unattractive. If the conviction of success is a stimulus, deception is a terrible, irreparable blow to those who, trusting that wealth is about to come, raise their hands to receive it in a triumphal embrace, and, in so doing, cast aside the tools of their trade, the most trusted friends of a man who works and lives in hope.

Again we say, it is better if the day of great wealth eventually comes to us. It is better if, on top of the accumulation of the small gains of every day, at a specific moment, fortune suddenly strikes and utterly changes the lucky man's way of living. One must assume that many things can go wrong. One must assume that the lucky day is still a long way off, as one must also assume that the day so long dreamed of may bring disappointment. The best approach is to keep at the regular day-to-day tasks. Thus, whether our dreams and hopes come true or whether we suffer the blow of disillusionment, the work of every day will uphold our love for life and will keep the way of hope open, even of those hopes which go beyond the individual's life, as they can be projected onto the lives of our children.

That is not democracy

Years ago, when the Dayton trial was causing a stir throughout the world, some of those in favour of Bryan's thesis said to those who disagreed with him, "But what are you complaining about? The law that prohibits the teaching of Darwin's theories in official or state-financed schools has been passed in the State of Tennessee. It is a law which has been passed by a parliament elected by universal suffrage. Therefore, it is a democratic law. There is nothing you can do except bow to it. Is not that democracy?"

No. That is not necessarily democracy. Not all the laws approved by a majority and which have followed due legal process are necessarily democratic. This is not the place to discuss whether the law in question is good or bad, fair or unfair. We only wish to make the point that it is a grave error to believe that the essence of democracy is the material fact of government by majority. "Do the majority govern? Then there is democracy," it is said, applying the crudest of criteria. In this case, everything depends on the interpretation given to the term "democracy". If we are to interpret it in the sense that the concept has acquired in our times, it seems undeniable that the principle of democracy is inseparable from the principle of liberty.

Taking words in a strict, etymological sense, we admit that there can be democracy without liberty, and liberty without democracy. But in modern ideology, when one talks of democracy, it is generally understood that one is talking about liberal democracy.

Thus, democracy is not only and essentially the government of the majority. Democracy is one thing, and rule by absolute majority is another. Government of the people is one thing; absolute government by a majority which invokes the right in the same way that an absolute monarchy invokes its divine right is another. For a truly democratic system to exist, in addition to the system of resolving elections by a majority vote, there has to be respect and guarantees for the rights of minorities and of individuals.

Within a homogenous group of people, majorities and minorities are fluctuating masses. Shifts in mass opinion can often turn yesterday's majority into today's minority, and make previously minor groups suddenly become major forces. On the other hand, it is worth remembering that even when a particular party is in government, a number of practical issues on which there may be a divergence of opinion within the same party will not be included in the party's manifesto and its stated ideology? Majorities and minorities are not fixed, clearly delineated, rigid entities. All groups should feel that they blend into the people as a whole. It is not as if the same people are always in government; it is not as if the people who are part of the group which has a permanent majority will always impose their will. In each specific case, the numerical difference between the majority and the minority can vary, just as the internal make-up of the different groups can vary. The belief that the majority represent the voice of the people, and that the will of most people is the will of all is a fiction, even if it is a necessary fiction, and one which is close to the truth.

So, one would do well to distinguish clearly between these two concepts: democracy and rule by absolute majority. Liberal democracy limits the power of the majority to resolve issues and circumscribes it beforehand within the limits set out by a constitution. Rule by absolute majority is little more than a dictatorship. So it should clearly not be confused with democracy. A law, or a political system, cannot be qualified as democratic, even if it counts on the will of the majority or a parliamentary vote, if it violates the fundamental principle of human freedom.

Our democracy

Some time ago, Pere Rouquette, a distinguished gentleman from Provence, wrote some comments on a talk given by Josep M. Junoy at the Barcelona Atheneum: "Not within the ideology or aesthetic of Charles Maurras." Mr. Rouquette, a French-style regionalist and nationalist, was deeply surprised by Junoy's profession of faith in democracy in his talk: "How is that?" he wrote. "What does the word 'democracy' mean to our friends, the Catalan conservatives?"

Reading our friend Rouquette's interesting comments shows us that he has a rather biased idea of Catalan thinking. He invokes the doctrines of Torras i Bages in *La Tradició Catalana* to show how Catalanism goes against the principles of democracy. In his opinion, the interpretation that Charles Maurras and his friends and allies give to the word "democracy" should be universally accepted. He writes, "For us French, historically and philosophically, democracy is revolution and implies turning values on their head and negating social order." Well, in that case it is not us Catalans, but the French people of this tendency who are twisting the true sense and very essence of the democratic system.

We have no objection to declaring that the Catalans, in general, understand the word "democracy" in the same sense as any other civilized people. As we well know, the word, like so many others, has numerous meanings and varying nuances. But, in its essence, our understanding of democracy is the same as an Englishman's, a German's, a Swiss, a Belgian's, a Scandinavian's, a Frenchman on the street's, an average Frenchman's, as M. Herriot would say.

No-one can be mistaken about how the Catalans use the word "democracy". It has a variety of historical, national and social forms, but it is essentially the system that puts the control of public affairs into the hands of the collectivity and does not make exceptions on grounds of birth, level of prosperity or profession. The negation

of democracy is the right of a person, a family, a caste or a group of people to govern others without seeking their agreement. Democracy involves intervention by citizens in public affairs; equal participation in all fundamental rights, though adjusted to and differentiated by their capabilities, activities and personal influence. Here you have a general formula for democracy. If, in the Middle Ages, social and civil inequality was translated into greater or lesser inequality in political rights, levelling people out as citizens, which is the basic postulate of human dignity, demands the recognition of their political equality, which in turn translates into the arithmetic procedure of universal suffrage.

“Democracy is revolution”, say the extremists of the French right. It would be fairer to say that democracy was revolution in France, almost one hundred and fifty years ago. We have always found the thesis that the French Revolution saw the beginning of liberal democracy exaggerated, even if it is an exaggeration that has become a commonplace. Ours is not to make the absurd mistake of denying the universal influence of the French Revolution. But the democratic system was known, practised and honoured long before the outbreak of revolution in France.

In many ways, modern democracies are connected to the tradition of certain ancient peoples, a tradition that was broken by centuries of absolute monarchy. In Catalonia, democracy is mistaken for racial soul. Within the Iberian Peninsula, Castille also had admirable examples of democracy in its municipalities, but it suffered the blows of dictatorship sooner. There is a well-known saying by an Iberian aristocrat about the old municipal system of Barcelona, which contemptuously states, “It is in the hands of tailors and shoemakers.” A large number of the principles which today are considered the result of revolutionary thinking were already a part of our old legislative system. It is surprising when one remembers that, in their work on the legal charters of Catalonia, Josep Coroleu and Pella i Forgas, organized the old laws of the Principality of Catalonia into articles, as in a modern constitution. Someone who is not fully aware of this subtle piece of manipulation beforehand might well be led to believe that they had before them one of the most advanced constitutions of modern times.

Our democracy belongs both to our tradition and our land. Catalan democrats are the true heirs of the autochthonous tradition. In their reactions against the so-called ideas of the French Revolution, it is rather the anti-democrats who end up adopting a strange position. If the old forms of democracy are our tradition, its modern forms are the laws that govern our life and the way in which we express faith in our nation.

Humour amidst the storm

The cycle of storms continues to loom over Europe. Although there are no showers of fire and blood now, the threatening clouds drift across the skies like vast ships of war. Léon Daudet never ceases in his cry, "War is coming, war is coming back!" He has assured us, for some years now, that a new European conflagration will soon be started by Germany. In one of his articles in *L'Action Française*, Daudet recounts a conversation which took place in the corridors of the Chamber of Deputies between an elected left-wing member of the chamber and an ex-member, a monarchist and war invalid called Joly, who had just failed to be re-elected. "You can prepare your military cape right now," said the invalid to his personal friend and political enemy. We do not believe much in these predictions in the short term, and this prediction failed. But it is true that the sunsets over the lands and seas of Europe are often a sinister red.

Europeans have the restless feeling that precedes a storm. In their souls, the tempests of the Great War have yet to fade away. The heavy clouds are still overhead. Every so often there are clear spells; but they do not provide the stability of fine weather so much as the anxiety of variable weather. And it is interesting to notice that this impression – which some have because of their instinct and others because of their intellectual clear-sightedness – does not prevent them from adding a festive note of humour to the chapters of history that are unfolding before our eyes.

Let us recall, for example, the newspaper reports on the opening session of the German Reichstag some years ago. While the *Daily Mail* published its sensational revelations of the German military build-up, and Léon Daudet declared that he had received confidential reports which proved Germany's warlike intentions, the elected members in Berlin, forgetting for a moment the transcendental importance of the Dawes Report, pronounced themselves in joyous ironies, laughing loudly, shouting, singing and indulging in Carnival-style teasing.

The humorous notes struck in that session of the Reichstag show that the Germans do indeed possess the gift of irony when they wish to show it. One must add, however, that such irony often degenerates into mere clowning. While the roll-call of members was in progress, a name was pronounced in solemnity: Prince von Bulow. And a Communist deputy shouted out, "He's only the nephew!" As our readers will understand, after these words all that remained was to add the annotation, "Great laughter."

Up to this point, the irony was discrete, moderate, spiritual; we could even say Latin. Afterwards, as the tone became more provocative, so things became livelier, much more to the German taste. Every time a deputy from Bavaria was announced, the Communists would shout, "Pig!" Everyone accepts that such a word is not particularly parliamentary, but we are all aware that unparliamentary language is very often heard in parliaments.

Be that as it may, all this is nothing beside the ironies, sarcasms and insults addressed to General Ludendorff. The Communists, many of whom had gone to the session dressed in the black shirts of the Fascists buttoned up to the chin, had left a bunch of flowers stained with blood, on the table of the Reichstag, with the famous soldier's card attached. The Communist deputy, Scholem, was wearing blue glasses, which he offered to General Ludendorff, as he remarked, "Mister Lindstroem (this was the false name that Ludendorff had used when he fled from Germany after his failed coup d'état), here are your glasses, which you left in Sweden." Needless to say, after these words comes the annotation: "General hilarity."

This is an example of humour amidst the storm. The unrelenting omens of war continue to make their appearance in the skies over Europe. And meanwhile, in the momentary calm on the ground, people shoot off their humorous darts with the same hands that were shooting guns just yesterday, and may well be shooting them again tomorrow.

Women and race

A very talented French writer of extraordinary psychological insight, Pierre Dominique, was commenting on the triumph of Marshall Hindenburg in the German presidential elections, and remarked that it was the votes of the German women that ensured his victory. This fact did not surprise him in the least; on the contrary, it seemed most natural. In the case of the election of Hindenburg, feelings overcame reflection. The powerful ethnic instinct obscured the perception of the political reality. In Dominique's opinion, it was a simple matter of the German masses being moved to vote according to their deepest instincts and they responded to the affection they felt. Instinctively and affectively, the Germans had to vote for the Marshall. The votes for Hitler's national-socialists or racists in the elections of the 14th September, 1930, were cast in a similar sort of fashion

Hindenburg's victory, like Hitler's, was largely due to women voters. In the feminine soul, the powers of reflection and logic are often less influential than in the masculine soul. In contrast, once they have put aside their homely indifference, women feel for movements that are mostly instinctive and sentimental – as are ethnic movements – in a more integrated, more exclusive way. This explains why German women have been inflamed more than the men by the formidable heat of German racism.

This subconscious, affective power turns women into the purest expression of race. The more open a human being is to the calm influence of reason and critical consideration, the more the ethnic substance becomes mixed up with generically human, and therefore universal, ideas. This mixture, which is more masculine in spirit, has undoubted advantages of a cultural nature. But when a people need vigorous ethnic sentiments, when the ethnic spirit needs to be turned into action, women have great potential. Once awakened, women's powerful ethnic sentiments can serve as much for

evil as for good; they can just as easily contribute to the victory of an ethnic cause as to the outbreak of a struggle which brings down their nation. Within a fully democratic system, in which both sexes have the vote, this question of a woman's psychology is most important.

The female factor must be taken into consideration, both to avoid the pernicious influence of ethnic instincts and to make noble use of their beneficial influence. Pierre Dominique claims that the particular genius of a people resides in its women. He says, "It is through women that the deep, religious and social ideas that constitute the moral foundation of a people are transmitted. Women are traditional in a much more profound way than men."

Precisely because these forces are so deep within the feminine soul, they sometimes take time to manifest. Often it takes an emotional shock to cause them to come to the surface. Good democratic politics requires that these conservative and constructive aspects of ethnicity be valued. Women oscillate between unbreakable conviction and indifference. More often than not, men tend to occupy a mid-point between these states because, in the masculine soul, critical sense and logical analysis counterbalance the rallying cry of the instincts and the blazing outbursts of the sentiments. What needs to be done is to channel the racial sentiments of women towards an idealism that is enlightened by the pure gusts of sentiment, and at the same time subordinate them to the voice of reason and the lessons of historical experience.

Work: a higher calling

Whenever there are conflicts of temperament or personal clashes in a small circle of people, whether literary, artistic or intellectual, we must always assume that the situation can be effectively remedied. The remedy is simply that all those involved have to set to work. Only those not gainfully employed, or those who habitually occupy their time in idle gossip, can stoke the small flames of slander, which neither illuminate nor give warmth, but merely consume energy. Thus the best defence against such attacks is to intensify one's normal work, in whichever field it may be.

Work is a higher calling, the opposite of ignoble acts of aggression. And we are talking here in terms of moral stature. This stature is within the reach not only of intellectuals and people of culture, but also of the man on the street, whose clean conscience allows him to hold his head high. Aberrant behaviour in people stems not only from their individual natures, but also from their inability to find work that involves them at the deepest level and which prevents them from wasting themselves on soulless objectives and useless pursuits.

Work: here you have the great secret of human strength. We need a spiritually dignified job, a job which constantly rouses our passion. Whoever has a passion for work avoids all sorts of harmful passions. The lack of a high goal in people's lives instinctively leads them to pursue limited, petty goals. And those who normally have an honourable job to do, by increasing their work, find they have a guarantee against the temptations which could undermine their ability to work.

Whenever literary or intellectual circles are filled with demoralizing criticism, there has to be an energetic, moral reaction. Instead of wasting time and energy on never-ending, unnecessary, arguments and club- or coffee room-chatter, one must focus on the noble aims of culture and put all the strength and purpose of one's intelligence and will-power at the service of these aims.

In the field of culture there are always things to do. Everyone will find work there, which is appropriate to their condition and preparation. There is no sadder mistake than that of people who allow themselves to be distracted by incidents of a personal or petty nature, which more often than not are the result of a misunderstanding or of comments which prove far from accurate. Why do we have to spend our time in mutual recriminations, in attacking each other, in secret or even openly? Let everyone take up their work, whether intellectual or literary, with renewed intensity, and allow the gossiping voices to tire and eventually die away of their own accord, in an atmosphere of indifference.

Daily work allows the writer, the literary figure, the artist or the scientist to forget the disagreeable anecdotes, appease personal resentments, and find joy in life itself. When those who are questioned or contradicted break their pen, destroy their canvas, or leave their work unfinished are committing a double fault, against themselves and against society. Instead of raising their voice even louder in the dispute, they should get down to their jobs again with even greater conviction, dedicating themselves to that higher spiritual work redeems them from their own defects and responds to the recriminations of others.

Struggles are inevitable, but at least let them be ambitious and noble. Struggling is the normal state of affairs in human society. The imperative law of the struggle has been in existence throughout humanity. Men and whole peoples live in perpetual combat. All the great social and political advances, all the conquests of liberty and the homeland, they were all born in the midst of often tempestuous and sometimes bloody struggles. But if the destiny of human society is unending struggle, let it be noble, let it be for the highest causes. When the struggle is noble, nations and humankind emerge strengthened, rejuvenated, improved. In our world, absolute peace would be a sign that death is at hand.

The heart is uplifted and grows strong when faced with struggles, which are a sign of social vitality and an instrument of progress. It is a beautiful sight to see the distinguished peoples of Europe with their constant political campaigns and clashes of ideas. We would happily give away, to anyone who wants it, the undisturbed quiet of those peoples who lie sleeping or moribund. The spirit is in love with those peoples in whom the struggle is always alight. Silence and lack of movement are indications of historical decay and spiritual failure.

Let us welcome noble struggles! The political level of a people is a sure sign by which to judge its vigour. Such noble struggles give rise to plenty of misery and plenty of personal anecdotes. But it is the attitude which gives these struggles their vital, moral purpose. Misery and base behaviour only prove harmful when they are left to their own devices, not when they are met with vibrant human ideas and sentiments. Those

who wish for complete, undisturbed quiet are asking for the pestilential corruption of stagnant waters. Put your highest aspirations into your struggles, and do not be afraid of their effects on your fellow men, on other peoples, and on the world itself.



The university of the southern regions of Catalonia, created by the Parliament of Catalonia in December 1991, bears the name of Antoni Rovira i Virgili, a journalist, writer and politician who was born in Tarragona in 1882, who fled abroad in January 1939 and who died in Perpignan in 1949 as president of the Parliament of Catalonia in exile. Because of his lifelong commitment to society, his powerful and restless intellect and the social and political convictions that led him to great personal sacrifice, the university proudly bears his name as an expression of its guiding values: the defence of democracy, the desire to provide a public service, and social commitment and responsibility.

In 1930, Antoni Rovira i Virgili published *In Defence of Democracy*, a book which is as relevant today as ever, given our current political and social circumstances. It reveals its author to be deeply acquainted with and full of insight into the political theory and philosophy of his time. In coming to the defence of democratic values at a time when autocratic styles of government had a growing appeal, Rovira i Virgili's intelligence and premonition are impressive. This book will surely appeal to anyone interested in politics and public life

